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Training of Trainers Workshop on Human Development

Training Technique -1A
Concept of Andragogy

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ANDRAGOGY

Learning Outcomes:-

Knowledge acquired through this module will allow the participants to:-

- Identify basic characteristics of adult learners.
- Explain implications of Principles of Adult Learning in Training

We are aware of learning in general. But in a training situation, we deal with the learning of adults. It is different from the learning process of the children and teens. Most of the training institutions begin with the initial dominance of the teachers. They are guided by Pedagogy, the concept of child learning. In Pedagogic model, the teacher assumes responsibility for making decisions about what will be learned, and when it will be learned. The teacher directs learning based on the banking concept of education; that is the learner is looked upon as an empty vessel to be filled by the teacher with knowledge. This is not effective for adults. Malcom Knowles, in his book *The Adult Learner: A neglected species* presented a comprehensive adult learning theory. There is now an emerging theory of learning concerned with the technology of adult learning. This technology of adult learning has been given the name 'Andragogy'. The word is derived from the Greek word 'ANDRA' (meaning 'man'). Andragogy is therefore the art and science of helping adults to learn.

Malcom Knowles identified the following characteristics of adult learners:

Adults do not learn in the same way as children. This is because:

Adults are autonomous and self -directed.

Children enter this world in a condition of complete dependency. Their every need must be taken care of by someone else. The first image, children get of them is that of a dependent personality whose life the adult world manages for them.

This self-concept of dependency is encouraged and reinforced by the adult world. In fact, society defines the normal role of children as that of learners; this is their full-time occupation, the source of rewards and self-fulfilment. On the whole, this occupation, whether it is termed that of a pupil, student, or learner, requires a more or less passive role of receiving and storing information chosen by adults.

As children's self-identity begins to take shape, they begin to see themselves as having the capacity to start deciding by them. This increases as they become more mature and experienced, leading towards greater self-direction. However, something significant happens to the self-concept when they consider themselves as adult. The adult acquires a new status, in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. She or he becomes essentially self-directing, and able to

decide and face the consequences. In fact, the point at which a person becomes an adult, psychologically, is that point at which he perceives himself to be wholly self-directing.

- **Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge** that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. They need to connect learning to this knowledge/ experience base
- **Adults are relevancy-oriented.** They are now performers. They see their normal role in society no longer as a full-time learner. They see themselves increasingly as a producer or doer. Their chief sources of self-fulfilment are now performance as a worker, a parent etc. They always see a reason for doing anything.
- **Adults are goal-oriented.** Unlike children, adults set their goal in their activities. They are not interested in spending their time in any activity which will not help them to achieve something specific. They usually know what goal they want to attain. They, therefore, appreciate an activity where there are clearly defined elements.
- **Adults are practical.** They are more concerned about improving their performance in their job. They may not be interested in knowledge for its own sake. Trainers must tell participants explicitly how the lesson will be useful to them on the job.
- As do all learners, adults need to be shown respect. Trainers must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom. These adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class.

IMPLICATIONS OF PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING IN TRAINING

Adults are autonomous and self -directed

Therefore, adults have a need to be treated with respect, to make their own decisions, and to be seen and treated as unique individuals. They tend to avoid, resist and resent, situations in which they are treated like children - being told what to do, and being put in embarrassing situations. Adults are likely to resist learning conditions that conflict with their self-concept.

Adults need to be free to direct themselves. Their trainer must actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators for them. They have to be sure to act as facilitators, guiding participants to their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts. Adult participants should be involved in the planning and design of the training course developed for them.

Often there is another factor in the self-concept of adults that affect their role as

learners. They may carry from earlier school life the perception that they are, or are not, clever. This recollection of previous learning experiences may be so strong that it serves as a serious barrier to becoming fully involved in learning activities. Once a trainer puts adult learners into dependent roles, repeating in sense earlier school-based experiences, she or he is likely to face a rising resistance and resentment to the learning event created.

Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge

- Learners should be able to relate what is being studied to their personal/professional experiences.

