What is Learning? Experience, Reflection, Practice, and Application

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What is Learning? Experience, Reflection, Practice, and Application

Over the course of history, teachers have agonized about what learning strategies are best for teaching students. According to Knowles (1980), there is the pedagogical model, which is the art and science of teaching children. Then there is andragogy model, which Knowles (1980) originally defined as the art and science of helping adults learn. Many teachers, and eventually Knowles, realized that the andragogy model did not always pertain just to adults but also to children. Knowles (1980) asserts, “As I see it, whenever a pedagogical assumption is the realistic one, then pedagogical strategies are appropriate, regardless of the age of the learner—and vice versa” (p. 43). The pedagogical model allows for the transmission of knowledge and skills to students; however, the adult students often need more subsidence to their learning. Knowles (1980) stated “many teachers frequently found adult learners to be resistant to the strategies that pedagogy prescribed, including fact-laden lectures, assigned readings, drills, quizzes, rote memorizing, and examinations. Adults appear to want something more than this, and drop-out rates were high” (p. 40). Even though teachers use both the pedagogical and the andragogical models with adults—the andragogy model is usually more effective and preferred for teaching adults. Knowles (1980) points out that the andragogy model allows adults to move away from being a dependent learner to be more of a self-directed learner.

Whether the student is a child or an adult the basic definition of learning for the pedagogical model is the process of gaining knowledge or skills. In the andragogical model, the difference between the audiences is what the learners understand or what they bring to the learning experience. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) write that the resource of highest value in adult education is the learner’s experience. Since learners vary in experience, they will
likely vary in their interpretation of learning experiences. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) point out the following core set of six learning principles for learning experiences where adults:

1. recognize the necessity to learn something before starting to learn it.
2. accept the responsibility for their own decisions.
3. enter a learning situation with prior experience that children do not always have.
4. acknowledge that they learn things eagerly, which they must know and apply to cope effectively with real-life situations.
5. realize they are life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning.
6. respond to some external motivators (i.e., better jobs, higher salaries, promotions).

These six principles relate well to my definition of adult learning, which is the process by which the learner experiences, reflects, practices, and then applies learning to a new problem, situation, or experience. Knowles (1980) suggests that adults in a work situation would want to learn skills associated with their job. As adults recognize the need to learn they may initiate the process of learning experiences and tend to offer personal experiences that raise the level of reflection in the learning. Then as they practice the learning skills or knowledge in a safe learning environment, the student’s experience a higher level of accomplishment. As a result, the learners may then feel more confident to apply the new knowledge or skills in the actual work environment. Knowles (1980) proposes, “In the orientation to learning adults see education as a process of developing increased competence to achieve their full potential in life. They want to be able to apply whatever knowledge and skill they gain today to living more effectively tomorrow. Accordingly, organizing learning experiences around competency-
development categories may help adults learn better. He suggests many learners are performance-centered in their orientation to learning” (p. 44).

Since many adults learn best when the learning pertains to their situation—it is important that the learning is relevant to the learner. Then when the student wants or needs to learn a new skill, they may remember the learning experience better and can reflect, practice, and then apply what is learned. For example, Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) suggest, “adults anticipate various desires or outcomes from learning such as satisfying a curiosity, enjoying the content itself, enjoying practicing a skill, or delighting in the activity of learning. Other long-term outcomes are producing something, imparting knowledge or skill to others, understanding what will happen in some future situation” (p. 64-69).

The Te Kete Ipurangi Online Learning Center (2003) recommends that we use learning goals that are appropriate to the each student to meet his or her needs. Some examples are:

- Observe the learner’s behavior
- Assess the students, formally or informally, to determine their current knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- Discuss issues with learner’s and ask them questions, as they will learn more readily when given an opportunity to respond

Tailoring learning to meet students’ needs may make the experiences more memorable. In adult learning, if the teacher does not identify the needs of the students, the students are less likely to have a good learning experience or even learn at all. Therefore, assessing the needs of the learner is an important step to meet the learner’s needs. One of the benefits of determining and meeting the learner’s needs is that the student may be more motivated to learn.
Lieb (1991) explains there are at least six factors that serve as sources of motivation for adult learning:

- Social relationships: to make new friends, to meet a need for associations and friendships
- External expectations: to comply with instructions from someone else to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of someone with formal authority
- Social welfare: to improve ability to serve humankind, to prepare for service to the community, and to improve ability to participate in community work
- Personal advancement: to achieve higher status in a job, to secure professional advancement, and to stay abreast of competitors
- Escape/Stimulation: to relieve boredom, to provide a break in the routine of home or work, and to provide a contrast to other exacting details of life
- Cognitive interest: to learn for the sake of learning, to seek knowledge for its own sake, and to satisfy an inquiring mind

When adults feel motivated to learn, the learning is more beneficial to them. In addition, when adults feel the learning is relevant, it is easier for them to stay interested or engaged in the learning. Personally, I can be motivated to learn when the knowledge I obtain will help me in my work or personal life. When I know that the learning will benefit me—I am able to get more out of the learning process and apply it right away.

Lieb’s motivators for learning are relevant to how I stay motivated to learn. If I have a reason to learn—I am more determined to learn and better able to retain the learning.

Wlodkowski (1999) tells us that motivational strategies by instructors enhance a learner’s motivation to learn. He then says that the motivational strategy contributes to stimulating or
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creating a motivational condition: a mental/emotional state of being in which the learner is desirous of information, knowledge, insight, and skill. In other words, a teacher’s motivational strategy may draw out the learners’ curiosity to continue to stay engaged in the process of acquiring that knowledge. Therefore, if instructors are to teach adults effectively, they need to understand how adults learn and how adults are motivated.

Malcolm Knowles principles are the basis for what adult learning has become today. One point that he makes is that adults need to have an investment in the learning for it to be effective. The effectiveness of the learning affects the learner’s experience with the learning as well as draws on the learner’s experience, which then affects the quality of the learning. Dewey (1938) argues there are two factors that explain the nature of the learner’s experience:

- continuity (that all experiences are carried forward and influence future experiences)
- interaction (present experiences arise out of the relationship between the situation and the individual’s stored past)

Therefore, as I reflect on what a learning experience is for me, I ask, “what do I want to know”; “where am I going to learn it”; “how am I going to learn it”; and “how am I going to apply it”. All of these questions add up to a rich learning experience for me as an adult learner. Then the knowledge that I walk away with from the learning experience is not only what I have learned, but also how I can apply this knowledge and experience to other situations.

**Observation Questions**

The overall purpose of my observation was to collect data on how Scott Switzer taught adults in his Managing Instructional Development class. After reading the syllabus for the class, I determined that I would collect the following data during the observation:
1. What was the physical setting?

2. What were the learner’s characteristics, such as, abilities, prior knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and socio-economic statuses?

3. What activities were delivered?

4. What messages were conveyed?

5. What interactions happened between the teacher and the learners?

6. What was the quality of the delivered activities?

7. What was the quality of the conveyed messages?

8. What other activities or events occurred as I observed the class?

**Methods**

I used a mixed-method approach to gather the data for my observation questions. I felt that the following strategies would be the most efficient and effective methods for enhancing my observation experience:

- Observation
- Student survey
- Teacher email interview
- Published literature review

**Observations**

I observed the Managing Instructional Development class during the second, third and fifth sessions to gather data on how Scott Switzer taught his class and how the learners reacted to his teaching methods. The topics taught in the Managing Instructional Development class gives students the knowledge and skills to manage a corporate training development project. The teacher, Scott Switzer is a Systems Training Engineer with BAE Systems, Inc. in Colorado
Springs, CO. In addition to pursuing a Ph.D. in the EDLI program, he is an occasional Learning Consultant in the Center for Teaching & Learning at the University of Colorado – Colorado Springs (UCCS). Scott currently holds a Master of Arts in Education from UCCS and a Bachelor of Science in Communication from Ohio University. Over the past eight years, he has been a Lecturer in the Master’s program in Education (Educational Technology emphasis) at UCCS, and has been a presenter at a variety of professional conferences and seminars. His primary research interests are in the areas of instructional design and eLearning development and he is very interested in higher education faculty development programs, particularly as they relate to creating more effective online and hybrid learning environments. The classes I observed will help me analyze how Switzer taught the adult learners in his class.

