
Learning to Teach Adults

An Introduction

Nicholas Corder



London and New York

**Also available as a printed book
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Learning to Teach Adults

Learning to Teach Adults is an indispensable guide for anyone who teaches adults as part of their job. This practical, accessible book gives sensible advice on the business of teaching and training adults, which can be used no matter what subject you are teaching. The author writes with passion and humour, and the book is full of helpful tips, ideas and practical examples.

Topics include:

- adult learners and learning styles
- teaching methods and techniques
- course and lesson planning
- student motivation and participation
- dealing with awkward situations

This wonderfully engaging and approachable book is essential reading for anyone teaching adults for the first time. It is also a useful reminder of good practice for experienced teachers and trainers and a helpful refresher for anyone returning to teaching after a career break.

Nicholas Corder is a freelance writer and teacher who has worked in adult education for the past twenty years as a manager, a tutor and a trainer.

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For my wife Pauline, who teaches me something new every day. Soon, I will have mastered washing-up and ironing.

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However, there are some whose contributions to the preparation of this book have been way beyond the call of duty. So, many thanks to Sandy Carroll of West Cumbria College, and Bob Groves of the Association of Part-Time Tutors, who brought me up-to-date on various bits and pieces and made encouraging noises. Katy Newell-Jones of Oxford Brookes University persuaded me to write this book, then gave valuable insights that have made it a much better book. David Ewens of the Learning and Skills Development Agency also made copious and sensible comments about the manuscript at various stages. These last two have curbed my wildest excesses and put me (nearly) on the straight and narrow. I would like to thank all of them and Malcolm Tight for throwing away their reputations by appearing between the same covers as me.

As ever, my wife Pauline kept me chained to the computer, ordered me to write, even when the cricket was on, and is the only one in the house who knows the recipe for tea.

Lastly, I'd like to thank you the reader for showing the taste and discernment needed to buy a book like this.

Foreword

I've known Nick for several years, when he signed up to study for a Master's degree with us (and I do still wish he could have continued to do a doctorate as well). We've kept in touch since he finished his degree and, since he's a lovely chap, I had no hesitation when he asked me to write the Foreword for this book.

Forewords are a somewhat curious convention, especially when they are contributed by someone other than the book's author. Flattering for me, of course, given the implication that my imprimatur (I've always wanted to use that word, whatever it means) will in some way add credibility to the book and encourage potential purchasers to reach quicker into their pockets. In some cases, but not this, it may also be a paying of dues. Or just a finishing touch, perhaps. Anyway, here goes.

Teaching adults is both a terrifying and rewarding experience. Every time you do it unless you've had some sort of sensory bypass there is that fear. Perhaps this time they'll find you out; you'll dry up; it won't work; you'll run out of things to do; they won't co-operate; they'll ask you questions you've no idea how to answer; they'll know so much more about it than you do. Eventually, of course, all of these things *do* happen, but you get beyond them.

Anything that'll help you to overcome and control this fear is gold dust: both for you and your students. This may seem particularly true if you're new to teaching adults, but it also applies if you've been doing it for some time. We all run out of inspiration and ideas from time to time, and need refreshing.

This book, then, is gold dust. It's full of helpful and applicable ideas, to be used whatever and however you are teaching adults. Read it, enjoy it not least because of Nick's dry wit reflect on it, and then apply it. It will work, more or less (Nick's suggestions aren't cast in stone, and

are there to be adapted), you will get through it, and your expertise and enjoyment will develop. And tell your colleagues about it.

Malcolm Tight
Professor of Continuing Education
University of Warwick

Preface

Those who can, do . . .

There's an old saying in education: 'Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach. And if you can't teach, you teach teachers.'

Writing a book about how to teach is as big an act of hypocrisy as you can get. I don't want you to think that I am the world's greatest teacher of adults. I'm not. I don't want you to think I have a huge fund of theoretical knowledge either. This book is based on twenty years' experience. I've been involved in just about every aspect of adult education there is, from cleaning the classrooms as a teenager to managing a large adult education centre.

On the way I've taught all sorts of different people and some of them have even learnt things. Often, despite my interference. During that time, I've made more mistakes than I would ever care to count. I've watched people teach who can knock me into a cocked hat. I've been in lessons that were so bad the teacher should have been hanged, drawn and quartered publicly. In fact, I was the teacher in some of them. I still bear the scars.

This book is the book I wish I'd had when I started teaching adults. Teaching is a practical activity and I've tried to make this a practical book. If you want a technical book full of jargon, gobbledegook and words you've never heard of, put this book down immediately. I'm really sorry, but you're looking in the wrong place.

I'm not knocking theory. There is a huge amount to be learnt from it. But the teacher faced with a class of adults for the first time is likely to be much more concerned with how to write on the board than they are with *Zabriniski's Hypothesis on Coaxial Andragogy in a Multi-disciplinary Context*.

This is a simple, straightforward book that will give you some of the basics. It's not designed to baffle you. If you want to be able to use words like 'cognitive dissonance' or 'cathexis', you'll have to buy another book. You can buy this one as well, but it won't tell you what cathexis means, because I don't know myself. I do know what cognitive dissonance means, but I don't want to show off right now. I've put it in a little glossary at the back of the book in Appendix B. I hope it's helpful.

There are lots of ideas in this book, but it is not a specific-subject book. It won't tell you how to teach Fork-lift Truck Driving or Accountancy or Needlework. You need to take away some of the ideas and apply them to your own situation.

Don't worry about reading it in one sitting. You'll only get fed up. There are 50,000 words here – it's a lot to do in one go. Pick and choose. If a bit bores you, skip it and come back to it later. I've written it in the order that I think is logical. My logic may not be the same as yours. It doesn't make either of us wrong. If you find my chapter orders daft, read it in the order you think is most logical. I won't be offended. Let's face it – I won't know!

All of us teach in different circumstances. In a short book, I can't deal with the difficulties of teaching highly specific topics like how to deep-sea dive safely. You need to adapt to the circumstances in which you find yourself teaching.

Your right to disagree

You have every right to disagree with what I say in this book. You can groan at the bad jokes or reach for the hand-grenade. Whatever you do, please think about what I have to say.

The best teachers think about what they are doing all the time. Their styles may differ wildly, but they have in common that they are thinking teachers who are always looking for new approaches and ideas and who listen to their students. I hope that this book helps you with that process. It won't teach you everything you need to know. I would be a fraud and a charlatan to make a claim like that.

The last chapter of the book, Chapter 10, offers some exercises that you might like to do. They're not compulsory. Some of them need a pen and paper – many of the others are simply ideas for you to think about and mull over. If you're on a teacher-training or training-the-trainer course, they're the kinds of things you might like to discuss with your fellow students over a cup of coffee at your break time.

It's not a bad idea to buy a smart note-book to keep your comments and ideas in one place. You could even keep it alongside you as you read this book. It's up to you. Above all, please enjoy the book. It's written as a gentle introduction. I hope I've made it fun to read. If when you've finished, you think, 'Well – it's nearly all common sense really', I'll be thoroughly happy. Most teaching is common sense. You may have done some teaching before, or this may be the first time you've ever faced a sea of a dozen or more faces. You might work in the most competitive of industries or in the relatively relaxed world of a recreational class.

Good teaching is good teaching

We live in an age of technology. You can telephone anyone almost anywhere in the world. You can email your best friend on the opposite side of the globe for a few pence. We can watch revolutions and wars as they happen.

Classrooms, lecture theatres and training rooms are also changing. We introduce machinery and equipment that were unheard of a generation ago. No matter how many blinking lights, computer terminals or interactive DVD players with sensurround feelorama we put in our teaching rooms, some things remains constant.

- Every good class is run by a good teacher.
- It's that human element that pulls it all together.
- We know from our own experience of learners how important it is to have a good teacher.

We still remember the inspirational teachers of our childhoods. When we go on a course it is the tutor who makes or breaks the experience.

Teaching and training adults is one of the most rewarding jobs there is. It can also be hard work. The demands of working with people are always under-estimated. You need a set of skills and the right attitude to make your class work.

Like a lot of jobs, the people who are good at it make it look easy. We like to think of them as 'born teachers'. I'm sure they exist – I've even seen a tiny handful in action and would have swapped several body parts to be as good as they are. There are also some people who couldn't teach to save their mother's life. We should probably bar them from crossing the threshold of a classroom. The rest of us straddle all levels of

expertise in-between, from the adequate to the very good. Sometimes we're anything from adequate to very good in the same week. I often manage it in the space of a couple of minutes.

We are the people who can be shown how to improve our teaching. We have some natural ability, but knowing a bit more will help us enormously. We are interested in our students. We want them to learn. We want them to be able to make ash-trays, speak French, pass their financial exams, comply with Health and Safety requirements – whatever.

We all make mistakes. If you learn some of the tools of the teacher's trade and have a positive attitude towards your subject, your students and their work, then your mistakes won't matter so much. I know it's a bit of a cliché, but we do learn from our mistakes. Just make sure you learn from your successes as well.

A rose by any other name

Coming from an adult education background, I tend to use the word *tutor* or *teacher*; occasionally I use *trainer*. As far as I'm concerned they mean more-or-less the same thing, so they're all pretty much interchangeable.

There is a host of words for what we do. All of them carry connotations – some good, some bad. Whichever word you use, someone is going to pull you up on it. *Teacher* makes you think of school teacher. *Tutor* smacks of Oxbridge colleges. *Trainer* sounds like a soccer coach. I don't like the word *lecturer* because it implies that all you're going to do is lecture. I dislike the word *instructor* even more – flat-pack furniture has instructions. My pet hate is the word *facilitator* because it is so ugly, even if it is a useful idea. *Educator* sounds pompous; *master* sounds like you know everything and *mistress* sounds like a kept woman.

Whichever word you use to describe yourself, you should always bear one thing in mind – teaching and learning are too important to be taken seriously – they should be fun.

Good luck!
Nicholas Corder

Adults as learners

The best days of our lives?

When we are children, our parents have the unpleasant habit of telling us that our schooldays are the best days of our lives. To an extent, this is true. It's really quite depressing when you're a proper grown-up and you have to pay bills, act responsibly and start every sentence with 'In my day . . .'.

On the other hand, many of us had some pretty miserable times at school. After all, there is only so much boredom, bullying, exam pressure, algebra and puberty you can take.

For some, distance lends enchantment. Our schooldays become one long, golden period of sunshine and success, no matter how awful they seemed at the time. Some of us, whether we liked school or not, were able to succeed to some extent or other. We left school with some decent qualifications and were set up for a life of choices.

Even if we are reasonably successful, there are some activities that we dread. I'd be quite happy to go off and learn another language, or study literature or history. I might even manage some science; but put me in a practical class and I'm terrified. If anyone utters the words 'Today we're going to learn how to do mitre joints', I break out in a cold sweat and foam at the mouth.

Again, other people were not so fortunate. They may never have found any inspiration in anything. For them, learning later in life can often be a way of repairing the damage caused at school.

No matter what our educational backgrounds and experiences, all of us are capable of enjoying the buzz of learning something. We are pleased – often thrilled – when suddenly we find that we are able to do things we couldn't do before.

Take a look at your adult class. Whoever they are, whatever their experience, background and achievements, they have two things in common. They have come to your class and they are adults.

What is an adult?

I've been using the word 'adult' very freely. Perhaps it's time to take stock and see if we know what we mean by the word. After all, this book is about teaching adults, not children (although some of it is still relevant).

We all know that there are differences between adults and children. We know that we think, act and speak differently now from when we were children. It would seem reasonable, then, to suppose that the way in which we would want to be treated as learners would be different as well. So, if we're going to think about what an adult is, where should we start?

Age

An easy way of defining adulthood might be by age. On the surface that seems straightforward enough. So what age shall we take? The age of consent? The age when you can start driving or vote, or the age when you are old enough to join the army? Perhaps we'd like to ignore all of these and to use the old voting age – twenty-one. Maybe we wouldn't consider anyone under the age of twenty-five mature enough to be considered an adult.

It would be very difficult to come up with a definition of adult by age. You as the reader might say simply 'Well, you're old enough to vote at eighteen, so that's what we'll call an adult'. Someone else's experience of eighteen-year-olds might be that they find them very childish indeed.

So, what looks like a straightforward, nice, easy answer isn't after all.

Maturity

Maybe we should look at the idea of maturity. We then run into the problem of defining that word as well. After all, we know some adults who are very childish and some teenagers who have acted middle-aged since birth. It is also possible for someone to be mature in many ways, but immature in others. If you take the obvious signs of maturity, like marrying and having children, then that could mean that the

young mum of twenty-three is more mature than the maiden aunt of seventy.

Life-cycle

We could decide if someone is an adult by using events in people's life-cycles. Everyone goes through a series of stages in their life. Obviously, the cycle starts in infancy, when we are totally dependent on adults to feed and clothe us and to keep us warm. Then we move through various stages until, unfortunately, we go off to meet our maker. There are dozens of theories about what happens in-between. In fact, so much has been written about it, that it has become a field of study in its own right. All of the specialists recognise the fact that as we go through adulthood we change, which is quite obvious really.

One of the most influential thinkers on life-cycle is an American academic called Dan Levinson. He wrote a book called *The Seasons of a Man's Life* back in 1978. He divides adult life into eight phases – four transitional periods (early adult, age thirty, midlife, age fifty) and four stable periods (novice, settling down, renewal and legacy). Levinson's ideas are quite complex, but in essence the phases of life he describes are:

Early adult transition (age 17–22)

Here, you are leaving adolescence behind and taking your first few steps in the adult world.

The novice phase (age 22–28)

At this stage, you begin to develop your dreams about the way you would like your life to go. Often, we find some kind of mentor in our personal or professional lives – or both. We also start to make choices about our careers.

Age 30 transition (age 28–32)

Towards the end of our twenties, we begin to realise that life is for real. This can be a stressful time as we either make new choices or get used to the choices we've already made.

The settling down phase (age 32 – 40)

Now, we are establishing a place in society and trying to make it in our chosen careers or jobs. At this point, we often strive for wealth or fame or recognition or social status.

The mid-life transition (age 40 – 45)

This is another period where we take stock of our lives. Forty seems to be the age at which we can look backwards over our lives and forwards to what is to come. We start asking ourselves very serious questions indeed about success and failure. A lot of us refer to this kind of age as the mid-life crisis. You know the sort of thing – you get mistaken for your mother or the face in the shaving mirror belongs to your father.

The mid-life phase of renewal (age 45–52)

This is the point at which we start to listen to our ‘inner voices’ as it were. It’s when we think of all the things we wanted to be or do and do the ones that we still fancy, if possible. We accept our responsibilities and try to balance the different demands that home and society demand.

Age 50 transition and the legacy phase (age 52+)

Around our early fifties, we begin to think about what it is we are going to leave behind us. After which, we then move on to making sure that we leave some kind of legacy. Often the legacy phase is one of great creativity.

Of course, we don’t all fit neatly into these categories. Some of us marry later in life, some of us never have children. There are people who fulfil their early dreams, there are also millions who live lives of quiet desperation, suffering in jobs they hate. Some people never seem to have been young; others never seem to grow old at all.

I’m sure you can think of plenty of exceptions to Levinson’s theory. There’s also been a lot written about it during the more than twenty years since he came up with it. Even if we don’t fit neatly into his phases, there are few (if any) of us who are the same people at forty as we are at twenty. And I’m not just talking waistline.

Forget definitions?

Perhaps the problem lies in actually trying to find an exact dividing line between childhood and adulthood. It may well be that we don't need a precise definition of 'adult' after all, but we do need to have some idea of what are the typical elements of adulthood.

Think of your own life. The likelihood is that if you are reading this book you are an adult. You know you are an adult because you are over eighteen, you probably drive, you might be married, have children, have to pay VAT on your clothes, and you pay the gas bill. All these are signs of adulthood, but let's face it, even though you are an adult you may well have your teddy bear, you still buy pop-corn at the cinema, and can't face getting rid of your train set. Then being an adult is probably a question of being more of one thing than you are of another.

So, adults may well have most of the following characteristics:

- They are above the age of compulsory education.
- They have some experience of the world of work.
- They have family responsibilities.
- They have financial responsibilities.
- They have domestic responsibilities.
- They are reasonably independent.
- They are able to make their own judgements about the world around them.
- They have some experience of life.
- Their tastes are more sophisticated than they were when they were younger.

Most importantly:

- This is not their first learning experience.

The adult as learner

When adults come to your course, they carry with them the baggage of all their previous learning experiences. These experiences, as I mentioned earlier, will be a mixture of negative and positive.

Depending on where you are teaching, the probability is that you will find that the students in the group have a wide range of backgrounds, ages, attitudes and experience. If you are going to be teaching

a Beginners' German evening class, this will probably be obvious at the first meeting of the class, because you can immediately see differences in age, dress and so forth. However, if you are going to teach a group of experienced salespeople, it might not be as obvious. You might automatically think of those people only in terms of their experience as salespeople. Sometimes you've got to look beyond the obvious.

As well as having gone through some elements of the formal process of education (school, college, university), the adults on your course will also certainly have learnt things in an informal setting. There are the kinds of things that one learns in the home – boiling an egg, bleeding a radiator or putting up shelves. They have often taught themselves how to do something, perhaps by reading how to do it in a book, or by adapting something they have learnt elsewhere.

In all likelihood you will be teaching in a formal setting (a classroom or meeting room), even if you do not teach in a formal way. Your students will have preconceived ideas about what to expect from the course, how they prefer to learn and the teaching methods they suppose you will use. They will also have some knowledge of the subject matter, even if they are supposedly complete beginners. Let's examine what adults bring to their learning.

Knowledge

First of all, no matter how obscure the subject, adults almost invariably have some previous knowledge of it. Sometimes, we even know something without knowing we know it. In Molière's play *The Would-be Gentleman*, the social-climbing Jourdain is having specialist tuition from a master of philosophy and discovers what the word 'prose' means. 'Good Lord!', he exclaims, 'I've been talking prose these last forty years and never even knew it!'

Similarly, I can look out of my study window and see the flowers and the garden path without for one moment understanding the process by which light enters the eye and gives the brain these images.

We also gather little snippets of information as we go about our daily lives. Let's take that Beginners' German class again as an example. First of all, it is highly unlikely that it will contain no one who has studied German before. It's quite common to find people who studied a couple of years of a language at school, or who recently did a year's evening class, but still consider themselves absolute beginners. These quasi-beginners already know some basic German – numbers, days of week, the names of some items of food and drink. As they themselves

tell you, they have forgotten an awful lot. That does not make them absolute beginners. It also probably contains some people who have been to a German-speaking country and have picked up a smattering of everyday German words or perhaps the occasional sentence hard-learned from a phrase book.

Even the people who have never been abroad will almost certainly know the odd word or phrase – *Vorsprung durch Technik*, *Blitzkrieg*, *Auf Wiedersehen*, *Achtung*. Then there are the international words, which although sometimes spelled differently, they will recognise – *Café*, *Theater*, *Bus*, *Computer* and so forth.

Your students may not know a lot about a subject but at least they know something. And, each student's knowledge is going to be different.

Experience

If all adults already have some knowledge, they also have some degree of experience. Let us stick with our German class for a moment longer and take a chap called Peter as our example. Now, Peter knows as little German as it is possible to know. However, he did study French to GCSE level at school a few years ago. Despite his lack of knowledge, Peter has experience of learning a language and that experience will either help or hinder his learning in your class. If his previous experience was positive, then he is likely to be able to transfer those skills to learning the new language. If his experience of learning French was poor, then he might find it makes it harder to learn. Our previous experience is crucial for our development, and experience is hard to avoid. In fact, let's face it, the average adult would have to have lain in a darkened room for several years not to have picked up a huge amount of experience (and even then, they'd have experienced darkness and lying down).

In a television documentary a few years ago, a very young doctor (actually he looked like a teenager, but then we're all getting older) was on his way to visit a woman who had recently given birth. He confessed that he was single, had no personal knowledge of babies and that he found it very worrying when asked by mothers for his advice on such matters. Essentially he was admitting he knew less than the mother. Now, nobody is going to argue that there is not some advice he could give, after all he probably knows better than the mother what the symptoms for, say, whooping cough are. However,

she is also an expert; she has the first-hand experience. She's the one who pushes when the midwife says 'push'.

It seemed to me that the doctor was looking for a partnership with the mother. This is a crucial idea in adult education. You must make your students partners in the learning process.

As a young tutor, teaching French to a group of experienced Francophiles, I was always being asked about areas of France I had never visited and things of which I had no knowledge whatsoever. To begin with, I felt rather put on the spot and did a great deal of bluffing, but after a while, I realised that the class's knowledge of the country complemented my knowledge of the language. They taught me a great deal about the regions of France.

When you teach a group of adults, you must bear in mind that they are all experts. By that, I don't mean that they are all going to be leading lights in their profession or highly skilled craftspeople, but they all have life experience.

Imagine you are going to teach a group of salespeople starting work as mortgage consultants about the legal aspects of mortgages, purchasing a house, etc. You are an expert on the legal aspects of house-buying, but some of the students will have bought their own houses and/or have mortgages of their own. There might even be someone who has done their own conveyancing. There is, therefore, a great deal of expertise within the group. What a shame not to make the fullest possible use of that expertise and knowledge.

It is also useful to remember that we each of us interpret our experiences in different ways. One person can see a situation as a challenge, another as a defeat. We all have our individual habits of interpreting what goes on around us.

Commitment

When an adult embarks on a course, he or she is by that very act showing a great deal of commitment. In the majority of cases, adults have paid for the course they are taking, and even if they haven't they probably need to follow the course for reasons of personal or professional gain. Only seldom is an adult coerced into going on a course. Your students are likely to be volunteers.

This is very different from courses undertaken when at school. It may not be good practice, but the teacher of a reluctant school pupil can always fall back on coercion as a bottom line. As a tutor of adults, you cannot do that. You simply can't treat adults like infants. A friend

of mine, Suzanne, recently started a full-time nursing course. She has three young children and used to have a responsible job. One day, in the second week of the course, she arrived a couple of minutes late (her train was delayed) and the tutor started banging on about punctuality and commitment. No one's doubting that punctuality is essential (especially if you're going to be a nurse), but the tutor's attitude was totally unacceptable. How much commitment does it show if you give up a job, commute an hour each way every day and juggle the heavy domestic responsibilities which come with having three children under the age of seven? This would be enough to put many a stout-hearted student right off. It could ruin a less confident student's career.

So forget any ideas about being able to force your students to do anything. The nursing tutor didn't help Suzanne to be more punctual, she merely made her resentful, upset her and has created a potential long-term problem on a three-year course. It is far better to inspire and enthuse your students. You need to build up their confidence, not knock them down.

If you are to keep your students' commitment and enthusiasm bubbling along, you must do so by the skilful use of a wide variety of techniques. A successful tutor is one who can harness the enthusiasm of new students and allow them to grow and develop. This requires patience, skill, humour and your own commitment and enthusiasm.

If people are attending one of your courses against their will, better judgement or whatever, it can occasionally make life tough for you as a tutor. We'll deal with students who can cause problems in Chapter 3 – but they are rare in any form of adult education.

Confidence

Often, adults lack confidence. Their own experience of formal education might be poor for whatever reason. They are frightened of failing. They don't want to hold themselves up to possible ridicule by appearing silly.

As adults, we learn things in an almost haphazard way, even if we do fit what we learn in to some kind of framework. In other words, we are used to learning in our own way, in our own good time. When we enter an unfamiliar situation, we feel fear, apprehension, anxiety. We do not want to appear foolish. Very often, initially at least, we either withdraw into ourselves or find ourselves trying to show off what knowledge we have to compensate for these feelings of inadequacy. The students in your class are no different from us, they too might initially try to

over-compensate. Quite simply they are anxious and nervous, because they are unused to formal learning and possibly new to the subject (at least in a formal setting). They may even have studied the subject at school and failed at it or might have had a very unsuccessful educational career to date. They may have used up so much of their courage in actually turning up for the course, that they are unable to participate until you have enabled them to feel more relaxed. They need to feel at ease, valued as members of the group, and that you are interested in them as people.

Don't forget that we are also all products of our gender, race and class. All these also influence the way we learn. We're all the same – we're different!

A quick summary

So, that's a brief guide to adults as learners. We are all products of our environment, our genes and our experiences; so are your students. Their ages, tastes, perceptions, politics, attitudes, knowledge, experience, aptitude, ability and intelligence (and the list could go on) are all different. They may well be at very different stages in their lives. They will all have different needs and make different demands on you.

It is with this wonderful mixture of people in mind that you have to start planning your course. Do whatever you can to draw on their skills, knowledge and experience and take a positive approach to your teaching and your subject.

But before we start planning what we're going to teach, it's worth having a look at what we mean by learning, how people learn both as individuals and in groups and at a variety of teaching methods.

What is learning?

This chapter is the heaviest in the book. It's the nearest we're going to get to an academic textbook. I've tried to keep the jargon to a minimum, but I've had to use the odd word. If you get bored with this chapter, just come back to it at a later stage. I did!