If you ask children who they are, they are likely to identify themselves in terms of who their parents are, where they live and what school they attend. Their self-identity is largely derived from external sources.

A somewhat modified response would be obtained from a person in their early twenties; the identification would be concerned with academic attainment, career prospects, outside interests and possibly an employer.

- But to adults, particularly ones in middle age, their experience is themselves. They define who they are and establish their self-identity based on their accumulation of a unique set of experiences. So, if you ask adults who they are, they are likely to identify themselves with their occupation, where they have worked, travelled, and what their training and experience has equipped them to do, and what their achievements have been.

- Because adults define themselves largely by their experience, they have a deep investment in its value. So when they find themselves in a situation where their experience is not being used, or its worth minimised, it is not just the experience that is being rejected -they feel rejected as a person.

These differences in experience between adolescents and younger and older adults have three consequences for learning:

- a) Some adults have more to contribute to the learning than others; for most kinds of learning they are themselves a rich source.
- b) Adults - and, again, some more than others - have a rich foundation of experience with which they will consider new experiences and their implications for work.
- c) Adults have acquired many fixed habits and patterns of thought and, therefore, possibly less open-minded.

Adults are relevancy-oriented.

Adult must see a reason for learning. Learners should know why they are studying something. If they find that the present learning is not at all relevant to their work, they will

withdraw themselves from the learning process. So, learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them. This means, also, that theories and concepts must be related to a setting familiar to participants. This need can be fulfilled by letting participants choose projects that reflect their own interest. All the activities in training should be developed on the basis of their work or job assigned to them in their organisation.

Adults are goal-oriented.

So they will be interested to know their achievement if they participate in a training course. A training course having clearly defined aims and objectives of the training will attract an adult learner if they find that it is relevant to his performance. This will motivate learners and make them ready to learn. Participants must be shown how this training course in general and the session in particular will help them attain their goals. This classification of goals and course objectives must be done early in the course.

Adults are practical.

Adults are more concerned with their performance. Instruction should be task-oriented, and it should take into account the wide range of different backgrounds of learners. They are primarily concerned with the problem they are facing in their job situation. Adult learners are generally more interested in the solution of the problem rather than the content of it. So, instruction in training should be problem-centred rather than content-oriented.

In addition, adult learners need specific knowledge of their learning results (*feedback*). Feedback must be specific, not general. Participants must also see a *reward* for learning. The reward does not necessarily have to be monetary; it can be simply a demonstration of benefits to be realized from learning the material. Finally, the participant must be **interested** in the subject. Interest is directly related to reward. Adults must see the benefit of learning in order to motivate them to learn the subject.

In training the following issues are needed to be considered to have effective result:

- * The physical environment should be one in which adults feel at ease, with furnishings that are comfortable and informal.
- * The psychological climate should be one that causes adults to feel accepted, respected and supported.
- * There should be a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation between the trainer and the learners, in which there is freedom of expression without fear of ridicule. A person feels more 'adult' in an atmosphere that is friendly and informal.
- * The behaviour of the trainer probably influences the learning more than any other single factor. The trainer conveys in many ways his or her attitude of interest and respect for

learners. The trainer, who takes time and trouble to get to know the learners individually and calls them by their first names, is promoting the right sort of atmosphere.

- * Very important is the willingness to listen, respect, and respond to views expressed by learners.
- * Because adults are themselves a rich source for learning, greater emphasis can be placed on techniques that use their experience. Training methods such as group discussions, case studies, in-tray exercises, and action learning, promote participation in a learner-centred environment.
- * Assist the learners to define their learning needs.
- * Design learning to suit an individual learner's entry behaviour
- * Help the learner to understand how to use learning resources, including the experience of sharing their learning experiences with others.
- * In selection of learning method, emphasise on experimental and participative training methods. This has been discussed in detail subsequently.
- * Assist learners to assume increasing responsibility for planning their own learning.
- * Reinforce the self-concept of the learner to encourage achievement of objectives.
- * Encourage the use of formative assessment techniques, including free exchange of feedback.