**Student Survey**

I conducted one online survey. I created the online survey by using the Rformation 21st Limited or rform.com survey website at [http://www.my3q.com/](http://www.my3q.com/). The survey helped me to get additional information about the learner’s responses to how Switzer was teaching the class. In addition, some of the insight I gained from the survey helped me to analyze the strategies Switzer used in the class.

**Teacher Email Interview**

I conducted one interview by email with Switzer to help gain insight on the methods he used to teach the class. I also obtained his views on best practices for teaching adult learners.

**Published Literature Review**

I reviewed published literature in this field, and gathered data about many of my proposed observation questions. I examined many different techniques of observation and ways of analyzing the dynamics in the classroom. I found that there are many theories on how adults
learn but many of them have similar ideas and various parts of the theories fit well with my own definition of adult learning. The reviewed published literature is quoted throughout my paper and all the resources that I found and used are located in the references section at the end of my paper.

Observation Findings

What was the physical setting?

The physical setting is very important to the learning experience. Learners should feel comfortable in the learning environment and not feel threatened. Huiett (2001) states learners need an environment that is both psychologically and emotionally, as well as physically, non-threatening. The environment created by Switzer worked well for the way he taught the class. Switzer divided the class into four teams and each team sat at their own table. The team arrangement gave the learners individual team time, as well as, time for the whole class to meet together when required. Switzer moved about the room either teaching the class as a whole, or individually meeting with the teams at their tables. The temperature in the class was cool and some learners complained. However, most learners do not notice the coolness since the group discussions and activities are lively.

What were the learner’s characteristics, such as, abilities, prior knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and socio-economic statuses?

Knowing the learners’ characteristics is very important to the teacher when they are trying to determine the teaching method for the class. However, teachers may find it difficult to define adult learner characteristics for each adult learner because each one is different. Polson (1993) stated that there is no universal statement about adult learners but it is possible to identify some general attributes, such as adults are:
• Engaged in multiple roles which impacts both the time and the energy the adult learner can devote to learning. The multiple roles include work, home, community, and school activities.

• More life experience from adults provides a rich resource for learning and a foundation upon which to build new knowledge enabling adults to apply what they are learning in class to their own life experiences.

• Varied developmental tasks for adults show their diversity. At any given time, an adult learner can be moving in, moving through, or moving out of many different life transitions.

I observed that all the learners’ in this class were engaged in multiple roles. Each learner works, has a family or home life and takes at least two classes at school. In addition, I observed that the learners had extensive life experience with which to draw upon for the role-play activities. The role-play method was one of the teacher’s strategies for conducting the class. Each learner brought various project skills to the class and their team that they applied to the project management activities. The last thing I observed for learner characteristics was that each of the learners was in a different place in their lives. Some learners were just starting new jobs, some learners were looking for jobs, and other learners were working at jobs they had held for many years.

**What activities were delivered?**

As I observed the class, one of Switzer’s teaching methods for activities was facilitation. The activities that he presented aligned well with the objectives he set in the syllabus. Switzer presented the learners with an opportunity for an authentic field experience within the confines of the classroom. Christensen (1995) defines authentic learning as “Learning presented to
students with problem-solving activities that incorporate authentic, real-life questions and issues in a format that encourages collaborative effort, dialogue with informed expert sources, and generalization to broader ideas and application.” The students worked in teams and had to accept a great deal of responsibility for their individual learning. In an interview with Switzer, he stated:

“The class was developed as the product of a lot of thinking about the types of skills graduating instructional designers will need in the jobs that they are pursuing. I feel it is important for learners to have a somewhat realistic experience of what it is like to respond to an RFP, work with clients, and struggle through some of the decisions that they will likely be struggling through in the future, but in a low threat environment. I think there are a number of hard skills (project management, resource / cost estimation, etc.) that are valuable to be successful, as well as a number of soft skills (maintaining effective communication with clients, dealing with difficult people, exercising creativity in the face of adversity, etc.) that are no less valuable. My goal was to create a non-traditional instructional opportunity that allowed learners to develop these skills in an environment that supported their growth as learners.”

Switzer implemented role-playing, and question and answer activities in the classes I observed. The learners had the chance to simulate a real-life project scenario as well as debrief afterwards in the question and answer activities. The learners performed all activities associated with creating a project plan and then presented it to the client, played by Switzer. Many of the learners stated that this approach was very different from the traditional teaching that most of their other classes had been like so far in their graduate program.
**What messages were conveyed?**

Sometimes, the messages that the teacher conveys in class plays a big part in whether the student engages in the learning, but it is the mutual sharing that seems to be most meaningful to all involved. Palmer says, “I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy. When my students and I discover un-chartered territory to explore, when the pathway out of a thicket opens up before us, when our experience is illuminated by the lighting-life of the mind—then teaching is the finest work I know” (p. 1). There are many types of learning, a few of types are knowledge-based, skill-based, authentic, or experiential. Knowles (1980) said that traditional pedagogical teachers transfer knowledge or skills to learners, but that adult learners found that style insufficient. The authentic or experiential learning methods may give the learner a more lasting and rewarding learning experience. Edmunds, Lowe, Murray, and Seymour (1999) convey, “In adult education there is a greater emphasis on the use of experiential learning techniques (discussion methods, case studies, problem-solving exercises) that tap into the accumulated knowledge and skills of the learners. Then techniques such as simulation exercises and field experience provide learners with experiences from which they can learn by analyzing them. These experiences expand and refine prior knowledge by connecting it to new learning, making the instruction relevant to important issues and tasks in the adults’ lives.” The message from Switzer is that he is there to help and support the learners and that the students need to let him know how to keep the content relevant for their needs. Switzer provided support materials or answers to questions the learners had about the project process. Rogers and Freiberg (1994) feel that all human beings have a natural propensity to learn and that the teacher facilitates that learning. They then gave the following methods for facilitating learning:

1. Set a positive climate
2. Clarify the purpose of the learner
3. Organize and make available learning resources
4. Balance intellectual and emotional components of learning
5. Share feelings and thoughts with learners

Throughout the classes that I observed, Switzer followed all the previous methods while facilitating his class.

What interactions happened between the teacher and the learners?

Good interaction between the teacher and the learner is essential for a productive learning experience. Adult learners need to feel valued and comfortable in the learning setting. If the teacher does a good job of providing the learners with a significant learning experience then the students can reflect on the experience and they will be able to apply the learning. Saddington (2004) described how David Kolb developed a model of experiential learning. Saddington also described how Kolb stated that the definition of experiential learning is the terms of a learning model that begins with the experience followed by reflection, discussion, analysis and evaluation of the experience. The assumption is that we seldom learn from experience unless we assess the experience, assigning our own meaning in terms of our own goals, aims, ambitions and expectations.

All of the nights that I observed the class Switzer and the students role-played the client and contractor relationship. Switzer divided the students into four teams of three and each team presented its project to Switzer who was playing the part of the client. During these presentations, the students participated in the role-play when it was their turn to present and otherwise they just observed the other teams. This allowed the students to learn from their presentation as well as from their classmate’s presentations. After each presentation, the teacher
and the learners debriefed with question and answer sessions. This was the time the learners
shared what went wrong and what went right in the presentations. The debrief sessions provided
feedback to all the teams as well as each team self-analyzed their own performance. The teacher
also gave positive feedback and constructive criticism for items that needed to be improved. The
debrief sessions became lively at times, as some learners did not like Switzer’s authentic style of
teaching. Felder says, “What a student learns in a class is determined by what the student
already knows and prior preparation, but also by the compatibility of the student’s attributes as a
learner and the instructors teaching style.”