Defining learning

In the Middle Ages, philosophers and theologians would argue over the number of angels who could dance on the head of a pin. Trying to define learning seems a bit like doing that. As with all these things, academics argue long and hard, adding new theories and hypotheses until their definitions become so complicated that unless you've got seven university degrees, you'll never understand a word. However, thinking what we mean by 'learning' and using the word is not a waste of time. After all, it is central to the idea of teaching adults. We want our students to learn something. If they don't, your class will be a waste of time.

Types of learning

For many of us, the word *learning* is something to do with memorising. You *learn* your times tables, the alphabet, the dates of the Tudor Kings and Queens. But learning is not just a matter of acquiring new knowledge. We can also learn how to take someone's pulse or how to deal with an awkward customer last thing on a Friday afternoon.

Learning also carries with it the idea of developing something – a skill, knowledge, the power of argument. We can improve our Hungarian goulash, grow more colourful roses, put up stronger shelves,

make longer words at Scrabble. In other words, we can also learn how to do something *better* or *more efficiently*.

When we teach our students, we're going to expect them to be able to do something that they couldn't do before they came to our class.

Be careful about using the word 'learning' too much in your classes. You'll be surprised at how frightening the idea can be for some students. If you wonder why this is, just think about how we talk about learning in everyday speech. If we say 'I learnt Spanish at school', it carries with it the idea that we can remember some. We tend to say 'I did Spanish at school' and that way, if someone asks us a tricky question in Spanish, such as 'What's your name', we don't feel embarrassed if we can't reply.

Teacher trainers often divide learning into three main types of skill – psychomotor, cognitive and affective. Psychomotor skills are concerned with physical abilities. Learning how to swing a golf club is a psychomotor skill, as is improving your netball, learning how to ride a bicycle or drive a car. Cognitive skills are concerned with developing and increasing knowledge. If we know our times tables or the dates of the Tudor Kings and Queens or what colour of electrical wire signifies neutral, then we have increased our cognitive skills. Affective skills are concerned with a change in attitude. Often these are the most difficult skills to learn as we have such an emotional attachment to our existing ideas. If we learn to tolerate the foibles of our neighbours – that is an affective skill. Allowing others to talk in a group when we desperately want to throw in our opinions all the time is also an affective skill. If you want, you can refer to these three types of learning as skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Obviously, there are times when you are going to have to learn using all three domains. Learning to drive a car involves psychomotor skills – you have to steer, change gear, work the pedals. It also requires cognitive skills. You have to understand what various road signs mean. It may also involve affective skills. Someone who thinks that driving fast is safe, needs to understand the potential consequences and dangers of speeding.

Memory

Memory plays an important part in the learning process. There are essentially three stages to the memorisation process. You have to input information, store it and then retrieve it. Put like that, it sounds rather like a computer. If your memory is anything like mine, you'll find it crashes rather more often than the average PC.

There are then two main sorts of memory – short-term memory, where we hold facts and ideas for as long as we need to apply them, and long-term memory, where we store information for use at a later stage. Yes, it sounds even more like a computer.

We have to transfer information, knowledge and skills into our long-term memory. This means that we have to practise what we have learnt – often in a variety of situations, in order for it to be of long-term use for us. In the main, it's almost impossible to separate out these stages as they are so closely linked. If we do break it down into these steps, we probably do so subconsciously.

In our house we have a little key cupboard. I know where the key cupboard is and that we're supposed to keep our keys in it. This is in my long-term memory. Right now, I cannot find my car keys. Not having put them in the key cupboard, I can't for the life of me remember where I put them. This is either my short-term memory letting me down or a failure on my part to retrieve information. Now, if that isn't your computer throwing up obscure error messages, I don't know what is.

We all develop different techniques for memorising information. As we enter adult life, we find fewer and fewer opportunities for actually sitting down and memorising. There are people who like to teach themselves poems. Amateur actors have to work at learning their lines for a play. Most of us don't have to go about learning in this way. We absorb information, without realising we are doing it. We know who the Chancellor of the Exchequer is, because we hear the name repeated so often on the news. We can recite the names of the 1966 World Cup winning side, although we've never sat down and consciously memorised them. Ply a middle-aged man with drink and he can recite the whole of the Monty Python dead parrot sketch.

But here lies the key to memorising information. Repetition is crucial. Now, that doesn't mean that you should get your students doing some rote learning, like you did at primary school. It does mean that you have to think about ways of teaching the same thing several times, without it appearing that you are repeating yourself.

Learning styles

None of us learns in the same way. We all remember the childhood friend who just had to take the radio apart to see how it worked, or the bookish one who knew everything, or the child who was genuinely motivated by the thought of a gold star.

Over the years, we all develop different approaches to learning. Psychologists and sociologists can argue forever about whether this is due to our nature or the way we are brought up. It's a fascinating debate, for which there is not enough room here. What does matter is that you are likely to find yourself with a class of people who all want to learn in slightly different ways.

There are several academics who have researched the concept of learning styles thoroughly. One of them, Peter Honey, identified four basic styles. The names he gives for each of these categories are activist, theorist, reflector and pragmatist.

Activist learning style

An activist, as the name suggests, enjoys active ways of learning. They love new experiences or having fresh problems to solve. They thrive on the excitement of the moment and enjoy being part of a team. On the other hand, they're not happy when they have to work on their own, have to follow precise instructions or sit and listen to lectures. They need to be able to join in.

Theorist learning style

There's nothing theorists like better than to have their minds stretched and challenged. Analytical, happier with complex ideas, they are at home testing out assumptions. They're largely unswayed by emotions. They would rather be dealing with ideas than their feelings. It's no use asking them for a snap decision, they need to be allowed the time to examine their subject in depth. Mr Spock is probably a theorist. Stick a theorist in with a bunch of bustling, busy activists and he or she will truly feel ill-at-ease.

Reflector learning style

The reflector likes to have plenty of time to observe what is taking place before embarking on a project. Happy undertaking dogged research with few time constraints, they feel at ease when they can cogitate and chew over what they are doing. They don't like it when you give them a deadline, or expect them to do something spontaneously. Ask a reflector to do a role-play and they will probably want to write themselves a script first.

Pragmatist learning style

Pragmatists like to be able 'to see the point of something'. They're the ones learning French for their holidays, rather than for the fun of it. They like to know that there is some practical, useful output at the end of a course. They thrive on plenty of practice and often need strong guidance as to how to complete a task. Don't expect a pragmatist to cope well with theory. Anything that doesn't look like real life can put them off completely.

To sum up, here's a little tale I was once told

An activist, a theorist, a reflector and a pragmatist all decide to learn golf. The activist gets out on the course and keeps on swinging at the ball until he gets the feel for it. The pragmatist books a set of lessons from the pro. The theorist reads up on trajectory, wind resistance and anatomy before taking to the course. The reflector ends up caddying for the other three, so he can watch them close up before having a go himself.

Of course, there are other psychologists who have investigated learning styles and come up with their own theories. You may come across such names as Kolb and Fry, Gagné, Belbin, Bloom and many others. They all have worthwhile ideas about learning and you should read up on their ideas if you are to take your professional development any further.

No matter which set of theories you like (and there are plenty to choose from), the main point is that we are largely some kind of mixture of different learning styles. It's highly unlikely that we're entirely theoretical in our learning, or totally pragmatic. All of us are likely to learn using a variety of styles. However, we probably favour certain styles over others. It is very rare indeed to find someone who does not possess at least a trace of the qualities of each of these learning styles. This book is written from a pragmatic point of view. If you are a reflector-theorist, you will probably find that you will want to read up on some of the theories that I have mentioned in passing. If you are more of a pragmatist-activist, you probably just want to get into the classroom and get on with it.

None of these learning styles is wrong or better. As students, if we can extend our learning styles, we have the chance of learning in a wider variety of situations. As teachers, tutors or trainers, we have a responsibility to ensure that we appeal to the whole range. It's a pound to a

penny that your class will contain students whose learning styles will differ wildly.

Motivation

In the same way that adults have different experiences, knowledge and styles of learning, so their motivation for attending a course can vary a great deal. Again, there are many theories of motivation – Maslow and Herzberg are two of the best-known figures in this area of study. Here we are dealing with the practical application of motivation as it affects you and your students in the classroom.

Amongst adult educators, it is generally accepted that adult learners fall into two broad motivational categories. The first type of motivation is normally called ‘instrumental’. Someone whose motives are instrumental is likely to see your course as a means to an end. They probably have specific goals in mind: ‘I want to be able to do my own accounts’ or ‘I want to learn how to bake a carrot cake’.

Many of us want qualifications. We need them for our work, to help us get or change jobs or win promotion. Occasionally, we just want to prove to ourselves that we are capable of studying to a given standard. We all need our self-esteem boosting from time-to-time. I once had a phone call from a lady who had never obtained a qualification in her life. Now, well into her fifties, she’d passed an elementary Spanish exam. She was so thrilled, I couldn’t get her off the phone for half-an-hour.

For some people, qualifications are the be-all and end-all of education. This is a pity. Sure, it’s difficult to dabble at an art class if you’re out of work and need English and Maths GCSE and a computing qualification to stand the faintest chance of getting a job. However, there’s nothing wrong with learning for its own sake.

The second type of motivation involves those learners who have ‘intrinsic’ motives. They are learning the subject for its own sake. ‘I’ve always been fascinated by history and wanted to find out more about the Victorian sewerage system of Greater London’.

Some people regard learning as part of being a ‘whole person’. Many of us grab the adult education brochure the minute it appears in the library and scour it avidly to see what we might dabble in this year. It’s not uncommon to come across someone who has used their local Adult Education Centre, Further Education College or whatever, to learn a huge range of skills – holiday Spanish, basic car maintenance, crafts, psychology. Each profession also has its course junkies.

The subject of your course may simply interest them. They want to know about the geology of the Lake District or how to mend a sewing machine. They are happy to be extending their knowledge. They may also be learning or polishing a skill for the sheer pleasure of increasing their expertise and knowledge.

Some students are plain curious. Some want new experiences all the time. For some it is the realisation of a dream. 'I always wanted to write, but I never had the time.'

The social gathering

I think that in local adult education, there is also a third group. Your local Adult Education Centre tends to be a fairly gentle place. It's not going to be top of your list if you want to drink a gallon of lager and get in a punch-up. It's a good environment in which to meet people semi-socially and there are plenty of people who attend their local adult education centre for social reasons.

People who are new to an area often look to adult education as one way of kick-starting their social life. You will also find people who suddenly realise that their lives are centred around work and feel the need 'just to do something else for a change'.

Some come because it's convenient. The class they really want to do is in another town, they haven't got transport and they can walk to yours. There are other students who try a different course every year, for whatever reason. They may be looking for something that takes their interest, or are happy dabblers. Not everyone feels the need to be an expert. Some of us are quite happy feeding our general knowledge and skills at a surface level.

Sometimes husbands and wives come to the same class in order to get some time together. There are young mums who take classes to keep their minds active, there are dads who escape family commitments one night a week. There are couples who take a break from each other. It's easy to think harshly of these people, especially if you are particularly precious about your own subject. We worry that they will be the ones whose attention and motivation may be hardest to capture.

Surprisingly, they often turn out to be the best students. As they are there for social reasons, it is often they who suggest going for a drink after class or arrange the end-of-term meal. They are often keen to make the most of their opportunities. They give the group an extra, informal dimension.

Mixed motives

Of course, these groups are generalisations. We can have instrumental, social and intrinsic motives at the same time. 'I want to study A-level Psychology to get into university. I've always been fascinated by the way people think and act. Meeting other people who are fascinated by it as well is tremendously helpful.'

Similarly, the motives you have for joining a course can alter over time. 'I fancied doing a spot of flower arranging just as a bit of a change. I found I loved it and now I'm going to take some formal qualifications because I want to become a florist.'

Our floating socialites get the bug for local history and produce a definitive guide to their village's Civil War past. Our *Computers for Work* students find companionship in internet chat rooms.

It is important that we understand our own students' motives. We need to understand why they are attending our classes in order to be able to plan properly for them and to teach them well. Let's look at a case study to see what brings them in.

The bricklayers – a case study

Imagine for the moment that you are teaching an evening course on bricklaying. If you ask around your students, you might well get answers like these:

'I want to build an extension to my house.'

'I'm new to the area and want to meet new people.'

'I always do something on a Monday.'

'I wanted to be on the general DIY course, but it was full.'

'My husband and I always do the same course.'

'If I can put up something that will stop my neighbour sticking his nose into my garden every five minutes, I'll be happy.'

'I'm a keen gardener. I want to landscape my garden and put in some low-level walls.'

'I've just retired and found I've never really had a hobby, so I thought I'd try this.'

'I always do a different course every year.'

'I'm busy all the other nights.'

'I spend all day sitting at a desk. I need a break.'

Looking through this list, you might think that only a few of the students are there to learn bricklaying. You might be dismayed that they don't seem particularly interested in your pet subject. Whilst this may be true, people's motives for attending a class are often much more complex than they seem on the surface. Besides, they have all *chosen* to learn bricklaying and parted with money in order to do so. You have to balance all the learning *needs* of the group.

You must consider what individuals within the group have in the way of previous experience. In the group above, you might be in the situation where nobody has laid a single brick or knows a single word of the terminology used in bricklaying. This does not mean that your students come without previous experience. The DIY enthusiast may not have direct experience of bricklaying, but may be used to working with his/her hands and learning a huge range of different skills compared with, say, the person who is normally desk-bound. Similarly, the student who intends building an extension, is either being very naive about the amount of work it will take to undertake such a big job or has a huge level of confidence. If the latter, compare this with the couple who always have to do things together.

It's compulsory

On the other hand, you may find yourself faced with a group who have been forced to come to your class. This could be for any of a variety of reasons. For example, regulatory bodies often demand new forms of certification. This often means that people have to attend courses to get new qualifications or to prove that they can do something that they've been doing perfectly well for years without anyone interfering. They might even resent you.

So, it's important to bear in mind that students will be in your class for a wide variety of reasons. It's vital therefore that you should make sure you find out why they came as early in your course as possible.

Learning isn't straightforward

Learning anything new is a complex process. The other day, I was taught the Japanese for black, white and green. I can remember black and white because they rhyme in Japanese. I can't remember green for the life of me.

I should be quite good at this. I'm tolerably well educated and I speak reasonable French and German, so languages shouldn't be too much of a

problem. I enjoy learning new things. I'm interested in adult education. I'm used to learning things and am quite happy to know things that are not of immediate use. In theory, I should be a good student. Even so, I've failed.

Apart from the word for 'green' not rhyming, there are several reasons why this word has escaped from my memory banks. I'm out of the habit of memorising anything – I tend to write everything down. I may enjoy learning, but committing anything new to memory has become a little haphazard. As Ben Elton once joked, 'How come I can remember all the words to Bohemian Rhapsody, but not the name of the person who was introduced to me two minutes ago?'

I'm also busy – I've got a load of work to do, so my mind is on other things that are of more immediate importance. Acquiring a smattering of Japanese is not high on my agenda. I'm not going there and I have no plans to go there either. The handful of Japanese people of my acquaintance speak much better English than I will ever speak Japanese.

A lot of these things are also true of your students. You have to remember that they are unlikely to be learning as their primary activity. They have jobs, families, houses to look after. They may have sick relatives or shift patterns that mean they can't attend as regularly as they would like. Even the keenest part-time adult student has a million other things to do before they come to your class.

Learning is hard, but there are additional reasons why some students will find it harder than others. Not everyone can boast that they have had good experiences of learning in the past. Anyone who had a miserable time of it at school is going to find it hard to re-enter a formal educational situation. Simply being in a classroom is stressful – especially if it is a borrowed classroom used in the evenings in the very school in which they did so badly.

Often adults lack confidence in their own ability. They have never been able to compare themselves against others, so they have no idea how good (and very occasionally how poor) they are. Many of us come from a background in which learning and education are seen as important. This isn't just so that we can get better jobs. We visit museums, or watch plays. We want to know the names of plants, the stars in the sky and the opening times of the local library.

There are millions of people for whom such a culture does not exist. You might want to stereotype them as the ones who are always glued to their television sets, mistaking celebrity gossip for real news and singing along to the advertising jingles. This does not make them stupid.

What it might mean is that there is no support for them if they go to learn something at a class.

There are also people from 'intellectual' backgrounds who regard manual skills as demeaning, just as much as there are people with practical skills who regard book learning as airy-fairy and a waste of time. There are also people for whom memory, or even basic intellectual skills are a real problem. We are not all brain surgeons and rocket scientists. You have to cater for as many people as possible.

Some people have additional needs that make it very difficult to learn. Whilst this book is not about adults with specific learning difficulties, it is important to be aware of the subject.

Special educational needs

Sensory impairment

If someone is hard of hearing or has extremely poor eye-sight, then they might find some aspects of your lessons difficult to follow. If someone tells you about this kind of disability straight away, it isn't necessarily a problem. They will soon let you know how you can help. Often this will involve seating the student close to you, or simply making sure the lights are switched on in your teaching room. You may have to speak up a little or make your handwriting on the board larger. 'My handwriting's awful – can everyone read that all right?' is probably just a touch more sympathetic than 'Can everyone SEE that all right? What about you, Betty?'

If you've got access to a clever photocopier, you can have handouts blown up larger. If you're demonstrating something allow a person of restricted sight to handle what you are using, if it is possible and not too dangerous. It's also worthwhile flagging up any hazards around the room that might be especially difficult. You can always give yourself a taste of what it's like by putting a patch over one eye for a day. Just see how often you miss the coffee cup handle.

When students are not forthcoming about these problems, it can be difficult. Again, if you encourage students to let you know (privately if necessary) if there are any difficulties, you will usually find they are quite forthcoming. You can easily adjust your room layout to accommodate them.

Other students are almost always extremely helpful and kind. You'll always find volunteers to carry bags, fetch a cup of coffee or help out in

whatever way they can. They can even be a little too zealous at times. Most problems become invisible after a while. I have a lady in one class with nerve problems in her neck. Every now and again she takes herself off with an upright chair to lean against the wall. No one pays the least attention to it.

Basic skills – literacy and numeracy

Many people in this country (and throughout the developed world, we're not the exception) have missed out on a decent basic education. Every now and again, some survey or other will hit the headlines, declaring that an enormous percentage of the population is *functionally illiterate*. What this means is that they are supposed not to possess the basic skills of reading and writing that are needed to function in the modern world. Everyone then bemoans how appalling the state of education is, chunters on and a few days later it's forgotten.

Of course it's nonsense. Most people develop enough literacy skills to function, even if they cannot spell beautifully or write in awkward capitals. Many people learn how to disguise their difficulties. Often, the wife or husband will have dealt with the paperwork. They are far less likely than someone with, for example hearing problems, to come forward and tell you their difficulties. They may well have developed an enormous range of practical skills, skills that many more bookish people would be thrilled to possess.

Most importantly for you, is that you need to be aware that many people have not progressed their literacy skills as much as they might (for whatever reason) and may need particular help.

Don't be mistaken by appearances. I know of one tutor of basic skills who visits a small mansion in order to give its self-made multi-millionaire owner lessons on very basic writing skills. The man can add up (that's how he made his fortune), but even as the owner of a large company, he has real difficulty with very basic written English.

These difficulties are much more likely to emerge if students are taking a course that involves a good deal of reading, or using the written word. They may struggle on a word-processing course, with a modern language or local history. It's perhaps less obvious if they are learning how to rock climb or to cook Indian food.

However, there is a lot of information that we tend to give in written form. The cookery class will have recipe sheets. The rock climbing class

will probably have handouts on safety or the care of equipment. These students may struggle to understand them.

Similarly, large numbers of people are innumerate. They are unable to manipulate basic figures. Adding, subtraction, multiplication and division are alien to them. Those people who can multiply multi-digit sums in their heads often cannot conceive of anyone who doesn't seem to be able to grasp the most fundamental arithmetic concepts. When faced with numbers, especially serried ranks of them, they too can easily feel tremendously intimidated. We need to take into account these people's difficulties as we go about our business of teaching. We must be sympathetic to their needs and adapt our materials to their particular situations.

Dyslexia

The word dyslexia is of Greek derivation and means 'difficulty with words'. People with dyslexia often show a huge gap between their intelligence and their work on paper, have difficulty organising themselves, poor short-term memory, severe difficulties with spelling and their handwriting is frequently poor.

The British Dyslexia Association reckons that around 4 per cent of the population is severely dyslexic and that a further 6 per cent have mild to moderate problems. In theory, then, a group of ten adults is likely to contain a student with some level of dyslexia. This may not be the case, but you should be aware that people in your group may be dyslexic. Some will be forthcoming about their difficulties, others may try to hide them. There are certain straightforward strategies you can adopt to help a student in this situation.

First of all, you should be as encouraging and supportive as you can without singling out the individual too obviously. If possible, rely on the advice and guidance of the student, if they are prepared to give it. They know their own problems best. Bear in mind that a dyslexic student needs structure to their work. They are usually happiest and learn best with active tasks that are not just paper-based. Often, a dyslexic student will find that a hand-held tape-recorder, a portable computer and some kind of organising system such as file dividers or a personal organiser are a positive start. Some like handouts and worksheets to be printed out on coloured paper. If you can, provide both written and spoken versions of what you are doing.

Age

Our age also makes a difference to our ability to learn. Given that a professional footballer typically retires in his early thirties, you can be fairly sure that most adult students are beyond their physical peak!

Our physical abilities do decline with age. Bits of us (especially hair and teeth) drop out. Where once we might have been able to identify the sex of a bluebottle at thirty paces, now we're hard put to find our spectacles. Our reactions slow down, our hearing becomes more muffled and our hand-eye co-ordination can deteriorate. If that wasn't enough to put up with, we also have to submit to the ignominy of being worse at some mental tasks. We can't memorise facts like we used to be able to.

The good news is that all is not lost in our advancing years. We may not be as sharp as we once were, but we develop better strategies for many tasks. Memory isn't necessarily that important. If you don't know where Ulan Bator is, it doesn't matter, so long as you know where you can find out where it is.

The increased general knowledge that we pick up as we go through life, and our ability to organise ourselves better than we could as children certainly help us to organise our learning. We understand more. Whenever you see some child prodigy on the television, they are nearly always mathematicians. A young child does not have the breadth of knowledge and experience that older people have. It may be unusual for a child of ten to get 'A' level Maths; it would almost be impossible for them to get the equivalent qualification in a subject that demands life experience, such as History, Social Sciences or Literature.

So, although age can be a barrier to learning, there are also advantages to being an older learner.

Where to go for support

If you find someone with dyslexia in your class, or you suspect that someone might be dyslexic but does not realise it, then you will need to do further research on the subject. There are some useful contacts in Appendix A and further reading attached to the Bibliography. If you are working in a larger institution, you may find someone with specialist knowledge who can give you more direct help. Similarly, the Basic Skills Agency (see Appendix A) publishes a whole range of guides and useful materials, so if you need more detailed information, it is worth investigating them. If you are working in a Local Education

Authority or in a Further Education College, you may even be able to get a classroom assistant to support you.

The emphasis is very much on inclusion. We want everyone to stand a chance of participating in the educational system – and quite rightly so too.

Successful learning – what you can do as a tutor

So, there they are. There is your class full of students, with all their different expectations, educational levels, intelligence, motivation and difficulties. All you have to do now is teach them.

It's a tough job. As a good tutor, you want your students to learn as much as they can. You want them to be happy in your class and to feel as though they are making progress. You want them to take a positive attitude to the subject and to look on you as a good tutor.

There are many things that you can do to ensure that your students get the best learning experience they can. Students need motivation. We all learn best when we have clear reasons for learning something. It doesn't matter whether these are for pleasure or for work; we learn best when we know why we are learning something.

As we have seen, not all students arrive at adult education with the kind of motivation that you might want them to have. So, you have to motivate them. Students like 'good' teachers. So how are we going to define a 'good' teacher.

A recurring theme of this book is the importance in getting the atmosphere in your classroom right. Your attitude is the largest possible determinant of the group's attitude. You may be teaching in an old ramshackle hut with mould patches on the wall, but if you bring a lightness of spirit to your work, your students will hardly notice their surroundings.

You also need to have a good knowledge of your subject. Realistically, you can't be expected to know everything. If you don't know something, don't fudge the issue. Sometimes you will find people in your class with greater knowledge and experience in some areas than you. This is especially true if you are younger than most of your students. Draw on their expertise. Don't be threatened by it.

Students like teachers to seem well-organised. If you don't know where the lavatory is, always forget your register, are forever opening your briefcase to find you haven't brought the handouts and are constantly dropping the overhead projector on your feet, you're going to have to work extra hard to make up for it.

Students also like teachers to be well-planned. If you are one of these teachers, you will often get compliments. I'm an inveterate producer of handouts and am always pleased when students praise me for the amount of preparation that I've done. I take the attitude that if you show your students that you are working hard for them, then they will work hard for you.

If we like praise as tutors, then it is logically manifest that we also like it as students. As a tutor, we should be handing out constant praise for achievements. You can even joke about it and hand out little gold stars if you like. It catches on. In a creative writing class I teach, we all read out parts from Jim's script. The next week, he brings us all home-made certificates testifying that we have achieved 'Grade A in acting'. Yes, it's silly, but it's a laugh and most people enjoy it and it feels like praise.

