

Adult Education Newsletter

For teachers and leaders of the ITN-NTI

In every man there is something wherein I may learn of him,
and in that I am his pupil.

- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Dr. Jane Vella, a noted adult educator, has taught in more than forty countries around the world. In her book, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach* (Jossey-Bass, 2002), she lists 12 Principles for Effective Adult Learning. In this newsletter, we'll look at Principles 3 and 4.

Principle 3: Sound Relationships

Many factors help build sound relationships in the classroom. Listed here are a few of them.

Time—Learning takes time. Not all students learn at the same pace. Some learn by listening, others by talking the ideas through. Time must be allowed for students to talk both with the teacher and other students. This could happen before class, after class or during breaks.

Mutual mentoring—In the quote above (which would be better with inclusive language) resides the idea of a humble attitude. Each of your students can help you if you allow it. Their life experiences, thoughts and creativity can inform the class and your own growth as a leader and teacher. If you listen to the students, they will listen to you. They also need to mentor each other between the class offerings. They can remind each other of course material and hold each other accountable to use the material that they have learned.

Lavish affirmation— Many times adult students feel inadequate. It may have been years since they last took a class. When they do well, tell them. When they exceed expectation, tell them. If they are praised for hard work, they will surprise you with diligence. This does not mean to praise students with no basis.



Tone of Mutual Respect— Do not allow any rudeness in your classroom. If a student wishes to disagree with another's point of view, they should use a respectful tone. No one should just start talking without recognition from the person who is currently speaking. Showing respect for others is a necessary trait for pastors and leaders and the classroom is a wonderful place to practice. If a student says something that surprises you or that seems bizarre, don't mock. Delve deeper and find out where that response came from. You

may discover a deeper misunderstanding or one that is not only held by that student alone.

Open Questions — These are questions or statements to which each person's response will be different. "How would you have responded in Jesus's place?" "In your church, how do you deal with gossip?" "Tell us about persecution in your area." "Share your testimony." Formulating these answers draws the students into the material in a personal way.

Engagement in Significant work and responsibility— At times, allow your students to make class presentations of the material. Assign a portion to a small group and allow them to decide how to teach it to the rest of the class. They may use drama, discussion, debate, lecture, or some other means to convey the information. Assign them to prepare a lesson based on the material that they could then teach to a small group at their church either as a Bible study or other small group.

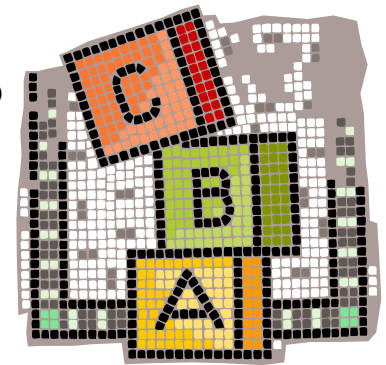
Role Clarification—Recognize, that the students will decide what and how much they learn by their commitment and engagement in classwork. The teacher's role is to present the material in an understandable and interesting manner and respond to students' questions.

Immediate Response to questions— When a student has a question, the teacher must respond immediately. The teacher may throw the question back to the class for response or answer directly. "I don't have an answer to that at the moment, but I will find out and get back to you," is a perfectly good answer, provided you do. Another good response — "We will cover that in the lecture tomorrow. If you still have a question be sure to ask again then." Never leave a student's question hanging in the air. It makes the classroom feel unsafe.

4: Sequence and Reinforcement

"*Sequence* means the programming of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in an order that goes from simple to complex and from group supported to solo efforts, from smaller to larger tasks." (p. 101)

We know this principle and follow it when working with children. We don't expect a child who does not know the ABC's to read. We'd never ask a child who cannot count to do calculus. New learning is built on the foundations of what we already know. Yet, somehow, we seem to forget the principle when working with adults.



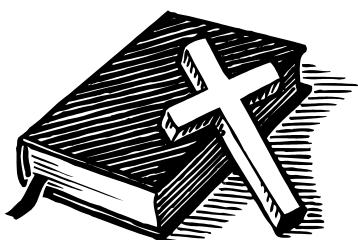
Most of the courses written for the ITN-NTI are self-contained—meaning that everything is explained in the course manual. As a teacher though, it is good practice to read through the lessons before the course begins. When you come across something that refers to prior knowledge—Ask yourself—Do my students have that information already? If they don't, for whatever reason, take a break from the current manual and give your students what they need to make sense of the new information.