**What was the quality of the delivered activities?**

The quality of the activities in which the students engages may be the defining moment
of the learning experience for the student. Switzer facilitated many activities that engaged the
learners. All three nights that I observed, the learners practiced their presentations for the
projects they gave to the client. The role-play activities kept the learners’ attention even when it
was not their group’s turn to present. During the presentations, Switzer provided information to
the learners to help them fully participate in the role-play situations. This provided the learners
with real-life experience of working with a client and for planning a learning project. The
learners discussed, analyzed, and worked through many difficult situations that face a project
team during a proposal to a client. Several of the learners stated that the process of trying to
figure out what the client wanted was challenging and frustrating.

**What was the quality of the conveyed messages?**

The quality of the messages the teacher conveys can also be a defining moment of the
learning experience for the student. Student’s can usually tell when a teacher does not prepare or
does not seem interested in making the learning experience engaging for them. A teacher can
use different strategies to deliver a quality message to the learner. Brookfield states “the tradition of pragmatist constructivism emphasizes the way people learn how to construct and deconstruct their own experiences and meanings. Constructivism rejects universals and generalizable truths, and focuses instead on the variability of how people make interpretations of their experience” (p. 15). Switzer had the students think critically about the process of project management for learning. He had the students reflect on the learning to construct meaning, then regeneralize, and apply the concepts to the projects plans. The Te Kete Ipurangi Online Learning Center (2003, Importance of Critical Thinking) recommended many strategies for teachers to consider when helping their students develop critical thinking skills to help ensure a quality learning experience. Switzer used all of the listed strategies in the classes I observed. Teachers should:

- have a sound knowledge base from which to support students as they delve more deeply into content.
- remain open to challenge by students, not representing themselves as the sole source of knowledge.
- encourage students to look at the big picture by engaging them in critical-thinking processes that have relevance beyond the classroom.
- be prepared to listen to voices that originate in the classroom and to use students' personal experiences as starting points for gathering information.
- encourage students to question and challenge existing beliefs, structures, and practices.
- avoid offering 'how to do it' approaches.
- encourage students to be sensitive to the feelings of others.
• provide opportunities for inquiry by giving students time for planning, processing, and debriefing.

• structure lessons so that students can work safely and co-operatively and develop creative forms of shared responsibility.

• encourage students to take critical action, when students learn to use democratic processes inside the classroom, they can transfer these to situations outside the classroom.

Switzer encouraged the students to reflect on the best ways to pursue and manage the training project. He avoided telling the students how to do the project, but constantly asked them for further analysis of the information given to them, and had the students come up with the solutions. Switzer used many techniques to get the students to take ownership of their learning process. He used the question and answer method, small and large group work, and reflection. Switzer constantly asked the students to let him know what he could do to help. He moved around the room to keep the students engaged and to make sure they focused on what he was saying.

What other activities or events occurred as I observed the class?

What surprised me as I was observing the authentic teaching method Switzer used was that the learners either liked or disliked this learning strategy. There were many heated discussions over what Switzer provided or did not provide for the learners. In my interview with Switzer, he told me the following was his intent for the learning experience:

“I think it’s a bit of a mixed bag. My intent was to provide a learning experience that would be very learner-focused. The learners would essentially rely on themselves and their teammates to gather data, make decisions, and present their work to a simulated
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client. However, I am not always certain that strategy is beneficial to adult learners. Adult learners often get frustrated when there is no one right answer. In a simulated environment such as this, more often than not, there is no one right answer and learners can get hung-up on this to the point of becoming inert. In the end, I hope the benefit to learners is that they have had a chance to experience a somewhat realistic training development experience, learned a little about the level of complexity of bidding on an RFP, and learned something about themselves as individual contributors, teammates, and as leaders. Whether or not that proves to be beneficial...the jury’s still out on that one!”

Switzer took a big risk by trying a new approach that could end up being either a disaster or very successful. Stalheim-Smith (1998) states that some instructional strategies involve taking more risks than others do. She says it is easier to start by integrating a lower risk strategy into our usual teaching format.

**Observed Learning Needs**

It is important to determine the learning needs to know what to teach the learners. The process of determining the learning needs is complicated but it is worth the time spent to provide an engaging learning experience. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) define learning needs as “the discrepancy or gap between the competencies specified in the model and their present level of development by the learners. This discrepancy shows the learner’s perception of where they are now and where they want (and need) to be” (p. 125). As I observed Switzer’s class and read the class syllabus, the overall course goal was:

**Managing Instructional Development course** – Present the learners with an opportunity for an authentic field experience within the confines of a classroom-based course. Based solely on the process of interpreting and responding to a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a
corporate training project, learners will work together in teams to submit a winning bid for a training project for a fictitious client. In the process of building this proposal, give the learners the opportunity to build many of the aforementioned skills through a series of in-class and online learning activities, as well as through reflective practice and collaborating with your peers.

I think that Switzer’s overall course goal fits into the authentic learning strategy of teaching and he used this strategy in each of the three classes I observed. Switzer allowed the learners to do much of the decision-making for how each class proceeded. He facilitated or guided them in the process of learning to manage an instructional project. In a survey, I asked the learners what their opinion was for this statement “My overall experience with this type of learning was satisfactory.” 25% Strongly agreed; 37.5% Agreed; 12.5% Neutral; 25% Disagreed. These answers are in alignment with how the learners reacted in the classroom. Knowles (1980) describes two guidelines that help with selecting the most effective technique for a given learning situation:

- Match the technique to the objective
- Involve the learner in the most active participation

Switzer used both the previous guidelines for the classes that I observed and significantly departed from the traditional classroom-based course approach. Therefore, the objectives for the class topics were higher-level objectives that required interaction from the learners. Knowles (1980) describes the matching technique behavior outcome of skills to include techniques such as:

- role playing
- games
• action activities
• participative cases
• skill practice exercises
• coaching

Switzer used many of these skill-based behavior outcomes to create the objectives for the classes I observed. These types of interactions engaged the students more intensely as they were actively involved or participating in the learning. The following are the learning needs that I observed:

1. The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will demonstrate their knowledge of project management principles and presentation capabilities in class tonight by participating in an experience of simulated corporate training development presentation that will give them experience for facing similar development presentation situations in their practice as instructional designers or managers of instructional development.

2. The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will demonstrate their knowledge of resource and cost estimation in class tonight by participating in the discussion and question and answer activities to help them regeneralize and build on their project resource and estimation skills.

3. The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will demonstrate their knowledge of interpreting and responding to a Request for Proposal (RFP) in class tonight by participating in an experience of simulated corporate training development presentation that will help build the development of soft skills.
4. The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will demonstrate their knowledge of project management principles and presentation by reviewing, revising, and reflecting on the role-playing experiences in class tonight to increase their awareness of how to communicate with corporate clients.

As mentioned before, Switzer used an authentic style of teaching where he used role-play activities and gave the learners real-life situations for learning. The course gave the learners practice at managing instructional development projects. Each week of class built on the previous week of activities and the learners not only learned and reflected on their work but the work of their classmates. With the authentic teaching style, Switzer allowed the learners to have control over how and what they learned. This makes Switzer more of a facilitator rather than a lecturer. Knowles (1980) says that the educational objectives become the criteria by which materials are selected, content outlined, instructional procedures are developed, and tests and examinations are prepared. Therefore it is important that learning objectives be stated in a form that will be helpful to the instructor and participants when planning and conducting the learning experience and evaluating the outcomes.

