

# **Module 2: Characteristics of Incarcerated Youth with Disabilities**

## **Instructional Design Specifications**

- Program:** EDJJ Professional Development Series
- Competency:** Upon completion of Module 2, the participant will be able to describe the characteristics of individuals with disabilities and discuss issues in the education of incarcerated individuals.
- Rationale:** Correctional educators need to have a basic understanding of the characteristics of individuals with various disabilities. This module presents basic information on various disabilities and emphasizes functional aspects of the disabilities. Similarities between offenders with disabilities and other incarcerated persons with skill deficits are also discussed.
- Prerequisites:** None specified.

## **Introduction**

This module is one in a series of training packages that have been designed for working with students with disabilities in a correctional setting; it focuses on the characteristics of incarcerated youth with disabilities.

## Objectives

After completion of each module, the participant will be able to:

- A. Identify the characteristics of the most prevalent disabilities of incarcerated youth.
  1. State general characteristics of individuals with disabilities.
  2. Identify the most important/common characteristics of each category:
    - (a) learning disabilities
    - (b) emotional/behavioral disorders
    - (c) mental retardation, mild/moderate
    - (d) communication disorders
    - (e) attention deficit hyperactive disorders
- B. Identify characteristics of incarcerated youth.
  1. Name groups that are overrepresented in corrections populations.
  2. State social skill deficits frequently displayed by incarcerated individuals.
  3. State academic skill deficits frequently displayed by incarcerated individuals.
  4. Describe evidence of school failure among incarcerated adults and youth.
  5. Identify family problems characteristic of a disproportionate number of offenders.
  6. Identify the theory which best accounts for the overrepresentation of youth with disabilities among juvenile delinquents.
- C. Identify issues in the education of incarcerated individuals (Imel, 1986).
  1. State the degree to which juvenile offenders with disabilities receive the special education they require.
  2. Differentiate necessary functional skills from other learning tasks.
  3. Identify the characteristics of adult learners.
  4. Identify the occasions when incarcerated individuals need transition services.

## Participant Assessments

### A. Functional definitions of exceptionality

1. Which of the following statements are true of individuals with disabilities?  
(Circle as many as are true)

- (a) All are mentally different from nondisabled individuals.
- (b) All are capable of learning.
- (c) They require special education, related services, and/or devices.
- (d) They most often differ in their rate of behavior or learning.
- (e) They are not successful academically.

2. Identify the one most important/common characteristic of each category by answering true or false on these etiological statements (Circle T or F):

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | (a) Individuals with learning disabilities exhibit average intelligence.                               |
| T | F | (b) The neurological causes of learning disabilities are well-known.                                   |
| T | F | (c) Individuals with emotional/behavioral disorders are typically very aggressive.                     |
| T | F | (d) Emotional/behavioral disorders can be caused by a number of biophysical and environmental factors. |
| T | F | (e) Alcohol consumption by pregnant women can cause mental retardation in their children.              |
| T | F | (f) The causes of most mental retardation are unknown.   |
| T | F | (g) Mental retardation is determined by IQ test scores only.   |
| T | F | (h) Communication disorders occur most often when no other disability is present.                      |
| T | F | (i) Speech and language disorders do not affect academic development.                                  |
| T | F | (j) Noncompliance is associated with ADHD.   |
| T | F | (k) ADHD is one of the IDEA categories of disabilities to be supported educationally.                  |

B. Characteristics of incarcerated individuals

1. Which individuals with disabilities are overrepresented in corrections?

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Two social skills deficits frequently displayed by incarcerated individuals are:

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

3. List three academic skill deficits frequently displayed by incarcerated individuals:

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Only about \_\_\_\_\_% of juvenile offenders complete high school or the GED (Bullock & McArthur, 1994).

5. Which of the following descriptors apply to the families of a disproportionate number of offenders? (Circle two)

(a) Rich overindulgent parents

(b) Single parent

(c) Highly educated parent(s)

(d) Abusive or neglectful parent(s)

(e) Family members with serious mental illness

(f) Overreligious parent(s)

6. Which of the following statements supports the theory that there is an overrepresentation of youth with learning disabilities among juvenile delinquents (Bryan & Pearl, 1989)? (Circle all that apply)
- (a) They compensate for poor academic performance by trying to impress their peers through delinquent acts.
  - (b) Labeling tends to group them with other problem youth.
  - (c) They display poor judgment.
  - (d) They are genetically predisposed to criminal behavior.
  - (e) They are treated differently by the juvenile justice system.

C. Issues in the education of incarcerated individuals:

1. Approximately \_\_\_\_\_% of juvenile offenders with disabilities receive the special education they require by law.
2. A functional approach to instruction suggests that students with disabilities need to learn: (Circle all that apply)
- (a) Reading and computation skills required for work situations
  - (b) How to identify the relevant aspects of a task
  - (c) Visual-perceptual skills such as mazes and dot-to-dot
  - (d) Strategies for remembering what they learn
  - (e) Reading comprehension for social science texts
  - (f) Diet and nutrition information
  - (g) Beginning college algebra
  - (h) Oral and written communication skills
  - (i) The neurophysiological cause of their disability
  - (j) All of the above
3. List three characteristics of adult learners:
- (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Circle the occasions when incarcerated individuals need transition support (all that apply):
- (a) Prior to release
  - (b) During transition
  - (c) In the community after release

