



Center for Learning and Innovation in Medical Education ([CLIME](#)).

All interested in growing as educators in the health professions welcome!

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Developed in collaboration with the UW School of Medicine Academic & Learning Technologies ([SOMALT](#)) for the Innovations in Curriculum Design & Delivery workgroup.

WHAT IS ADULT LEARNING THEORY?

Adult learning theory is the art and science of helping adults learn. It embodies the idea of learner-focused education, and expects a higher degree of learner maturity and autonomy. There is reduced emphasis on teacher control and top-down content delivery.

ADULT LEARNING THEORY IN ACTION!

1. Be transparent and communicate about your course design and plans. Share goals and objectives in advance of each session. Give learners a preview of what they will learn, and, to increase motivation, tell them how they will use the content now or in the future.
2. Encourage active learning so that students actively participate in their learning by doing rather than through top down delivery styles like lectures. This helps students progress from dependent to self-directed learners.
3. Support learners when they express interest in knowing more about a certain topic, even if not originally planned.
4. Purposefully integrate into your sessions and assignments multiple opportunities for learners to reflect on their past experience and compare it with their new knowledge.
5. Promote the immediate application of knowledge with assignments or tasks that enable them to relate their new knowledge to their existing knowledge frameworks.
6. Provide activities that prompt learners to tie what they are learning back to their own lives and work.

SUMMARY

1. Engage learners with information that is relevant, timely, and useful.
2. Draw upon prior learner experience.
3. Motivate intrinsic learning through real-world experience.
4. Develop an engaging and safe learning experience.
5. Participate in a bidirectional feedback process with learners.
6. Embrace opportunities for learners to engage with the material, and each other.