Even though Switzer’s style of teaching gave the students more control over the learning experience, many of the students were visually upset at the lack of up front material and help that he gave them. This created a situation where some students had their learning needs met, others did not. Many students generalization of teaching a class was not happening in Switzer’s classroom. Dewey (1938) writes the following about the generalization of traditional teaching, “The main purpose or objective is to prepare the learner for future responsibilities and for success in life, by means of acquisition of the organized bodies of information and prepared forms of skill which comprehend the material of instruction. Since the subject matter as well as
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standards of proper conduct is handed down from the past, the attitude of students must, upon the whole, be one of docility, receptivity, and obedience. Then the teachers are the organs through which students are brought into effective connection with the material” (p. 18). Some of the students basic generalization was that the teacher should provide the learning and the student should absorb the learning. When I asked, “What have you disliked about the learning method used in this course?” in the student survey, several students complained of the lack of teacher help. One student said, “Scott's courses are usually following Constructivist theories, which are hard for me because I need a little more structure and direction from the instructor”. The student’s generalization of how to teach a class was getting in the way of how Switzer taught the class. One student said that the class, “probably should have been established clearer for those learners who are not used to this style”. Felder and Brent (2005) state that how much a student learns in a class is governed in part by that student’s native ability and prior preparation but also by the compatibility of the student’s attributes as a learner and the instructor’s teaching style.

Prescription for Situated Adult Learning

The next step in this process includes a prescription for teaching the subsequent class. In the student survey, I asked, “Would you change about the way the course is taught? Two of the student’s answers have given me insight to how I designed the next class. Those students’ answers were:

- I would have the lecturer perhaps try an affective strategy to get more buy-in from the students who are not participating - they are ruining it for the rest of us.
- Engage the whole group in an understanding of the techniques used and how and why - show a study on the positive learning that comes from this experience.
Many students prefer certain teaching methods when they are in a learning experience and feel uncomfortable if that style is not used. Felder and Brent (2005) state, “the optimal teaching style is a balanced one that sometimes matches students’ preferences, so their discomfort level is not too great for them to learn effectively, and sometimes goes against their preferences, forcing them to stretch and grow in directions they might be inclined to avoid if given the option.” Some student’s in Switzer’s class need help with their discomfort of the authentic learning strategy Switzer used in his teaching. Since it is still early in the semester, I felt it was necessary to address the student’s discomfort with the authentic learning strategy. I designed the following lesson plan for teaching the next class of Managing Instructional Development.

**Name of the lesson:** Benefits of Authentic Learning Techniques for the Managing Instructional Development class

**Purpose:** To help the students in the Managing Instructional Development class to identify and determine their learning style and the benefits of the authentic learning techniques used to teach the project management principles and presentation skills during the class. Students should also reflect on how these benefits may help them develop strategies to deal with the authentic learning style.

**Objectives:**

1. The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will identify their preferred learning style in the opening class activity by taking the online survey and discussing the results during the class tonight.

2. The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will identify five possible benefits of the authentic learning techniques used to teach the project
management principles and presentation skills by participating in the discussion of the advantages and the disadvantages of authentic learning during the class tonight.

3. In class tonight, using the identified benefits from objective two, the students in the Managing Instructional Development class will discuss how their identified benefits and identified learning style would help them to create a learning contract with the teacher that will help them regeneralize why authentic learning is an effective learning strategy.

4. In class tonight, the students in the Managing Instructional Development class will create a learning contract that devises a plan for meeting the goals and objectives of the course by using the authentic strategy benefits previously identified in objective two. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) write, “Learning contracts provide a means for negotiating reconciliation between external needs and expectations and the learner’s internal needs and interests” (p. 265).

**Rationale:** The student’s need some help with their discomfort of the authentic learning strategy used to teach the class. Identifying and showing the possible benefits of the experiential learning techniques may help reduce the resistance some of the students have for the authentic learning method. Christensen (1995) says, “Therefore, a key principle in adult learning is that the ultimate educator needs to develop an appeal, a need to know in the learners—to make a case for the value in their life performance of learning what is offered.”
Lesson Content:

1. 30 minutes - the students will identify their learning style during the opening class activity. Some learners may use more than one learning style in their learning. Christensen (1995) writes, “While it is thought that learners have developed a preference for or have greater skill in processing one type of input over others, most learners simultaneously process information through multiple senses.”

2. 60 minutes - the students will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of experiential learning to identify benefits.

3. 110 minutes - the students will discuss how to create a learning contract, and then create a learning contract that will help them have more buy-in with the experiential learning strategies used to teach the class.

4. 30 minutes - the students will evaluate their learning contracts and then evaluate how their learning styles affect the design of their contracts and what strategies they will use to deal with the authentic learning style.

5. 10 minutes – students will spend time discussing how they will use this knowledge in further in-classroom and out-of-classroom project management activities.

Lesson Plan Steps:

1. Warm-up/Review:

   **Purpose:** Focus the students' attention before the actual lesson begins with a short activity.

   **Duration:** 30 minutes
**Objective:** The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will identify their preferred learning style in the opening class activity by taking the online survey and discussing the results during the class tonight.

**Activity:** What is your learning style? Students will take a short survey to determine their learning style and then discuss the results. The survey is online at [http://www.ldpride.net/learning_style.html](http://www.ldpride.net/learning_style.html). After the survey, students will receive the Learning Style Types Handout, which will help them define what their type of learning styles means for them in their learning. Students should reflect about how their learning style may be in conflict with the authentic learning style.

2. **Introduction:**

**Purpose:** Set the stage for new lesson, describe the purpose, content and benefits of this lesson to learners.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Objective:** The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will identify five possible benefits of the authentic learning techniques used to teach the project management principles and presentation skills by participating in the discussion of the advantages and the disadvantages of authentic learning during the class tonight.

**Activity:** The teacher will give out the Authentic Learning Handout for the students to review. Then the students will break into groups of two or three and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of authentic learning. Then the students will identify how their learning style relates to the advantages and disadvantage of authentic learning. From that discussion, the students will identify five benefits
that may help reduce the resistance they have for the authentic learning method.
The students will actively participate in the discussion and share their results aloud in order for the teacher to know that they have identified the five benefits.

3. **Presentation:**

   **Purpose:** Provide the key concepts and information learners need to successfully complete remaining parts of the lesson and meet the lesson's objectives.

   **Duration:** 50 minutes

   **Objective:** In class tonight, using the identified benefits from objective two, the students in the Managing Instructional Development class will discuss how their identified benefits and identified learning style would help them to create a learning contract with the teacher that will help them regeneralize why authentic learning is an effective learning strategy. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) state, “In field-based learning, there is a strong possibility that what is to be learned from the experience will be less clear to both the learner and the teacher than what learning is to be learned. Learning contracts help students create learning objectives that make the field experience clear and explicit” (p. 266).

   **Activity:** Skills used for this activity are reading, writing, critical thinking, speaking, and listening. Combining various strategies may help keep the students interested. Christensen (1995) writes, “Appeal is the power of attracting or arousing interest. Adult learners are motivated to learn when they have a need to know. The want to know how the instruction will help them and often ask themselves the following questions:

   - What is in it for me?
What is Learning?

- Why do I need this information?
- How will I benefit from it?
- How can I make use of it in a practical, real way?
- How will it help me be a better person or professional?"

Activity Steps:

i. The teacher will hand out the Learning Contract Handout for the students to review and then they should analyze how their learning style and identified benefits of authentic learning would help them create their learning contract.

ii. The students will discuss their Learning Contract ideas in the same groups as the last activity to get feedback on how they will design their learning contract. Students should design into their contracts how they will use the authentic learning strategies throughout the rest of the course. The benefits and learning styles that were determined earlier should help the students identify the best authentic strategies that they may reduce their resistance to learning in an authentic way. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) tell us that learners should diagnose their needs, specify learning objectives, specify learning resources and strategies, and evaluate accomplishments to develop a sense of ownership in the learning contract process.

4. Practice:

Purpose: Provide activities that allow learners to practice using, in an appropriate context, the skills, concepts and information presented in previous steps.
**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Objective:** In class tonight, the students in the Managing Instructional Development class will create a learning contract that devises a plan for meeting the goals and objectives of the course by using the authentic strategy benefits previously identified in objective two.