ANSWERS:

- A
1. b,c,d
  2. a=T, b=F, c=F, d=T, e=T, f=T, g=F, h=F, i=F, j=T, k=F
- B
1. males, minorities, low SES
  2. choose two: failure to get along, putting self first, unrealistic expectations, excessively dependent, non-compliant, aggressive
  3. spoken language, written language, reading, computation
  4. 20%
  5. b and d
  6. e
- C
1. 80%
  2. a, b, d, h
  3. learn by doing, motivated when instruction draws on personal experience, like to plan activities
  4. a, b, c

## **Participant Activities**

The following activities are designed to allow the participants opportunities to have first-hand experiences with students with disabilities and their families or to have more in-depth learning about disabilities. Collaboration for these activities is encouraged as a technique that can be transferred to support best practice in actual teaching following the modules (Nelson, Rutherford, & Wolford, 1996).

1. Design a simple pretest/posttest that helps you and the participants understand what they may already know about disabilities and what they learn as a result of this module. For example, they could list each disability in one column, then list what a youth is like with that disability in column two, and finally, any special ways they might teach a student with that disability in column three. Do this before the module and again at the end.
2. Establish groups to research each disability. Allow participants to join one of the groups. The research should include characteristics, causes, and teaching strategies. In addition, each group should design a set of interview questions to ask a parent of a youth with a disability. Then at least two members of the group should interview the parent or youth with disabilities. This could be done on videotape. The results of this research should be organized into a presentation with handouts, visual displays, and shared as each of the disabilities is discussed in class.
3. Bring in a speaker for each disability that has first-hand knowledge of what that disability is like. Encourage participants to design questions to ask the speakers in order to understand their successes and challenges as they have gone through school/life. After each speaker, ask the participants to record the most important concept they learned from the speaker.

4. Ask participants to read at least one book about a person with a disability (such as those listed in Handout A-2-b). What characteristics were included about the main character that either match or add a different dimension than ones discussed in this module? What insights were gained by reading the book? Submit a report on these characteristics and insights.
5. Bring in a teacher or coordinator of public school programs for students with disabilities to discuss the educational services they provide to students. Ask the speaker to discuss the contacts that they or their students have had with the juvenile justice system.
6. Ask a prosecuting attorney or representative from your state's department of the adult or juvenile justice systems to address policies regarding correctional education and the provision for the needs of exceptional individuals. Which advocacy groups or social service agencies are involved?
7. After learning about the three theories regarding why there are more youth with disabilities in juvenile justice settings than in general education, have each participant choose the theory that rings true from their own experiences. Have the participants who espouse each theory work together to develop the reasons they believe that theory to be true and then present these reasons to the other two groups, supported by experiences from their own backgrounds.
8. Stage a debate on the issue of whether youth in the juvenile justice system should have the right to educational services. Using federal law (IDEA) and other facts gained from this course, discuss students with both general and special education needs. Include the factors that may undermine a successful education as seen by both sides of the issue.

## **Transparencies**

This transparency presentation summarizes the content of this module. It does not include all the information contained within this module and should be used to supplement its implementation.

**Transparency A-1-a**

**Categories of Disabilities Identified in IDEA Reauthorization**

Learning Disabilities

Emotional Disturbance

Mental Retardation

Communication Disorders

Autism

Other Health Impairments

Visual Impairments

Hearing Impairments

Traumatic Brain Injuries

Orthopedic/Physical Disabilities

Multiple Disabilities

Deaf-Blind

(Reader may wish to refer to Module 4: IDEA)

## **Most Prevalent Disabilities of Incarcerated Youth**

Learning Disabilities (45%)

Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (42%)

Mental Retardation (7%)

Communication Disorders (3%)

Also: Attention Deficit Disorder/  
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder  
(up to 46%)

(Bullock & McArthur, 1994)

Transparency A-2

**Prevalence Estimates of Youth in the Juvenile Justice System  
With Mental Health Diagnoses**

Emotional Disorders

Anxiety Disorders: 6-41%

Conduct Disorders: 50-90%

Personality Disorders: 2-46%

Affective Disorders: 32-78%

Psychosis: 1-6%

Also

ADHD: up to 46%

Substance Abuse: 25-95%

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: 41% (one study)

History of Previous Psychiatric Hospitalization: 3-26%

History of Child Abuse: 25-31%

History of Suicide Attempts: 6-28%

From: Nelson, C.M., Rutherford, R.B., & Wolford, B. I. (1996). *Comprehensive and collaborative systems that work for troubled youth: A national agenda*. Richmond, KY: National Juvenile Detention Association.

