

LEARNING METHODS

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KEY WORDS

- adult learning
- self-directed learning
- learning as a process
- learning by doing
- group dynamics

We have chosen learning methods that best serve adult learners and involve joint reflection and discussion, based on sharing experiences.

ADULT LEARNING

Adult learning: adults approach learning as problem solving and learn best when the topic is of immediate value

They benefit mostly from

- active participation in the learning process
- being given chances to process their own experience through reflection, analysis and critical examination.

Trainers are therefore seen more as **resources and facilitators** than as lecturers

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Adult learners use their skills in every situation, including learning-e.g.

- they **seek solutions** to their problems
- **use previous experience** and knowledge to perform their tasks
- see things in **broader perspectives**

This implies that learning is **self-directed** i.e learn by using own experiences.

Adults usually want to learn both **alone** and with **groups** of different people

LEARNING AS A PROCESS

Learning is a **comprehensive experience** combining

- reasoning
- emotions
- imagination
- intuition
- experiences

Studying is a learning process, for when we study, we set goals for ourselves and our learning and concentrate on the chosen themes.

LEARNING BY DOING

Learning by doing is **experiential learning**:

- we learn by **handling tasks and problems**, same as we do our everyday life
- we are encouraged to seek **different approaches**, make **new assumptions** and try to find **different solutions** to the problems we handle

But also

- to reason, reflect on and evaluate our experiences.

That way we can **construct our knowledge continuously**. This is **motivating and fun**.

GROUP DYNAMICS

People are social by nature and work better when they **solve problems together, set goals together** and **try to achieve them together**

Learning together, sharing experiences, and making the best out of the various backgrounds and knowledge, leads to very good results

But, to have **a successful learning environment**, we need to be aware that when we work in groups, there are particular kinds of **challenges**, which have to do with the group setting itself.

This is what **group dynamics** is about

GROUP DYNAMICS - THE FIRO MODEL

(FUNDAMENTAL INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP ORIENTATION)

Inclusion - the need to socialize, to be in the company of, or in contact with, people.

Do I want **to belong** to the group?

Control - the need to influence, make decisions, direct, have power over and impact on.

Am I in a situation of **conflict** or **cooperation**?

Openness - the need to share one's inner thoughts and feelings.

Are my thoughts **acceptable to all** or to some members of the group?

PRACTICAL METHODS TO WORK IN GROUPS

Open space – we express our ideas on a certain topic and created a poster to reflect on

Workgroup – we work in small groups of 4-6 people to discuss certain questions and reflect on them, presenting our conclusions on a poster

World cafe – we discuss different questions in every table, but we change around the table sitters to mix the participants and give them the chance to discuss with different people

Hands-on experiences: case-studies, study trips, interviews, discussions with people in project areas

Talks by experts on different topics, where extra knowledge is necessary