**Activity:** Students will work individually using the Learning Contract Handout example, their identified benefits of authentic learning, and the information gathered from group discussions to create their learning contract and identify activities that will help them work with the authentic learning strategy in the most effective way. This is a problem-solving activity. The learning contract should incorporate the students’ ideas, which will help them to have more buy-in with the authentic learning strategies used to teach the class.

5. **Evaluation:**

**Purpose:** Assess how well learners have achieved the lesson objectives specified in Step 2. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) define evaluation as the systematic collection of evidence that helps you determine if the desired changes are taking place.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Objectives from step 2:**

i. The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will identify their preferred learning style in the opening class activity by taking the online survey and discussing the results during the class tonight.
ii. The students in the Managing Instructional Development class will identify five possible benefits of the authentic learning techniques used to teach the project management principles and presentation skills by participating in the discussion of the advantages and the disadvantages of authentic learning during the class tonight.

iii. In class tonight, using the identified benefits from objective two, the students in the Managing Instructional Development class will discuss how their identified benefits and identified learning style would help them to create a learning contract with the teacher that will help them regeneralize why authentic learning is an effective learning strategy.

iv. In class tonight, the students in the Managing Instructional Development class will create a learning contract that devises a plan for meeting the goals and objectives of the course by using the authentic strategy benefits previously identified in objective two.

**Type of Assessment:** Demonstration, writing, oral and observation

**Activity:** Each student will share two of their five benefits for authentic learning and tell how they incorporated the benefits into their learning contract to show what learning strategies they will use to deal with the authentic learning style used to teach the class.

**Student Reflection Activity:** As students share their ideas, they will reflect on the benefits and strategies given by the whole group to help them have more buy-in with the authentic learning strategies used to teach the class. Edmunds, Lowe, Murray, and Seymour (1999) assert, “Learners are more likely to believe
something fervently if they arrive at the idea themselves. Thus, when training adults, presenting structured activities that generate the students’ ideas, concepts, or techniques will facilitate learning more effectively than simply giving adults information to remember.”

6. **Application and Extension:**

**Purpose:** Provide guidance and activities for learners to extend learning beyond the lesson and apply it in a meaningful way in the class for future authentic learning activities.

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Notes:** The student’s need some help with their discomfort of authentic learning strategy used to teach the class. Identifying and showing the possible benefits of the authentic learning techniques may help reduce the resistance some of the students have for the authentic learning method.

**Activity:** Encourage students to assess continually the benefits of being open to new types of learning and offer suggestions for ways to deal with learning in which the students do not want to participate. Now that the students know their learning style and the benefits of authentic learning, they should find ways to work with new teaching strategies that will reduce the discomfort of learning a different way. Felder and Brent (2005) contend, “The teacher’s job is to create conditions that lead students to construct accurate representations of the concepts being studied, first abandoning prior misconceptions if any exist” (p. 64).

7. **Material and Aids:** (what you will need to teach this lesson)
Learning Style Types Handout is used to give the student basic information about the types of defined learning styles.

Authentic Learning Handout is used to give the student basic information about the advantages and disadvantages of the authentic learning strategy. This handout should be the basis for the discussion where the student’s identify the benefits of authentic learning.

Learning Contract Handout is used to give the students basic guidelines and an example for creating their learning contract. They will take their identified benefits and learning style and then create a learning plan that will help them have more buy-in with the authentic learning strategies used to teach the class.

The lesson plan I designed above may help the students to take the next step in becoming more comfortable with authentic learning and finding ways to deal with learning strategies in which they feel uncomfortable. Some students like the traditional fashion of teaching, which is lecture and all materials handed to them. This type of teaching is not as meaningful to some students but because they have no buy-in to a new style of teaching they sometimes are not willing to participate in the authentic style of teaching. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) state, “learning contracts provide a student with the means for negotiating reconciliation between external needs and expectations and the learner’s internal needs and interests” (p. 265). Without some sort of intervention, such as creating a learning contract, many students resist new styles of teaching, especially if they are required to put in more work. If students reflect, or deeply analyze the benefits of a more active learning experience, they usually find that the
learning experience is more realistic. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) state, “learning contracts provide the vehicle for making the planning of learning experiences a mutual undertaking between a learner and his or her teacher. They also emphasize that when the learner participates in the process of diagnosing his or her needs, formulates personal objectives, identifies resources, chooses strategies, and evaluates accomplishments, the learner develops a sense of ownership of (and commitment to) the plan” (p. 266).

When the teacher gets the student’s buy-in, they may then have a better chance to reduce the student’s resistance for learning in a new way. Once the student’s realize the new learning strategy is beneficial for them, they will be more willing to participate in the learning experience.

**Conclusion**

Most of the learners were frustrated with Switzer’s authentic teaching style. The three times that I observed the class, the learners were frustrated about the lack of direction from Switzer. In the online survey, I asked the learners, “What have you disliked about the learning method used in this course?” Most of the answers below show the frustration of both the students who do not like this style of teaching and the ones who are frustrated with the students who are not participating.

a. The RFP scenario at times is almost too vague - to the point that it distracts from the learning.

b. The structure of the course tends to place the burden of teaching on those who are more experienced in the field. It is not the fault of the instructor, but it is the way that the students are responding.
c. I dislike the way other adults (!) have complained so comprehensively about the methods. As ILT students, I would have hoped they would be more willing to try different methods.

d. I think we should have worked as a class on each step since so few of us have any real experience in responding to RFPs.

e. If some team members do not or cannot participate, the burden falls unequally on the others.

f. There is not enough definition about the big picture.

g. Probably should have been established clearer objectives for those learners who are not used to this style.

h. Scott's courses are usually following Constructivist theories, which are hard for me because I need a little more structure and direction from the instructor.

While a majority of the learners fully participated, other learners did not participate. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) state, “The core premise of learning style is that individual learner preferences will lead to learners being less effective in learning situations that require them to leave the comfort of their preferred learning strategies and styles” (p. 219). Some of the learners were feeling way out of their comfort zone during the classes I attended. Several students wanted more direction from Scott then his style of teaching provided.

My definition of learning is the process by which the learner experiences, reflects, practices, and then applies learning to a new problem, situation, or experience. The classroom learning experience that Switzer provided definitely fell into the area of my definition. Switzer provided opportunities for his students to learn actively through role-play situations, and discussions with small and large groups. These learning experiences allowed the students to
experience, reflect, practice, and then apply their learning during class. For example, during the role-play the students were experiencing simulated real-life client interaction. The students applied their knowledge of project management and presentation skills to the role-play situations and thus practiced their skills as they role-played. After the role-play situations were over, Switzer always had the students reflect and deeply analyze how they interacted with the client and the other students on their team. As, the students discussed each other’s presentations they were able to learn skills that they could apply the next time they had a role-play situation. As the student experiences the learning, then reflects and practices the learning, they can then apply it to new situations. In an interview with Switzer, he emphasized, “Although the students may find it frustrating at times, he thought that the level of reflection he required as part of routine class discussion and their written work was ultimately helpful in creating better projects. He said that learners in previous classes have lamented the on-going (and often tedious) discussions about how they are doing, or what they are thinking, etc. History, however, tells him that when learners do reflect, better results and better products fall out of that thoughtful reflection. It does not always meet the immediate gratification test, but he senses that reflective practitioners are rare, and therefore represent an important addition to the field of instructional design. Reflection is the key to a students overall success in an authentic learning situation.”

