MOA Vision Program

02/27/2012

Characteristics of Adult Learners

As a whole, adults are autonomous, self-directed, have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge, are goal-oriented and are practical. Characteristics of adults must be taken account for when it comes to providing them with special needs program.

Adults often have many responsibilities. They may have a heavy work schedule with family and children. They may not get the chance to rest at night because of problems of rent, mortgages, taxes…etc. Questions such as, “How much sleep did you have last night...What problems do you have that are keeping you from learning?” must be taken into account when teaching adults.

Adult learners need to be in charge of doing. You cannot merely tell/show them what they are to learn. They must be active participators in learning a task. Connecting their previous learning challenges to their past learning experiences helps them to be more in charge of their learning process.

Adults must perceive that a lesson or activity that they are to engage in is relevant to their needs. Activities that they are to participate in must be fully explained as to how they fit into their goals and aspirations.

Adults need to feel that they know what is important for them to learn and must be assessed for their perception of what they need. They rarely stay motivated if they are doing “what you want them to do.”

Adult groups are made up of many ages and diverse backgrounds. Everyone must be made to feel that their age or background can be used to make a positive contribution to the group. For instance, age brings wisdom to a group in decision making; and young minds can bring new ideas in developing new projects.

Adults do not like to waste time. They demand that what they learn has to be useful to them. They have too many responsibilities and many feel that time is running out for doing something relevant in their lives. Many think of their high school days and do not want to repeat such negative scenarios such as: the lack of attention or drive they had in high school, the over abundance of drug use, skipping school to do mischief...etc. They now have grown up and want to behave responsibly when it comes to education.

They also have beliefs that form their opinions of how things should be. As an instructor, you will have to have a strong conviction or evidence on why something “is” if you are to get buy-in from a student that has deep biases.

The rich learning experiences of adult learners can be positive or negative for the teacher. The adult input from their experiences can be used to enhance the learning experience of those in the classroom. The learning experiences can also be negative in a classroom situation. When bad things happen in life, it can lead to biases in the thoughts of the adult learner. For instance; the adult could have experienced, in his earlier years, a classroom situation where the teacher was allowed to dominate the student in a psychological or physical (some schools practiced physical punishment in the classroom) way. Consequently learning is hindered by the teaching of a perceived dominate teacher (flash backs)

Most adult learners are motivated from within. They do not need the teacher to tell them why it is important for them to succeed. Many have gone through life’s experiences of marriage, child rearing, having been hired, fired or laid off, great or failed relationships, and trouble with the law…etc. These experiences motivate them to want to learn. They just need the teacher to give them the right path to get to their career aspirations or goals.

Required reading:

<http://www2.honolulu.hawaii.edu/facdev/guidebk/teachtip/adults-htm><http://ed.fnal.gov/lincon/staff_adult.shtml>

Check for understanding

Questions:

1. Showing an adult how to accomplish a task is all that is needed for learning. (T/F)
2. Relevance is important in teaching Adults. (T/F).
3. Age does matter when teaching Adults. (T/F)
4. Adults in a classroom situation are more relaxed when it comes to learning. (T/F)
5. Motivation from the instructor is most important to adult learners. (T/F)

Special Needs of Adult Students

Eye-sight (vision)

Vision takes up two thirds of the brain path ways. It integrates with all of our other senses including hearing (1, 2). If the visual system is corrupted then many learning challenges can ensue.

1. <http://pavevision.org/what-should-you-ask-your-doctor)>}
2. [www.tsbvi.edu/curriculum-a-publications/1052-basic-assumptions](http://www.tsbvi.edu/curriculum-a-publications/1052-basic-assumptions)

Schools in k12 are federally mandated that students be screened for 20/20 sight. However, that is only testing to see if they can see from 20 feet away. Students need to be checked for near point reading efficiency and learning. Each child should have a comprehensive eye exam at least every two years. A comprehensive exam should screen for many visual deficiencies, eye movement control and eye teaming being very important. If eyes do not team (move) together smoothly then reading will be difficult, despite the fact that the individual may have 20/20 vision. Additionally, there are many other vision skills (at least 13) that must be checked which include: focusing speed, peripheral vision, visual memory… etc. Learning in those with vision deficiencies will not be efficient and can manifest itself in many ways; from a withdrawn student, with low self-esteem( I know I am smart...but I can't read fast) to a delinquent student, leading to gang activity or prison (“If I can't make it in school, I'll make it in crime.”)(1).

1. Zaba J. Social, emotional, and educational consequences of undetected children’s vision problems. *J BehavOptom*2001;12:66‐70.  
  
Research has shown that 1 in 4 children in a classroom have not developed adequate visual skills needed to function properly, particularly when working up close during tasks such as reading, writing and computer use, which places high demands on our visual system. Parents and teachers often equate their children’s symptoms to other problems, such as learning disabilities or attention deficit disorders, when, actually, their difficulties in the classroom are undiagnosed vision problems. Further research has shown that 80% of High School dropouts have vision related learning disorders(1).

1. (Johnson R, Zaba J. Visual screening of at risk college students*. J BehavOptom*1995; 6:63‐65).