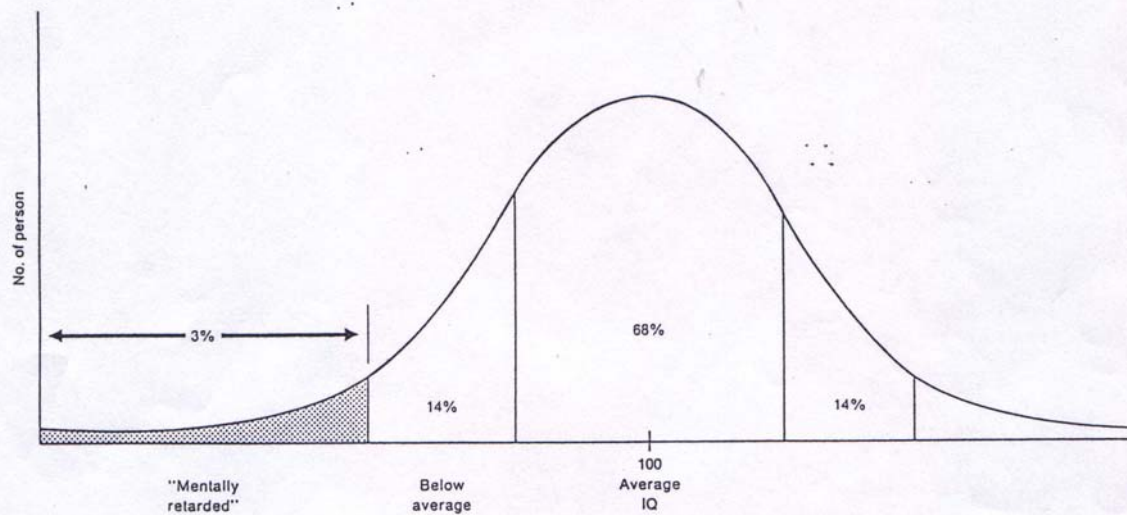
# Transparency A-3

## PREVALENCE OF MENTAL RETARDATION

Characteristics of Exceptional Populations: Incarcerated Youth with Disabilities

Transparency 236

### Prevalence of Mental Retardation



**Communication Disorders**

**Speech:**

Articulation

Voice

Dysfluency

**Language:**

Rules

Symbolic Uses

## Transparency A-5

### Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

#### Practical Definition for AD/HD

Attention Deficit Disorder is a medical condition of inappropriate developmental degrees of:

**INATTENTION:** The student is off-task, distractible, or shifts attention from one activity to another.

**IMPULSIVITY:** The student acts before he thinks, often interrupts, talks excessively, intrudes, and engages in thrill-seeking behavior.

**OVERACTIVITY:** The student is overactive, out-of-seat, tapping objects, squirmy, or fidgety.

**NONCOMPLIANCE:** The student does not follow adult requests in a reasonable period of time, often resulting in arguing, delaying, or tantrums.

**SELF-MANAGEMENT DEFICITS:** The student has difficulty delaying gratification and self-managing his or her behavior.

**ACADEMIC DEFICITS:** The student is academically behind in subjects, has difficulty with organization and completing class work or homework.

**SOCIAL SKILLS DEFICITS:** The student has social skill problems that lead to peer rejection. These problems can include poor cooperation, poor friend making skills, resisting peer pressure, and difficulty giving and receiving feedback (Goldstein, 1999).

Source: Adapted from *The Utah Attention Deficit Disorder Guide* published in 1992 by the Utah State Board of Education, Salt Lake City.

## **Social Skill Deficits**

Conduct Disorders

Aggression

Getting Along with Others

Unrealistic Expectations

Excessively Dependent

(Refer to Goldstein, 1999; Larson, 1998)

## **Academic Skill Deficits**

Language: Written and Spoken

Reading

Comprehension

(Hallahan & Kauffman, 2000)

**School Failure**

Grade Retention

Enrollment in Many Schools

Drop-out or Expulsion

No Diploma or GED

**Relation of Learning Disabled (LD)**

**Youth and Delinquency**

School Failure Theory

Susceptibility Theory

Differential Treatment Theory

Metacognitive Deficits Hypothesis

**Well-designed**

**Correctional Education Programs**

Functional Assessment

Functional Curriculum

Vocational and Career Development Skills

Effective and Efficient Instruction

Transitional Services

Comprehensive Services

Availability of Appropriate Staff and Resources  
for Students with Disabilities

## Handout 1.0

### Objectives

After completion of each module, the participant will be able to:

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- C. Identify issues in the education of incarcerated individuals.
  1. State the degree to which juvenile offenders with disabilities receive the special education they require.
  2. Differentiate necessary functional skills from other learning tasks.
  3. Identify the characteristics of adult learners.
  4. Identify the occasions when incarcerated individuals need transition services.

## Handout A-1-a

### Learning Disabilities

#### **“I’m going to do what I promised. I’m going to save your life”**

Dr. Fred Epstein whispered these lines to a young patient immediately before surgery. Dr. Epstein, who is coauthor with Elaine Shimberg of *Gifts of Time* (1993, William Morrow & Co.), is a pediatric neurosurgeon. Many of his colleagues refer to him as a miracle worker. He has been willing to perform surgeries that others considered impossible and, as a result, has saved many young lives.

Dr. Epstein also has learning disabilities. His grades in college were only average, and his chemistry grades were “abysmal”. He applied to four medical schools and was rejected by all of them. His father, a psychiatrist, intervened and Dr. Epstein was finally accepted by New York Medical College.

Perhaps his struggles with learning disabilities have helped him to develop the patience and tenacity that resulted in his success. He emphasizes, “I don’t accept children dying.”

See *Reader’s Digest*, February 1993, pp. 192-228.