Students need reminding that they have already done lots of things in their lives and learnt to do all sorts of complicated things – how to drive, how to cook, how to raise a family. Vitally, they also want you to empathise with them in their attempts to learn. This is often easier said than done. Once you have learned and practised something so often that you are perfectly capable of doing it in your sleep, you may have forgotten just how hard it was in the first place.

You need to be flexible. An approach that works well with one group or a student, may not work as well with another. You need to be able to abandon your best laid plans in order to rescue a floundering lesson. You also need a sense of humour. You don't have to be Buster Keaton, but it does help if you enjoy a laugh. If you can laugh at yourself it's even better. When your carefully constructed scientific experiment collapses in front of your bewildered students, it's no good acting like a temperamental prima donna.

Being good at presenting your subject also helps. Of course, knowing how to set your students going on individual and small group tasks is important, but if you don't do the stand-up-and-teach bit well, then it can undermine you as a teacher. If you're not confident doing this, practise at home. You can fake confidence till the real stuff comes along.

Bringing variety to your lessons is also important. In Chapter 4 we look at a whole range of teaching methods, and in Chapter 5 we examine what learning and teaching resources are available to you. Always be prepared to try something new. Your students will appreciate the fact that you try to vary the activities in the class.

Adult students also like to feel as though they are getting support from the rest of the group. As ever, this is the elusive idea of 'atmosphere' that it is your job as a tutor to create. Managing your

class well also includes getting the balance right between whole group work and individual attention.

So, teaching adults is dead easy. All you have to be is an empathetic, sympathetic, highly organised, well-planned, praising, praiseworthy, encouraging, knowledgeable, comedic manager with decent presentation skills. Oh, and of course, you could argue that you can't teach anyone anything, they have to learn it for themselves. It's a piece of cake.

P.S. By the time I came to check through this chapter, I'd forgotten the Japanese for black and white as well. We're all fallible.

Learning in groups

We've seen in the previous chapter how adult students vary widely in terms of knowledge, ability, learning style and motivation. Teaching each type of learner on an individual basis is hard enough, but what happens when we put these people into groups?

If you have the chance to watch a group being taught, it is very useful indeed to observe what is taking place within the group – amongst the students and between students and the tutor.

Does the class have a good 'atmosphere'? In other words, does there seem to be a sense of purpose? Do the students chat to one another as they arrive? Do they help each other with chairs or equipment? Does the class seem to have a social dimension to it? Do the students say things like 'There's the book I promised to lend you'?

You can tell a great deal from the coffee break. This is the chance that most groups have to do a little socialising. Does the group feel like a social unit? How does the tutor use the break? Good tutors tend to use the break for a mixture of social chit-chat, a little bit of administrative work, helping students on an individual basis and speaking to those students who perhaps did not say a great deal in class.

How many people speak during the session? Some students are bound to have more to say than others. Some of us are louder than others. That's not quite the point. Does everybody get the chance to say what they want? Does the tutor (or even other students) try to get everyone talking as much as possible? Do the students allow one another the opportunity to speak or do they rush in to interrupt and fail to listen to one another?

Occasionally discussions can get quite heated. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but when things do get hot, do the students still respect one another's points of view?

Benefits of learning in groups

Undoubtedly, there must be benefits to learning in groups, otherwise you wouldn't find huge numbers of adults throwing themselves back into education and training each year. Nor would you find companies and public bodies funding group teaching, training and learning.

Learning something on your own can be very dispiriting indeed. There are advantages to learning in groups and, whether we can articulate these or not, there are several reasons why we herd together to learn something. Foremost, we tend to be social animals. We like being with other people. Sharing the experience of learning with other people seems to help us. Why that is, no one is entirely sure, but there is no doubt that feeling part of a group helps us. Perhaps we simply like some company. Maybe it's because being part of a group allows us both gentle competition and co-operation. We can often learn a great deal from others who are struggling to achieve the same things. We can also help to set our own standards, by aiming to be as good as the best in the group. It also saves us the embarrassment of being singled out. We can, from time to time, hide. The group helps us to feel secure.

As a tutor, do not underestimate the importance of this social aspect of learning in groups. A class you help to be non-cliquey, fun and who accept new ideas and newer students can be one of life's great pleasures. A good group, where students are supportive of one another, can help learners improve their self-image. The students will themselves become important learning resources and their encouragement will help others who are perhaps struggling. A good group can be a powerful learning resource in its own right.

Creating a good group

You have to do your best to get your group to gel, to respect one another's opinions, to work well and to learn. Your group will be made up of individuals. Their competing demands will have a big impact on you as a tutor. You have to be seen to be fair, you have to allow for all the differences within the group.

How are you to achieve this? How are you going to balance individual needs with group needs within the overall structure of the course? How are you going to find out what the needs, demands and expectations are?

Management style

As a tutor, it is your job to manage the group. Those of you who have worked for several different managers will know that styles vary enormously. At one end of the spectrum is the tyrannical despot, who demands the impossible, expects you to guess what they want before they want it and wanted it yesterday anyway. At the other end is the weak, feeble, incompetent buffoon who couldn't manage a hot dinner.

Of course, these are extreme caricatures – most of us fall somewhere between these two. You do need to realise, however, that your management style is going to have an important bearing on the way in which your group works. And you are in charge.

Just how 'in charge' do you want to be? If you want to make sure that you are the king-pin of the group, you will adopt a very directive style. All initiatives will come through you and your students will largely be in the situation where they are reacting to you rather than to each other. Alternatively, you might want the group to be entirely democratic, in which case you would play a far less dominant role.

Student participation

A well-run class means that all your students will have the opportunity to join in. It's important that you take an approach that is encouraging, sympathetic and allows the students to learn as much as they can.

Occasionally, you will find some students who are more difficult to teach than others. It may seem odd, but even discipline can be an issue in an adult class. If you're teaching children and the worst comes to the worst, you can probably send a disruptive child out of the room, or to the Deputy Head or force them to do some chore or whatever. You can't do the same with adults. Students on compulsory courses can occasionally be resentful that they are even there, but it is very rare indeed to find a voluntary adult student who is a truly disruptive influence.

If you've read *Animal Farm* or *Lord of the Flies*, you will know what can go horribly wrong with groups. You'd be very unlucky to end up facing a group of students wielding sharpened sticks and face-paint but, if you do your job badly, you may end up either with no students at all, or with a delegation of them in your manager's office. Nobody wants this.

Group dynamics

Groups take time in which to develop. They go through a variety of processes. If you've ever seen any of those television programmes where a handful of people are locked away together on a remote island, you will know that people tend to take on different roles within the group.

There has been a great deal written about the roles that people adopt when they are in groups. It makes for fascinating reading and, if you are part of a particular group at work or in education or as part of a hobby, you will soon start examining who plays what role.

In a teaching group, the process is not quite the same, because you are the tutor and even if you are not directive, it is to you that the students will ultimately look as a referee or arbiter.

Who's who in your group?

We have already seen how previous experiences of learning can shape a student's attitude. We must remember that all of us have our own individual weaknesses, foibles and idiosyncrasies. Some of these are more difficult to deal with than others. When handling students whose attitudes seem to be problematic, just bear in mind that they are often nervous and lacking in confidence. It's very easy to over-compensate.

The leader

There's often someone who seems to want to be the leader. Sometimes there's more than one person. You are the leader, simply because you are paid to be. There may well be students in the group who think they should be the leader but you are, in fact, in charge, even if you're not a very bossy boss.

If the leader takes on the role of a sort of social secretary to the group, then this may well give them a sense of importance. Give them a job to do and they will be truly happy.

The clown

There's often someone who likes to tell jokes or throw in bit of humour. These students can be a tremendous help for group development, if they're doing it in the right way. After all, humour is a useful tool in

the classroom. The danger is when they're not actually funny and spend all their time trotting out appalling puns and the like. These students are not normally particularly difficult to deal with, unless you are teaching a group of young adults and it is the student's way of rebelling. They usually calm down after a while.

The inarticulate student

We all know how hard it can be to put our thoughts into words sometimes. We're forever thinking of exactly the right thing to say several days after we've had the conversation. Some students find it difficult for large parts of the time. Often, a student will have an idea, but can't express it. If another student in the group is particularly clever with words, they can be intimidated. This is particularly hard during discussions. An inarticulate student has just as much right to join in as an articulate one, but may not be able to do so. As a tutor, you have to ensure that they are allowed their say. You need carefully to pick through what the student is saying and then repeat their ideas to them, without demeaning them in any way. Try not to change their ideas or embellish them – just make them clearer for everyone.

Ramblin' Rose and Silent Sid

Never once adhering to the subject, ambling off down the by-ways and culs-de-sac of whatever it is that takes their fancy, Rose uses the most far-fetched examples to baffle you and your students into complete incomprehension.

Don't feel too hard about Rose. We know that meeting new people is an important element of adult education. This may be the only chance she gets to speak to anyone all week. There's rarely any malice in her. Wait for Rose to draw breath. When she does, you have to dive in, thank her for her contribution, re-state what the group is discussing and move on. 'Can we have some other views on this?'

Silent Sid, on the other hand, is more difficult to deal with. We have to know why he is so quiet. He might be bored, in which case you need to work to catch his interest. You may have accidentally ignored him and he is feeling put out. Again, you need to try to involve him, perhaps with a direct question. Sid, like Rose, might be shy. Whilst Rose covers for this by talking too much, Sid goes back into his shell. If that is the case, he needs some gentle coaxing.

The opinion seeker

You will often be asked your opinion as a tutor, because people expect you to have one. If discussing a delicate matter, try to keep your opinion as balanced as possible.

Normally, asking for an opinion is a genuine enquiry. Students will usually believe that your opinion is worth hearing, whether they agree with you or not. They may even want a little advice. Unfortunately, sometimes, there can be a little shark lurking a fin's distance from the surface. Some students deliberately seek out the tutor's approval by making sure that their opinions coincide with yours or are pushing you to declare that you belong to one side or another of a debate. If you think that is the case, then it is simply best to avoid giving an opinion and say that your point of view isn't important – it's the students' opinions that count.

The highly experienced or knowledgeable student

Students can learn a great deal from each other, as well as from you. If you are lucky enough to have an experienced and knowledgeable student in your group, with a positive attitude to the other students, you have an excellent resource. They can, for instance, be enormously helpful in practical classes, where working alongside newer students, they can be ready with a handy hint.

The problem occurs when others in the group (and sometimes the tutor) are intimidated by them. You occasionally find someone who has come to your class to show off. My mate Ian, a languages graduate, was once in an Italian class. The tutor was a native speaker who didn't spend too much time on grammar, preferring to concentrate on oral work. She wrote an example on the board. A snooty voice from the back asked, 'Can you explain to me what the gerund is doing in that sentence?'

'I'm sorry, the what?'

'The gerund. You know, the GERUND.'

The young tutor looked perplexed. She obviously didn't know what a gerund was. (Let's be honest, do you?)

Ian maintains that it was one of the greatest pleasures of his life when he turned round and said, 'I think you'll find it's a GERUNDIVE'.

It's quite useful if you've got a student who can do this kind of thing for you, but it is your responsibility to handle the situation. If you have a student who is always showing off their greater knowledge or experience

in a way that seems to oppress the other students, then they might be better off in a higher level of class, if such a thing exists. If not, you have to cope with them in yours. Try to show them that you are pleased to be able to draw on their experience, but make sure you draw on the ideas and knowledge of others in the group as well.

The combatant

It may just be in his nature to be aggressive or a heckler, but you occasionally come across students with an aggressive attitude. Again, the likelihood is that your aggressive student is as nervous as the rest and that aggression is the way in which he is compensating. On rare occasions, you will find this kind of behaviour on compulsory courses, where your student (or delegate or attendee) simply wishes he was elsewhere.

You're paid to grin and bear it. As in all these instances, it's very easy to lose one's temper, but you have to give him the benefit of the doubt. He may be the sweetest person on the planet, but his wife has just left him, the bank's foreclosed on his mortgage and he's under threat of redundancy. He's angry and you're on the receiving end. You also need to keep the group under control. It's not going to help if they react too strongly to him either.

Instead of succumbing to the great temptation of laying into Joe with a baseball bat, it's best to look for something positive in what he has to say. If you're able to pick out one or two points that you or the group can agree with, it will normally go some way to placating him.

The rescuer

You ask your group a question and there's a deadly silence. Is the question too hard? Should I reword it? Is it so simple, they can't believe I've asked it?

The rescuer sees you're struggling. They are the Seventh Cavalry. Every time, they jump in with an answer, which means that the other students are missing out on a chance to respond. They've got the best of intentions. They're a godsend when you're teaching a new group, but you have to try to involve the others as well. If they jump in a little too often, then crack a joke with them and say that it's about time the others did some of the work.

Side conversations

In the main, side conversations need encouraging in adult education. They are generally a good sign that the students are interacting well with one another, with the materials you are using and with the task you have set them. Even in whole group work, you will find that most side conversations are connected with the subject. Often it's just a case of one student helping another out.

From time-to-time, these conversations may be distracting to the other students. Occasionally, they may be personal. Only rarely are they nasty. If you find that a side conversation is getting in the way, it is often a good technique to throw out a few questions, aiming one at one of the students caught up in the conversation, without making it too obvious.

If you find that you've got a lot of side conversations happening at the same time, then there are several possible causes. Your students may be bored. They may be a little confused by what you've said. They may find the last point you've made needs more discussion. Ask if the students have understood your last point and if there any questions. If you are open to students and encourage them to ask for clarifications if they're unsure of anything, you'll find this kind of side conversation rarely happens. Generally, if you find side conversations are beginning to be a problem, it is time for a change in learning activity.

The clique

Occasionally, you may find that a class has a tendency to divide itself into little groups. If you're teaching a weekly group, this could happen during the coffee break. This is natural enough. We tend to gravitate towards the people with whom we think we have something in common.

Those who are switched on to politics, music, film and theatre might soon find themselves in one group. Smokers, forced to find what shelter they can outside buildings nowadays, will often band together purely because they smoke. I suspect that this is bound to happen to some greater or lesser extent. It probably doesn't matter, provided the sub-groups are not mutually antagonistic or one becomes a bit of an in-crowd. You can always mix students across friendship groups or break down the class into smaller units, using your own system for devising pairs, threes and so forth. You are much more likely to encounter cliques in established groups than you are in newer groups.

Welcoming a newcomer

Sometimes students join courses after they have already begun. This can be awkward for them, you and the rest of the group. There are also some activity-based courses in mainstream adult education that continue from one year to the next. The 'old' students may seem very established to any new student.

As always, put yourself in the new student's shoes. How would you feel? I suspect most of us will be a little apprehensive, if not downright nervous. Our minds will probably be full of little niggling worries. Some of us will feel like rabbits caught in the headlights of an oncoming car. We might have the impression that all eyes are on us. We are the interloper, the stranger. We have queries whirring round our heads. Will everyone be more advanced than me? Can I catch up? Will they all know each other? We don't want to feel different, isolated, an outsider.

Your job as a tutor is to integrate the newcomer into the group as quickly as possible. It's not a bad idea to start any new term by stating (lightly) that you are running a class, not a club, and that new and old are equally as welcome.

If term is already underway and a new student arrives, take a few minutes out from what you are doing to get the group to introduce themselves to your newcomer and vice versa. The new student will probably forget all the names straight away, but at least they'll feel as though everyone's making an effort, and some of your existing students will at least remember his or her name.

If you can, pair the student up with one of your tame students – preferably one of a kindly nature, who you can rely on to be encouraging. If at all possible, try to see the new student on their own for a few minutes at some point early in the first session and certainly in the coffee break. Try to catch them up (very gently) on what they've missed, and give them any handouts that cover what you've done already. Use existing students as a resource. If any jargon words or technical terms come up, ask your 'old' students to explain them to the new one. This will help integrate the student and also act as a useful revision exercise for the rest.

Make sure the student is aware of the plan that you have for your course and what he or she can expect to achieve at the end of it. The warmth of your approach to the student will be normally be picked up by the group and they will soon be welcomed into the fold.

Effective communication in the classroom

Communicating to a group is very different from dealing with people on an individual basis. Good communication is essential to running a good class. For a start, you need to be able to ensure that your voice carries to all the students in the room. This is not too difficult in a small room, but can be a concern in a larger lecture theatre. Students who can't even hear what you're saying are going to switch off pretty quickly.

You also need to make sure that you vary the tone and pitch of your voice as you talk, otherwise you could end up boring your students by droning or talking in flat monotones. But communication isn't just about using your voice. There is also body language. Loll around in your chair with your feet on the desk and your students may think that you're either too bored or too lazy to teach them.

A good tutor uses gestures, nods, eye contact and facial expressions to communicate interest to the students. If a student is talking to you, you don't need to keep on repeating 'Yes, that's a good point'; nodding the head from time to time helps get the message over. You also need to make sure that you adapt your language to suit the group. You cannot use the same jargon and specialist vocabulary with beginners as you can with advanced learners.

Communication is also a two-way process. When students speak to you, you have to show that you are listening. Jotting down the main points of what students tell you will help you remember what they have said and will show the students that their points of view are worth noting. You can then use what the student has said as the basis for a clarification, or to restate what they have told you or can summarise the student's main points before moving on to the next stage.

Arranging the room

One of the most important aspects of how students interact in your group is the physical layout of the room. There are many ways in which you can set out a room, so what follows are just a few examples. Whichever arrangement you choose, you should bear in mind your teaching style, your subject and the learning activities you are expecting in a particular session. You can soon train weekly students to arrange the room for you; if you are teaching or training on a one-day session, you should arrange the room yourself.

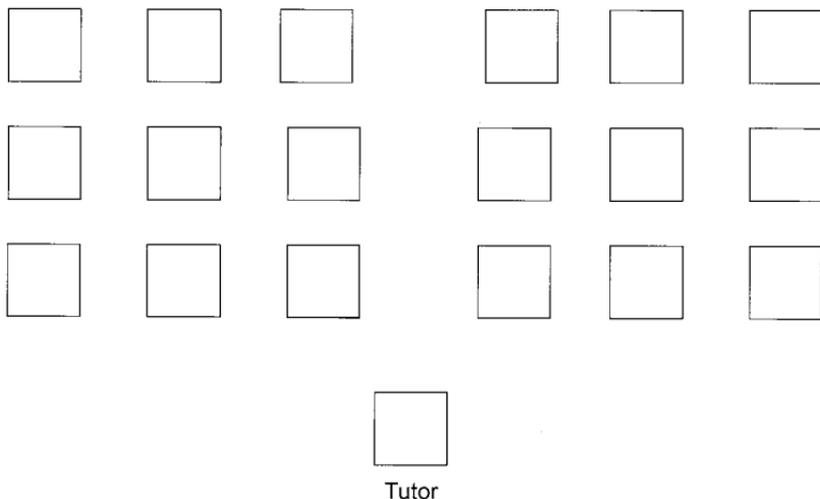


Figure 3.1 Serried ranks

Serried ranks

I'm sure that most of us remember the layout shown in Figure 3.1 from our own schooldays. Your students will probably remember it as well. For some that familiarity will be reassuring; for others it will be off-putting.

Although the sightline for the tutor is good, it is not necessarily particularly great for students. Some of them will find it difficult to see what is going on. It is also onerous to get any kind of interaction between students. It's not very pleasant being unable to see the person behind you when they or you are speaking.

The layout shown in Figure 3.2 can be fine for lectures, but it's all too easy to end up talking only to those students who fit in the teaching V. It is rare to see this kind of seating arrangement in adult education.

Circle

You can easily arrange most rooms to take a circular arrangement of chairs, either with or without tables as shown in Figure 3.3.

If you don't use tables, it means that the group can become very intimate. The open circle is fine for open discussions and work in which it is important to break down barriers, such as with counselling. Tables, as well as giving the learner somewhere to write, also form a

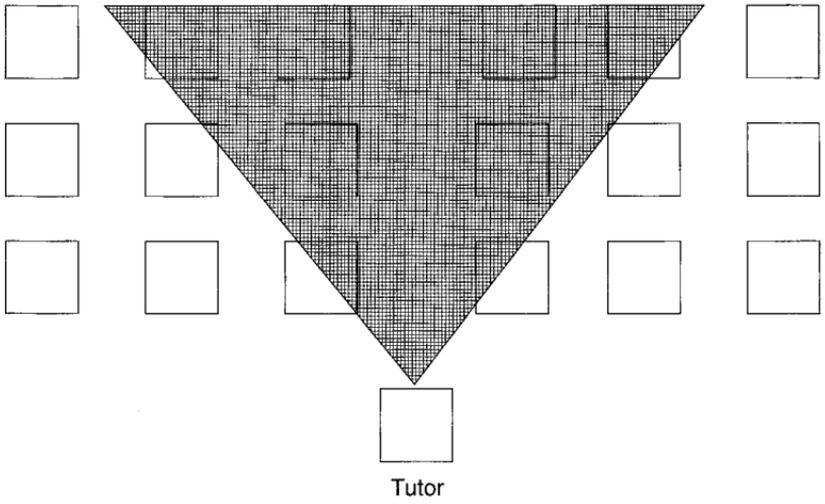


Figure 3.2 Teaching in the V

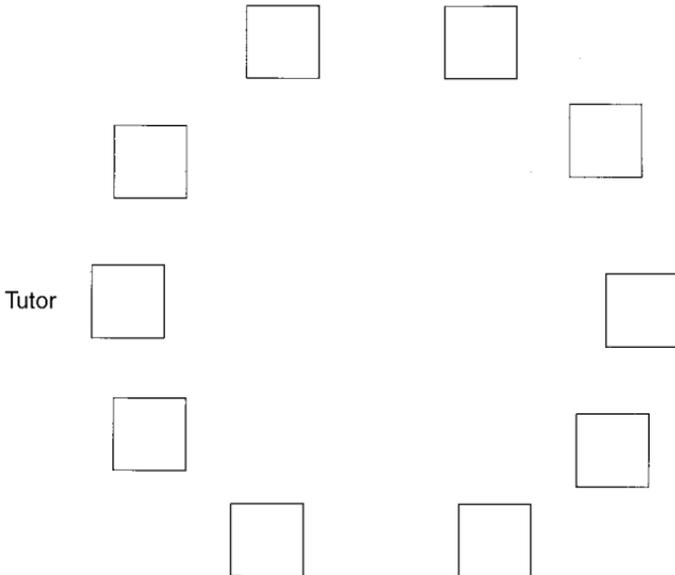


Figure 3.3 Circlee

barrier. Now, a barrier is not necessarily a negative thing to have. It can stop the learner from feeling too vulnerable.

A circle can be a very effective way of working, but don't forget that some students like working on their own, so they might find this particular layout a little distracting.

Groups of tables

The layout shown in Figure 3.4 works particularly well if you want your students to work in small groups. You generally need a good-sized room in which to do it, but if you lay out your room like this, it means that you can circulate quickly between groups.

It is not particularly effective if you are going to give lots of formal input. Some students will have to strain and crane to see you or the board. It also means that it is very easy for students to carry on side conversations when you want them to focus on you.

Oblongs

There are two essential variations of the oblong. One is the 'chairman of the board'-style layout, where you can group tables into an oblong and sit at one end. As a tutor, you can see most students, although you may find that some have to stretch a little to see you. This layout

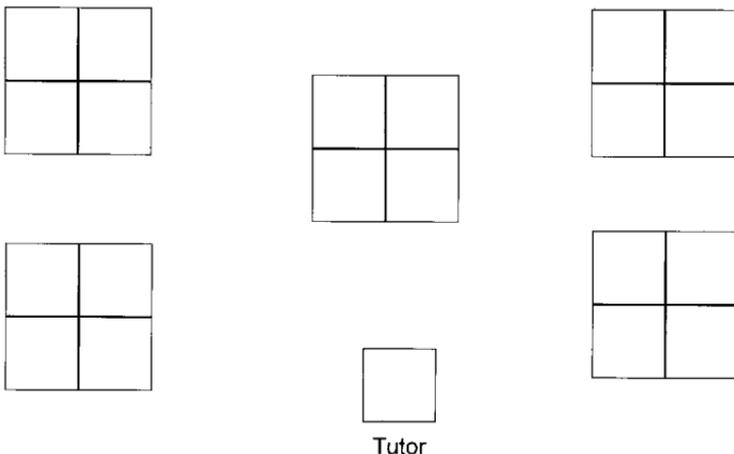


Figure 3.4 Groups of tables

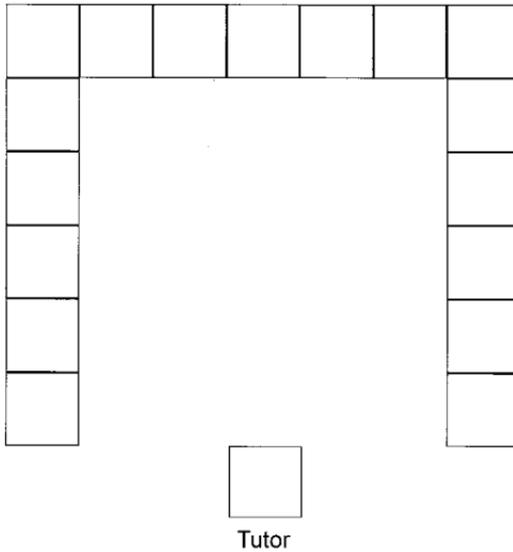


Figure 3.5 The open oblong

can work very well with small groups, and if your students are dealing with a lot of paperwork, then they have plenty of room to spread out.