Vision programs in Group setting can be effective

Research has shown that group vision activities can be beneficial to students with vision deficiencies. Exercises for the eyes in a group setting outside of vision therapy can be effective (1, 2). Additionally, according to Research by Dr. Laura Weisel, About 9 out of every 10 student/clients have issues with sensitivity to light /Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome. And many have been relieved of poor learning/reading through the use of colored overlays (3).

1. Bleything, Willard "The Effectiveness of a Group Delivered Vision ... Program”, http://www.oepf.org/presentations?page=1
2. Martha Y. Gooden Lewis( MA Ed teacher/Reading Specialist, Porter Elementary, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, CA) "Visual Learning Development in a Group Setting Within an Inner City School). <http://www.oepf.org/presentations?page=2>
3. An In-depth Discussion of Special Learning Needs of Individuals in Adult Education, At-Risk Youth Programs, and One-Stop Centers Part 2—The Impact of Visual Stress Syndrome, Laura Weisel, (2007) <http://www.naasln.org/documents/articles/weisel_02_special_learning_needs.pdf>

Vision Screening/Activity Protocols used

*In the MOA Vision Program we utilize two protocols, Catalyst Protocol and The Irlen Method*

Sensoryprocessingcourses.com has developed the protocol called Catalyst for teachers to do screening for visual discrepancies and to conduct the associated activities. This program screens for 13 vision skills that must be obtained in order to have effective and efficient learning for the student. The skills include:

**Visual Efficiency skills**   
1. Eye Movement Control—Saccadic movement (eyes jump smoothly); Fixation (eyes fix on one spot long enough); Pursuit (eye can track moving target smoothly)   
2. Focus— The ability to sustain and shift focus   
3. Peripheral Vision—What is seen outside of primary focus area   
4. Eye Teaming—Ability to use both eyes together   
  
**Visual Perception Skills**   
1. Laterality & Directionality—Understanding where ones body is relative to everything else   
2. Visual Closure—The ability to mentally close an incomplete picture   
3. Visual Discrimination—The ability to discriminate similarities and differences in shapes letter or forms   
4. Figure-Ground—The ability to distinguish between information in the foreground and information in the background   
5. Eye-hand Coordination—The ability of the eyes and brain to coordinate hand movements   
6. Form Reproduction—The way in which linear and geometric forms are perceived and then reproduced   
7. Visual Memory-- The ability to see an image in your mind   
  
**Sensory System**1. Auditory Sequencing—The ability to take in sequential auditory information and process it automatically   
2. Vestibular Sequencing---For body balance and spatial orientation

Helen Irlen has developed protocol called the Irlen Method (www.irlen.com) that has been very successful in screening for Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome/Irlen syndrome(sensitivity to light, in the past called Word Blindness) and finding the proper Colored overlay , if needed, that has alleviated diagnosed symptoms which include: ADD, ADHD, Specific learning disorders, Dyslexia, Autism, brain injuries, migraines and headaches. This protocol helps deficient Visual Perception/Sensory System skills as mentioned above

**Montgomery Adult School (MOA) Vision Program**

[**www.moavisionprogram.wikispaces.com**](http://www.moavisionprogram.wikispaces.com)

**a component of the ABE reading class**

In the summer of 2010 a pilot model of the Vision Program was developed at MOA in collaboration with Dr. Judy Lopez OD of Chula Vista, CA; that confirmed vision problems (utilizing the Catalyst protocol), when screened. We then confirmed positive progress when vision activities were done for three weeks (two to three, 1 hour sessions with home activities given) with a small number of struggling students. After the Pilot, MOA decided to train teachers and further develop the MOA vision program with the following results:

**4/6/2011**--Michael Lewis gave an update to teachers at Montgomery Adult School. All students inducted into the program were recommended by their teacher, who had previously received vision training. Of the 13 students initially inducted into the program, 02/11/2011(utilizing Catalyst prescreening protocol) 8 stayed with the program. 6 out of 8 (75%) students showed significant CASAS gains.  
  
Students with 20 or more vision activity sessions had average CASAS gains of 5.75. Additionally, 75% of these students have passed GED practice test that they previously had difficulties passing because of time requirements. All students felt good and positive about their vision activities and progress.  
Students with 8 to 10 vision activity sessions had average CASAS gains of 2.75.  
  
All CASAS score gains were referenced from last valid CASAS scores before the post test that were given in March 2011 . Most of the pretest valid CASAS scores were given in January 2011. These gains were significant considering Montgomery Adult average CASAS gains for the year as a whole is less than 2.00(1.97). Additionally, the CASAS test were performed using only the reading comprehension section.

**In the 2011/2012 school year** MOA Vision Program combined both the Irlen Method and Sensory Processing Catalyst protocol in our vision program. Our program first screens for light sensitivity/visual perception skills utilizing the Irlen method in screening for Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome(SSS)/Irlen Syndrome.

**This year** we have screened over 74 students ; in which we have so far verified that 97% have indications of SSS, of which 75% are severe and 25% are moderate.