#### **Don’t Waste Your Time**

When Janice Anderson Connolly entered her Period 7 class on her first day of teaching, she knew she was in for a challenge. One of the students commented, “Lady, don’t waste your time. We’re the retards.” She later learned that most of the students were children of migrant workers. Their attendance and motivation were poor, and no one expected them to graduate from high school. Janice decided that she wouldn’t give up on them as others had. She went to the board the next day and wrote “ECINAJ” and told them that was her first name. After a few comments about her weird name, she wrote: “JANICE” on the board. She explained to them that she had a learning disability and couldn’t write her own name when she began school. Janice also told them she couldn’t spell words or do math. “That’s right. I was a retard.” I can still hear those awful voices and feel the shame.”

Her understanding of their dilemma reached the kids. She maintained high expectations for them and helped them to discover that they could learn and learn well. Two years later, all 14 of her Period 7 students graduated, and six received college scholarships.

See “The First Year of Teaching: Real World Stories from America’s Teachers,” 1992, *Mentor*, pp. 26-31

Vignettes taken from : Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Shank, M., & Leal, D. (1999). *Student study guide to accompany Exceptional Lives, Special Education in Today’s Schools, 2nd Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

## **Handout A-1-b**

### **Case Study: Adolescent with Learning Disabilities**

Claudia is a 14-year-old Hispanic female from a large urban area in Arizona. She is currently incarcerated at a state-run facility for delinquent females. Claudia has a history of school truancy and alternative type programming. She is 14 years old, yet she has only completed 6th grade. Claudia is currently diagnosed as learning disabled in reading. She reads and comprehends at approximately the 3rd grade level. She has not mastered grapheme/phoneme correspondence and has trouble decoding most words.

Claudia refuses to do flash cards in the classroom because then the other students will know she can't read. She will do assignments from a remedial reading workbook, but when given an assignment, Claudia's first reaction is "I can't do this" or "this is too hard". When prompted Claudia will attempt to do her assignment but requires a great deal of one-on-one attention from the teacher. She frequently becomes frustrated and will throw her assignment on the floor, rip it up, or state that she is not doing it. Claudia states that she wants to learn to read, yet her frequent frustration results in a great deal of off-task behavior.

To reduce Claudia's frustration level and increase her reading ability Claudia takes part in a token economy system in class in which she earns points to buy items from a store by reading books at her current reading level.

#### **Questions:**

1. What are the signs that Claudia has a learning disability (i.e., characteristics associated with LD)?
2. What could the teacher do to support Claudia's frustration with her low reading besides the token system mentioned?
3. How could the teacher engage Claudia in more on-task behavior?
4. How important is self-esteem for a student with a learning disability?

## Handout A-2-a

### Normal and Disturbed Behavior

The relationship between normal and disturbed behavior is striking:

Each of us contains the whole range of emotional health and disease within himself. Our nightmares, if they serve no other purpose, enable us to share the ways in which many psychotics experience life. The sudden loss of temper nearly all of us have experienced gives momentary empathy with the feelings of uncontrollable rage, helplessness, confusion, guilt, pulse control. Most of us have shared a variety of neurotic symptoms: the terrifying fear of something that we know rationally should not in itself cause fear; the magical, protective cloak of knocking on wood, crossing fingers, counting to ten, holding our breath; the compulsive need to get one thing done, no matter how inane or how inconvenient, before we can do something else; the piece of work that can never be finished because it is never good enough. Such illogical behavior does not mean that most of us are neurotic...only that some emotional disorder is as much a part of everyone's disorder as much a part of everyone's life as the common cold. [Cartwright, Cartwright, & Ward's study (as cited in Long, Morse, & Newman, 1976, p.1)].

That single passage brings home more forcefully than many pages of well-reasoned text the dilemma we face when we try to differentiate between normal and disturbed behavior. Though some behaviors exhibited by emotionally disturbed children are so bizarre and unusual that we do not often find them in normal children, many behaviors are the same for the two groups.

## Handout A-2-b

### Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

#### Animals Teach Kids to Care

At Green Chimneys, students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders who have been referred by psychiatric hospitals treat injured and orphaned wildlife and care for farm animals. The students relate to the fact that most of the animals have been abused and feel unwanted. Dr. Samuel Ross, founder and director of Green Chimneys, explains that if a child who has been poorly nurtured himself can learn to nurture an animal, it becomes easier for him to relate to peers and adults. "Trust is established, and the child risks the human connection. The goodness of the child is unleashed."

See *People Weekly*, October 31, 1994, pp. 121-123.

#### A Child Called "It"

David Peltzer has written powerful books about the horrible physical and emotional abuse he suffered as a child. A caring substitute teacher recognized his pain and initiated procedures to have Dave removed from his home. Although he developed emotional and behavioral disorders from the abuse, he eventually overcame them. Dave has received commendations from Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton. He was also the only American who received the prestigious Outstanding Young Person of the World award in 1994. If you have not read his books, we recommend that you do so. The titles are *A Child Called "It": An Abused Child's Journey from Victim to Victor* (Health Communications, 1995) and *The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family* (Health Communications, 1997). The third book in the series, *A Man Called Dave*, might be published by the time you read this.