"*Reinforcement* means the repetition of facts, skills, and attitudes in diverse, engaging, and interesting ways until they are obviously learned." (p. 101)

Although teachers are expected to finish the course manual in the 36-40 hour time span given for each class, there is enough time to review and discuss the material. In fact, it is often during this process that the student really takes the lesson to heart. If the class too quickly moves through the material, they risk learning it until the test only and promptly forgetting it. This is

not the objective of education. To have learned something means that you have changed. Your attitudes, actions, or beliefs will demonstrate noticeable evolvment. If your students are the same two years into the program... something is wrong. There should be a maturity and depth that attracts others to Christ.

Take time to make sure your students have understood the connection of course material to their lives and ministries so that lives may be changed.



Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. James 3:1

Practice: Planning a Lesson (adapted from *Teach English: A training course for teachers* by Adrian Doff) using TP203—Christian Education, Lesson 2

The first step to writing a lesson plan is to read the lesson. At the top of your planning sheet, write the name of the lesson.

Eight Ways Formation Happens

Next decide what the aim of lesson is — what will the students know after the lesson that they may not have known before? Sometimes this is explicitly stated by the lesson writer, at other times you will need to make that decision.

The students will be able to define “formation,” know the eight ways it happens and understand the differences between them (community rites or traditions, environment, time, community life, discipline, social interaction, role models, and language).

Once you have determined the goal, look at the path you will take to arrive at that destination. What is the new material to cover?

Students might not be familiar with the Christian Calendar — I should get more information about this including dates and get more information about the Christian disciplines from the spiritual formation class. The other parts of the lesson should be easily understood and discussed.



Next, plan the lesson stages. Lesson stages usually involve: Review of previous learning, Presentation of material, Discussion – in a group to clarify learning and thinking, Reflection – a time to personalize the lesson to current situation, and Production — the students using the material in a meaningful way. Production usually comes last, but the others may be interchanged.

Lesson Plan:

Review: Help the students remember their personal experiences with Christian formation by discussing — How did you first learn about Jesus? What people were important in your spiritual growth? How did the church welcome you? Describe a Bible study you've attended.

Presentation: Go through the lesson as presented in the class manual. Make sure the students understand each of the eight ways. Add material on the Christian Calendar and Spiritual disciplines as appropriate.

Reflection: Give the students 5 minutes to reflect on their own ministry setting. With a list of the Eight Ways, have them match the activities of their church to the way or ways that the activity promotes Christian formation. Which areas are the strongest? Which are the weakest?

Discussion: Have the students form small groups based on geographical areas. They should share their lists. The group should brainstorm ways that the churches could improve the weak areas. They should congratulate each other for the strong areas. Is there any way that the churches could work together to promote Christian formation in their area... in the villages between them?

For homework: Ask the students to develop a plan for improving Christian formation for children and new believers in their assigned ministry.

Lastly, consider if visual aids needed. If so, get them ready.

A chart of the Christian Calendar would be an interesting handout.

NEWS

Marcel GOHI (Côte d'Ivoire)— Starting at 2 p.m. on December 17, the students were the first to come into the auditorium at the Society of Transport (SOTRA) in Abidjan. It was there that we rented a hall capable of seating 2500 to 3000 people. All the students wore a uniform – a black suit with a white shirt and black shoes, and looked really sharp. A few minutes later, the National ITN Coordinator gave them final instructions. At 3:30 p.m. all 33 graduates (16 Diploma in Theology, 17 Certificate level) processed into the hall, accompanied by the music of the choir and to the sound of applause. Many welcomed them like conquering heroes. Graduates found their seats, accompanied by their spouses. There were several short speeches followed by a special sermon by the guest speaker, who also gave a gift of 136 books to the school, including one with the testimony of a former follower of Rose Croix (a cult) who had come to Christ. When it came time to give out the diplomas, each graduate -- accompanied by their spouse – received four books. The joy was indescribable; people broke out singing and dancing, which made many people want to enroll in the ITN.



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