The 'open oblong' shown in Figure 3.5 is the same kind of idea, but leaves the teacher's end of the oblong open. Its advantage over the 'chairman of the board' is that you can circulate inside the oblong, giving attention to both individual and clusters of students. It also doesn't take a lot of furniture moving to break the group into pairs or small groups.

To sum up

Teaching a group, composed of very different individuals, is no easy business. It takes a lot of skill and practice. Doctors are never asked to diagnose eye problems, gastro-enteritis, athlete's foot, impetigo and hay fever from amongst a group of twenty people all at the same time. You will be expected to do the educational equivalent. Doctors get to see their patients individually (and they can get rid of the annoying ones after fifteen minutes) – a piece of cake in comparison.

It is your responsibility as a tutor to create an effective learning group. You should do so by:

- ensuring that your management style encourages student participation
- dealing promptly and effectively with potential disruptions
- ensuring that your communication style is right for the group
- dealing sympathetically with your students
- making sure that your room is as comfortable as it can be
- setting out your room to make learning as effective as possible
- creating the right atmosphere in the class
- showing your students that you care about their opinions and ideas
- valuing your students as individuals
- having a sense of humour and proportion.

We can't be brilliant teachers all the time. If our students know that, despite our shortcomings, we have their best interests at heart, they will respect what we are doing for them.

Teaching and learning methods

No matter how new you are to teaching, you will have come across many of the methods in this chapter. You may not know what they are called and you may come across them wearing slightly different names and disguises; they will be familiar all the same. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but it should give you an idea of some of the methods you can use.

We tend to divide teaching methods into two general categories – teacher-centred methods and learner-centred methods. With teacher-centred methods, the teacher tends to play the part of the circus ring-master. Everything that takes place in the classroom is heavily directed by the tutor. With learner-centred methods, it is the learner who is allowed to take greater personal charge over his or her own learning.

For example, the traditional method of teaching older students is the lecture. The lecture is a way in which one person can give information to a large group, generally without any form of interruption. In a lecture, it is the teacher who has control over the amount and level of information students are exposed to. Other types of teacher-centred activities include demonstrations, talks, lecturettes and discussions that are led by the tutor.

This kind of teaching is absolutely fine. No matter what anyone tells you, there is nothing wrong with it. Where it does become a problem is when it is the only kind of teaching you use. If you're not careful, it can become extremely tedious for your students. You end up talking far too much and, frankly, it's very hard work for you.

At the other end of the spectrum is, of course, learner-centred education. You may also find it called 'student-centred' learning – it's exactly the same thing. As its name suggests, it puts the learner and not the teacher at the centre of the activity. Study tours, discovery learning, distance learning, buzz groups and brainstorming are typical examples

of this kind of approach. Good teachers use this kind of learning as a way of allowing their students the freedom to do their own work at their own pace and to discover things for themselves. Bad teachers use it as an excuse to do no teaching. The danger is that without any direction, student-centred learning can become flabby. Small group and individual work need clearly stated aims. Yet again, the idea of having a partnership with your students is crucial. You must co-operate and collaborate to enable them to get the best of all possible methods.

Mix and match

We've seen how your students are a mixed bunch who will have different learning preferences. They may find some activities tedious or simply inappropriate. You need to mix the activities that take place in your classroom and match them to what you are trying to teach.

Not all the methods listed here will be useful for your subject. There is probably no 'right' method for teaching a particular point. You must make that judgement bearing in mind your skills and aptitudes and the students' inclinations, abilities and previous knowledge.

All teachers have a tendency to rely on a few stock methods and to ignore others. Try to keep an open mind as you read through. Think how you might use the methods for your subject.

Good teachers will try to use as many different teaching techniques as they can in order to give their students good lessons. They also like their students to develop into autonomous learners. If you can help to develop good study habits in your students, it will equip them for other subjects in the future.

Teacher-centred methods

Lecture

The old-fashioned lecture is the most direct method of transferring knowledge from one person to a large group. The lecture is much maligned as a means of teaching, mainly because we have all suffered such appalling periods of unmitigated tedium at the hands of lecturers who have done for teaching what the Boston strangler did for door-to-door selling.

Unless you are a spellbinding speaker of huge personal wit, wisdom and knowledge, use the lecture sparingly. If there are some topics or areas of your course which you think would best be dealt with in a

lecture, try to keep it as short as you can and, if possible, make it more of a lecturette.

Always allow some time for a question-and-answer activity or a discussion at some point in the session, otherwise the ideas you have been trying to get across will soon be lost. Many tutors new to teaching feel that if they are not 'doing the work' all the time that they are not giving value for money. If you find that you are lecturing all the time, have a think about what other methods of teaching you could use.

Lecturette

If you do need to do some lecturing, perhaps instead of going for a full-blown one-hour, you could try the lecture's little sister, the lecturette. Essentially it is the same as a lecture, but smaller.

The lecturette is a more useful method than the full-blown lecture for two main reasons. First, it allows more time in the session for a variety of other teaching methods and so your session can appeal to more learners. Second, you won't end up staring at rows of dulled, grey faces politely (if you are lucky) stifling yawns and looking surreptitiously at their watches. For both lectures and lecturettes, it is worthwhile preparing a handout of the main points, so that students can follow your lecture and jot down notes in some logical sequence.

At the end of a lecture, lecturers have a tendency to ask their audience, 'Has anyone any questions?' If they are met by a wall of silence, either they have given such a blindingly good lecture that every possible point has been covered, or they have simply bored the audience into stunned silence.

It's much better to pose a few questions asking students for their opinions about any individual points you have covered or to show what they have learned in some practical way – perhaps through a demonstration or some kind of written exercise.

I will cover testing and assessment more thoroughly in Chapter 7, but if you are preparing a lecture, don't forget to include a list of questions for any post-lecture discussion. Treat it as an essential part of the lecture.

Explanation

It seems almost silly to mention this one, but often experts forget how difficult some things can be for the beginner. Explanations could be to the whole group 'I will explain how a nuclear reactor works', or could

be on an individual or small group basis. It is especially useful to help clarify a point. Students often ask for individual explanations, which means that, as a tutor, you have to be quite quick at thinking of different ways of explaining things.

Explanations should be clear and concise. Encouraging students to give their explanations is often a good technique for allowing them to consolidate knowledge. You will also often be surprised by how many students learn a great deal from other students' little 'side explanations'. You may not be the only teacher in the class!

Talks and presentations

'Talk' is the term that is often used for those kinds of informal lectures that are laid on by such groups as the Women's Institute, University of the Third Age and local hobbyist organisations. You often see them advertised at the local shop on topics such as local history, travel or personal experience.

I always think of the talk as being a light-hearted lecture, best with a few touches of humour, which works well if you can get in a few anecdotes. Often, a talk will be illustrated in some way, perhaps with slides. This can be a much more interesting way of passing on your knowledge.

Presentation tends to be the term that is commonly used in commercial and organisational settings for what is essentially a talk. Again, it's another variation on the lecture-lecturette-demonstration style of teaching.

In work-based training, people often have other important and pressing jobs to do. Wherever possible, you need to keep things short and to time in order to ensure that they can carry on with their other duties. It's much better to finish slightly early in this kind of situation than it is to over-run.

Demonstration

Hobbyist organisations might also include demonstrations on their calendars. Demonstrations are very often used in skill-based subjects, such as arts and crafts. It's a kind of practical version of a lecture.

As with the lecture, there is nothing wrong with demonstration, but you should avoid certain traps. First is the 'And here's one I made earlier' trap, where the tutor, having gone through a series of very

complicated tasks, whips out a brilliantly executed example, leaving the students totally demoralised because they got lost at stage two. Second, a skills-based subject is to do with learning skills. That seems obvious, but it is very easy to end up demonstrating all the time and not allowing your students to carry on with actually using their own hands. Doing something is the best way of learning.

If you teach a craft subject and spend a lot of your time circulating around the class dispensing help, the demonstration comes in handy in two different ways. Instead of jumping in to do the task in hand for the individual student, demonstrate what they need to do and allow them to do it for themselves – they will learn so much more, even if they don't get it quite right to begin with. Also, it is worth getting either the whole group or a small group together in order to demonstrate one particular, or a small series of skills.

Another technique is to demonstrate the activity with the class actually doing it at the same time. You can see this type of activity frequently in physical exercise classes, but it could equally be used for boning a leg of lamb or showing students how to tie knots, connect copper pipes, plant seedlings or operate a piece of machinery.

Good practice for lecturing, demonstrating and presenting

I will reiterate that there is nothing wrong with a presentational style of teaching, but you must bear in mind what makes for good practice and the pitfalls to avoid.

Prepare thoroughly

Just because you know your subject, this doesn't mean that you don't have to plan what you are going to do – make sure that you decide exactly what your students need to know.

Emphasise key points

Make sure that the key points are obvious. Use bullet-points or little summaries to help the learner.

Speak up

Make sure you can be heard. I was convinced at university that my lecturers had all grown beards just so they could mumble into them. Your voice should be clear and loud.

Don't bore your audience

A touch of humour is great, as is the occasional anecdote or illustrative story. But if your lecture turns into a stand-up comedy routine, then some students may feel that they haven't got what they paid for. It's easy to try to be too entertaining, often because you are nervous and think that a joke or two will go down well.

Know your audience

This is a tough one, especially if you're giving a one-off talk to a group of people you've never met before. If you can reasonably expect that the learners will know the technical terms for your subject, use them. They will feel talked down to if you don't. On the other hand, if you pepper a talk to a more general audience with jargon they cannot possibly know, then they too are going to switch off.

Learner comfort

Make sure the learners are comfortable, but not so comfortable that they doze off. Often you have little control over this, but you can at least make sure windows are open on stuffy days.

Punctuality

Keep to time. Your learners may well need to be somewhere else. Leave enough time for questions at the end.

Mannerisms

Mannerisms, whether quirks of speech or physical ones, can be off-putting if your learners begin to concentrate on them, rather than what you are saying. We all have mannerisms and it is difficult to keep them under control.

A mate of mine, who is often called upon to do company presentations, has been drilled into keeping his arms by his sides. I think this is taking it a bit far. Gestures can help enliven what you have to say. Just don't go overboard. Similarly, the 'errs', 'aahs' and 'umms' of everyday speech can get in the way of what you are trying to say – again, these are furiously difficult to control.

Your learners will forgive you many of these habits, if you talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about your subject.

Questioning and quizzes

Often at the end of a more teacher-centred process, there will be a period of questioning. This can be the opportunity for learners to ask for clarifications or opinions or further information.

You can also ask questions. It's tempting to see questioning purely as a way of testing students' knowledge (see Chapter 6 – Assessment and evaluation). True, we use questions in order to check understanding and knowledge or to make sure that we have explained something as well as we can, but you can use questions as a very powerful teaching tool. Questions can certainly encourage your students to think more deeply about a subject.

We all tend to mix in similar social circles or to read one kind of newspaper. We can become very set in our views and our opinions. If we ask our students questions that mean they have to look into other sets of views and opinions, we are educating them. We are not telling them that their opinions are wrong, but we are opening up the world to them.

When you look at an exercise, a passage or a section of a textbook, make a list of questions that will provoke your students into thinking more. What would the devil's advocate ask?

You can also use quizzes both as a means of testing existing knowledge and as a means of light-hearted revision. Again, individuals do not necessarily like being put on the spot, but if you use the pub quiz technique, whereby you have small teams and the answers are written down, then you won't put them too much on the spot.

Students often like this kind of semi-competition, although some can be put off. Again, if you, as the tutor, make it seem like a light-hearted piece of fun, then that is how the students will perceive it. If you have the odd student who likes to coast a bit, they can get away with the minimum amount of work, but it also gives the shyer,

more knowledgeable students a chance to show what they can do without their having to do it in front of a large group. It is also a good technique for a new tutor to use, as you can still feel 'in charge' of the session, but at the same time, you are allowing the students to do most of the work.

Above all, think of questions as a teaching technique as well as a means of testing. It really can be a powerful teaching tool.

Questioning techniques

We will look at questioning as a means of assessment in Chapter 6. Although there is some overlap with using questions as a teaching technique, the two are not entirely the same.

There are largely two types of question – the open question and the closed question. A closed question normally requires a simple 'yes/no' answer, or a straightforward fact. 'Is the Pope Catholic?' is a closed question, as is 'What was the date of the Battle of Waterloo?' On the other hand, a question such as 'Do you think we should remain in NATO?' is an open question. It is asking for a point-of-view or an opinion.

One of the dangers of questioning is to fall into the trap of asking 'guess what I'm thinking' questions. 'What is the most important aspect of Christianity?' might lead to a rigorous discussion. On the other hand, students might sit there in total bewilderment, wondering if there is an actual answer to the question.

Question and answer is not the same as discussion. Question and answer tends to be more teacher-directed. Discussion allows students to interact with each other much more. It is fairly common to find that you end up with something of a hybrid of the two, using a bit of question and answer to lead into a discussion.

Debates and panels

Debates may seem a bit old-fashioned now, but what's wrong in that? Sometimes old-fashioned techniques are so different for a younger generation, that they have a novelty value. A debate uses a statement as its opening gambit, usually in the form of 'This house believes that the prison system is ineffective'.

Normally, the debate is guided by a chairperson. You have two people for each side of the debate. They take it in turns to represent each side of the argument. After they have presented their arguments,

the audience is allowed to ask them questions. Once all the questions have been answered, the audience (the house) should then vote for the side that has put forward the most persuasive argument.

In an era when emotions seem more important than analysis, it is sometimes difficult for people to leave their own personal opinions out of their decisions. They should, in theory, be voting for the best-constructed argument. In practice, they have a tendency to vote for whoever they sided with before the debate began.

Don't forget that some students might feel singled out if they were expected to stand up and give a formal talk. Also, the students who are not going to speak formally may need guidance in order to think about the kinds of questions they might like to ask.

This is not a method you would want to use every lesson, but fun once a year for some subjects. It might even be worth getting in a couple of outside 'experts'. Debates can be a useful learning method for subjects where the ability to express an argument or a point of view is part of the subject. It also exposes the students to different points of view and ideas that they might not otherwise have considered. Debates are often used in English, the social sciences and study skills courses.

Panel

Perhaps less daunting for students than standing up to take part in a debate is a panel. This method can work very well; think of all the examples on the radio or TV – Gardeners' Question Time, Any Questions, etc. The main danger is with the person (either 'panellist' or 'audience') whose area of specialism is pontificating about absolutely nothing. Either a small group of expert outsiders, or members of the group who are well-informed on a certain topic or topics or who have worked on a specific area for the occasion are then expected to answer questions from the group.

I once saw an excellent drama lesson, which used a version of the panel. One group of students gave a rehearsed reading of a play. At the end of the reading, they stayed in character whilst other students asked them questions about the play and their feelings. This was a brilliant exercise. The 'acting' students not only developed their skills in performance – style reading, but they also had to work at improvisation. The 'audience' students, not only got to see and hear an extract from a play, but they were able to find out more about each of the characters.

Outside experts and interviews

Students often love the chance to interview an outside expert, especially if they're something of a local celebrity. You might be surprised at just how generous some well-known figures can be with their time if it is for an educational project.

Others, of course, may demand enormous fees. Approach them with the idea that they would be doing you a huge favour. If your expert has written a book or even several books on the subject in question, you can always encourage them to bring along some copies and mention to your students that they might like to buy some books, because X has so generously given of their time.

Brief the expert fully. Give them the kind of information that they need to know about your group. Tell them something about the group's knowledge, ability, experience and the work you have done to date. Also, make sure that the expert knows exactly what you want from them.

Think about some of the questions that your group might ask beforehand. It seems a terrible shame to get in an expert only to find that no one has thought through what they wanted to ask. This technique can be used either with members of your group or by using an outside expert. The technique is not just limited to interview practice, for example with a group of unemployed looking for work, but also as a means of getting information from a member of the group without putting him or her under the strain of standing up and giving a talk.

Learner-centred methods

Of course, there is always going to be some overlap between teacher-centred and learner-centred methods, but the following at least emphasise the learner's role in the class, rather than that of the teacher.

Simulation

Simulation is, as its name suggests, a way in which we try to replicate real-life situations in the classroom. The ultimate simulation, of course, is to pilot a moon landing from the safety of a mock-up capsule anchored firmly to the earth. Unfortunately, not every educational establishment has one of these, although most Further Education Colleges have training restaurants, where students can practise and

develop their skills in a real-life situation. Fire stations have towers where fire officers can rehearse saving people from burning buildings.

If you were training would-be mountaineers for an Everest expedition, for instance, you could give your students the experience of climbing a smaller mountain here at home. If you use simulation, you must make sure that it is as near the real experience as you can possibly make it, without placing your students at unnecessary risk.

Role-play

This is a teaching technique where members of the group act out a scene, a scenario or a series of parts and then analyse the experience afterwards. Role plays are often used in the kinds of subjects where we need to explore emotions. Counselling courses and classes involving the practical application of psychology use role-play. Being lectured how to counsel someone who has just lost their partner is not quite the same as actually going through the motions in a role-play. Often in these situations, the other students are asked to observe what is taking place.

You may also find that some students do not want to role-play in front of the whole group. They might find it awkward or embarrassing. In this case, you might consider using several unobserved role-plays, making the activity seem a little more like pair-work.

Role plays don't always have to involve complex situations that place an emphasis on affective learning. They can be extremely useful for training people for commercial purposes. For example: How is the receptionist going to deal with an angry customer? How is the tourist on holiday in the Algarve going to buy a loaf of bread, using Portuguese?

Role-plays can be fun and effective, but they need a well-thought-out scenario if they are to work properly. You need to give your students clear instructions as to the parameters of the role-play and what exactly they are trying to simulate.

Games

You can also use games to help with learning. Often, existing board games can be adapted to suit your needs. Scrabble or Boggle, for instance, adapted according to the situation, can be excellent for Basic Skills or Languages courses. Games add a competitive element to your class. Normally, this is not particularly serious competition, but there is little point in playing a game if you are not intending to win.

I tend to think that dividing a class into smaller groups that then form 'teams' is the safest way of introducing competition. It doesn't put individuals on the spot; it increases teamwork and generally makes for a fun level of competition.

Discovery learning

As we go about our daily lives, we pick up bits and pieces of information and ideas, almost without concentrating. In the modern, information-based age, we can't help it. We're bombarded from all sides with information that slips in under our defences through our ears, eyes, mouths and noses. We soon recognise the smell of fresh-baked bread or the taste of real coffee. We tune in to TV sets and radios, absorb music, news, films, videos. This is all a form of discovery learning. You can use these techniques in your course, but I am going to suggest that they are of limited use for teachers of adults. I am happy for you to disagree, but I am convinced that adults enrol on courses in order to learn something. Asking them to go away and discover the perfect tense of irregular verbs is a cheat.

Where discovery learning is truly useful in adult education is the fact that adults, having lived longer than children, have discovered more things and consequently learnt more. This prior experience and learning can sometimes be certificated nowadays, but the important thing is that it means that you have a group of students who already know something about your subject and also general knowledge from the world they inhabit.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning is not quite the same as discovery learning. Experiential learning involves finding out about something by going through the process itself. For example, I once went on a course on the way in which groups work. For several days we sat around and discussed how we thought groups worked and, in the end, we discovered whether or not we, as a group, had gone through the processes of forming a group.

I'm not sure that this is necessarily the best way to learn about something. Quite frankly, I could have read up on what I learned in about half an hour, but it was quite fun watching people determined to humiliate themselves in front of perfect strangers. I must have learnt something, because I got a certificate.

Facilitation

Experiential learning is often facilitated rather than taught. I asked my friend David, who does a lot of facilitation work, to define the term for me and, to be honest, his answer was far too clever. I nodded with complete incomprehension and tried to read between the lines.

The problem seems to be that no one can quite define it, and it means different things depending on which side of the Atlantic you happen to be. Advocates of facilitation will probably send out a lynch mob for my definition (once they've discussed who is going to carry the noose and voted on it democratically), but I think that, in the general context of the teaching of adults, facilitation is to do with allowing students to concentrate on their own learning and take a step back as a teacher.

If your class has divided into groups and these groups are now working on a problem-solving exercise, when you wander round the class as a resource for the students, then you are teaching in a facilitative way. Facilitation can also be used to describe the process of acting as the chairperson of a group, enabling the group to achieve its aims.

Tutorials

If you are working in the further education sector, you might well be expected to take tutorials. Tutorials are normally either one-to-one sessions with individual students, or small groups. A well-run tutorial will give the tutor and student a two-way process that enables each to feed back to the other.

In the main, there are no tutorials in adult education, although you might think of your little promenades round the room as people are working as an opportunity for some kind of mini-tutorial. If you have to give tutorials, make sure that you set out an agenda for you and your student. This doesn't have to be the kind of formal agenda you need for a meeting, but you could simply start by saying 'Today, I'd like to discuss the following three things . . . have you got anything else you'd like to talk about?' Then, try to stick to the agenda, otherwise you will find that you end up with a meaningless hodgepodge of chit-chat.

Brainstorming, buzz groups and snowballing

Even if you've not heard these terms before the chances are that you have used one or other of these methods. Brainstorming is a way

of listing all the ideas associated with a particular topic, each member of the group contributing randomly. One member of the group (not necessarily the tutor) usually writes the words on a board or a flip-chart. This must be done without additional comment from you or the group and all contributions should be recorded without the contributions being altered in any way.

It is best to keep the period of brainstorming quite short. It can then be followed up with group discussion on the ideas, which have been listed. It is a powerful tool if used well, but can be difficult to manage as a whole group exercise.

You might feel more comfortable trying a variation of brainstorming known as a buzz group, where the class is normally divided into very small groups who would think very quickly of ideas associated with a certain topic. Unlike brainstorming, comment is allowed. It is a very useful technique for solving problems or for getting groups to think in a highly creative way. A problem is worked out individually, then students get into pairs to discuss what they have been working on, the process of comparison is taken a step further by working in a four. The groups of four then report back to the whole group.

I'm not the only teacher who finds using brainstorming difficult to control. As I like to promote discussions in my groups, I often find that students want to comment on ideas, which goes against the whole spirit and principle of brainstorming. I have to confess that I always want to get my two pennyworth in as well. I tend to use individual brainstorming or buzz groups as I like the interaction.

It is worth trying both methods as they can be very useful learning aids. You might also try snowballing – where a large group is divided into pairs, who then brainstorm. The pairs then join up with another pair, sharing ideas, then group together in an eight. This can be an excellent way of coming up with ideas and reflecting on them.

Case study and problem solving

The story of an event, set of circumstances, problem or even a person. The group analyses the case study in order to give possible solutions. It is best if a case study is true. However, you may not be able to find anything suitable, in which case you should try to base your case study in truth, or at least give it a ring of truth. In other words, even if it didn't happen, it might well have done.

Case studies can be extremely useful in group work, where problem solving and teamwork are to be encouraged. This can be done either

individually or in groups. Some problems lend themselves best to individual solution (too many cooks spoil the broth). Other problems are best dealt with in groups, where you often find that the range of ideas generated is much greater and much more creative. It is for you to decide what works best on the merit of each problem.

Flexible learning, open learning and distance learning

If you are teaching in mainstream adult education, you are probably unlikely to come across these types of learning. In colleges, commerce and industry, however, they have become very popular ways of teaching students.

Open learning is a blanket term to cover all the sorts of learning which takes place largely on an individual basis with the learner working at his or her own pace, more often than not at home, although increasingly at the workplace, and where the student has very little contact with the tutor. Open learning covers home learning, distance learning, correspondence courses, etc. Nowadays, the internet has opened up a whole range of courses that make learning available to people no matter where they live. You may find that some of your students are studying an open learning course in the same, or a similar subject, elsewhere and are using your class as a kind of support mechanism.

For the traditional adult education tutor, these kinds of methods of learning are not normally used in a formal sense, but you may find yourself doing so as and when necessary. Many adult education tutors give out their own telephone numbers or email addresses so that their students can contact them as and when necessary. I have found that it is rare that students take advantage of the tutor by telephoning at all hours of the day and night. Contact by phone and email is one way in which you are providing a little additional service – a safety net, a mini-tutorial, a guiding or helping hand – to students who do not have the full formal back-up that larger educational establishments might be able to provide.

Group discussion

There are two main types of discussion. One is guided discussion where the tutor leads the group through a series of questions to arrive at certain conclusions. In group discussion, where the group can consist of all the members of the class or smaller sub-groups, the tutor might

take a back seat or join in as an equal member or take on the role of devil's advocate. Essentially it is a freer kind of group.

One very popular and effective way of teaching subjects where discussion is important, is to have a handout that covers your main points. You can then talk through with your students the items on the handout one by one. This is a great technique for mixing your own formal input and drawing on students' own experience and knowledge. This gives the session a relaxed, but purposeful, atmosphere. Without the handout, it might seem too informal. Students may well feel that 'chat' is for coffee breaks and that you should do 'real work' in class.