Vignettes taken from Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Shank, M., & Leal, D. (1999). *Student study guide to accompany Exceptional Lives, Special Education in Today's Schools*, 2nd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill

## Handout A-3

### MENTAL RETARDATION: ADAPTIVE SKILL AREAS

- ◆ **Communication**: Skills include the ability to comprehend and express information through symbolic behaviors (e.g., spoken word, written word . . . graphic symbols, sign language) or nonsymbolic behaviors (e.g., facial expression, body movement, touch, gesture).
- ◆ **Self-Care**: Skills involved in toileting, eating, dressing, hygiene, and grooming
- ◆ **Home-Living**: Skills related to functioning within a home, which include clothing care, housekeeping, property maintenance, food preparation and cooking, planning and budgeting for shopping, home safety, and daily scheduling.
- ◆ **Social**: Skills related to exchanges with other individuals.
- ◆ **Community Use**: Skills related to the appropriate use of community resources, including traveling in the community.
- ◆ **Self-Direction**: Skills related to making choices.
- ◆ **Health and Safety**: Skills related to maintenance of one's health in terms of eating; illness identification, treatment, and prevention; basic first aid; sexuality; physical fitness; basic safety considerations.
- ◆ **Functional Academics**: Cognitive abilities and skills related to learning at school that also have direct application to one's life.
- ◆ **Leisure**: The development of a variety of leisure and recreational interests (i.e. self-entertainment and interactional that reflect personal preferences and choices and, if the activity will be conducted in public, age and cultural norms.
- ◆ **Work**: Skills related to holding a part or full-time job or jobs in the community in terms of specific job skills, appropriate social behavior, and related work skills.

From *Mental Retardation: Definition Classification, and Systems of Supports*, by R. Luckasson, D.L. Coultieri, E.A. Polloway, S. Reiss, R.L. Schalock, M.E. Snell, D.M. Spitalnik, & J.A. Stark, 1992, Washington DC: American Association on Mental Retardation. Copyright 1992 by the American Association on Mental Retardation.

Taken from Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Shank, M., & Leal, D. (1999). Exceptional lives, special education in today's schools, 2nd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

## Handout A-5-a

### ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVE DISORDER (ADHD)

#### Calvin and Hobbes

Calvin, from the “Calvin and Hobbes” comic strip by Bill Watterson, exemplifies the combined type of ADHD. One minute Calvin is staring into space, oblivious to everything around him and daydreaming that he is fleeing awful bug beings from Zartron-9. The next, he has to face the principal for a comment he impulsively blurted out in class. He explains to the principal that the comment was “not an attitude, it’s a fact!” You can learn a great deal about ADHD from reading “Calvin and Hobbes”.

#### Now or Not Now?

When you are given an assignment at the beginning of the semester, how do you plan for completing it? According to Dave deBronkart, the tendency for people with ADHD is to think of tasks in only two ways: now or not now. With an extraordinary ability to finish things “all at once”, they can unexpectedly and creatively complete tasks in “a mad flurry of activity”. Others, seeing these remarkable results, chide the person with comments such as “See what you can do when you apply yourself!” It’s not a matter of will power or laziness, deBronkart contends. Instead, the problems is a lack of depth perception for the passage of time, resulting in an inability to perceive that the task deadlines are getting closer. Your students with ADHD will need to understand their misperception of time and how to work around it. See “The ADD Sense of Time” at <http://www.ruralnet.net/bobseay/debr.htm>.

#### An Awakening

Gary Roy worked 13 years for a college degree he never attained and held 128 jobs. Finally, a psychologist informed him that he had not “outgrown” the ADHD he had as a child, as he and his family had been told. Once Roy started taking Ritalin again as part of multimodal treatment, his life began to change. He obtained his ham-radio license and became a Civil Defense radio supervisor. Roy says, “Right after I started the treatment, I saw *Awakenings*. I cried and cried because that was how I felt, like I had awakened.” See “The Not So Young and Restless” by G. Cowley and J.C. Ramo (1993, July 26), *Newsweek*, pp. 48-49.

#### ADHD-Friendly Jobs

Making the transition from school to work is often challenging for people with ADHD. In school, they had clear assignments and deadlines. Many times, in the workplace, workers must set their own deadlines and perform with minimum direction. According to Kathleen Nadeau, and editor of *ADDvance*, ADHD-friendly jobs minimize paperwork, allow immediate response to short-term tasks, provide support and structure, emphasize the worker’s interest, allow variety and stimulation, have a comfortable stress level, and are supervised by an organized, supportive individual. See <http://www.addvance.com/article2/html>.

Vignettes taken from Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Shank, M., & Leal, D. (1999). *Student study guide to accompany Exceptional Lives, Special Education in Today’s Schools*, 2nd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

## **Handout A-5-b**

### **Case Study: Adolescent with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder**

Larry comes to Biology on time and deposits all his belongings on his desk. Then he roams around the room, joking with other students in a rough, rather physical way. Class starts and he makes it back to his desk. He hasn't found his homework in his bookbag when the class begins correcting the homework. He fusses as he takes out many wrinkled and dirty papers, depositing them on the floor. Finally, he finds the homework but by this time the class is done with the corrections. The teacher allows him to put his paper on her desk, and she goes on to give today's notes. Larry returns to his seat but can't find a pencil or clean piece of paper. He distracts three other students as he attempts to borrow paper and find a pencil. Then he gets up to sharpen the pencil, walking past the small animal cages on the side of the room. He stops to watch the snake for a few seconds. He makes it eventually to the pencil sharpener, sharpens his pencil, then calls out an answer to something the teacher is saying. The teacher asks him to sit down and raise his hand if he has something to say. He rolls his eyes, makes a silly remark, and stops to make comments to several students as he returns to his seat. He doesn't know what to write on his paper and asks if he can copy someone else's notes. The teacher reprimands him for interrupting class again so he puts his head down. His foot starts tapping while he is glancing around the room at the other students. Then his pencil starts tapping. The teacher allows students to go to their lab sites, and Larry hops up and runs right over. While the other students are getting out the materials, he's sitting on the lab counter, laughing and joking with students. His lab partners seem frustrated with him, tired of being the ones to be organized and repeating directions to him. They more or less get him his own set of materials so he can do his own thing and not ruin their experiment.