Learners are different in how they learn or how they feel most comfortable learning. Some students may be able to mitigate their discomfort with learning situations they do not like but others are not able to do that. Therefore, the authentic learning or self-directed learning may not always be the answer for some learning situations. St. Clair (2002) states, “Despite Knowles' claim that the framework could be applied to any adult learning setting, the critiques make it essential to recognize that andragogy only addresses certain types of learning at certain times.”
Overall, because Switzer provided learners the chance to practice instructional development skills that they might be lacking, they were then able to improve those skills even when they felt frustrated with the authentic learning style. Having learners practice with their peers in a group situation gave them a non-threatening environment to work in and they were more likely to be motivated to openly share comments and stay involved in the learning. Then, from that learning experience, they could make application of the new skills to other situations. Because of the authentic learning style Switzer used in the class, most of the students stayed engaged and learned more then if a traditional teaching approach is used. In an interview with Switzer, he said, “this learning method begins to shift the learner’s mindset from being spoon-fed answers and information to becoming more resourceful on how to collect data, analyze situations, and make good decisions. I wish that this would consistently happen at the end of an undergraduate degree, but I think many learners in graduate school still maintain this paradigm. I hope that a learner in my class would be able to say, “It was frustrating at times, but I learned how to think critically and make better decisions based on my critical thinking.” I know it does not always turn out that way, but that is certainly my goal.” Therefore, this design of training although frustrating to some students can be a powerful strategy to facilitate students to a more self-guided learning. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) state, “One of the basic findings of applied behavioral science research is that students tend to feel committed to a decision or activity in direct proportion to their participation in or influence on its planning and decision making” (p. 123). Although, I agree with and tend to lean toward the authentic or active learning strategy, I realize there are times when these strategies are not appropriate. For most training though, when the students have an active role in planning the learning, that affects how much they will learn, reflect, practice, and apply the learning to other situations or experiences.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Scott Switzer and the students of the Managing Instructional Development class for allowing me to observe their class and for participating in the interview and survey that I created.
Appendix A: Observation Instrument

Adult Learning Development Observation Protocol

Background Information

Observer: [signature]

Date of Observation: 9/15/15

Duration of Observation:
- 1 hour
- 2 hours
- half day
- whole day

Other, please specify:

Total Number of Attendees: 5

Name of Teacher: Scott

Section One: Context Background and Activities

This section provides a brief overview of the session being observed.

I. Session Context

In a few sentences, describe the session you observed. Include: (a) whether the observation covered a partial or complete session, (b) whether there were multiple break-out sessions, and (c) where this session fits in the project’s sequence of adult learning development for those in attendance.

Class started a little unorganized. Students talking and doing a song to start. But then they formed into teams and got into the lesson. The students worked well with their groups and other groups around. There was a lot of talk and discussion about what they had to do and we had to do the project. A leader between students and teacher was a valid crystallized intelligence (g). Students showed critical thinking by answering teacher questions.
II. Session Focus

Indicate the major intended purpose(s) of this session based on the information provided by the teacher.

Student / Team tried to draft on Team Project proposal
and analyze for relationship and check.
Team met with facilitator for clarification.

III. Adult Learning Development Activities (Check all activities observed and describe, as relevant)

A. Indicate the major instructional resource(s) used in this adult learning development session.

- Print materials
- Hands-on materials
- Outdoor resources
- Technology/audio-visual resources
- Other instructional resources (Please specify.)

B. Indicate the major way(s) in which learner activities were structured.

- [✓] As a whole group
- [✓] As small groups
- As pairs
- As individuals

C. Indicate the major activities of presenters and learners in this session. (Check circle to indicate applicability.)

- Formal presentations by presenter/facilitator: (describe focus)
What is Learning?

- **Formal presentations by learners**: (describe focus)
  Individuals present their proposals to teachers and their peers.

- **Hands-on/investigative/research/field activities**: (describe)

- **Problem-solving activities**: (describe)
  Worked in small groups to strategize how to work through credit limit issues for an e-commerce project.

- **Proof and evidence**: (describe)

- **Reading/reflection/written communication**: (describe)

- **Explored technology use**: (describe focus)
  Updated and used course website.

- **Explored assessment strategies**: (describe focus)

- **Assessed learners’ knowledge and/or skills**: (describe approach)
  Teacher reflected on how to assess participation.
D. Comments
Please provide any additional information you consider necessary to capture the activities or context of this adult learning development session. Include comments on any feature of the session that is so salient that you need to get it "on the table" right away to help explain your ratings.
Pre-Observation Notes

Instructor: 
Observer: 
Time and Place:
for the observation: 5:40 - 6:00
for the follow-up meeting to discuss the observation: 

Instructor's goals for the class being observed:
- Class Website & dwell
- 
- 

The instructor asks the observer to pay special attention to:

Observation Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Impressions / Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:40</td>
<td>1. Practice, infused, asked in</td>
<td>1. Posts alternatives for what? concerns about textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Class Website &amp; dwell</td>
<td>2. Technology tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Invasion of privacy to</td>
<td>3. Technology tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>find &amp; also have</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Discuss learning from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>writing, read through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Ask for confirmation of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>broadcast of groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation notes continued on the next page

Immediate Post-Observation Questions

General Questions:
- Was this a typical class?
- What was your impression of how it went?
- What's your impression of how well you achieved your goals for the class?

Specific Questions (based on observation notes):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>time</th>
<th>observations</th>
<th>impressions / questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:14</td>
<td>Teacher asks students to group. They ask questions. Teacher reflects back what do you think. Then gives further direction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:16</td>
<td>Teacher passes the deck of cards down. Red word style. (HBS group)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:18</td>
<td>Teacher questions further to help them think about point in presentation. Teacher asks questions that make them process. Think critically about each point in presentation. Cultural differences.</td>
<td>Good interaction and clarification. Humans - factors of culture and how we accept the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45</td>
<td>Pacing is perfect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:50</td>
<td>Second group around table. Next front point - Integrate rest of class discussion. Teacher has it turn to work with others. Uses story to reinforce point. Challenged group to think about their strategy. How will it hold?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher - reinforced ideas - used humor
Observation Notes, continued

time | observations | impressions / questions
--- | --- | ---
7:20 | 3rd group: 1st discussion stage - asks questions to get team to process their plan. Start the team (2) go through their project proposal. | Realistic
7:43 | Fourth group suggests stay-based training. The group seems to be doing well. | No power point - catchy title
8:05 | Group starting over. Teachable moment on what happened. What did you learn? Students share real-world happenings to relate concepts to activities. | Students ask what teaching and seeing what it is like, student groups relating to project work
8:25 | - good use of materials? - good group discussion | Good group discussion
9:05 | - also ended allowing a small amount of time for groups to meet, 2 groups from the room to meet. | Good use of time, good time of sharing
Adult Learning Development Observation Protocol

Background Information

Observer

Date of Observation

Duration of Observation:

_ 1 hour _ half day

_ 2 hours _ whole day

Other, please specify

Total Number of Attendees

Name of Teacher

Section One: Context Background and Activities

This section provides a brief overview of the session being observed.

I. Session Context

In a few sentences, describe the session you observed. Include: (a) whether the observation covered a partial or complete session, (b) whether there were multiple break-out sessions, and (c) where this session fits in the project’s sequence of adult learning development for those in attendance.

Complete class module, cleansing data, met
30 minutes at end of small group 4th
Begin students outline, evaluate the
Abuse, bullying & prejudice
Indicate the major intended purpose(s) of this session based on the information provided by the teacher.

Discovering work, steps to have to go about designing project, test of introduction, and analysis of strategies to de-project.

III. Adult Learning Development Activities (Check all activities observed and describe, as relevant)

A. Indicate the major instructional resource(s) used in this adult learning development session.

___ Print materials
___ Hands-on materials
___ Outdoor resources
___ Technology/audio-visual resources
___ Other instructional resources (Please specify.)

B. Indicate the major way(s) in which learner activities were structured.

___ As a whole group
___ As small groups
___ As pairs
___ As individuals

C. Indicate the major activities of presenters and learners in this session. (Check circle to indicate applicability.)
Problem-solving activities: (describe)

Discussion of selection of project

Proof and evidence: (describe)

Reading/reflection/written communication: (describe)

Questions asked during feedback written on board

Explored technology use: (describe focus)

Used power point to show example budget

Explored assessment strategies: (describe focus)

Assessed learners' knowledge and/or skills: (describe approach)

Sitting down clearly what they know

offering extra help
D. Comments
Please provide any additional information you consider necessary to capture the activities or context of this adult learning development session. Include comments on any feature of the session that is so salient that you need to get it "on the table" right away to help explain your ratings.
Class Observation Notes

Pre-Observation Notes

Instructor: Scott
Observer: [Name]
Time and Place: 5:30 - UCD

for the observation:
for the follow-up meeting to discuss the observation:

Instructor's goals for the class being observed:
- What are your goals for today?
- What are the main topics to be covered?
- What do you expect students to achieve?