**The CASAS gains were outstanding**. The classes of teachers that had been trained in the Irlen Method had average CASAS **gains of 5.2**; for those students with less than 10 hours of class time and average CASAS **gains of 7.7**; for those with 10 hours of class time or more. Our **school wide** CASAS gains went from **1.97 to 2.76 (40% increase**). Additionally, we had **10 GED/High school graduates** of students that went through the vision Program, which represented **20% of our GED graduates**. Most importantly, **testimonials** from teachers and students have been **positively overwhelming** as indicated at our website (moavision program.wikispaces.com.).

Students that do not have the syndrome are further screened for visual efficiency utilizing the Catalyst protocol and perform visual activities in the classroom as well as utilizing visual activities from website eyecanlearn.com. Additionally, to help strengthen visual processing as well as efficiency skills (when the students are not using the colored overlays) we include vision activities for all students .

Students must efficiently process what they hear from the teacher in order to take notes and remember facts and processes that they hear from the teacher during a lecture. A student with audio delays ( words from the teacher is delayed from the initial hearing to the brain) often misses much information from the teachers lecture and cannot keep up with the teacher. Learning is very difficult. Additionally adults must work in order to live. With poor audio skills, a worker that is missing information from a boss’s instruction because of the lack of skills can be looked upon as a poor and inefficient worker that will have difficulty advancing or keeping their job. We also have an audio component added to our program in which we use a program called brainbuilder; in which a computerized program test the student for delays and deficient short term memory and tailors a program to help build on the deficiencies.

Support Includes:

* **Leslie Peters of sensoryprocessingcourses.com (provides consultation, training and support).**
* **Brainbuilder.com,**
* **Foundation for the Disabled Learners, FDL(Support and funding when needed for economically depressed students),**
* **SUHSD Adult Division**
* **Technology Integration Mentor Academy (TIMAC) Project (provides technology and mentorship training),**
* **Irlen Institute (provided training for certification of two teachers for screening of students for Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome/Irlen Syndrome).**
* **Dr. Judy Lopez OD of Chula Vista, CA (provided discount comprehensive screening and consultation).**
* **Adrian Ojeda Of Eye Care : Optometry Associates (provided discounts on colored lenses).**
* **Jamal of Sunshade at the Spring Valley Swap Meet (provides discount on sunshades).**

Class Room Procedures

Initially students are screened by trained/certified teachers in vision screening/activities.

During screening, the students are led by the teacher to discover there own unique vision symptoms and the problems with learning associated with it..

If the student has symptoms of Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, then the student is given the colored overlays which alleviates those particular vision symptoms and joins the class for visual exercises. If the student does not have the symptoms of the syndrome, then the student is further screened for other visual deficiencies; consequently, if found, they join the class for group eye exercises and other visual activities/ programs available.

During the week, students are instructed to take their overlays to their respective classes and use them when they are reading or on the computer, depending on the particular symptom of the student. They also have homework of doing their visual exercises during the week. They are encouraged to get their family involved in the exercises and realize that the visual symptoms that they encounter could be hereditary. Additionally, the aim of the program is not only to help them, but also to help their families and in turn make the whole community aware of the need for screening if learning problems are detected.

Each week, the students come together and have a share/journal session and have large group discussions about individual problems or triumphs during the week. Sharing can include; if their CASAS scores have increased, if their headaches are gone, passing the GED or maybe how much easier and longer they can read now. During their meeting time, they also participate in various group/partner eye exercises.

There are lessons given on comprehension often. Because, now that they can read, comprehension skills seem to be the issue that most of them have (many of them could not read long enough, because of various difficulties, to master comprehension). The students are also taught how to use the computer and various programs available for resources, including the MOA vision website.

Students must attend class each Friday. Additionally, they must attend for at least 5(2 hours each) sessions. The sharing and collaboration are needed because there are many complications that can come from using the overlays such as: 1) How to handle various lightings in a particular room that hinders learning with the overlay. 2) Problems of reading too much (in which some do because they can read faster and longer now); which can cause other problems of burn-out and head/eye aches. 3) For some it brings on emotional overload of finally being able to read and needing group solidarity of those going through the same experience, sometimes it is hard to find those that understand.

Additionally, learning the eye exercises will actually strengthen their muscles in their eyes and, for some, it can eliminate many of their visual deficiencies.

For more information about our program see moavisionprogram.wikispaces.com.

Website of interest:

* www.pavevision.com
* [www.irlen.com](http://www.irlen.com/)
* [www.sensoryprocessingcourses.com](http://www.sensoryprocessingcourses.com/)
* [www.moavisionprogram.wikispaces.com](http://www.moavisionprogram.wikispaces.com/)
* Bleything, Willard "The Effectiveness of a Group Delivered Vision ... Program”, http://www.oepf.org/presentations?page=1
* [www.tsbvi.edu/curriculum-a-publications/1052-basic-assumptions](http://www.tsbvi.edu/curriculum-a-publications/1052-basic-assumptions)
* Gooden Lewis, Martha Y. ( MA Ed teacher/Reading Specialist, Porter Elementary, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, CA) "Visual Learning Development in a Group Setting Within an Inner City School” . <http://www.oepf.org/presentations?page=2>
* eyecanlearn.com
* fdl.wikispaces.com