### **Questions**

1. What are the signals that Larry may be hyperactive (i.e. characteristics associated with ADHD?)
2. What could the teacher do to support Larry's organizational skills?
3. How could the teacher engage Larry in more on-task behavior?
4. How important are social skills for teens with ADHD? Explain.

## Handout B-2

### Indicators of Conduct Disorders and Delinquency Proneness

- ◆ Home supervision limited; lack of parental interest or involvement; only one parent in the home; home life characterized by disorganization; conflict between parents; emotional disturbance, criminal behavior, alcoholism, or drug abuse in one or both parents.
- ◆ Socioeconomic deprivation; qualifies for subsidized school lunch or breakfast programs; family receiving public assistance.
- ◆ Dislike of school problems with school authorities; truancy; history of detentions, suspensions; unexcused absences, class cuts; defiance of teachers; refusal to complete assignments.
- ◆ Difficulties in educational achievement; failure of one or more school subjects; reading below grade level; older than classmates because of grade retentions.
- ◆ Patterns of association with delinquent peers; gang involvement; early use of drugs or alcohol; minor police involvement.
- ◆ Early history of neurological dysfunction or learning disabilities; impulsive behavior patterns; below average to average intellectual ability.
- ◆ Emotional instability; erratic behavior patterns; easily angered; unable to accept responsibility; rigidly independent or overly conforming.

No single characteristic by itself is indicative of a conduct disorder or proneness to delinquent behavior; the more factors present, the greater the probability of chronic behavior disturbance.

(For further information see Gilliam & Scott, 1987; Huizinga, Loeber, Thornberry, & Cothorn, 2000; Rutherford, Quinn, Leone, Garfinkle, & Nelson, 2002)

## Handout B-3

ADULT LEARNING      The body of knowledge on the subject  
is just beginning to accumulate, but are there some  
truisms (we think)

# 30 things we know for sure about adult learning

By Ron and Susan Zemke

We don't know a lot about the mechanisms of adult learning. At least, not in the "What are the minimum- necessary and sufficient- conditions for effecting a permanent change in an adult's behavior?" sense of knowing.

In that, we're not alone. Dr. Malcolm Knowles came to much the same conclusion in *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. Eight years ago, he equated his efforts to summarize what was then known about adult learning to a trip up the Amazon: "It is a strange world that we are going to explore together, with lush growth of flora and fauna with exotic names (including fossils of extinct species) and teeming with savage tribes in raging battle. I have just made a casing-the-joint trip up the river myself, and I can tell you that my head is reeling." Today Knowles says, "The river is much tamer. We are beginning to understand what we do that works and why it works." But as we listen, we have the distinct impression that what our point man Knowles sees as tame travel can still be white-water rapids for the rest of us.

While there are hundreds of books and articles offering tips and tricks for teaching adults, the bulk of that knowledge is derived from three relatively limited spheres. The First is "My life and times in teaching," wherein one teacher/trainer of adults shares his or her career's accumulation of secrets with others. Though intriguing and interesting, this literature focuses more on teacher survival than anything else, and while we learn much about living, we learn relatively little about learning.

The second common source is the "Why adults decide to study" research. Here we learn some interesting, even fascinating, things about the conditions and incidents that motivate adults to engage in a "focused learning effort." But in most of this research, the adult seems assumed to be a learning machine who, once switched on, vacuums up knowledge and skill. It is more indicative than instructive, suggestive than substantive. A cynic would call this body of knowledge about adult learning a form of market research.

The third source is extrapolation from theory: both adult learning theory and research and that derived from work with children and non-human subjects. The adult learning theories in question are really holistic treatments of human nature: the Carl Rogers/Abraham Maslow sort of theory from which we can only infer, or guess at, rules of practice. "Would you rather learn from a lecture or a book?" or "On your own or with direction?" are interesting questions, but ones that beg the issue of results or learning outcomes. A trainee may prefer listening to lectures but learn best by practice and application exercises.

The non-adult theory and research is a broad lot-everything from child development studies to pigeon training. The tendency seems to be to draw guidance from the B. F. Skinner/behavior modification/programmed instruction, and the Albert Bandura/behavior modeling/social learning schools of thought. While both schools are generating research and results, they are still shorter on proven practices than pontification and speculation. No single theory, or set of theories, seems to have an arm-lock on understanding adults or helping us work effectively and efficiently with them.

Still and all, from a variety of sources there emerges a body of fairly reliable knowledge about adult learning-arbitrarily 30 points which lend themselves to three basic divisions:

- ◆ Things we know about adult learners and their motivation
- ◆ Things we know about designing curriculum for adults
- ◆ Things we know about working with adults in the classroom

These aren't be-all, end-all categories. They overlap more than just a little bit. But they help us understand what we are learning from others about adult learning.