Seminar

This is a very controlled form of group discussion. A seminar starts with a paper (by that we mean someone reads out an article or essay they have written) or an introductory lecture by an 'expert' (this could be a student), which has a clearly stated argument. It is hoped that this argument will then get the group so excited that fruitful discussion will ensue. It needs an excellent speaker/lecturer, preferably one being quite controversial, and some firm leadership at the discussion stage.

Small groups

Dividing your class into smaller groups can work very well. You may find that your students always form the same little groups. This is not necessarily a problem, unless the groups begin to look a little bit cliquey.

Most adult classes are quite happy to break up into different small groups from week-to-week. They are not particularly worried about who they work with. If you do find that individual groups are getting a bit cliquey, or you want to avoid this happening, it's not too difficult to come up with a series of little strategies for organising your sub-groups. For instance, you might use register order, or surnames, or draw names from a hat. Don't overdo it. Some people come to adult education to learn together. If a husband and wife are learning about interior design, they may well want to be together so that they can put the skills they learn to use on a joint basis.

Working in groups is a very important aspect of adult learning. Throughout this book I have stressed that adults already know a great deal. Working in small groups allows your students to swap

ideas and expertise and to learn from each other. It is also a useful way to encourage friendship and socialisation amongst the members of the group.

Group working is not always straightforward. Occasionally, one group can complete an exercise in a world record time, whilst another struggles along. It's often worth having additional activities up your sleeve for group work, as well as for individual exercises.

Sometimes a sub-group can get a little stuck. It's your responsibility to help unstick them. You need to be ready to ask for information, to help re-direct their thinking or give explanations as appropriate. Try opening with, 'Can I give you any help' rather than, 'You lot look a bit stuck. Could you do with a helping hand?'

Displays

Holding a display is a good method of allowing students to show off their work and a chance for them to feel proud of their achievements. Don't think of a display merely in terms of a bunch of pictures on a wall.

Art groups can put up their pictures, craft groups can show off their creations. Creative writing groups can publish their poems and stories in little home-made booklets (a booklet of their work is, essentially, a display). Cookery groups can allow other students to taste their dishes.

One residential college where I work encourages the students on different courses to have a wander around the other groups during the coffee break. Positive comments from students doing completely different courses is amazingly encouraging. I have yet to see the motor-cycle maintenance team link up with keep fit to do human pyramids around the adult education centre car-park, but I look forward to it with relish.

The great thing about a display is that it not only allows students to be proud of their achievements, but it also shows potential students what they might achieve. If you are going to hold some kind of display or exhibition, it is also worth seeing it as a chance to involve the local press. They are always looking for a story.

Project

A project can be undertaken on an individual, small group or whole group basis. Generally it is a larger piece of work than usual, allowing for research by the group or the individual. Projects need a good deal of guidance from the tutor if they are not going to flounder.

In craft classes, students often come with their own projects in mind. I know of a woodwork class where one student had joined in order to make her own coffin.

Ice-breakers and warm-ups

An ice-breaker is a game or short activity aimed at allowing you and the group to get to know each other at the start of a course. Ice-breakers can also be used as warm-up activities at the start of a session. One typical ice-breaker is when the group stands in a circle and throws a soft ball or a bean bag to one another. The person doing the throwing has to name the person who is to catch the ball. Of course, this calls for a little bit of manual dexterity, and we're not all blessed with that!

One ice-breaker that I've seen used in a variety of forms and have several versions of myself is the 'Find someone who . . .'. Students need a sheet of paper on which they have a series of commands, such as 'Find someone who has travelled more than ten miles to be here today' or 'Find someone who has a red car'.

Warm-ups are similar, but have the intention of re-starting a group, rather than getting them going in the first place.

Field trips

Field trips and study tours are an excellent way of getting outside the classroom and visiting places of interest to the group. The Art class can go to a gallery; the French class on a day trip to Boulogne. Field trips are a good means of bringing a subject to life.

However, beware turning an educational trip into something that can be booked through a travel agent. A good field trip will involve preparation and planning. Will you need to hire a coach or a minibus? Can students find their way themselves? Can you negotiate some kind of group discount? Don't forget, there may be students for whom the cost of an educational trip is prohibitive. You need to find out if there is any way in which you can help pay for their costs, without embarrassing them. You also need to prepare the students for the educational aspect of the trip.

So, if you are going to the art gallery, try to visit it yourself beforehand, or if it is too far away, get hold of a catalogue. You can then prepare useful tasks for your students to do. You might, for instance, prepare a worksheet that identifies certain works of art that illustrate different artist's techniques.

Once you've got all this educational stuff out of the way, then you can open the crate of lager on the back seat and get busy with the community singing.

And finally . . .

Choosing appropriate methods and a variety of them is vital in constructing positive, useful sessions where learning actually takes place. It is worth involving your students in deciding which methods will be most appropriate for your course. Ask them if they have any particular preference for the various methods you use. Feedback from students is as important for the methods you use as it is for the content of your course.

We've seen that at one end of the scale there is the lecture, where the teacher has to do all the real work, whilst the students largely sit as passive receptors of your pearls of wisdom. At the other end of the scale is the 'discovery' method, where the teacher serves merely as a guide. In general, if you see yourself only in terms of these two extremes, you are probably not doing your job as well as you could. The very best teachers use a wide range of techniques and carefully select the methods and approaches they will use according to what they are trying to teach.

Resources for teaching and learning

Some people argue that teaching resources and learning resources are not the same thing. They reckon that teaching resources are things such as the equipment we can use in our classes – video players, tape-recorders or whiteboards, for instance.

Learning resources are therefore what the students use – books, worksheets and tapes. Personally, I don't see that much of a distinction between them as, certainly with adults, most of this kind of stuff can be used by students and tutor alike.

In terms of the equipment you can use, no longer do you have to be limited to a chalkboard and three pieces of chalk. Most Adult Education Centres and Further Education Colleges now have a wide range of equipment available for you to use. In some larger commercial and public organisations they have the very latest gadgetry – often whether they need it or not.

The relentless advance of technology means that there are all sorts of new devices coming onto the market all the time. Digital Video Discs (DVDs) may be taking over from CD-Roms and video cassettes, computer-generated graphics programmes may be making the overhead projector redundant, but the techniques of using them are essentially the same.

Technology is no substitute for good teaching. Learn some useful methods of showing a video film and they apply equally well to a Super8 movie (remember them?) or DVD. There may be cleverer techniques you can now use, but the essentials haven't changed. Even if your establishment has all the latest gear, you cannot rely on a piece of equipment being available or working or comprehensible to someone without three degrees in electronic engineering. If, like me, you teach in a wide variety of venues a fair distance from home, you are even more at the mercy of forces beyond your control. You arrive to find

that your session entitled 'Presentation Skills – Using the Overhead Projector' is in serious jeopardy because there's been a power-cut, which is what happened to me once!

More sophisticated equipment such as video cameras will probably need to be procured from elsewhere. Make sure that you know the local procedure for booking larger items of equipment. Above all, make sure you are familiar with the equipment you are using. Don't be shy about asking someone for help or a demonstration. You might even find one of your students is an expert.

Thorough preparation means that you will be able to cope with most disasters, but don't rely on one item of equipment to see you through a session. Carry extras, spares and always have a reserve lesson that doesn't need any large items of equipment.

Audio

Most establishments have a cassette recorder of some description. Some may have something even posher, such as a minidisk or CD player, but a cassette player is a very useful tool. The great thing about cassette players is that just about everybody has one. If your students don't actually own a cassette player and they need an individual one for your course, they can buy them cheaply enough new and for a few pence at car-boot sales. Similarly, audio-tapes can be picked up for a trifling amount, especially if you buy a bulk pack.

The chances are that your centre's cassette player looks like the flight deck of Concorde and has more knobs than the cloakroom at the Ritz. You could spend the first half of the lesson trying to fit the tape into the slot where the batteries should go, so find out how it works beforehand. It may be tempting to bring in your own machine, but you must check local Health and Safety Regulations before so doing.

As with video, it is a little too easy to turn on a tape and expect people simply to listen. Make sure that your students have some positive exercise to do when listening to the tape. For language learning, this might be a gap-filling exercise, whereby you have transcribed the tape, omitting every tenth word or whatever. For a humanities or social science subject, you could simply ask students to note down the main points of a speaker's argument, before using the resulting answers as a springboard into getting students to give their own opinions.

If you produce your own materials on cassette you can give them out as part of an assignment to be done outside class time. Materials

recorded from the radio can also be loaned out, but do check about copyright restrictions.

Chalkboard/Whiteboard

Do not sneer at the good old-fashioned chalkboard or its modern counterpart the whiteboard, which instead of using chalk uses water-soluble felt-tip pens. No matter what, it remains the greatest piece of equipment in any classroom. If you have not written on a board before, it is worthwhile getting in somewhere and practising, as it is a lot harder than it looks, so here are a few tips:

- If you know what you want to write on the board in a particular session, get into the room beforehand and write it on the board.
- When you have written or drawn something on the board always go to the back of the room to make sure it is clearly visible/legible.
- Don't talk to the board whilst you are writing on it. Your voice will be muffled and it's rude to turn your back on someone when you're speaking to them anyway.
- Don't plant your feet in one place while you are writing. You will find your writing curves away towards the end. Instead of writing in straight lines you will end up with a series of arcs.

Bad board writing is an insult to your students. If you really can't master it, get hold of an OHP instead.

At the end of the session, wipe off what you have written. The next person to use the room doesn't want to have to clean up your mess for you.

Computers and the internet

The personal computer is everywhere nowadays. Even Neanderthal Luddites like me know their way around one, even if we do type with just three fingers.

Obviously, there are courses such as word-processing, using the internet, desk-top publishing where using the computer is central to the course. As well as being a vast area of study in their own right, you might like to use a computer, or a suite of computers to teach various topics. For example, students on a Basic English course could produce their own newspaper using a desk-top publishing package. You could use a commercially available educational package of which there are

now hundreds, although most seem to be aimed at the schools market. If you come up with a project or a session that is exciting enough, you often stir up sufficient enthusiasm to overcome all the difficulties.

Some people are scared stiff of computers, hence the proliferation of courses with titles such as 'Computing for the Terrified'. You may find that using a computer merely alienates some of your students, although it can provide a great opportunity for students to learn from each other if you have some students who are computer-literate.

If you are interested in using computers as an adjunct to your course, it is worth taking some advice, especially if you're not too confident yourself. Computers require a high level of personal skill and knowledge and obviously need a lot of expensive equipment. You may not have used one either at work or in the home. It may be worth taking a computing course yourself – you will not only learn a new skill, but you'll also get the chance to watch another teacher at work.

Of course, the internet is one of the greatest learning resources now available. The problem with it is that you have to hack your way through endless reams of trash and pornography to find anything of worth. Learning to use the net is an extremely useful tool for you as a tutor and a powerful means of enabling your students to become independent learners and researchers. You don't even have to own a computer or have internet access yourself. There are plenty of public libraries and internet cafés. You will also find that students with an internet facility at home are often extraordinarily generous with their time and skills.

Flipchart

The flipchart is a free-standing easel-cum-whiteboard to which you can attach a large pad of paper, generally A1 or A2 size, which means that we're looking at big bits of paper. They are very useful for teaching in accommodation where you would not normally find a permanent board, as they are portable. Flipchart paper is also useful for giving out to smaller groups to help them feedback to larger groups.

If you can get hold of a pad of flipchart paper, you can write out beforehand what you would normally write during the session, thereby saving valuable contact time. Another cheeky little method is to write any awkward facts, such as dates or words that are hard to spell, on the pad in very light pencil. When you write in bold on top, citing these facts as if from memory, everyone will think what a wonderful, knowledgeable, intelligent teacher you are.

Just be careful not to mix up your felt-tip pens. You are better off with permanent marker for the paper and non-permanent for the whiteboard.

Games

Games can be a useful teaching aid and you don't need to limit them to the last session before Christmas. There are many commercially available games which could be adapted to your needs. You might also like to devise your own simple games in order to teach a certain point. Do try your own games out first at home, even if you have to imagine that you are all the players. As well as providing a bit of light relief, the game you choose must be relevant to the work you are doing in class. Learners enjoy light-hearted activities, but they are there to learn.

When using games, everyone needs to be involved. If some people actually don't like the game they can be alienated very quickly. Don't think that anyone who opts out of 'team games' is not being a team player; there may be plenty of other reasons why they don't wish to take part.

Commercial training often includes outdoor pursuits games. By learning how to build a suspension bridge over a thousand foot chasm using only seven cornflake boxes and some left-over darning wool, you are suddenly part of a well-oiled human machine that can then solve all the company's problems at a stroke. Of course, it may be a lot of fun (if you like that sort of thing), but the whole concept is flatulent nonsense. If you want to put yourself at the whims and mercy of dangerous psychopaths, then become an international drug smuggler.

Radio and television

In the United Kingdom, we are phenomenally lucky to have excellent television and radio programmes. Sure, there's a lot of dross, but there's still some good stuff. Both TV and radio are useful sources for teaching materials. The BBC and several of the independent television companies produce programmes specifically for educational purposes. Open University programmes and the BBC's learning zone, which often transmit their educational programmes overnight so that you can record them, are excellent, as is Channel 4.

There are also many other programmes that could be used in the classroom. Soap operas often raise important social issues. Documentary

and current affairs programmes are useful for a wide variety of subjects. Everyday programmes on cookery, household improvements, history, the regions – almost anything can be put to some kind of educational use.

They also have Education Officers, who might be worth contacting. Record anything that looks useful and read the sections in this chapter on audio and video, for a little homely advice.

Video

Essentially using video falls into two different categories – watching video films and making video films. If you are going to use video, it will probably be for showing films, TV programmes, etc. Avoid the trap of thinking that showing a video is a soft option where you can slap in a video cassette and have a quick snooze. Most adults attending class in the evening would regard this as something they could easily do at home. If you are showing a video, make sure that it is relevant, divided into manageable chunks and devise a range of activities to go with it.

It is less likely that you would use video for actually making films. However, if you did, you could provide students with an exciting and unusual experience. It is not worth making a video film for its own sake, but it might be a fun way of examining some of the work they do. For example, if you were teaching a public speaking course or a customer services course, it would provide students with an ideal opportunity for them to examine their techniques, their strengths and where they needed to improve.

If you feel inspired to film activities within your group, have a word with your line manager to find out about availability of equipment. Should it prove impossible to get hold of the necessary equipment within the centre, consider hiring one and splitting the cost among the group.

Overhead projector

Normally known as the OHP, this device looks like a square metallic box with a lens on a stalk; which is hardly surprising as this is essentially what it is. In a nutshell, the OHP will take whatever is written on acetate slides and project it onto a flat surface. You may not even have to use a projector screen. You can prepare your own slides, writing directly onto the acetate sheets using either a water-soluble or

a spirit-soluble pen. If you are making materials you want to keep, it is best to use the latter type. If you are computer-literate and buy the right kind of acetates for your printer, you can even print them out.

The best thing about the OHP is that you can prepare materials that can be used over and over again with very little loss of quality.

Slides

Most centres or colleges will have a slide projector. Very few have a slide library. If you are going to show slides, the likelihood is that you will have to provide or even produce your own. Slides are a very useful way of sharing pictures with the whole group. Using slides in a lecture is a good method of ensuring that it is not simply you talking all the time; on the other hand, the pitfall is that what was intended to be a slide-show could simply become an illustrated lecture.

Encourage comments from your students. Ask them to bring along their own relevant slides. Keep it lively. If your topic is Greek Architecture and you have taken the slides yourself while on a family holiday, avoid showing the one of Auntie Lil in front of the Acropolis, unless it is to show the scale of the building.

Making your own materials

Pop into any decent bookshop and you will see loads of ready-made materials for teaching most subjects. However, many of these are geared towards subjects that carry some kind of certification. It isn't always possible to find appropriate material for your subject. Even if you are teaching something for which there is a useful course book, you will find that your lessons go so much better if you create your own resources. If you do this, you will soon build up a range of appropriate, tailored materials that you can use again and again.

A teacher of glass painting might like to create a whole series of examples to show students that will help them to see what possibilities exist. A woodwork tutor might like to create a range of joints as examples for the students. A modern languages tutor might collect everyday items. Packaging from everyday materials brought back from abroad can add realism to a lesson on shopping. Tutors of Basic Skills can use an old kitchen clock to help practise telling the time.

There is no doubt that creating your own teaching aids is a very positive thing to do. It can also be very time-consuming. The time you invest in creating your own materials must pay off in your classes.

To spend four hours preparing for an activity that will last five minutes in class is very noble, but probably a waste of effort. Don't reinvent the wheel. If you've seen something used successfully before, adapt it for your own teaching.

Handouts

It is often worth preparing handouts for your group. Handouts could perform a lot of different functions, e.g. act as ready-made lecture notes, summarise a particular topic, act as an introduction to the next topic. Handouts can also come in the form of worksheets, which are a good way of moving away from the rigid course-book approach. Adult students seem to love getting handouts. A lot of teachers call them 'happy sheets'. If people go away from a course with lots of bits of paper that they can peruse at their leisure, then they are contented.

This is a little bit cynical, but there is an enormous core of truth in it. Handouts are one of the most useful learning aids that you can supply. Good teachers make a huge variety of handouts with very different aims in mind.

Handouts for reference

These are extremely useful for students to put in their files or folders. Book lists, contact lists, lists of the jargon for your subject, vocabulary lists for language learning, diagrams and so forth all make useful handouts. Students can refer to them at home and in your classes. A well-designed handout is useful for a practical subject, even if you don't actually use it in the session. These are not quite teaching aids in themselves, but should provide students with additional information.

Students often see these as a bit of a bonus. This kind of handout cuts down on their own personal research time and points them in the right direction. It can also help their confidence incredibly, if they do not keep on having to ask you to clarify a point over and over again, simply because they've forgotten.

Note-taking handouts

As I said earlier, a handout with a few bullet-points on it can be very useful to guide students' note-taking. For example, you can use an overhead projector or a whiteboard to put up your main points. The students can write their own notes around your bullet points.

Worksheets

These will vary enormously according to your subject and the level of the group. The simplest worksheets might include word searches or pictures that need naming. More advanced worksheets may ask students to give highly complex replies.

Don't forget that it is very easy to lose a worksheet. We all know how we can search our houses from attic to cellar for a particular item, only to find it two years later when eventually we move the fridge to clean behind it. Always keep a few spare copies. Students who've missed a class or forgotten or lost their sheets will really appreciate the way you can solve what they will perceive as a problem.

When using a worksheet for the first time, keep a copy on one side and, if anything does not work particularly well, mark up the copy and change it the next time you use it. Worksheets and handouts should:

- be attractive to the learner – we don't want to put them off with a poor design
- have plenty of 'white space' – gaps between paragraphs, good margins
- be written in a good-sized font – at the very least 10, but preferably 12 or even 14 point
- have relevant pictures and diagrams
- use headings, sub-headings and bullet-points
- leave room to complete exercises (if necessary)
- be straightforward – you're trying to teach, not baffle
- be checked for spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes.

Tutor's portfolio

It might be worth building up a portfolio of examples of your own work that students can look through for ideas. For some subjects, this might just be a file or folder; for others you might have to put together a box of examples. For instance, if you are teaching paper making, you could carry with you a series of samples to show students what they can achieve. A little time spent tying a few knots and mounting them on a board will show students learning to sail what their end-products should look like. Some photographs of the various stages of the construction of a larger item can also help students see the way in which they are going.

Dictation

Dictation has gone completely out of fashion. I suspect that it is because a generation of teachers bored their students rigid by 'dictating notes'. I seem to remember that this was a favourite technique amongst the old 'O'-level teachers of yore.

I suspect that dictating notes is one of the greatest wastes of a student's time. However, there are other forms of dictation that can be useful for certain types of class. English and Modern Language classes can both benefit from occasional spurts of dictation. It genuinely helps with spelling. However, it is best to keep dictation short and, rather than 'mark' it, give the passage or series of words to the students for them to check themselves. Try not to include any words that they are unlikely to have come across.

It's best not to swap papers as that can put students on the spot. Students will often compare notes of their own accord and it can be a powerful way of enabling them to learn from one another. I would still use it sparingly.

Comprehension

We all remember comprehensions from our schooldays. Frequently, it was a case of reading through a passage, culled from some obscure nineteenth-century historian, after which we were then expected to answer questions that varied from the inane to the obscure.

Comprehension is an excellent aid to learning, especially in the humanities. Social Sciences and Languages lend themselves very well to comprehension. The real trick is to make a comprehension relevant to your students.

Giving instructions

There's an old adage amongst teachers. 'Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you've told them.' It may sound cynical, but it's quite a useful tool to use. It's a technique that's often used in textbooks and academic books. The introduction to a chapter or unit 'Tells them what you're going to tell them'. The main body of the unit 'tells them', and then the conclusion 'tells them what you've told them'.

If you are giving instructions, it's a technique that is not to be ignored. Imagine you are about to get students to use a piece of gym

equipment – a rowing machine for example. You might explain the parts of the machine, then get on the machine and show them how it's done, then get a volunteer to climb onto the machine and guide them through it.

This is, of course, partly a demonstration, but you are also giving instructions on how to use the rowing machine. By breaking it down into three steps – your explanation, your demonstration and guiding a student through using the machine as an example, you have 'told them what you're going to tell them, told them and told them what you've told them'. As have I in this little section!

It is worth thinking about the instructions you give in order to make them as clear as possible. As a student, there can be nothing more embarrassing than having misunderstood the instructions, to find that you're the only one out of step.

Assignments

A lot of tutors tend to use the word 'assignment' to mean 'homework'. Fearing that the word homework smacks too much of schooldays, they think 'assignment' sounds better. They may have a point. On the other hand, 'assignments' are what James Bond would go on. It's pretty difficult imagining some cross-stitch practice or 'taking a few photos of anything red' as being on a par with paragliding away from the evil forces of SMERSH.

You will have to negotiate assignments with your group. In weekly adult education classes, it can be quite difficult to expect students to produce regular weekly work. I think this also depends on the course. Students on a course that leads to certification will almost certainly have to do work outside the class.

For 'leisure'-oriented classes, the idea of voluntary homework is a good one. Try to make the homework something that will stretch the students into some additional skill or practise one they have just learnt, rather than making it the basis of your next teaching session. Anyone who has not done the work, for whatever reason, may feel left out. They may even drop out of your class because they don't want to be shown up.

I once read an opinion column in an art magazine, where an artist who also worked as an adult education tutor upbraided her students for not doing enough work. It ran along the lines of 'I went to art college for seven years and devote at least forty hours a week to painting, so how

can students who only pick up a paint brush in my class expect to be as good as Monet . . .’

I can see how it might be annoying that your students don’t put in a forty-hour week on your subject, but you have to accept that they are human and have commitments elsewhere. If hoping to be Monet in a week is an unreasonable expectation, say so at the start of the class. Most students appreciate honesty.

When setting assignments, allow individuals to choose their own work whenever you think it is practical or possible. For instance, if you are teaching a Creative Writing class, you might think it is important that students be allowed to develop their own ideas. However, some students may not be ready for this. They might want to be given set themes or topics to work on for homework. Similarly, if someone is engaged on a crafts project, they may simply need some advice on which aspect of the work to tackle next.

One way round this problem might be to have a choice of a couple of writing exercises that students can choose to do or not to do. Other students who have their own projects can carry on; those who need the guidance have got it.

Books

As colleges, schools and universities transform their libraries into ‘resource centres’, so the good old-fashioned book loses its footing as the most important element of education. You can moan about this as much as you want, but you can’t hold back the forces of technology.

Books, however, are still a vital part of the educational process. Most important for trainers and tutors is the course book, but don’t forget the importance of the general reading book. Sometimes they will be one and the same thing. For instance, the book you are now reading aims to be a general reader on adult education, but could equally well be read as a starting-point for a course on training the trainer or teaching adults.

A number of subjects in mainstream adult education are badly served by course books. They are or may be aimed at younger people, and be too theoretical, too simplistic. If there is a suitable course book, you might like to consider ensuring that all your students get a copy, bearing in mind that they probably have to pay for their own materials.

Work-related subjects tend to be better catered for. There are innumerable books on time management, management techniques,

selling, running a small business, work-based assessment and so on. For most adult students, books on the subject are more of a way of ‘reading round’ what they are doing. It is well worthwhile producing a useful booklist for your students. It will help those who want to read further. You may also find that your students, once they start helping one another, will bring in books of their own to lend to other people. Students on a course on interior design for the home, for instance, might bring in books to give you some idea of the look they are trying to achieve in their bathroom or to discuss with other students what elements of a particular design they might go for.

The great thing about books is that anyone can join their local public library, which usually means that they can borrow books for free. You may find that your students are actually a little wary of joining a library. They may not think of it as the kind of place for them. In this case, they need some gentle encouragement.

And finally . . . when designing tasks

When designing any kind of task – handout, case study, practical work, or whatever – you need to think through the various stages a student will have to follow. Most tasks are successful if you use the following criteria:

- There is an obvious step-by-step progression through the task.
- The task is meaningful – it has some kind of learning outcome.
- Where possible it is related to real life.
- The task is interesting.
- The different elements of the task involve different kinds of exercises.
- Students can tell if they have completed the task successfully.
- It must be of the correct level for students or have different levels of achievement within it.

