

## Follow-up Discussion

Professional Development Monthly Advisor and Planner (PDMAP)

### ***Adult Learning and Adult Development***

September/October 2011

#### Discussion Questions:

1. The Zemke authors identify 30 things known about adult learning. The first four items in the "Motivation to Learn" section focus on life-changing events as key motivators for adults to seek additional education. What types of life-changing events are your current students experiencing and how did you learn about them? How do you assure that your instruction provides the skills needed for the next stage of your learners' lives?
2. The Rossman Adult Learning Inventory (RALI) includes many items that attribute the slower pace of adult learning to physical factors of aging. In contrast, items in the Curriculum Design section of the Zemke article attribute this slower pace to psycho-social factors such as a reluctance to accept new information if it contradicts long-held beliefs and values, a reluctance to take risks, and a need to guard self-esteem. How do you take these two types of factors into consideration when instructing your adult learners? What strategies have you used successfully?
3. The Lipnevich article on adult literacy students' global and academic self esteem contradicts the conventional wisdom that adult learners suffer from low self esteem that needs to be "cured" during the course of instruction. She provides three possible explanations: 1) adults cope with negative outcomes in one domain of their lives by focusing on their achievements in other, unrelated domains; 2) adults who enroll in literacy programs arrive with a belief that they can succeed (otherwise they would not enroll); 3) individuals' self-perception is based in part on comparisons with others in their peer group – i.e. similarly placed adult learners. How does this new knowledge influence your previous beliefs about adult learners and self-esteem?
4. What have you noticed among your learners about their attendance patterns? Do they "stop out" or "drop out"? How does this Belzer article

echo the conclusions of the Lipnevich article? How do you handle your own feelings when a learner stops attending instruction? What strategies does your program have in place to facilitate adult learners' return to the program after a period of stopping out?

5. The Adult Development Research study identified three ways of knowing among adults. Instrumental knowers tend toward a concrete, external, and transactive orientation to the world; Socializing knowers identify themselves through their relation to other persons or ideas; and Self-Authoring knowers take responsibility for and ownership of their own internal authority. These three ways of knowing are not correlated with age, culture, or social role. By being aware of these three "types of knowing" are you able to understand your current students in a new way? What materials and instructional strategies can you use facilitate learning for these three different types of learners?
  
6. Gerald Grow's Staged Self-Directed Learning Model describes four stages of self-direction: dependent, interested, involved, and self-directed. It further posits three principles: 1) students have different abilities to be self-directed in their learning; 2) teachers must adapt their methods in response, lest mismatches drive students away; 3) self-direction can be taught. Are you able to identify or intuit the stages in which your learners currently reside? What instructional strategies do you use facilitate learning for these students with different stages of self-direction?
  
7. The resources in this PD MAP present many different ways of looking at adult development. Are you, as a teacher, resonating with one model more than another? Or will you draw a few concepts from each of the different perspectives as you move further in your teaching practice?