



P R E V I O U S L E A R N I N G
A P P L I C A T I O N
R E F L E C T I O N

TEACHING FRAMEWORK AND QUICK FACTS ABOUT ADULT LEARNING

KIDCARE
CANADA
nurturing the best possible start



This document introduces you to two helpful mnemonics (memory aids). You will find more indepth information and practical strategies in the document "Overview of Adult Learning."

PAR is the first mnemonic. It relates to a useful 3-step TEACHING FRAMEWORK you can use in a wide variety of contexts, e.g. when facilitating group learning, leading meetings, teaching or giving presentations.



Previous Learning

Application

Reflection

Purposefully using these three steps will help participants learn more effectively

Step 1 is:



PREVIOUS LEARNING

Step 2 is:



APPLICATION

Step 3 is:



REFLECTION

P R E V I O U S

L E A R N I N G

WHAT IS IT? The ideal starting place

WHY DO IT?

- People learn best when new learning is connected to previous learning.
- Provides an opportunity for participants to recall what they already know about the subject.
- Enables participants to be mentally present and have focused attention.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

- Ask questions, often “Yes/no” or “closed” questions that include concepts and topics related to the video you will be showing.
- Give participants the opportunity to warm up their minds and focus on the topic at hand rather than what they were thinking about when they walked in the door.
- Speak about keywords from the video to give familiarity with the language to be used.

By the end of the section on “Previous Learning” you may want participants to be

- focused on the topic at hand
- familiar with the language they will encounter in the video
- thinking about what they already know about the topic

A P P L I C A T I O N

WHAT IS IT? The second step – the point where knowledge can be taken and applied. Your group has “warmed up” and you are ready to present new material (in this case, the video and your discussions) and provide opportunities for them to relate it to their own lives.

WHY DO IT?

- Learning happens when people can make information personally relevant and meaningful.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

- Ask people to think about their own context and relate what they’ve seen in the video to a situation they are familiar with.

By the end of the section on “Application” you may want participants to

- find the material personally meaningful, i.e. they are able to make sense of it and explain it to someone else
- recognize how they can apply what they have learned in the video and discussions to their own context, as parents, educators, health professionals, service providers, policy makers etc.

R E F L E C T I O N

WHAT IS IT? The third step. An opportunity for participants to think about what they've learned.

WHY DO IT?

- Deeper learning happens when reflection takes place. Some participants may be ready to analyze, synthesize and evaluate their new learning.
- Some participants may be keen to learn more.
- Intentionally thinking about new material increases the chance of putting it into long-term memory.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

- Allow time for reflection.
- Provide options such as having participants write their thoughts, ask questions, or talk with other participants.
- Ask questions, especially open-ended questions. These require people to think.
- If individuals want to seek further knowledge, they will be able to consult additional resources or talk to the facilitator after the session.

By the end of the section on "Reflection" you may want participants to be able to

- think about the key messages, compare them to what they have learned from other videos and trustworthy sources of information
- summarize, analyze, evaluate and synthesize what the key learning is for them
- recognize what additional information they would like to have about the topic

This mnemonic summarizes key aspects of facilitating adult learning



P₃ lan

R₁ elevant (attention)

E₁ motion

P₃ revious learning (memory/recall)

A₁ pplication (personally meaningful)

R₁ eflection

E₁ xperience

PLAN

To facilitate learning it is important to PLAN so that you are prepared to lead the learning experience and your session incorporates the following:

RELEVANT (attention)

- attention is required to learn something
- participants are attentive when something is personally relevant
- when something is personally relevant participants find meaning in it
- when participants find something meaningful they can remember it and explain it to others

EMOTION

- learning is more easily retained if it has an emotional component – humour, sadness, excitement
- however, too much emotion can cause learners to retreat into themselves and “shut down.” This can happen if learning triggers a painful memory

PREVIOUS LEARNING (memory/recall)

- new learning generally builds on previous (prior) learning
- it is easier for adults to accept new learning if it makes sense and fits with what they already know
- the flip side of this is: learning new information that shakes an existing belief system is harder to achieve. A facilitator needs to actively focus on changing attitudes in this situation. E.g. some parents used to believe that picking up a crying baby would “spoil” the baby. Research today confirms that comforting a crying baby teaches the baby to trust, and this provides a strong foundation for the child’s future development

APPLICATION

- when participants relate new learning to their own situation, that is, they apply it to their own context, the information becomes personally relevant and meaningful
- E.g. asking parents how they talk to their baby increases the likelihood that they will remember what they have learned – that talking to a baby helps with language development. They will be more likely to intentionally talk to their baby in their everyday life

REFLECTION

- when participants have the opportunity to think about what they have learned they are more likely to remember it and to think about additional information they would like to learn
- questions, especially open-ended questions, that are asked in a safe way (no “wrong” answers, time to think or talk with others about the question) encourage participants to engage in deeper thinking

EXPERIENCE

- in general, learning happens either when it is linked to previous learning or when it involves participants in an exciting experience with emotional content
- when introducing a completely new topic, engage participants in active learning that involves “doing” something (passive is not conducive to learning)
- provide repetition in various formats so that participants remember the experience of learning something new

For more in-depth information see the “Overview of Adult Learning.”

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