Assessment and evaluation

If you're new to the terms 'assessment' and 'evaluation', then you may well find that they seem interchangeable. In education, they don't mean the same thing. Assessment is all about checking your students' progress and achievements. Evaluation is to do with making judgements about how well your course, your lessons and your teaching are going.

Assessment

Assessment of your students is an integral part of any course. It does not just apply to those courses that have an examination or some other form of assessment or certification. Assessment is vital for both you and your students to make judgements about their progress.

Student assessment begins at the very first session. As adults are this funny mix of different experiences, skills and knowledge, one of the first things you are going to have to do is assess what your students already know or can do. This can be very hard. One way to assess your students is to give them a little entry 'test'. You can get away with this if you make the test fairly broad and non-threatening. However, it's always worth putting yourself in the place of your students. How might you feel if you wandered along to a flower arranging class and found that before you were allowed to start you had to make a Christmas wreath just to see how good you were? In a mainstream adult education class, you can do this fairly informally. Create a supportive atmosphere by your kindness, empathy and humour and you will soon have people telling you of their prior experiences. If you don't feel confident doing that, then wheedle out some relevant information over coffee.

Obviously, that's not a very scientific approach, but it is better than having no prior assessment at all. At the other end of the scale comes what is normally referred to as APL or APEL, which stands for

Accreditation of Prior Learning (or Experience and Learning). The idea behind this is that students can be given credit for things that they have already learnt or accomplished informally, or at work, before they have joined your course. This is often a dull tick-box exercise, but at least it can prove to the learner that they are not the complete beginner that they feared.

Formative, summative and continuous assessment

Once you have ascertained prior levels of skills, knowledge and experience, you will want to assess progress and achievement. Formative assessment is the kind of assessment that you will do as the course progresses. For instance, in Maths, you need to be able to multiply before you can move on to the concept of squares. Formative assessment would help you to check this. Once you have covered the topic of multiplication, you will want to test your students' ability to use it. You might choose to ask a few questions around the class. The course that you are teaching might call for some kind of interim test as part of continuous assessment. Whatever method you use, you are still assessing as you go along, to ensure that learning has taken place. Once you are convinced your students can multiply, you can then move on to teaching them squares.

Formative assessment is not just for your students. It is also vital for you as a tutor. If you find that your students have not learnt something particularly well, you may well decide that you need to revise that particular area of weakness. This is also sometimes known as diagnostic testing. It also allows you to adjust your course plan (or programme of study or planned learning sequence or whatever) according to what your students need to know.

Summative assessment, on the other hand, takes place at the end of a unit or a course. It is a method of assessing what learning has taken place during the course. Traditionally, summative assessment has taken the form of examinations. These may not be entirely relevant for your students. However, they need some form of assessment, otherwise they may not think that they have made any progress. It doesn't have to be too formal. A quiz, a competition, an activity that tests progress without screaming 'I am testing your progress'. Summative assessment is vital. It tells you whether or not your students have had their money's worth.

You may also come across the term 'continuous assessment'. This is like a combination of summative and formative assessment. Instead

of saving everything up for one big final test, students are assessed at various stages of the course.

If you are teaching an accredited course, you might find that your adult students like continuity of assessment. It enables them to set a series of shorter-term goals. Success in the first assessment will give them a positive outlook for the next step. Also, quite frankly, how would you like to spend three hours in an examination hall nowadays without coffee, easy access to the toilet and several cigarettes?

On the other hand, continuous assessment often carries with it a large workload, which can occasionally be daunting, especially to students whose previous experiences of education have not been entirely positive.

Some assessment strategies

If you are teaching an informal, non-exam class, such as Tai Chi or Music Appreciation, you will probably want to teach in an informal style. It would come as an enormous shock to students if, having been laid-back with them all year, chatting over coffee and creating an air of relaxed purpose, you suddenly whip out a formal examination paper on the last day.

For informal courses, the best form of assessment is also informal. Students may be aware that they are being assessed by you, but they won't think of it as a 'test'. They will soon realise that you are assessing them so that you know more about them and their progress. Most students will thoroughly appreciate this.

At the end of each session, it is worth spending a few minutes checking to see if the students have grasped what you have done. There are many different ways in which you can do this. If you're teaching a craft subject, you can do this almost surreptitiously. If your topic for this evening's electrical class was wiring a lighting circuit, then you can simply spend the last ten minutes seeing if the circuits actually work. You could check on a knowledge-based course by having a little quiz.

If you prefer something a little more upfront, you could restate the aims and learning outcomes for the particular session and ask students if they feel they have achieved this. But the danger with harking on too much about the learning outcomes is that students often 'just want to get on with it'. They can see this as taking up their precious learning time with unnecessary silliness and waffle.

I suspect it is probably best to leave formal assessment out of the adult education classroom unless you are teaching the kind of course that

means it is unavoidable. These will largely be accredited courses. Be warned, however. Nowadays, however, the accent is definitely on accreditation. Even courses that are being pursued for the sheer enjoyment of learning may carry some kind of qualification if they are to have any form of public funding. If this is the case with the course you are teaching, it is well worth investigating what alternatives there are to 'proper' exams. Organisations such as the Open College Network are keen to give credit to adult students for what they have achieved without making the assessment process too obvious.

Self and peer assessment

Learning how to assess your own progress is an extremely useful skill for the learner. You may find that a lot of students who drop out of a course do so because they 'don't feel they're making progress'. They may actually be making terrific progress, but they have nothing against which to measure it.

When students assess how much progress they have made, they generally under-estimate themselves. If they have just undergone some form of assessment and had feedback from it, they will be better placed to make these judgements.

When you can already do something at a high level, it is often very difficult indeed to work out what progress you are making. It becomes harder to quantify. As a beginner, checking progress is often straightforward. In a swimming class for beginners, you might first learn to float, then swim a width, then a length, then two. Progress is obvious and measurable. Deepening one's understanding of Shakespeare, on the other hand, is something far harder to measure. Helping students to assess themselves by giving them assessment tasks they can carry out themselves is an excellent way of doing this. You can quite easily convert the language of your learning outcomes into more straightforward English and create a tick sheet relevant to your subject.

For an introductory course on teaching adults, such a list might contain the following sorts of statements. I can:

- identify five common barriers to learning
Confidently Need practice
- explain the term 'learning outcome'
Confidently Need practice
- design a worksheet for use in the classroom
Confidently Need practice

- write legibly on the board
Confidently Need practice
- design an OHP transparency
Confidently Need practice
- operate the centre's video player
Confidently Need practice
- create an assessment exercise
Confidently Need practice

Of course, these would be better divided into logical sections, but I'm sure you get the idea.

If you want your learners to develop autonomy, self-assessment is a great way to get them doing it. Peer assessment is another method. This has the advantage of helping the group to gel if it is done well. You may often find that whilst an individual student under-estimates their achievements, others in the class are quick to show them just how much they are learning.

There's nothing like a bit of approval and applause from your classmates to bolster you up. If you can encourage your students to give one another feedback in a positive way, then it helps the group and the individuals. You can keep any adverse criticism, which then needs careful handling, until the learners in the group trust one another enough to be able to do so.

Remember

Whatever form of assessment you use, you should feed the results back to your students as soon as you possibly can. You need to take a positive approach to this. Some people may be sorely disappointed with their results. You need to help those students who are disappointed, give appropriate praise and look for constructive ways of moving your students on to the next stage of their learning. Also, if you negotiate learning targets with your students, so that they have a personal investment in what they are going to learn, you will find that they are much more willing to be assessed.

Make any assessment as relevant as you can to your subject. If you have been teaching Yoga, check to see that your students are capable of demonstrating the postures you have taught. If you are teaching flower arranging, get them to do a special seasonal display (for Christmas for instance), in which they can show off the various techniques they've learnt. If they have been studying antiques, do a little 'Going

for a Song' session in which the students are given an antique to identify. If your students are studying website design, get them to make a website for themselves, their businesses or as a hobbyist site. There is no need for assessment to be turgid. In fact, if you're really good, you can turn it into something of a lark.

So, to sum up, effective assessment:

- is relevant to the subject
- is applied in a practical situation
- is as unobtrusive as it can be
- is directly related to learning outcomes and aims
- allows the tutor to revise the course or session plan as appropriate
- gives students a sense of achievement
- motivates the learner to carry on
- helps learners identify what they need to do next#
- enables the tutor to check existing knowledge or skills before moving on to the next stage
- works even better if it involves the student and the group directly.

Learners need positive, constructive feedback from themselves, their peers and you, the tutor. They need to be given it clearly, in a supportive atmosphere and as soon as possible. Assessment isn't just a case of throwing your students on the mercy of an accrediting body.

Evaluation

Evaluation, I'm afraid, is much harder than assessment. As a teacher, your assessments are to do with other people. With evaluation, you are either having to make judgements about your own work as a tutor, or getting someone in to watch you teach. It's very hard for us to make judgements about ourselves and our work. Just like our own students, we often become either much too harsh about our own performance or far too uncritical.

As someone who is going to evaluate your teaching, you need to be critical of your course, the sessions you teach and your performance as a teacher. You must be critical, but without judging yourself too severely. You are not your own hangman. To evaluate your own performance, you have to imagine that you are observing someone else teach. Yes, you want to point out things that could have been done better, but you also want to praise them for the good work they have done. You can be truthful without being vicious. Being self-critical does not

mean being nasty to yourself. That way madness lies. Don't think of evaluation as a luxury add-on extra. It is an important part of teaching, which starts right at the beginning of the teaching process.

Earlier in this book, we looked at the students you might find in your class and how and what they would be taught. This is the very start of the process of evaluation, a process which you must apply throughout a session, after the session has ended and in the planning of the next session or series of sessions.

You do not have to attempt to evaluate on your own. You must involve your students by encouraging them to feed in their own ideas – not just at one formal point in, but throughout the teaching and learning process. This can be done fairly simply. Informal chats over coffee work well. You can even ask students directly. 'I've never tried doing this exercise before, so I'd be pleased if you could let me know if you think it works.' If you create a rapport with your students, you will soon find that you get feedback automatically without asking for it.

Not everyone will like every exercise you do. We know that people learn in very different ways. However, a class taking its lead from the tutor, where the students develop mutual trust and respect, will generally be adaptable. Yet again, we come down to the fact that you, as the tutor, must set the lead in terms of the general attitude that the students will have towards you and others. This is fine for day-to-day evaluation, but sometimes you do need something a little more formal.

Formal evaluation

Most educational establishments ask for some kind of feedback from their students at the end of a course. This is fine, for a one-day or short course, but is less effective on longer courses. If it is distributed after ten, fifteen, maybe thirty weeks, the students who have the most adverse comments to make have probably long since given up the course, so you may only get feedback off the ones who are largely happy. The kinds of evaluation sheets used for this purpose are often quite general. You want to know if your session on how plants cross-pollinate made sense. The centre's form has a vague question about satisfaction with the general standard of teaching.

Some institutions whip the evaluation forms off you as soon as the students fill them in. You get a couple of minutes to glance at them before they disappear into the bowels of the organisation to be number-crunched into a spreadsheet. This is not particularly useful

for you as a tutor. You should ask to see the evaluation forms or, if possible, make copies for yourself. It is only by being able to evaluate your work that you can make improvements, adjustments and alterations to what you do. We all want to be better teachers, and this is one way how you can do it.

But don't dismiss this kind of evaluation form entirely. If the institution or department can turn round and tell the people with the purse strings that 95 per cent of students found the standard of teaching good or very good, it probably won't harm their funding prospects. Nor should you dismiss it totally on a personal level. Your students telling the powers that be that they found your teaching good or very good is a genuine pat on the back. We all need praise from time to time. No, don't dismiss it, but take it with a pinch of salt. You need proper feedback, but you need it in a way that will be useful to you.

It is worthwhile constructing some form of evaluation sheet which can be used at the end of a term or after a topic. The questions you ask will depend on your subject. If you teach Art, you might like to know if there is any demand for a session on History of Art. If you teach Languages, it is useful to know if you are getting the grammar-conversation mix right. If you teach Physical Exercise, you might like to know if the activities feel too strenuous or not.

If you do decide to create your own form, it is important to make sure that the questions are straightforward to answer. It is not an exercise in scientific discovery, so you can make it quite chatty. If you've done scholarly research, there's no need to worry about how scientific this approach is.

What should you ask?

To an extent, what you ask is up to you. All teachers have their personal preferences. There are many different ways you can ask for feedback. All of them have their advantages and their disadvantages. Don't think that you have to find one way of doing it and stick to that. Experiment until you find a way that suits your subject.

General comments

You can simply hand round a piece of paper and ask students to write down what they feel about the course. If you want, you can narrow this down by asking for three comments about a particular session. This method does allow students to say what they want. However, it

may be harder for students with limited literacy skills and it is possible for students to omit something, because there is nothing on the sheet to remind them.

Number-crunching

You can ask questions in this kind of format:

Was the pre-course information useful?	1	2	3	4	5
Were the handouts useful?	1	2	3	4	5
What was the standard of teaching?	1	2	3	4	5

(1 = poor, 5 = excellent)

This is the kind of method that institutions use, because they can more quickly and easily get the results together for analytical purposes.

Some people don't like numbers – they find them off-putting. You may find people who have misread the numbering system and given you a grade 1 for everything, meaning that your teaching is dire, when they've patently enjoyed the course tremendously, and were forever telling you how good a teacher you are. You can do the same sort of thing by asking people to ring a word or a little phrase, e.g.

How much progress do you think you have made?

A lot Quite a lot Some Not a lot None at all

It's just a variation really. You can still give the responses a numerical value for analytical purposes, and it is perhaps easier for us to give praise to tutors in this way – and we need praise as well as criticism. I'm sure that many of us find it hard to give 5 out of 5 – 'you can't get full marks, it's impossible!' – but are prepared to say that something is excellent.

Broader feedback

Treading carefully between the heavily guided approach and simply asking for general comments, you can easily compromise on the kind of evaluation form that asks for comments, but in a guided format.

If you make up such a form, you will obviously want to tailor it to your subject. However, there are certain aspects that any evaluation form should cover:

- enjoyment
- teaching
- level of course
- handouts
- assignments
- equipment used
- progress
- anything need revising
- additional comments.

Caveat 1 – Form-filling fatigue

The ‘customer as king’ is now so ingrained in most aspects of our culture, that customers are forever being asked to fill in feedback forms. Go down to your local branch of a burger bar and there’s probably a questionnaire for you to fill in about cleanliness, quality of service, freshness of food and so forth. It takes longer to fill in than it does to eat the burger. You can inundate people with the need for some kind of feedback. You should, therefore, make your form easy to complete and, if your institution has its own form, try not to give them out at the same time.

Caveat 2 – Who said that?

Anonymity can also be an issue. Whenever I go on a course and am given an evaluation form, I always put my name on the form, whether it is asked for or not. This is because I think that if I am going to say something to a tutor, they have a right to know that it is me who has said it.

I know other people who feel that if they are not asked for their name, they can be more truthful. I’ve spoken to several experienced tutors on this issue and the general consensus is that it is best not to ask for names, but to suggest that students can write their names on the form if they so wish.

Caveat 3 – Odd feedback

Occasionally, you will get bizarre feedback that you can’t fathom. I once taught a public one-day course and was thrilled with the positive feedback of the first few forms. People had paid for this course out of their own pockets and had obviously got their money’s worth. I was chuffed at

a job so expertly well done. No one in the entire history of adult education had got such positive feedback. It was only a short while before the District Council would be round to stick a circular blue plaque on the front of my house. The whole area would take pride in the fact that such a brilliant adult educator should choose to grace the village with his presence.

Pride cometh before a fall. Whilst I was busy preening myself, I turned to the next form which said 'A much more pleasant experience than I anticipated'. What? I re-read it. Did they mean that it was a pleasant experience or that, despite the fact it was me teaching it, it wasn't too bad? Or what?

I still don't know to this day whether that was a positive or a negative comment. It still sticks in mind, though.

Other forms of student feedback – attendance

Very few Adult Education courses still boast the same number of students at the end of the course as they did at the beginning. Your register will provide you with some kind of guide for this.

However, it is very important that you try to retain your students. The level of attendance at your course and the level of dropout are two ways in which you can judge for yourself how successful the course has been. They are *not* the only ways.

Students drop out of courses for a whole variety of reasons. Some fall ill, move house, change their shifts, can no longer afford it . . . or a whole host of reasons which are beyond your control. Others drop out because they are dissatisfied with the teaching, their fellow students, they lack confidence . . . they've missed two weeks because they were on holiday and don't think they can catch up. These are factors over which you can have some control.

If someone has missed two sessions without giving a reason, contact them and try to find out why they have been absent. It might simply be that they forgot to tell you about a holiday commitment. It might be that they are in some way unhappy about the class. Discuss with them the problem. The very fact that you are open to discussion will help them to return to your class.

Other forms of student feedback – observation as evaluation

You should consider getting someone to visit your class to observe you at work. It is best if this person is a professional adult educator who

understands enough about your subject to make useful comments. Make sure that you provide any observer with a copy of your course and session plan. Also, if you've got handouts, books or other materials, make sure they have a copy.

Decide beforehand what they are going to observe and comment on, but I would suggest that you could do worse than start with a list like this:

- your overall course preparation
- how well you have prepared this particular session
- the room layout
- your use of teaching equipment
- the variety of the methods you use
- your subject knowledge
- how you communicate with your students
- the appropriateness of the learning resources you have chosen
- how well you have designed any of your own teaching resources (e.g. handouts)
- your relationship with the students
- the students' involvement in the session
- the techniques you use to assess student progress.

If you can't find a professional to observe, then get someone who has tons of common sense and good judgement and who will be kind (but not uncritical) about your work. Rather than have them observe, you might invite them to join in as a student. You can then ask them to comment on more general issues concerning the way in which you deal with students.

A list for this kind of evaluation might include such ideas as:

- if you seem flexible
- if you show tact and diplomacy
- if you encourage your students
- if you make the learning interesting
- if you are approachable
- if you seem interested in your students
- if you are enthusiastic
- if you seem confident
- if you deal with any difficult situations well.

Frankly, by inviting people into your classroom, you will be learning an enormous amount. It also shows that you are confident enough in your teaching to have someone else come in and feedback to you afterwards.

These days, with greater accountability, you are much more likely to be observed formally in the classroom. You will find that by having visitors from time-to-time, you soon get used to the idea that your classroom is not closed to others. When you do have some kind of formal observation or inspection, you will feel less apprehensive about it and might even welcome it.

Conclusion

Evaluation and assessment are not the same thing. You assess your students' progress and you evaluate the success of your teaching. You must carry out both throughout your classes and at the end of a term, a topic, or a block of learning.

Try to match assessment and evaluation to your course. By ensuring that students have discernible and achievable targets for their learning, it is both easier to assess them and to evaluate your course.

Wherever possible, try not to be too formal in either. Testing students all the time does not mean that they are necessarily learning anything. Just think of all the stuff you crammed into your skull during your own schooldays for a test the next day, that you couldn't recall now if it would save you from a firing squad. Above all, make it obvious to your students that you are there to help them, that you appreciate their comments and feedback and that you are in partnership together to help them with their learning. If they know that their progress and learning matter to you, then you are half-way there.

Planning

Planning a course

Before you get into the classroom and start teaching, you will need to plan your course. If you are studying on a teacher training course, 'course planning', which seems a perfectly good way of describing exactly what you're going to do, may be described by any one of a number of ugly terms: 'Planning a sequence of learning' is one that gets bandied about a great deal. I've even heard 'Designing sequential learning experiences'.

It's all course planning. Just because some people give it a silly name, doesn't make it a silly process. So don't think that it is something you don't have to do. Course planning is vital. After all, you need to know what you're doing.

With general adult education courses, you may have the luxury of being able to devise your own course. On the other hand, you might be given an 'off-the-peg' course to teach. Accreditation bodies will have syllabuses for their qualifications, but you will still have to turn a syllabus into a coherent teaching plan.

No matter what kind of course you are teaching, you must plan. If there is an existing syllabus for a course, you may find it written in a style that is very off-putting. There is a tendency in education at the moment to write everything in the most hideous, mangled English. National Vocational Qualifications are especially bad for this. If you're having difficulty understanding the syllabus, just think how hard it might be for your students!

This chapter deals with planning a course of your own devising from scratch. Most of what I have to say applies equally to courses based on existing syllabuses (they're often called schemes nowadays).

If you are able to devise your own course from scratch, you can have plenty of leeway. Some people like the freedom to be able to devise their own courses. Don't expect to be able to plan everything at once. It is worth spending as much time over it as possible. Keep a notebook especially devoted to your course planning and add to your ideas over time. When your course plan is complete, it should contain the following:

- course title
- your target students, including the level of the course
- length and timing of the course
- aim of the course
- learning outcomes
- topics
- general statement of methods
- teaching and learning resources needed (no need to be too specific at this stage – a general statement will do).

There are other things that you could include, but most of them are best left to the session planning stage, when you are getting down to the nitty-gritty of deciding exactly how you are going to teach the various elements of your course plan.

What is the title of your course?

You don't have to think of a name for your course immediately, but it helps if you have some kind of idea in mind, so you can always use a temporary title until something better comes along.

The reason why the title is so important is that it helps you to fix an idea of what you want in your mind. Your course title may also contain a reference to the type of student you are trying to attract. 'Gentle Exercise for the Over 60s' is a good, informative title that will help you come up with a series of suitable exercises. I discuss titles in greater detail in the next chapter.

Who are your students?

Your course planning should be done with your potential students in mind. You need to make some pre-emptive guesses as to who will turn up for your course. Once you have a list of the types of student

you think might come, then you can begin to sort out in greater detail what you might do in the classroom.

You will need to build into your course plan a certain amount of flexibility. For certificated courses, it may not be possible to be as flexible as you want; for courses such as 'Upholstery', you need to be prepared for almost any eventuality. The level of your course may depend on the students you get in your class. If your upholstery class attracts students with plenty of experience, then there is little point at aiming the course at the beginner.

Whilst labelling your class 'for the over 60s' refers to a particular age group, it would be a foolish teacher who assumed that all over 60s were the same. In the case of this specific class, you are going to get a wide variety of age and fitness, as well as different learning styles and expectations.

When planning think of your course as a framework for negotiation with the students. Unless you have to do certain activities for some kind of external body, such as an accrediting body or a professional organisation, what you have planned to do is not set in stone.

Length and timing of your course

We can't always make decisions about the length and timing of our courses. If we have thirty meetings of two hours in which to teach GCSE Maths, then that's what we've got.

The length of a course may well be determined for you. Sometimes, you may be asked to teach a subject in half-a-day that you think needs four years full-time study.

On the other hand, you might be able to decide how long your course is. This is always a tricky one. If you have been allowed a free reign on this, it is best to work out the other elements of your course plan and then decide how long you will need in order to accomplish it.

In general, when you teach adults, you will either have a series of short weekly meetings or a day or two of intense work. The course that lasts two hours each week over a period of twenty weeks is typical of what you might find at your local Adult Education Centre, Community Centre or local Further Education College.

These have the advantage that you can get to know your students over time, can prepare your sessions based on the previous session you taught and can adapt readily to your students' needs and demands. There is plenty of room to negotiate course content with students.

Increasingly popular, both in work settings and in general adult education, are the short, sharp, courses. These often last just one or two days – in mainstream adult education, they sometimes take place in adult residential colleges and, for summer schools and the like, can last a week. They have the advantage that you can teach intensively. There is, on the other hand, less room for negotiation. In fact, arrive to teach a Saturday class that lasts five hours and start negotiating course content and your students will probably think you are simply badly organised and don't know what you are doing.

Short courses work very well for subjects that can be reduced to a handful of topics and as an introduction. They also give students an opportunity to try out subjects and activities without making a huge commitment.

Aim

What do you expect your students to be able to do in general terms? A driving instructor might expect a student to learn to drive well enough to pass the driving test. The instructor might say that the aim of the course is to 'pass the driving test'. This is a very specific aim, with an easily measurable outcome. The student takes the driving test and either passes or fails.

An aim does not have to be as specific as that. It could be along the lines of:

- to introduce students to computing
- to help students to acquire basic curtain-making techniques and skills
- to improve the student's knowledge of Tudor history
- to introduce students to the works of Bach
- to enable students to describe major psychological theories of education.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are much more specific than aims. If the aim is the overall goal, the learning outcomes are the separate little steps that a student will need to make in order to get to that goal. If you make your learning outcomes as clear as possible, you will find that this will help you in several ways. Knowing precisely what you want your students to be able to do means that you can plan precisely how to

teach them. Good, clear outcomes also mean that you can teach in a logical and systematic way. It also enables you to construct ways in which you can assess your students' progress, which in turn means that they can also monitor their progress and feel that they are learning new things.

