

Adult Learning Principles

1. Adults must feel safe to learn

- Use structures to invite equity of participation in discussions
- Do everything you can to address power dynamics between you and the teachers you support
- Show up as a learner. You are also a learner
- Establish agreements and ways of working
- Pay attention to feelings and cultivate emotional intelligence

2. Adults come to learning experiences with histories

- Find out what your teachers know and can do
- Create opportunities for your teachers to tell stories and share past experiences
- When your relationship is forming, facilitate discussions about previous experiences working collaboratively
- Begin your discussions by asking questions to activate background knowledge and to make connections between what they are learning and what they already know

3. Adults need to know why we have to learn something

- Include a section on agendas that articulates the reason for engaging in a process
- Draw a connection between the learning and the school's goals, mission, vision, and priorities
- Connect the learning to previous questions and challenges

4. Adults want agency in our learning

- Ask teachers to reflect on how they learn best, be responsive to their needs
- Guide teachers to identify their areas for growth and professional learning goals
- Ask for input and feedback in person and anonymously

- Use data to help teachers make decisions about their learning

5. Adults need practice to internalize learning

- Always include time to practice new skills and time to reflect on learning
- Reduce the number of objectives on an agenda
- Contain the new information to less than a third of the meeting time, and use the rest of the time to practice, make meaning of the information, and draw connections
- Close learning with time for your teachers to name their takeaways and ideas about how they'll apply their learning (next steps)

6. Adults have a problem-centered orientation to learning

- Facilitate processes for teachers to identify strengths and areas of growth or challenges
- Balance meeting time that builds skills that can be applied immediately with opportunities for reflection
- Use structures such as the consultancy protocol and role plays which blend depth of thinking with application

7. Adults want to learn

- If someone seems uninterested in learning, keep reminding yourself that all adults want to learn
- If there is low interest in learning, consider the conditions for learning- is the learning relevant? Have participants had a say in their learning? Do they feel safe?
- Find out what your teachers want to learn about- keep asking and asking
- Ask about previous learning experiences-as an adult and a child
- Whenever possible, make learning fun