### **Motivation to Learn**

Adult learners can't be threatened, coerced or tricked into learning something new. Birch rods and gold stars have minimum impact. Adults can be ordered into a classroom and prodded into a seat but they *cannot* be forced to learn. Though trainers are often faced with adults who have been sent to training, there are some insights to be garnered from the research on adults who seek out a structured learning experience on their own: something we all do at least twice a year, the research says. We begin our running tally from this base camp.

1. Adults seek out learning experiences in order to cope with specific life-change events. Marriage, a new job, a promotion, being fired, retiring, losing a loved one, and moving to a new city are examples.
2. The more life-change events an adult encounters, the more likely he or she is to seek out learning opportunities. Just as stress increases as life-change events accumulate, the motivation to cope with change through engagement in a learning experience increases. Since the people who most frequently seek out learning opportunities are people who have the most overall years of education. It is reasonable to guess that for many of us learning is a coping response to significant change.
3. The learning experiences adults seek out on their own are directly related—at least in their own perception—to the life-change events that triggered their seeking. Therefore, if 80% of the change being encountered is work related, then 80% of the learning experiences sought should be work related.
4. Adults are generally willing to engage in learning experiences before, after, or even during the actual life-change event. Once convinced that the change is a certainty, adults will engage in any learning that promises to help them cope with the transition.
5. Although adults have been found to engage in learning for a variety of reasons—job advancement, pleasure, love of learning and so on—it is equally true that for most adults learning is not its own reward. Adults who are motivated to seek out a learning experience do so primarily (80-90% of the time) because they have a use for the knowledge or skill being sought. Learning is a means to an end: not an end in itself.
6. Increasing or maintaining one's sense of self-esteem and pleasure are strong secondary motivators for engaging in learning experiences. Having a new skill or extending and enriching current knowledge can be both, depending on the individual's personal perceptions.

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The major contributors to what we know about adult motivation to learn have been Allen Tough, Carol Aslanian and Henry Brickell, Kjell Rubenson and Harry L Miller. One implication of their findings for the trainer is that there seem to be 'teachable moments' in the lives of adults. Their existence impacts the planning and scheduling of training. As a recent study by the management development group of one large manufacturer concluded, "Newly promoted supervisors and managers must receive training as nearly concurrent with promotions and changes in responsibilities as possible. The longer such training is delayed, the less impact it appears to have on actual job performance."

## Curriculum design

One developing research-based concept that seems likely to have an impact on our view and practice of adult training and development is the concept of “fluid” versus “crystallized” intelligence. P. B. Catell's research on lifelong-intellectual development suggests there are two distinct kinds of intelligence that show distinct patterns of age-related development, but which function in complementary fashion. Fluid intellect tends to be what we once called innate intelligence; fluid intelligence has to do with the ability to store strings of numbers and facts in short-term memory, react quickly, see spatial relations and do abstract reasoning. Crystallized intelligence is the part of intellectual functioning we have always taken to be a product of knowledge acquisition and experience. It is related to vocabulary, general information, conceptual knowledge, judgment and concrete reasoning.

Historically, many societies have equated youth with the ability to insatiably acquire information and age with the ability to wisely use information. Catell's research suggests this is true- that wisdom is, in fact, a separate intellectual function that develops as we grow older. Which leads to some curriculum development implications of this two-facet intellect concept:

7. Adult learners tend to be less interested in, and enthralled by, survey courses. They tend to prefer single-concept, single-theory courses that focus heavily on the application of the concept to relevant problems. This tendency increases with age.
8. Adults need to be able to integrate new ideas with what they already know if they are going to keep- and use- the new information.
9. Information that conflicts sharply with what is already held to be true, and thus forces a re-evaluation of the old material, is integrated more slowly.
10. Information that has little “conceptual overlap” with what is already known is acquired slowly.
11. Fast-paced, complex or unusual learning tasks interfere with the learning of the concepts or data they are intended to teach or illustrate.
12. Adults tend to compensate for being slower in some psychomotor learning tasks by being more accurate and making fewer trial-and-error ventures.
13. Adults tend to take errors personally, and are more likely to let them affect self esteem. Therefore, they tend to apply tried-and-true solutions and take fewer risks. There is even evidence that adults will misinterpret feedback and “mistake” errors for positive confirmation.

Dr. K. Patricia Cross, author of *Adults as Learners* (date), sees four global implications for designing adult curriculum in Catell's work. “First, the presentation of new information should be meaningful, and it should include aids that help the learner organize it and relate it to previously stored information. Second, it should be presented at a pace that permits mastery. Third, presentation of one idea at a time and minimization of competing intellectual demands should aid comprehension. Finally, frequent summarization should facilitate retention and recall.”

A second neat new idea that impacts curriculum design is the concept of adult developmental stages. Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and others have seen children as passing through phases and stages for some time. It is only recently, thanks to Gail Sheehy, Roger Gould, Daniel Levinson and others, that we've come to acknowledge that there are also adult growth stages. A subset of this concept is the idea that not only do adults' needs and interests continually change, but their values also continue to grow and change. For that insight, we can thank Clare W. Graves and his pioneering work in value analysis. The implications, though still formative:

14. The curriculum designer must know whether the concepts and ideas will be in concert or in conflict with learner and organizational values. As trainers at AT&T have learned, moving from a service to a sales philosophy requires more than a change in words and titles. It requires a change in the way people think and value.