The instructor asks the observer to pay special attention to:

Observation Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Impressions / Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:40</td>
<td>Discuss the students' current projects and progress.</td>
<td>- Motivation for students is to achieve their goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:50</td>
<td>The instructor calls on students to share their progress.</td>
<td>- Encourage students to ask questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:55</td>
<td>Close discussion about what students can do to make documents better.</td>
<td>- Ask questions to clarify understanding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Immediate Post-Observation Questions

General Questions:
Was this a typical class?
What was your impression of how it went?
What's your impression of how well you achieved your goals for the class?
Observation Notes, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>time</th>
<th>observations</th>
<th>impressions / questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:10</td>
<td>Students a little behind, not understanding what teacher is saying.</td>
<td>Interests in learning what I'm doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher asking for questions that not understood.</td>
<td>Interested in learning why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students start understanding and help others understand.</td>
<td>Understanding from others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher says to individual who students are not understanding 40%</td>
<td>Student still frustrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100% students are not participating and doing the things</td>
<td>2 or 3 students are not participating and doing the things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:39</td>
<td>Students coming up solutions</td>
<td>Concrete students 8 out of 10 students participate in discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:40</td>
<td>100% students think must study discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Impressions / Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45</td>
<td>Discuss issues from previous weeks, students giving solutions.</td>
<td>analyze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:05</td>
<td>New activity:会长 meeting, most students writing down points talked about devotionally and need the info for their project. Teacher pulls out questions that makes students critically think about how to approach project budget &amp; resources.</td>
<td>Cross talk, analyze, share ideas, 3 main students discussing. 3 others once or while 2 not discussing. Have given the rubric for projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Still discussing project. Teacher discusses in different ways to help students understand how to come up with solutions for other projects.</td>
<td>stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>observations</td>
<td>impressions / questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:32</td>
<td>Teacher tries to get students started through project. No contracts on project, which is causing some issues with students locating limits but not working limits at the same time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:40</td>
<td>Teacher shows Rowe couple on screen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:49</td>
<td>Teacher checks in with discussion been helpful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:53</td>
<td>Group meet together separately to discuss strategy. Teacher meets separately with each group.</td>
<td>Takes group from this point and discus strategies. What worked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Impressions / Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:08</td>
<td>One group left early. Teacher greeted both small groups remaining with good group work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10</td>
<td>Each group works on problems. Teacher checks progress and enters feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20</td>
<td>One student group working well. How to divide? Regular project topic. Teacher interacts</td>
<td>Good interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:25</td>
<td>Teacher surveys teams. Teacher checks problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:28</td>
<td>Another group left after taking notes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section One: Context Background and Activities

This section provides a brief overview of the session being observed.

I. Session Context

In a few sentences, describe the session you observed. Include: (a) whether the observation covered a partial or complete session, (b) whether there were multiple break-out sessions, and (c) where this session fits in the project’s sequence of adult learning development for those in attendance.
II. Session Focus

Indicate the *major intended purpose(s)* of this session based on the information provided by the teacher.

---

III. Adult Learning Development Activities (*Check all activities observed and describe, as relevant*)

A. Indicate the *major instructional resource(s)* used in this adult learning development session.

   ___ Print materials
   ___ Hands-on materials
   ___ Outdoor resources
   ___ Technology/audio-visual resources
   ___ Other instructional resources (Please specify.)

B. Indicate the *major way(s)* in which learner activities were structured.

   ___ As a whole group
   ___ As small groups
   ___ As pairs
   ___ As individuals

C. Indicate the *major activities* of presenters and learners in this session. (*Check circle to indicate applicability.*)

   ___ Formal presentations by presenter/facilitator: (*describe focus*)
B. Dianne Calhoun

√ Formal presentations by learners: (describe focus)

Third group will provide feedback to assist their project presentation.
Other activities: (Please specify)

Role play

D. Comments
Please provide any additional information you consider necessary to capture the activities or context of this adult learning development session. Include comments on any feature of the session that is so salient that you need to get it "on the table" right away to help explain your ratings.
Class Observation Notes

Pre-Observation Notes

Instructor: Scott
Observer: 
Time and Place: 5:30 - UCY

for the observation:
for the follow-up meeting to discuss the observation:

Instructor's goals for the class being observed:

The instructor asks the observer to pay special attention to:

Observation Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>time</th>
<th>observations</th>
<th>impressions / questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>1st group works with dice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher runs chart, role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>playing the fact presenta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:12</td>
<td>2nd students groups are watching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>first group strategy. He</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learn information &amp; tech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>niques for doing their role play.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 students are working on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their presentations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

observation notes continued on the next page

Immediate Post-Observation Questions

General Questions:
Was this a typical class?
What was your impression of how it went?
What's your impression of how well you achieved your goals for the class?

Specific Questions (based on observation notes):
## Observation Notes, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Impressions / Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:20</td>
<td>Group 1 finished role play + <code>store</code> and <code>clay discuss</code> results of role play.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:28</td>
<td>2nd group stated their role play, 2nd group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>All members are actively participating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>3rd group starts role play.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:19</td>
<td>Group finished presentation was really good. Teacher led no questions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:22</td>
<td>4th group starts role play. Everyone participates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:52</td>
<td>5th group ends presentation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:53</td>
<td>Debrief. Groups complements each other.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Next steps</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Student Survey

University of Colorado at Denver: IT 5160 – Managing Instructional Development
Semester: Fall 2005

Hello everyone,

I am conducting a survey on what your opinions are of the Managing Instructional Development for my Adult Learning Education class paper. The online survey is confidential, so I will not know your names—only the results.

Please click on the link below to answer the questions on the online survey. The answers will be tallied through the my3q.com website and emailed to me, so you only need to submit your answers. Please complete the online survey by Wednesday, October 13, 2005.

http://www.my3q.com/go.php?url=dpeach2959/23022

The overall results of the online survey will be incorporated in my paper. No names will be used. Thank you for your participation! Dianne Calhoun

Survey Questions and Answers:

1. What have you liked about the learning method used in this course?
   a. I like the "realness" of it. The RFP response scenario lends itself well to learning via discovery.
   b. There has been a lot of peer-to-peer learning because we're able to share experiences.
   c. I love the flexibility and the way it encourages us to find some answers, just like in the real world.
   d. The concept of the project development response to a Request for Proposal (RFP).
e. I like being responsible for my own learning.

f. I like the contextual nature of the class.

g. real world authentic learning

h. small groups

2. What have you disliked about the learning method used in this course?

i. The RFP scenario at times is almost too vague - to the point that it distracts from the learning.

j. The structure of the course tends to place the burden of teaching on those who are more experienced in the field. I do not think this is a fault of the instructor - I think it is the way students are responding.

k. I dislike the way other adults (!) have complained so comprehensively about the methods. As ILT students, I would have hoped they would be more willing to try different methods.

l. I think we should have worked as a class on each step since so few of us have any real experience in responding to RFPs

m. If some team members do not or cannot participate, the burden falls unequally on the others.

n. Not enough definition about the big picture.

o. probably should have been established clearer for those learners who are not used to this style

p. Scott's courses are usually following Constructivist theories, which are hard for me because I need a little more structure and direction from the instructor.
Read each statement and circle the number that best characterizes your own response.

**SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree**

**General Observation**

3. We worked more collaboratively than usual in this course.
   
   A = 50%; B = 50%; C = 0%; D = 0%; E = 0%

4. This course is interesting to me.
   
   A = 37.5%; B = 50%; C = 0%; D = 12.5%; E = 0%

5. I feel we have enough time to search for resources and to complete the assignments.
   
   A = 12.5%; B = 62.5%; C = 25%; D = 0%; E = 0%
6. I am able to locate different resources.
   A = 25%; B = 62.5%; C = 12.5%; D = 0%; E = 0%

7. I feel I have a better understanding of the process of managing learning projects as the course has progressed.
   A = 12.5%; B = 37.5%; C = 25%; D = 25%; E = 0%

8. I have a better understanding of project management techniques related to learning as a result of taking this course.
   A = 12.5%; B = 37.5%; C = 37.5%; D = 12.5%; E = 0%

9. This course has been easy for me.
   A = 0%; B = 37.5%; C = 12.5%; D = 25%; E = 25%
10. I am able to provide well-supported conclusions about my project.
   A = 12.5%; B = 37.5%; C = 50%; D = 0%; E = 0%

11. I feel I understand the main issues of managing learning projects as a result of taking this course.
   A = 12.5%; B = 75%; C = 12.5%; D = 0%; E = 0%

12. We have been able to identify questions that need to be investigated further in our project.
   A = 25%; B = 62.5%; C = 12.5%; D = 0%; E = 0%

13. Most students were able to use convincing argumentation with their peers.
   A = 0%; B = 25%; C = 25%; D = 50%; E = 0%
14. Most students were able to understand the course topics and pose questions to be pursued.
   A = 25%; B = 37.5%; C = 12.5%; D = 25%; E = 0%

15. My overall experience with this type of learning was satisfactory.
   A = 25%; B = 37.5%; C = 12.5%; D = 25%; E = 0%

16. Would you change about the way the course is taught? Please explain.
   a. The original RFP in the scenario would be a little less vague.
   b. I would structure it so that the entire class is part of the same company and different groups are teams in charge of a specific part of the RFP. Also, I would include the creation of a mock up of the final product. People need to be able to understand that a cross-functional team is much different to work with than a 3-person group.
   c. I would have the lecturer perhaps try an affective strategy to get more buy-in from the students who are not participating - they are ruining it for the rest of us.
   d. The vagueness of the initial RFP and how to pursue it. I think the intent was good but there were too few of us with any commercial project management experience which left the group leaders doing a good deal of the work while the others made smaller contributions and still did not get the learning they needed.
e. Since I already have an understanding of project mgmt and proposal basics, some more advanced learning & examples would have been appropriate.

f. I would have more discussion about the objective of each meeting.

g. engage the whole group in an understanding of the techniques used and how and why - show a study on the positive learning that comes from this experience

h. Provide a different approach to content
Appendix C

Teacher Email Interview

Managing Instructional Development Course Interview with Scott Switzer

Questions:

1. As the instructor for the Managing Instructional Development course, what do you feel is important for the learners to take away from your class?

The class was developed as the product of a lot of thinking about the types of skills graduating instructional designers will need in the jobs that they are pursuing. I feel it is important for learners to have a somewhat realistic experience of what it is like to respond to an RFP, work with clients, and struggle through some of the decisions that they will likely be struggling through in the future, but in a low threat environment. I think there are a number of “hard skills” (project management, resource / cost estimation, etc.) that are valuable to be successful, as well as a number of “soft skills” (maintaining effective communication with clients, dealing with difficult people, exercising creativity in the face of adversity, etc.) that are no less valuable. My goal was to create a non-traditional instructional opportunity that allowed learners to develop these skills in an environment that supported their growth as learners.

2. Please describe how you think your method of teaching will be beneficial to adult learners?

I think it is a bit of a “mixed bag.” My intent was to provide a learning experience that would be very learner-focused. The learners would essentially rely on themselves and their teammates to gather data, make decisions, and
present their work to a simulated “client.” However, I am not always certain that strategy is “beneficial” to adult learners. Adult learners often get frustrated when there is no one right answer. In a simulated environment such as this, more often than not, there is no one right answer and learners can get “hung up” on this to the point of becoming inert. In the end, I hope the benefit to learners is that they have had a chance to experience a somewhat realistic training development experience, learned a little about the level of complexity of bidding on an RFP, and learned something about themselves as individual contributors, teammates, and as leaders. Whether or not that proves to be beneficial…the jury is still out on that one!

3. Do you have any best practices that you incorporate in your teaching of adult learners?

In terms of best practices, I feel that I consistently do a couple of things that adults, over the years, have really appreciated. One, I make a concerted effort to build relationships with each of the students to the extent possible. I do not always connect with all of them, but I certainly take an active interest in their success and through relationship building, do everything I can to support their individual success. Another “best practice” is to create a very supporting learning environment. I try to stay very tuned in to the discussions in class and again, make a concerted effort to make sure the environment is supportive of learning and respectful of people in general. Finally, I think that the very best practice I try to employ regularly is that, in the end, it is much more about their learning than it is my teaching. I find that I often have to adapt to situations organically and despite my best efforts, sometimes things do not turn out the way I
What is Learning? 70

anticipated. The key thing is to treat learners with empathy and respect…I was (am) a learner too, and I know how I like to be treated. I would have difficulty sleeping at night knowing I was treating others any differently.

4. Overall, what three benefits do you perceive will come from the learning method you are using for the Managing Instructional Development course?

   a. For one, I think this learning method begins to shift the learner’s mindset from being “spoon fed” answers and information to becoming more resourceful on how to collect data, analyze situations, and make good decisions. I wish that this would consistently happen at the end of an undergraduate degree, but I think many learners in graduate school still maintain this paradigm. I hope that a learner in my class would be able to say, “It was frustrating at times, but I learned how to think critically and make better decisions based on my critical thinking.” I know it does not always turn out that way, but that is certainly my goal.

   b. Another benefit is modeling good instruction. I would like to think that, through a variety of techniques, both online and in the classroom, I am modeling good instructional design and good teaching practices. I think it is hard to an innovator in the field of education if you have never been exposed to “alternative” teaching strategies. I think people who spent most of their educational life in lectures will see that as the hammer that pounds every nail. I hope that upon completion of my class, learners have felt like they have been exposed to some different, even if they do not immediately see the value or if they find it frustrating. I hope that it is
What is Learning?

provocative at a minimum, and in the best-case scenario, a learning experience that transforms their perspective.

c. Finally, as much as they may find it frustrating at times, I think the level of reflection I require as part of routine class discussion and their written work is ultimately helpful in creating better products. Learners in previous classes have lamented the on-going (and often tedious) discussions about how they are doing, or what they are thinking, etc. History, however, tells me that when learners do reflect, better results and better products fall out of that thoughtful reflection. It does not always meet the “immediate gratification” test, but my sense is that reflective practitioners are rare, and therefore represent an important addition to the field of instructional design.

5. Is there anything you want to add that you are surprised that I did not ask?

Not really…I am assuming that you were able to collect sufficient information from your paper and, given your own experience, able to draw many conclusions about my intent. In addition, if other questions arise as you develop your final paper, please do not hesitate to let me know how I might help. Good luck in the rest of your program!
Appendix D

Example Learning Contract:

1. Review course goals with students.
2. Review how student’s work contributes to each course goal.
3. Identify opportunities for the student to meet course goals.
4. Discuss and agree upon skills and knowledge required by the student.
5. Discuss and agree upon the degree of skills or knowledge required.
6. Discuss and agree upon a time frame for the acquisition of new skills or knowledge.
7. State changes in students’ results expected from the application of the learning.
8. Survey learning strategies and resources; for example, self-study books or manuals, computer-based training, on-site or off-site training program, mentoring, etc.
9. Select optimal learning strategy and resource(s) according to learning style, budget and schedule.
10. Measure learning achievement by reviewing how a student has applied learning to the class.
Author Note

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Beverly Dianne Calhoun is now a Masters student in Instructional Design for Adult Learners at University of Colorado at Denver.

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mailto:dpeach2959@aol.com
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