Adult Classroom

For learning to occur, adults require a high degree of interaction. Therefore, instruction should:

•Build on existing knowledge and establish an association with the new information.

•Anchor all learning to a larger problem.

•Encourage learner ownership of the problem or task.

•Teach an authentic task without extraneous material.

•Present practical, relevant material that integrates into practice.

•Provide a realistic and challenging environment for the new learning to be practiced and applied.

•Encourage testing of ideas against alternative views.

•Allow opportunity for self-reflection on the learned content.

•Active learning that is analyzed, discussed, linked to relevant activity, incorporated into decision-making processes, or challenged with a problem is retained approximately three times better than lecture-based learning. It is also more likely to be integrated into practice.

The Instructor

•Within adult learning environments, instructors assume a facilitator role rather than that of a lecturer or teacher. A facilitator is less a transmitter of knowledge than a guide to learning.

•Facilitators allow learners to experience learning on their own terms by steering learners toward analyzing, critiquing, and assessing new information or the problem to be solved.

•It is essential to create a comfortable climate of mutual respect to encourage the testing and sharing of new ideas. The environment must be a non-threatening one where the learner’s experience counts as much as the facilitator’s knowledge. This allows adult learners and the facilitator share information and perspectives as equals.