15. Programs need to be designed to accept viewpoints from people in different life stages and with different value “sets.”
16. A concept needs to be “anchored” or explained from more than one value set and appeal to more than one developmental life stage.

A final set of curriculum design guides comes from the research on learning media preference. Researchers have for years been asking students if they preferred learning XYZ from a book, a movie experience, or another person. Though there are limitations to the value of this sort of data, enough of it is accumulating to be of some help to the design effort.

17. Adults prefer self-directed and self-designed learning projects 7 to 1 over group-learning experiences led by a professional. Furthermore, the adult learner often selects more than one media for the design. Reading and talking to a qualified peer are frequently cited as good resources. The desire to control pace and start/stop time strongly affect the self-directed preference.
18. Non-human media such as books, programmed instruction and television have become popular in recent years. One piece of research found them very influential of the way adults plan self-directed learning projects.
19. Regardless of media, straightforward how-to is the preferred content orientation. As many as 80% of the polled adults in one study cited the need for applications and how-to information as the primary motivation for undergoing a learning project.
20. Self-direction does *not* mean isolation. In fact, studies of self-directed learning show self-directed projects involve an average of 10 other people as resources, guides, encouragers and the like. The incompetence or inadequacy of these same people is often rated as a primary frustration. But even for the self-professed, self-directed learner, lectures and short seminars get positive ratings, especially when these events give the learner face-to-face, one-to-one access to an expert.

Apparently, the adult learner is a very efficiency-minded individual. Allen Tough suggests that the typical adult learner asks, "What is the cheapest, easiest, fastest way for me to learn to do *that*?" and then independently proceeds along this self-determined route. An obvious tip for the trainer is that the adult trainee has to have a hand in shaping the curriculum of the program.

### **In the classroom**

We seem to know the least about helping the adult maximize the classroom experience. There are master performers in our trade who gladly pass along their favorite tips and tricks, but as Marshall McLuhan observed, “We don't know who discovered water but we can be pretty sure it wasn't a fish.” In other words, the master performer is often a poor judge of how one becomes a master performer. There certainly are volumes of opinion and suggestion, but by-and-large they rest more on theory than hard data. Ironically, some of the strongest data comes from survey studies or what turns off adults in the classroom. Likewise, there is a nicely developing body of literature on what makes for good and bad meetings that has implications for training:

21. The learning environment must be physically and psychologically comfortable. Adults report that long periods of interminable sitting and the absence of practice opportunities are high on the irritation scale.
22. Adults have something real to lose in a classroom situation. Self-esteem and ego are on the line when they are asked to risk trying a new behavior in front of peers and cohorts. Bad experiences in traditional education, feelings about authority and the preoccupation with events outside the

classroom all affect in-class experience. These and other influencing factors are carried into class with the learners as surely as are their gold Cross pens and lined yellow pads.

23. Adults have expectations, and it is critical to take time up front to clarify and articulate all expectations before getting into content. Both trainees and the instructor/facilitator need to state their expectations. When they are at variance, the problem should be acknowledged and a resolution negotiated. In any case, the instructor can assume responsibility only for his or her own expectations, not for that of trainees.
24. Adults bring a great deal of life experience into the classroom, an invaluable asset to be acknowledged, tapped and used. Adults can learn well-and much-from dialogue with respected peers.
25. Instructors who have a tendency to hold forth rather than facilitate can hold that tendency in check or compensate for it by concentrating on the use of open-ended questions to draw out relevant trainee knowledge and experience.
26. New knowledge has to be integrated with previous knowledge: that means active learner participation. Since only learners can tell us how the new fits or fails to fit with the old, we have to ask them. Just as the learner is dependent on us for confirming feedback on skill practice we are dependent on the learner for feedback about our curriculum and in-class performance.
27. The key to the instructor role is control. The instructor must balance the presentation of new material, debate and discussion, sharing of relevant trainee experiences, and the clock. Ironically, we seem best able to establish control when we risk giving it up. When we shelve our egos and stifle the tendency to be threatened by challenge to our plans and methods, we gain the kind of facilitative control we seem to need to effect adult learning.
28. The instructor has to protect minority opinion, keep disagreements civil and unheated, make connections between various opinions and ideas, and keep reminding the group of the variety of potential solutions to the problem. Just as in a good problem-solving meeting, the instructor is less advocate than orchestrator.
29. Integration of new knowledge and skill requires transition time and focused effort. Working on applications to specific back-on-the-job problems helps with the transfer. Action plans, accountability strategies and follow-up training all increase the likelihood of the transfer. Involving the trainees' supervisor in pre-/post-course activities helps with both in-class focus and transfer.
30. Learning and teaching theories function better as a resource than as a Rosetta stone. The four currently influential theories- humanistic, behavioral, cognitive and developmental- all offer valuable guidance when matched with an appropriate learning task. A skill-training task can draw much from the behavioral approach, for example, while personal growth-centered subjects seem to draw gainfully from humanistic concepts. The trainer or adults needs to take an eclectic rather than a single theory-based approach to developing strategies and procedures.

### **To be continued**

Study of the adult as a special species of learner is a relatively new phenomenon. We can expect the next five years to eclipse the last fifty in terms of hard data production on adult learning. For now, however, we must recognize that adults want their learning to be problem-centered, personalized and accepting of their need for self-direction and personal responsibility. When you think of it, that's quite a lot to work with right there.

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