Learning outcomes are often written along the following lines:

- The student will be able to play a C-chord.
- The student will be able to name six kinds of perennial plant.
- The student will be able to minute a club meeting.
- The student will be able to wire a plug.
- The student will be able to differentiate between aims and learning outcomes.
- The student will be able to identify verbs in the present continuous.
- The student will understand why observing safety regulations in the furnace area is important.
- The student will be able to repair a puncture to a bicycle tyre.

As the vaguest of vague rules of thumb, you should aim for somewhere between one and three learning outcomes per hour of class contact time.

Topics

If you are new to course planning, you might like to think about topics first, before getting down to listing learning objectives. I still prefer planning my courses in this way. In fact, I suspect it's the most effective way of doing it.

Again, this is where that notebook will come in handy. You can jot down the topics you think need including, but it's often difficult to list them all first time round. Leave your notebook lying around and add to it as and when.

One of my colleagues finds that getting down to the library and looking through the contents pages of relevant books, noting down what they contain, often helps at this stage. Of course, the logical order for topics in a book is not necessarily the same as for a course. The reader has the luxury to be able to skip or pick and choose.

When you've got all the topics you think you want to teach in a list, get hold of some paper or index cards and write down one topic on each. You can then shuffle them, spread them out on the table and figure out what you think the best order for them is. Sometimes, the order in

which you teach things is fairly unimportant, but in most courses, students may have to know something before they can progress to the next stage. If you want to sew on a button, it's pretty handy knowing how to thread the needle first.

Try to think like a student. Forget for a moment that you are a skilled practitioner. What would you find difficulty with if you were just starting out?

Methods

You have decided on the topics you are going to teach and the learning outcomes you hope your students will achieve. It is now worth giving some thought to the methods you will use.

If you take another look at Chapter 4, you will see that there are plenty of different methods available to you. At this general planning stage, you just need to give some preliminary thought to the ones that you are likely to use. Would lectures be appropriate? How are you going to bring variety to your lessons? What new methods would you like to try out?

Teaching and learning resources

As with your choice of teaching methods, you will need to think about this in greater detail when you get down to planning individual sessions. It is a good idea to think through the resources for your course at this stage as it will help you to focus your mind and make the planning of individual sessions much easier.

- What equipment do you need?
- What equipment would you like to use?
- What equipment is simply too bulky or not available, which will mean that you have to re-think parts of your course?
- Do you know how to use the equipment available to you?

You also need to give some preliminary thought to the resources the students will require in their learning.

For a craft subject you may need to get a hold of various materials or enable your students to find out where to buy them. Remember that they too have local knowledge and may know the cheapest place locally for certain items. Be fair to your students. There is a horror story doing

the rounds of a craft tutor who insisted that students only buy through her. It seems that she was making a more-than-handsome profit on the materials. This is rare. Most tutors buy materials in order to pass on bulk discounts to their students.

More general materials could range from photocopied worksheets to overhead projector pens and acetate sheets to chalk or whiteboard markers. Find out what your centre can and cannot provide.

- Do they need a course book?
- Do they need any specialist equipment or materials?
- Do you need to prepare handouts and worksheets?
- Are there any other resources, such as tapes, videos or study packs available?

Other factors to consider

You also need to bear in mind a number of other factors at the planning stage. Some of these factors are outside your control, some can only be dealt with by you.

Environment

Find out which room you have been allocated or if you have a choice of rooms. If you are teaching a craft subject, does it have to be a specialist room? If a language, what are the acoustics like, if an art subject, is the light good enough? Are the tables adequate for your subject?

Of course, it is not always possible to tell from looking at an empty room if it is going to meet with your requirements. Establish if you can change rooms if the need arises.

Seating arrangements

We saw in Chapter 3 that an important ingredient in any lesson is the layout of the furniture. In some rooms, such as workshops or cookery rooms, the furniture is immovable unless you have a class full of body builders. In most rooms it is possible to re-arrange the furniture. So, if the room you use has serried rows of desks and you want a semi-circle, plan to re-arrange the room. Don't dismiss this element of planning, and be prepared to be a little flexible. A layout that works well with half-a-dozen students might be claustrophobic for twenty.

Eventually, when you have got all these ideas down on paper, then you can move on to the next stage, which is . . .

Session planning

Session planning is your next logical step. It's also very hard to do if you have never taught before. You're moving closer and closer to stepping through the classroom door. To begin with, ask yourself some general questions, such as:

- What am I going to teach?
- How am I going to teach it?
- How long do I need to spend on each stage of the lesson?

Don't expect to plan your lessons successfully at the first attempt – it will come with experience. If you are unsure where to start, try this method and see if it suits you. Take a piece of scrap A4 paper and turn it sideways, so that it is in landscape format. Along the top write the following headings:

- Time
- Topic
- Learning outcome
- Tutor activity
- Student activity
- Resources
- Assessment.

Then rule down the page so that you've got a column for each heading.

Time

I am always tempted to put the time in as the last consideration as it can often be the most flexible element of a plan. Typically, each stage of a session should be no longer than about twenty to thirty minutes, but this can vary enormously. Activities should last about half that length.

If I am going to talk to a group, I try never to do so for more than ten minutes without some kind of student interaction. On the other hand, students working on arts or crafts projects are often able to concentrate on what they are doing for longer periods of time.

Topic and learning outcome

As we have already seen, topic and learning outcome are not the same thing. Sometimes a topic will last over several sessions; sometimes it might fit into a short slot of a few minutes. It's not enough simply to list your topics, you must say what the students are going to be able to do after this stage of the session that they couldn't do before.

So, your topic might be 'The Origins of the First World War', but your learning outcome for the topic might be 'Learners will be able to identify five causes of the First World War'. Learning outcomes do help you concentrate on what you are really trying to teach.

Tutor and student activity

It is very easy when planning a session to think in terms of what you, the tutor, are going to do and forget what your students are doing. Looking at the student activity column of your session plan is an excellent way of ensuring that your students are doing a variety of different activities in each session.

If you look down this list and see that all they are doing is listening to you talking, then you need to have a re-think. Similarly, if you find that as you circulate around your practical classes, you are telling all your students the same thing, but on an individual basis, then perhaps you should be thinking in terms of giving a small lecture-demonstration-talk to the whole group.

Don't forget yourself in all this. If you are the tutor, you can't be in full flood all the time. You too need activities where you are not trying to do everything for everybody. Give yourself a few little respites by changing what you're doing.

Resources

As with tutor and student activities, using a number of different resources brings variety to your lessons. Don't use resources just for the sake of it. A video and television may be useful resources, but they're no good if you're still on the origins of the First World War and all you've got is a copy of Tony Hancock's 'The Blood Donor', then forget it – no matter how funny you find Tony Hancock.

Don't forget when listing resources, that it's even worth jotting down if you're going to use board markers.

Assessment

Assessing students is a continuous process. You don't need to give them a three-hour exam after each ten-minute section of the session. You might, however, like to include a little question-and-answer session, or get students to work through a couple of examples before you start out on the next step. As always, match the assessment to the learning outcome.

Evaluation

As soon as you get the chance, you need to give some thought as to how effective each stage of the session has been, both in its own terms and in the context of your overall plan. You can then use the results of your evaluation, together with your students' assessment, to plan the next session.

Before you plan a course or a session for real, it is worth playing around with a sheet of paper to find a format that suits you. Frankly, I don't think it matters what format you end up with, as long as you understand it.

As you develop more experience, planning will become increasingly easier. At a later stage, it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that you don't have to plan. All I can say is that a planned lesson is nearly always better than an unplanned lesson, but we have a tendency to remember those great off-the-cuff lessons we have taught and think we can do it all the time.

To sum up:

- Course and session planning are essential.
- Think carefully about what you want your students to learn.
- If possible, negotiate course content and teaching methods with your students.
- Vary your teaching methods to suit your topics and learning outcomes.
- Match your resources and equipment to learning outcomes.
- Assess your students at every stage.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of each stage of the lesson.

A professional approach

Nowadays, it is extremely difficult to survive for long in a job unless you take a professional approach. Freelance trainers are entirely dependent on their performance to keep the customers coming in, as are adult education tutors who must retain students if they are to be allowed to continue. It's a tough world out there.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this, it makes it all the more important that you should take a professional attitude to teaching adults. It all starts in the classroom or training room, where your real work is done.

If you want to make your students totally unhappy and get rid of them, you could try the following methods:

Poor planning

'Has anyone seen my cigarettes? Only I'd jotted down a few things down on the packet that I thought we might do tonight. Never mind. I'll try to remember, and if I can't I'll come up with something else instead.'

Students can tell when you haven't planned or prepared properly. I think they find it insulting if you're not well-prepared. If the tutor can't be bothered to sort themselves out, why should they? If you work for your students, they are much more likely to work for you.

Make it your personal goal to have one of your students turn round to you and say 'You must put in a huge amount of work at home'. It will give you a nice warm feeling. Preparation is so important, that you might find it useful to create a little space for yourself in which to work at home. Always make sure that you are well-organised before you set foot in the classroom and know what you are going to teach. Always have a back-up plan.

Lack of enthusiasm

'The subject I am about to teach you is so boring that I am bored and you will be too. Have I mentioned how boring it is? 'Cos it's very boring.'

Frankly, what on earth are you doing in a classroom if you're not enthusiastic? I know we all have our off-days and that sometimes, you're going to be teaching through a heavy cold and struggling to make sense. We can't be wonderful all the time, but in the main, you should visibly demonstrate that you want to be in that room.

Why should your students want to be there if you quite obviously don't? You really need to show that you love your subject and enjoy teaching it.

Lack of subject knowledge

'As you are studying British history, you will all know that the Battle of Hastings occurred in . . . er . . . er . . . Hang on, I've got a note of it somewhere.'

You must have a decent grasp on the subject you are teaching. You don't necessarily have to have a formal qualification, but you should know what you are talking about.

Of course, there are going to be gaps in your knowledge. It's best to admit you don't know and promise to find out than it is to bluff and bluster your way through. We're all allowed to forget, have mental blocks, blanks and lapses.

Poor group management skills

'If the rest of you shut up we can listen to Maria now, as she always seems to have the best ideas and I fancy her as well.'

If you obviously have favourites, fail to treat students even-handedly or don't cope with difficult students or situations adequately, then you will soon be perceived as incompetent.

Managing your group is a difficult process and requires skilled handling of the individuals in it. Try to be as relaxed and confident about this as you can. I know that's easier said than done, but you can always fake confidence until real confidence comes along.

Not assessing students' work properly

'Did anybody give me anything to look at last week? Only I've been so tied up with various bits and pieces.'

If you teach the kind of subject that lends itself to assignments or homework, then you have a duty to your students to 'mark' their work. You should at least read anything they've written and make comments. If you're teaching a class where they can only demonstrate their skills in class – e.g. rock-climbing or cycling proficiency, then you must make sure that you give your students feedback in class. You must be encouraging when you are assessing your students' work. It isn't going to help them if you are constantly moaning, harping on and criticising.

Avoid these obvious pitfalls and your life as a tutor, trainer or teacher will be a whole lot easier. You will develop a good reputation for your teaching and thus encourage learners to come to your classes.

Beyond the classroom

Every job of work carries with it a burden of responsibility. Whilst doing a spot of part-time adult education teaching may not be as weighty as running a multinational company or looking after a ward full of sick people, it does involve certain tasks.

Of course, there is the responsibility of helping people to learn, but your job is not simply confined to the classroom, workshop, lecture theatre or training room. Your other duties will probably include:

- marketing your course
- submitting formal course and session plans
- attending relevant meetings
- professional development, e.g. attending training courses
- administrative duties.

Successful tutors, unless they are such wonderfully brilliant teachers that students and administration will forgive them their organisational sloppiness, also make sure that they do the peripheral tasks to the best of their abilities.

Marketing your course

Whether you are teaching in a factory or at your local Community Centre, you will have to advertise your course in some way. Larger public and private organisations often have specific forms for completion in which they ask for information about your course. This is certainly a good step, but often what the organisation wants to hear and what the students want to hear are not written in the same language.

Education and training have become full of jargon and awkward, jarring, clumsy phrases. Students want plain English. Imagine you're going to be teaching a course on study skills as part of a programme to help adults return to learning. You might describe a learning outcome as:

Students will be encouraged to develop autonomy as researchers.

That's fine for an internal document or to keep the funding fairy happy, but what does it actually mean to the people coming on your course? Do we know what a researcher is? What does autonomy mean? Are we baffling them with bull?

You will attract learners on the basis of what they read in a brochure, a handout or the local paper or in an internal memo. They want to read something written in language they understand. When telling potential students about the course, you might want to rewrite your learning outcome as:

You will learn how to use libraries and the internet to find out the information you need to study on your own.

When writing titles, blurbs or advertising messages for your course, here are a few ideas to bear in mind.

Choose a good title for the course

I think the best titles tell students what they are going to get. You can get a bit too clever sometimes. Call your public speaking course 'Stand and Deliver' by all means, but if the course is merely listed without any explanation, you're going to baffle people. 'Stand and Deliver – Public Speaking for Beginners' is a much better title. 'Computing for the

Terrified' tells us that if we think computers are the most frightening invention in the history of mankind, then we'll feel at home on this course. 'Painting for Pleasure' tells us that it is a painting course and that it is for our amusement, whereas 'Art GCSE' shows that we're going to be studying for a qualification.

There's nothing wrong with a simple title, such as 'First Aid at Work', 'Midday Supervisors' Certificate' or 'Russian for Beginners'. These are good, honest and straightforward. If you're teaching something a little more esoteric, then you can be a little more fanciful. 'Wordsworth – The Dove Cottage Years' may not mean much to everyone, but it will appeal to likely students – horses for courses, and all that.

Use 'we' and 'you'

It will make your course sound friendlier if you speak directly to the reader.

'You will learn . . .', 'we will study . . .', 'you can use . . .', 'we will look at . . .' all sound a good deal more inviting than 'the course will involve students in . . .'

Use active verbs instead of the passive

An active sentence (the boy hit the little girl) carries much more weight than a passive one (the little girl was hit by the boy). 'Future field trips will hopefully be possible' is not as immediate as 'We hope to arrange field trips in the future.' Talk directly to your reader, as I have tried to do throughout this book.

Keep it simple

Use shorter words where possible. For example, why not 'tell' your students, rather than 'inform' them?

Keeping things simple doesn't make them moronic. 'You need to wear loose clothing' carries with it a lot of additional information that isn't stated, but is very obviously implied. This isn't a theoretical class, you will be expected to stretch and bend, not watch videos of people stretching and bending.

Make it sound enjoyable

These are some of the phrases from adult education brochures that make the classes look as though you might want to join them: 'This is a friendly, supportive class . . .' . . . you won't feel like a duck out of water and we're all here to help you. 'You'll be amazed at what you'll be able to do in ten weeks' . . . wow, not only is it fun, but I'm really going to make some progress.

What is your Unique Selling Point?

Salespeople talk about the USP (the unique selling point) – whatever it is that makes their product different from other similar ones on the market. In your case – what can people do at your classes that they can't do elsewhere?

'Yoga is the ideal antidote for stress' . . . just the thing after a hard day at the office.

'The Tin Whistle is inexpensive and easy to carry' . . . great! Just the thing! It's hard fitting a grand piano into a bedsit and a killer for busking.

'Try before you buy your own' . . . the materials can be expensive, so don't buy things beforehand, because one of the first things I'm going to teach you is how not to spend a fortune.

Tell them how much experience they need

'Some word-processing skills would be useful' . . . they're not essential, but it sure would be helpful if you knew your way around a computer keyboard.

'Students must have gained their Stage 1 qualification' . . . it's not for absolute beginners.

'No painting skills required' . . . then it's the perfect course for me.

The local press

Many local newspapers carry 'What's on' listings, where you may be able to mention an upcoming course free-of-charge. It's a simple matter to get hold of the relevant regional and local papers and find out the name of the person who deals with the column or section. This will only give you a tiny listing. A more useful way of drumming up custom for your courses is to try a press release.

Most local newspapers are always on the look-out for stories. A press release is simply a short news story that you write yourself and send to the local newspaper. A press release is not hard to do, but it's worth bearing in mind the following:

- Don't make it too long – two or three paragraphs is fine.
- Make sure there's a story – concentrate on a person and their achievements.
- Send photos if you've got them – a picture paints a thousand words. If Ged has carved a standing oak tree into a fully-functioning model of HMS *Victory*, it will look great in a picture.

Advertising your course

Giving talks to interest groups is always a good way of bringing yourself to the attention of a wider public. There are plenty of groups who are always on the look-out for speakers. The pay isn't marvellous, but it's a great way of getting your name about.

Groups like light-hearted talks that still have a good solid core of information. If you can take half-decent slide pictures, it can also help.

Administrative matters

Keeping all those bits of paper sorted is vital. It may not seem like the most obviously rewarding job in the world, but it helps to keep the wheels oiled. Your line manager will appreciate it and it also makes you feel more organised. Besides, just because you don't thrill to one element of the job doesn't mean it isn't worthwhile doing it well.

Your register

It is very important to keep the register for your class and to keep it accurately. Whilst a register may seem to have only a limited function as a record for administrative purposes, it can also be a useful tool in the process of evaluation (by monitoring student numbers) and thereby ensuring you maintain a good rapport with your class. There is no need to take a formal roll-call, although it might be worth doing so in the early stages in order to help you and the group to remember names. It is vital that your register is accurate. Most organisations insist that your register is marked straight away in case there is a fire, a bomb scare or some other kind of emergency.

The old story circulates of the slap-happy tutor in the habit of marking the register in an entirely haphazard fashion, who marked as present a young man who at the time of the class was committing a burglary elsewhere. The tutor thereby became an unwitting accomplice by supplying a false alibi. OK, so it may be an urban myth, but it's best not testing it out the hard way.

Attendance and dropout

If attendance at your course is compulsory, you may not be troubled by students leaving the course before the end. Similarly, if you are teaching a one-day course, a short course or perhaps a course at one of the adult residential colleges, you are unlikely to suffer from poor attendance.

True, people simply may not turn up, or might have to leave early, but you are not going to experience some of the difficulties faced by teachers of weekly classes. Very few weekly adult education courses still boast the same number of students at the end of the course as they did at the beginning. Student attendance is bound to be erratic. Part-time students have competing demands on their time. You may have parents' evenings at your child's school, have to work late, might be ill, have to visit someone in hospital. As a tutor, you need to realise that although a student may really enjoy your course, it is not necessarily the most important thing in their world.

As an Adult Education Centre manager, I once employed a man whose class numbers fell on a week-by-week basis. It's happened to most of us, but he called it 'getting rid of the buggers who don't want to learn'. There might have been an element of truth in what he had to say, but I felt he had a responsibility to engage his students and interest them in what he was teaching. Trying to keep your students is a much better strategy than trying to get rid of the ones who 'don't want to learn'.

You can do a great deal to combat dropout by creating the positive attitude and atmosphere that I keep on banging on about in your class and using as wide a variety of teaching methods as possible. Being perceived as a 'good teacher', who gives loads of encouragement, is friendly, helpful, patient and whose lessons are interesting is as good a start as you can get.

There are also some basic, practical ideas that you can put into use. Make it easy for people to let you know if they can't attend. If you think it's appropriate, give students some kind of contact number where they can leave a message for you. Encourage your students to let you know if

they're going to miss a class for any reason. They are bound to have other commitments from time-to-time. Attending your course is probably not their first priority, no matter how much they enjoy it.

If you have handouts and anyone is absent, write their name on the handout and let them have it on their return. Not only does this help students who have missed a class or two catch up, but it also helps to give them a sense of value because you have obviously thought about them in their absence.

The level of attendance at your course and the level of dropout are two ways in which you can judge for yourself how successful the course has been. It is also the easiest way by which you can be judged by other people.

Very few teachers are employed on the basis of their performance. However, adult education teachers need to keep their class numbers, even if purely to make sure that they continue to be employed. For some adult tutors, this may not be too important. There are tutors who have full-time jobs, who simply enjoy doing a spot of teaching, or hobbyists who work on their own and see teaching as a way of meeting others. I'm all for the enthusiastic 'amateur'. They are sometimes the very best teachers you can find, because they sincerely love what they are doing. You can be an 'amateur', but still take a professional approach.

A teaching notebook

In addition, it is important that you keep a set of lesson notes. These could also include comments on what worked well and reminders about topics the students have asked to cover. Find any means that suits you of keeping your teaching notes together – the medium is relatively unimportant. Allow yourself a couple of minutes at the end of every teaching session to jot down any little points of domestic business.

It's worth keeping a note of who's told you they can't make the next meeting or any materials you've promised a particular student. If you're anything like me, you probably honestly believe you'll remember, but by the following week have no recollection whatsoever.

Equal opportunities

There is a huge emphasis on equal opportunities in education at the moment. Successive governments and educators are aware that there

are many people who, for a variety of reasons, tend to be excluded from the educational process. Currently, there is a great deal of debate whether providing equal opportunities means creating separate provision for those who are often excluded, or integration into mainstream activities.

As a tutor, you have a responsibility to ensure that your students are treated equally. For some students this may mean that they have to be provided with additional means to enable them to participate in your course.

Not everyone has had the easiest access to education in the past and it is part of your job, in your own small way, to help redress the balance. Find out your employer's policy on equal opportunities and stick to it.

Courses for teachers of adults

Some companies run in-house training-the-trainer courses. These are often excellent, especially if you are going to be teaching one particular programme of study. Sometimes, these are broken down into smaller training sessions on specific topics, such as 'Giving a Company Presentation' or 'Using Visual Aids' or even 'Demonstrating the ZB1098 Vacuum Suction Pump to Potential Customers'.

If you want to broaden your teaching, it is well worth considering studying for a recognised qualification. The best-known qualifications for teachers in further and adult education are those certificated by the City & Guilds. The most common of these are the 730-series qualifications and the most popular is the 7307. There are also specialist qualifications for such subjects as teaching Basic Skills, Exercise, Dance, English as a Foreign Language and specialist qualifications concerned with the assessment of National Vocational Qualifications. Your local Further Education College is as good a first port of call as any for this kind of course.

Under new regulations, anyone who is going to teach a publicly funded course leading to a qualification will have to have City & Guilds 7307 Stage 1 or equivalent within two years of starting to teach. Whilst this might seem quite demanding for a new tutor, who is perhaps only teaching a couple of hours a week, it does give you a great opportunity to learn some highly useful fundamental skills. It also means that you will be observed by an expert. Rather than seeing this as a threat, you should see it as a great opportunity to get some useful feedback. You will also find that the hidden curriculum of your teacher training course is as useful as the course itself. You will

meet all sorts of people from all sorts of walks of life, who have an enormous range of experience before beginning to teach adults. Contacts of this sort are absolutely invaluable and you will learn at least as much from one another as you will from the course itself.

Professional development also means that you have to stay abreast of your subject. You can do a lot of this by subscribing to the relevant magazines and journals and trying new things out for yourself. It's no good clinging to the twenty-year old textbook for ever; in a fast-changing world, we're out-of-date before we've torn yesterday's leaf from the calendar.

Amateurs and professionals

An amateur does things for the sheer love of them, with no thought of material reward. A professional works for money, knowing that the labourer must be worthy of the hire. Try to cultivate the amateur's enthusiasm and the professional's rigour; you'll find it is a winning combination for teaching adults.

Remember:

- Be punctual – at the beginning and at the end of every session.
- Make sure you've checked the equipment.
- Make sure you've got all your teaching/learning resources with you.
- Arrange the room appropriately, or get your students to do it for you.
- Plan the session thoroughly.
- Tell learners what they're going to do (state the learning outcomes).
- Be flexible and adaptable if things don't go according to plan.
- Be positive about your subject.
- Be positive towards your students.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be patient and tolerant of mistakes.
- Keep the lesson flowing – if you've got to leave the room, ensure that students know what they're doing.
- Assess students progress throughout the session.
- 'Mark' any work they do.
- Evaluate the session at the end.
- Keep up your own learning.
- Market your course with flair.
- Deal efficiently with all the boring bits of administration and record-keeping.
- Enjoy yourself if you want your students to enjoy themselves too.

The first session and some traps to avoid

It's September, the evenings are getting shorter and you fancy learning something new. You did some art at school and enjoyed it, but you'd really like to learn how to draw so that you can make sketches when you go on holiday. A local Adult Education Centre has an art class. The one-line description in the brochure reads 'A weekly class for students of all levels. Drawing, water-colours, oils, pastels – any medium.' Obviously, it's quite a general class, but it's the only one you can make as you're working when the others are on. Besides, you like the idea that if you get on well with drawing, you might try out some painting as well.

You have never been able to master perspective, and you don't know what kind of pencils you should buy. In fact, should you buy pencils, or would you be better off with charcoal? Art materials can be pricey. Can you get away with the cheap ones from the discount stationers, or do you need to go to a specialist art shop?

You go along to your first class with these questions. You set off in good time for your class and are the first to arrive. You have brought the minimum of art materials. As you slip your pencil and A6 sketch pad from your jacket pocket, you find that the next person to arrive, obviously at home in the class, is building a small Hadrian's Wall of equipment around herself. She's got a desk-top easel, a full-scale easel, seven trays of oil paints, with realistic blotches in rainbow hues all over them. She's also got the eighteen full-scale oil canvases she's painted over the summer holiday – and what's more they've got price tags on them!

