



Facilitating Adult Learning Tips and Tricks for Service Unit Fall Product and Cookie Managers

Who Are My Learners and How Will I Engage Them?

Most people have similar preference for acquiring and processing new information. Most individuals prefer to learn through one the following three ways:

- **Seeing – The Visual Learner**
- **Hearing – The Auditory Learner**
- **Touching/Doing – The Kinesthetic Learner**

Here are some clues as well as some tips for engaging each type of learner.

Visual Learners learn best by seeing new information. Visual learners prefer to read or see the information in a written format or in graphics or pictures that represent the information.

Learning Style Clues	Learning Style Facilitation Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to see something to truly understand it • May have trouble following lectures or spoken directions • Often misinterpret words • Have a strong sense of color • May say “it looks good to me” or “I see what you are saying.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use graphics to help reinforce concepts. • Color code sections to help organize content • Provide written directions • Use graphics whenever possible • Use metaphors that create a visual image

Auditory Learners learn best by listening to new information.

Learning Style Clues	Learning Style Facilitation Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer to get information by listening-need to hear it to understand it. • Sometimes have difficulty understanding written information and expressing themselves through writing • Sometimes unable to read body language and facial expressions well • May have trouble following directions • May say “It sounds good to me” or “I hear what you are saying.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain information orally rather than relying on learners to read and synthesize directions or charts. • Process activities that will engage them in discussions where they may freely express their reactions and ideas.

Kinesthetic Learners prefer hands-on experience to learn and acquire new skills or information.

Learning Style Clues	Learning Style Facilitation Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer hands-on learning • Often don’t need to read directions to do an experiential activity • May have difficulty sitting still and focusing • Learn better when physical activity is involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in active learning, making models, movement activities • Take frequent breaks • Allow doodling or other “hand” activity that does not distract from the rest of the group • Use computer or models to reinforce learning through the sense of touch • Incorporate activity to demonstrate ability

One Dozen Ways To Create an Empowering Learning Environment

1. Introduce yourself to everyone as s/he enters the room.
2. Appear excited and enthusiastic yourself.
3. Make them feel important – and do it sincerely. Be an awesome host.
4. Engage their “brains” the moment they walk in the door in visual, auditory, and/or kinesthetic ways.
5. Make sure everything appears – and is – in order. Check visibility of all visuals.
6. Provide a warm-up activity that links to the purpose of the session.
7. Uncover their expectations.
8. Win the technology battle – say “NO” to cell phones and anything that has an on/off button that could be a distraction.
9. SMILE!
10. Work the room – do not stay in one spot.
11. Use color. Use appropriate music. Provide surprises.
12. Give yourself a positive pep talk before starting the session.

Time Management Tips for Facilitators

General:

- Start and end on time.
- When someone arrives late, acknowledge them, let them know quickly where you are and that you will meet with them at the break or at the conclusion to cover what s/he missed.

Breaks:

- Choose an odd number of minutes for the break (example: 13 minutes).
- Delegate a table cluster with the responsibility of bringing everyone back on time.
- Offer special content during the break. If time is tight, have a working break.
- Use music. Either play music during the break and stop it when you are ready to start or delegate someone as the pied piper to use a pleasant musical instrument to use to gather the group back.
- Make them happy they returned by your energy and enthusiasm.
- Honor/acknowledge those who returned promptly.

Session Delivery:

- Build processing time into the sessions. Allow ample time to debrief an activity.
- If you have a co-facilitator, help each other keep track of time. Agree on a signal before the session.
- If you have no co-facilitator, ask one of the participants to give you a “time” signal at a designated time.
- Be mindful of cues from your participants. Watch their body language. If the pace is too slow, they will lose interest and either mentally check out or engage in a side activity that may become a distraction.
- Be ready to adjust the pace. *Tip:* Place green, yellow, and red plastic cups in the center of a table. Encourage each small group to place a green cup on the top when they have completed an activity. The yellow would designate more time. The red might indicate they were experiencing difficulty and were at a standstill. For individual activities, give each participant small squares of red, yellow, and green paper. Each individual could indicate a need to stop, slow down or speed up the pace.

Top 10 Facilitation Mistakes And How to Avoid Them

1. **Not opening the session in a strong and memorable way.**
 - a. Avoid waiting for people and start on time.
 - b. Open with energy.
 - c. Review the objectives so they know what to expect and what not to expect.
2. **Using inappropriate humor.**
 - a. If you are not naturally funny, don't try to be.
 - b. Be yourself, no one can do it better.
 - c. Don't tell jokes, someone in your group may be offended.
3. **Repeatedly calling on the same people during the session.**
 - a. Direct some questions to the table groups who haven't participated very much.
 - b. Rotate small group leaders.
 - c. During breaks, speak to someone who has not participated to determine if there is an issue.
4. **Going off on a tangent or keeping the focus on you instead of the learner.**
 - a. Stay on point and focused on the participants.
 - b. Ask other participants to answer "the" questions before you do.
 - c. Provide one short answer and then invite participants to add or elaborate.
5. **Distribute handouts well before you use going to use them.**
 - a. Provide materials when you want them to read/review it.
 - b. Try placing them upside down in the center of the table and ask them to leave them alone until we are ready for them.
 - c. Ask for a volunteer to distribute handouts and other support materials.
6. **Facilitating/talking during distractions.**
 - a. Deal with it. Don't ignore distractions and hope they stop.
 - b. Stop talking. Remain calm. Don't raise your voice.
 - c. For "sidebar conversations" change position and stand in close proximity to the "talkers".
7. **Facilitating only from the front of the room.**
 - a. Purposefully move around the room periodically.
 - b. Try initiating the session from the back of the room or start up after a break at this location to regain their attention.
 - c. At some point, every participant should feel as though s/he is at the front of the room.
8. **Not tapping into different learning styles.**
 - a. Try to engage all of the senses.
 - b. Try placing kinesthetic "toys" in the middle of the tables.
 - c. Vary the learning methods including some that require quiet reflections, discussion, writing and creating.
9. **Too much telling, not enough asking.**
 - a. Develop your questioning skills and use a variety of open and closed questions.
 - b. Too much telling creates passive learners and only a small percentage of it is retained.
 - c. Develop a level of comfort in leading discussions.
10. **Not ending on time.**
 - a. To end on time, let participants know you will be available following the sessions for additional questions.
 - b. Allow ample time during the session for questions.
 - c. Pay attention to your participants' non-verbal cues and their energy level.