She knows what she's doing. She slips on a man's shirt. It is paint-spattered and you can also make out the charcoal and paint under her nails. She takes out a quiver full of brushes ranging in size from a single genuine badger hair to external housepainter.

Already, you're beginning to worry. Everyone else greets one another by name. They've all got as much confidence as they have equipment. They chatter away; so do your teeth. You open out your sketch book to make it look bigger and grope in another pocket to see if you've got a biro to add to the meagre collection in front of you.

'I'm going to be working in gouache this term', says one old hand.

'Impasto is so wonderful for expressionism' comes a voice from the corner.

'Did you see the Fauvism exhibition?'

'I hope this new tutor's up to it. Did anyone get her name?'

'Mary something. I'd never heard of her.'

You spy someone else cowering in the corner. Their lips wear the same wan, watery nervous smile as yours. You have that identical uncomfortable sensation as you had on your first day at infants' school.

As you look around the class for the forty-third time, you are painfully aware that:

- Everyone else is confident. You're not.
- Everyone else has tons of equipment. You haven't.
- Everyone else is bandying about art terms you've never even heard of.
- Everyone in the class seems to be wanting to do something different. All you want to do is some sketching.

Then in comes another person, laden with yet more kit. You only know she's the tutor because she's got a pink register clamped between her teeth.

Now swap roles. Instead of being the student, you are the tutor. Suddenly you are going to be faced with a sea of unfamiliar faces, each one belonging to a different student with different needs and demands. Some of them have been coming for years; others are brand new. Some seem to know more than you do; others haven't even brought a pencil.

It's crunch time!

You've read most of this book (even though you skipped the boring bits). You may have taught before. You might have been on a short teacher training course, such as those accredited by the City & Guilds. You know the difference between cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. You know that you are going to:

- Use the students' own knowledge and experience as your starting point. Encourage them to tell you what they already know about the subject.
- Involve your students in the sessions right from the start. They want to know that you care about what they have to say. Make sure that they are aware that they can learn a great deal from each other.
- Vary the techniques, methods and exercises that you use in your teaching. It helps to keep your students interested and also means that you do not weary yourself with repeating the same kind of exercise all the time.
- Create a positive atmosphere. Oh, no, here I go again – positive atmosphere. If you create the kind of classroom where people feel valued, where they are encouraged to participate and can feel that what they are doing is fun and purposeful, you are well over half-way to running great courses.

That's the theory, now you need to put it into practice. You are facing a brand new class. The questions and worries nuzzle at your mind. How am I going to cope? Will they like me? Will the first class go well? What if I get someone awkward? What happens if I don't know the answer? What if there's a fire drill?

Back to basics

Before you even think about any of this, it is important to get all those boring essentials right. You need to mull over some of the dull, practical elements of the session. Again, think of your students as customers. Put yourself in their place. If they see a well-organised tutor, then they will already have a positive image of you.

If you can, go and have a look at the room in which you will be teaching. Find out if you can rearrange the room, as this is not always possible if you are using a specialist room, such as a computer suite or a workshop.

If you can alter the layout, what kind of seating arrangement are you going to use? Will you have to put the room back into its original layout after you've finished?

How comfortable is the room? Often, we find ourselves teaching in spaces that are less than ideal. What can we do to ensure that our students are as reasonably comfortable as they can be?

Are there blinds, curtains, heaters or even air-conditioning systems over which you can have some kind of control? There's nothing worse than a chilly room, or projecting slides into direct sunlight.

What are your responsibilities?

Do you need to collect the register or list of participants? In adult education, a lot of centre heads like their tutors to call in at the office for their class registers as it gives them a chance to see their tutors, if only briefly, once a week or so.

You also need to make sure you know the kinds of things that will give your students confidence in you, such as where the toilets, coffee bar and smoking area (if such a thing exists – it's probably outside) are situated and what to do in the event of a fire.

Your students

You need to identify any students with specific physical or educational needs beforehand if at all possible. Try to establish the ways in which you can help these students. If you are teaching a part-time weekly course, you also need to work out just how responsible you should be. I recently heard a story concerning an inexperienced young tutor who was taking an exercise class. One of the students in the class had severe epilepsy. The tutor was expected to administer a rectal muscle relaxant should this occur. It's one thing trying to include as many people as possible in the education process, it's another being expected to be a fully-trained nurse or social worker at the drop of a hat.

It might therefore be worth your while writing yourself a checklist of all the things you need to do in the first session.

Time

You should always arrive at least ten minutes early for each session. For your first lesson it is best if you arrive even earlier so that you can prepare the room, sort out your lesson notes, etc. Some students will also probably be early.

Always start on time. If you are teaching in a large centre, remember that your students may have a certain amount of difficulty finding a space to park, finding the room or might simply have difficulty in reaching the course on time for very valid reasons.

Equipment

If you have asked for a certain piece of apparatus, make sure you have it; if it is not there find the duty member of staff and remind them about it.

Actually doing some teaching

The first session is likely to be very different from other lessons you will teach. The group I outlined at the beginning of this chapter is an established one, in which some people may have been coming for as long as ten years or more, although there are obviously a couple of new members. Alternatively, you may be faced with a group of students who are as new to each other as they are to you. It's a nerve-racking experience for you and them. You are going to have a huge number of demands placed on you as a tutor anyway, without the added difficulties of the first session.

Starting the session

Greet each member of the group as they arrive. It is very important that you create a warm, friendly atmosphere. Everybody learns best if they feel comfortable and relaxed and it will make it much easier for you to develop a good rapport with the class.

It may seem obvious, but people need to be introduced to one another. You can do this in whatever way you like. You might ask students to introduce themselves and say where they live. You might also ask them to say a little about themselves and why they have come.

Introduce yourself and say a little about yourself. This does not mean that the students need to know your life story or the state of your bank balance, but it does help them to get to know you and feel that you can be approached on an individual basis. It is worth letting students know how and why you are qualified in your subject and a little about what interests you. There's nothing wrong with admitting that you are new to teaching, but it's not compulsory.

Name badges, which can simply be sticky labels, are useful. Circulate a decent-sized felt-tip pen, then students will be forced to write in larger handwriting. Don't forget to wear one yourself – it helps to make you all equal and students won't be embarrassed if they forget your name.

One trick I picked up off my old partner-in-crime Katharine is to make a rough plan of the seating arrangements and not only jot down the student's name, but add a little bit of description to help

remind you who they are. I then try to look at the sheet a few times before the next session, so that I know names at the next meeting. Students appreciate that you have taken the trouble to learn their names and it always impresses them no end.

Students' expectations

We know that students have different expectations of a class and a teacher, so we need to deal with these early on. It's worth warning students that the first session might be a little different from the others because they all need to get to know each other

One way of ensuring that you can meet students' needs and demands and which also helps to break the ice is by getting them to discuss their reasons for coming to your class.

You can, of course do this by asking the class as a whole to state why they have come in front of everyone. You can also give them a little questionnaire to fill out during the coffee break.

At the first session, while you have to spend time getting to know each other a little, finding out the different reasons why people are attending the course and discussing the course content, it is also vital that the students actually learn something. Make sure that the task or activity you set is not so hard as to be off-putting, but at the same time not so simple as to insult everyone's intelligence.

One approach is to pair up students and to get them to make a short list of the reasons why they have come to your class. Give them a few minutes for this, as they will also be getting to know other people in the group. When they've done this in pairs, get the pairs to move into groups of four and to do the same thing again. Depending on the size of your group, you can also do this with eights and sixteens (if it isn't getting tedious). Students will begin to get to know each other, break the ice and this exercise can often lead to some important discussions about the way you will organise your class.

Domestic business

You will have to spend some time in the first session running through some of the domestic business which the students will need to know. These will include fire procedures, health and safety regulations (especially if you are teaching a craft subject), where to go for coffee, where any students who have not yet paid need to go to do so, etc.

Materials

If you have textbooks or other larger materials to give out, now is the time. Most adult students have to pay for their own larger materials, although this is unlikely to be the case in the commercial sector. Sometimes, they may not realise just how expensive some things are. If materials are likely to be expensive, you should warn students before they enrol. The price of a textbook, equipment and so forth should be kept as low as possible, especially for beginners.

It's also worth giving them little tips if you know where they can obtain things second-hand or if there are cheap substitutes for expensive materials. If you have told students that you will advise them about materials at the first session, make sure that you have brought the wherewithal to ensure that a class takes place. Occasionally, you might be able to bulk-buy something, or have an arrangement with a local shop whereby on the production of a course receipt students can claim some kind of discount. Students appreciate this kind of little measure.

At the end

At the end of the first session, allow your students time to ask you informally about anything that has cropped up in the session. If two or three people are asking the same question perhaps it needs to be covered at the next meeting.

Before you leave the room, make sure that it is put back how you found it and return the register to its usual place. Afterwards, at home, run through what you did. What worked well? What didn't go according to plan? Was the seating arrangement right? What did you forget to do? Be honest with yourself, but do not be brutal.

Traps to avoid

We all make mistakes when we're teaching. It's a fact of life. Sometimes we don't teach as well as we could. Below are some of the common traps that you should try to avoid.

Not planning fully what you are going to do

The day may come when you can plan a lesson by scrawling a few words on the back of a cigarette packet whilst stopped at the traffic lights.

However, to begin with, you should plan as thoroughly as possible, thinking through every detail. This might seem a bit of a chore at first, but you will find that it can help you to think through your teaching in a thorough and systematic way.

Relying on equipment to do your work for you

You are the teacher. Teaching resources are wonderful, but they are not a substitute for good teaching. If you arrive at your teaching venue to find the video you needed for your class is broken or unavailable and you have only prepared to use the video, then you need some other appropriate activity. Always plan for this.

Talking too much

Try not to turn your lesson into a lecture. Make sure the students are able to join in whatever you're doing. If you are expected to give a lecture, then keep to time and allow plenty of opportunity for questions and answers. Even if you don't 'lecture', you may still talk too much. And yes, if any of my students read this, I know I'm being a hypocrite.

The grand tour

A common pitfall for craft teachers or IT tutors is to spend all lesson, circulating amongst their students, doing the hard bits for them. The majority of students don't want the tutor to do the hard bits for them, they want to learn for themselves.

Break-neck demonstrations

If you're showing people how to do things, don't try for the world land speed demonstrating record. Break it down into small, logical steps and take it slowly. It's no good saying, 'Right then, bosh, bosh, bosh and there's a pretty nifty Picasso copy, mate.' Explain what you're doing.

Not using students' expertise

It's amazing how much students can learn from one another. A student who has just grasped how to do something, often makes a great, informal tutor for their classmates.

Jarring with jargon

It may seem absolutely obvious to you what a twelve-digit flange bore sprocket-holding hoxter with aluminium sliding bolts is. Your students may never have heard of it. Why not make a sheet with a little explanations of all the key jargon? Make sure you don't use yet more jargon in your explanations. In fact, writing a sheet like this will help you focus your attention on how to explain things. Have a look at Appendix B to see how I've done it.

Worksheet famine

Always carry a few extra copies of worksheets for when your students lose them. If a student misses a class, pencil their name on any handouts you've used and hang on to them for the next meeting.

My mate Bill

Oh, great. My mate Bill's in the group, so I'll be able to talk to him. Try not to concentrate on just one person or one sub-group. Others in the class will not appreciate it. That's not to say that you can't make friends within the group, just make sure that the friendship doesn't unbalance the class.

Board scrawl

Writing on a whiteboard or chalkboard is trickier than it looks. If you write anything on a board, go to the back of the room to make sure it's legible. If it isn't, either get in some practice or go to the optician.

Thinking it's easy

Normally, when we teach a subject, we are pretty good at it. We probably found it came easily to us when we learnt it. It's often hard for us to understand just why someone is having difficulty doing something so simple. Just think about something you're not very good at. How would you feel if you went to a course to study that subject and felt as though you were being left behind?

Under-planning

I'm a neurotic over-planner. I recently travelled 300 miles to deliver a training course. The lady who had organised the course stared in disbelief at the amount of material I had with me. 'You'll never get through all that today!' 'I know,' I said, 'but if I've forgotten anything, it's a long way home.'

I always prefer to have too much rather than too little. No matter how experienced you are, judging how long you need for an exercise is a near-impossible task. If you're as worried as I am, always have the next session planned as well, or at worst take along some additional exercises that will help reinforce a particular point.

Not keeping to time

You may start punctually, but it's easy to think you're giving value for money by carrying on for twenty minutes beyond the allotted time. But your students may have homes and families to go to. If you're training in the workplace, you may be stopping people from getting on with other, possibly more important, work.

Forgetting stuff

Nobody's perfect, and you're bound to forget things from time to time. You will lower your chances of forgetting things if you make yourself a little checklist of the various bits and pieces you need in your tutor's toolkit.

I am sure that you are perfectly capable of doing this yourself, but I've made a list in Appendix D that you might like to use as a starting point.

World's greatest tutor

You are now so brilliantly well-prepared that you know when you walk into that classroom you just can't fail. Examine your teeth for spinach, check your flies or make sure your skirt isn't tucked into your knickers at the back; give the impression that you are confident. Then, look in the mirror and repeat after me, 'I am the world's greatest tutor'.

Postscript

Well, I'll have to leave you there, just as you are deciding how you got on with your first class. I hope when you get into the classroom and start teaching it goes well.

That's it for the main body of the book. The rest of the volume contains exercises and some information in the appendices.

I trust that you find what I have to say useful and have enjoyed reading it. Of course, it's meant as a simple guide to the subject. You should use it as a starting-point along the route of your own personal and professional development. As you gain more practical experience of teaching, training or tutoring, you will find the theory becomes more and more useful.

You could do worse than start with some of the exercises in the next chapter. They are fairly typical of the kinds of exercises you get to do on tutor-training courses. They are typical for a good reason – they will genuinely help you towards being a more effective, more professional teacher.

Don't forget that teachers also need to keep on learning. You might like to embark on a course of professional study or join an appropriate professional association. Meet with colleagues as often as you can to discuss teaching adults. Develop new skills, keep up with your subject. Make sure that you gain a reputation as a good teacher.

Lastly, writing a book does feel a little like giving a lecture. It's a one-way process. Unlike a lecture, I don't even have the benefit of seeing your face as you are reading the book, so I can't even gauge your reactions. It's nice to get feedback from readers, so if you want to contact me, through the publisher, please do so – I'd be glad to hear from you. And please be nice to me, even if you want to be critical. After all, I'm just another adult student, full of phobias and hang-ups, who's a mixture of his own educational failings, terrified of being the slowest or the worst or not understanding what the teacher tells us.

I hope you enjoy working with adult learners, no matter where you are doing it – church, school, village hall, training centre, community centre, conference room or the side of Scafell. I can think of few jobs that are more rewarding and fun and which bring with them such long-term friendships.

Good luck!

Over to you

I hope you've been thinking about some of the ideas I have mentioned as you've gone along. Some of them will have seemed obvious, some will be irrelevant to you, some you will disagree with. Some will be out-dated; others new.

Instead of placing exercises at the end of each chapter, I have grouped them all here at the back of the book. I thought this would make the main body of the book more readable. The kinds of exercises listed here are typical of the sorts of things you will be expected to do if you undertake specialist adult or further education teacher training, such as the City & Guilds 7307.

If you're not following this kind of a course, you can pick and mix – do the exercises that seem interesting, ignore the ones that don't seem relevant. It's better at least to think about some of these issues than it is to do nothing at all.

If you're really fed up with this chapter, you can even tear it out, soften it and perforate it and it will make perfectly acceptable toilet paper. Please only do this if it is your book. Librarians and friends don't like you defacing their books.

The student as customer

Nowadays, we try to think of everything in terms of the 'customer'. It's always worth putting yourself in the position of a student to get a 'customer's eye view'. Think about the last time you went on a course.

- What subject did you learn?
- Why did you go? Were you sent by an employer? Was it a recreational course?
- What did the tutor do that worked well? Badly?

- How satisfied were you with the course?
- How did you feel at the end? Had you learned anything new or useful or enjoyable?
- Did you, or your employer, or whoever paid for the course get their money's worth? Why (not)?

A student's experience

Imagine you have decided to learn how to draw and have joined a weekly class of two hours at your local Adult Education Centre. The course is scheduled to last for two terms of ten weeks. What problems might you face in terms of:

- attending the class
- feeling as though you are making progress
- getting on with the tutor
- getting on with the other students
- practising your drawing at home
- obtaining equipment and materials.

If you were the tutor, how would you help your students to overcome these difficulties?

Watch others at work

Visit some classes. Find out from your boss, local Adult Education Centre or wherever, if you can watch a tutor in action. Speak directly to the tutor to make sure that it is OK to visit. Be non-threatening – teachers are used to working unsupervised and your presence could be a bit intimidating.

Make a list of all the positive things you think the tutor is doing. Which parts of his/her teaching would you (could you) copy?

Barriers to learning

Think about your own subject.

- What difficulties might someone completely new to the subject have?
- If someone has learning difficulties or is physically less able, is this going to give them particular problems in your subject?

Everyone knows something

Ask someone who knows you well (your partner, a colleague, a close friend) to give you a subject or a topic that they consider you know nothing or very little about. Take a sheet of paper and write down in note form everything you can think of connected with that topic. Allow yourself five minutes for this task.

- How much did you know?
- Were you surprised (or perhaps even disappointed) by how much you knew?
- Did you have enough time for the task?

Getting to know your students

It's vitally important to know your students as well as you can. If you are already teaching a group, think about your current students:

- Who are the people who have come to your class?
- What are their names?
- What is the gender mix? Mostly women? Mostly men? About even?
- How many do you know by name?
- Are there certain students who always work together? Does this matter?
- Is the group dominated by any particular students?
- Is there anyone who does not get involved in class discussions?
- Have they studied this subject before?
- Why have they come?
- What do they expect to gain from the class?
- Are there people with any particular learning difficulties?
- Do you have any other observations about your class?

If you don't teach a group, try to find someone who will allow you to observe their class and do the same exercise with their students, or think back to a class you have taken in the past.

Unsuccessful learning

Think back to an unsuccessful learning experience you had.

- Why was it unsuccessful?

- What did the teacher do wrong?
- How would you do it better?

Learning skills

In Chapter 2, we saw that learning tends to be grouped into three main skills areas – psychomotor, cognitive and affective. Of course, some skills fall into more than one category.

Below is a list of some things you might well have learned how to do. To which category (or categories) do the following items belong:

- Knowing your mother's phone number off by heart.
- How to persuade people to your point of view.
- The six times table.
- How to sew on a button.
- How to perform a tennis serve.
- How to ride a bicycle.
- How to boil potatoes.
- How to ignore provocative comments.
- How to peel carrots.
- How to mow the lawn.
- How to make a stew from a recipe book.
- How to write a CV.

Your students, your subject and you

- How do you want your students to see your subject?
- How do you want your students to see you?
- How do you want your students to interact with each other?

Difficult student – a case study

What do you do with an adult student you can't manage and who is damaging the other students' learning and confidence?

You are teaching an English Literature class. One student always arrives earlier than any of the other students, whilst you are busy sorting out lesson notes, handouts and so forth. To begin with, you just think that he is a little lonely. He mainly chit-chats about this and that, asking you if you have read particular books. After a couple of weeks, his little chats take a deeper turn. He has by now admitted to being a widower and is new to the area. You feel sorry for him, but there's

only a limited amount you can say. Then his talk becomes nastier. He begins to make snide comments about the standards of the other students' work.

It emerges that he is unhappy with the table lay-out (which seems to suit everyone else). In the actual sessions, he starts challenging other students' points of view in too robust a manner. Other students seem cowed the moment he shapes up to talk. You realise that he is attempting to take over the group and wants to show off just how much he knows about literature, giving the air that not only does he know more than the others, but he knows more than you do. You now feel decidedly out of your depth. He is putting off both you and the students. It feels as though he has no confidence in you and is trying to take over as the tutor.

What course of action do you think you should take in order to control this student, who is obviously having such a detrimental effect on your class?

Don't forget – this exercise, as well as aiming to help you with your thoughts and ideas on teaching adults, is also an example of a case study. Case studies are discussed in Chapter 4. You might like to think about how to use case studies in your work. The above example is based on a true story.

Integrating new students

It is the start of the second term of your course on dressmaking skills. As well as a group of faithfuls from your previous term, there are three new students, one of whom is a man – the only man in the group.

- What can you do to ensure that your new students are integrated into the group?
- How are you going to cope if any of them are complete beginners?
- Do you think there might be any special problems for the man?

Room layout

Before you start teaching, visit the room where you are going to hold your class. What will be the best way of arranging the room for your particular subject? Draw a quick sketch of what you intend to use. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the layout you have chosen?

Teaching methods

In Chapter 4, we discussed a wide variety of teaching methods that are available to you. First of all, try to make a list of as many teaching methods as possible without referring back to the chapter. When you run out of steam, you can cheat and look up the rest.

Next, consider each method. Answer the following questions:

- 1 What are the advantages and disadvantages of each method?
- 2 How could each method be applied to your subject?
- 3 Which would you definitely want to use for your subject?
- 4 Are there any that you think would be totally useless?
- 5 Are there any you might consider using from time to time, just to make a change?

Questioning techniques

Watch a chat show and decide which are open questions and which are closed. Are there any questions that are intended to be open questions, but provoke a closed reply? What could the interviewer have done to improve his/her questioning technique? For example, if you ask someone 'Did you have a nice weekend?', your intention is probably to find out something about what they did, where they went, how they found it, etc. However, it could easily be interpreted as a closed question. What other ways of asking the question are there which would ensure that the question was an open one?

Make a list of the kinds of questions you could use to:

- Check students' existing knowledge of a subject.
- Test knowledge informally at the end of a session.
- Get students to think more widely about one of the topics on your course, using open question.

Other people's exercises

Find an existing exercise in a textbook relevant to your subject. Look at it critically. Do you like the exercise? If you do, what is it that you like? If not, what do you think is wrong with it? How relevant is it to your students? Would you use it with them? How could you adapt it to use in your classroom? How would you adapt it for any of your students with special needs?

A bank of exercises

It's very useful to build up a portfolio of your own teaching materials and ideas. Look at the various teaching and learning methods outlined in Chapter 4 and the resources discussed in Chapter 5. Using the examples and explanations I have given, start making yourself the following set of materials:

- 1 An ice-breaker that you can use with a new group.
- 2 A glossary of terms used in your subject.
- 3 A handout giving information (*not* a glossary – you've just done that).
- 4 A paper-based exercise.
- 5 A student-centred, classroom activity that will help your students practise something you are going to teach.

Assessment

Write an exercise that aims to assess something you have taught without making it obvious to your students that you are directly assessing them.

Evaluation

Decide how you are going to evaluate your course. If necessary, create an appropriate evaluation sheet for this purpose.

Planning a sequence of learning (yes, course planning)

Imagine you are going to be teaching a course in your own subject. The course is scheduled for five weekly meetings of two hours each. Make a plan of what you would teach during the course. The following questions are in no particular order, but may act as little prompts for your thinking.

- How would you arrange the room?
- What teaching methods are you going to use?
- How much could you fit in?
- What would you have to leave out?
- What would you expect your students to learn?

- How will you break this down into units, sessions and lessons?
- What equipment do you need?
- What equipment do your students need?

When you have covered several sheets of paper with your thoughts and ideas, then try to marshal them into a logical sequence of learning.

Planning an individual session

From the course you have outlined above, plan an individual session. In your plan, make sure that you have included the following elements:

- What is your overall learning aim for the session?
- What are the separate learning objectives that will enable students to achieve this aim?
- What activities are you going to use – it is worth breaking this down into the activities you will be doing as a tutor at each stage and what your students will be doing at the same time.
- What materials, resources and equipment are you going to need to teach this session?
- What materials, resources and equipment are your students going to need?
- Who will supply all the materials, resources and equipment? You? The Centre? The students?
- How are you going to assess what progress your students have made?
- How are you going to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching session?

Qualities of a good tutor

What qualities do you think go into being a good tutor? Make two lists – one of the professional qualities (e.g. skills, experience, knowledge), another of the personal qualities (e.g. attitude to students).

Why should your course even exist?

Imagine that your place of work is about to cut 50 per cent of its courses. You want to keep your course going. Jot down the reasons why you think your course should be allowed to continue. Who does it benefit? In what ways?

Student dropout

Make a list of possible reasons why people drop out of classes. Against each reason, list a series of possible remedies.

Remember, some things are beyond your control. You can only attempt to put right those things over which you have some influence, but an understanding of the difficulties faced by students attending a course will enable you to develop strategies to counteract them.

The class swot

If you come from a commercial background, you may well have heard of the technique known as a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

A SWOT analysis is not only a good teaching tool, but you can also apply a variation of it to yourself as a teacher.

- S What are your strengths as a teacher?
- W What skills do you need to improve?
- O What opportunities exist for you in terms of resources, methods, etc.?
- T What would stop you from teaching as effectively as you might?

Teaching journal

You often hear the term 'reflective practitioner' bandied about, especially on teacher-training courses. A reflective practitioner is someone who thinks about their work and reflects on what they have done afterwards. It's a useful idea.

When you first start teaching or go on a teacher-training course, you may be asked to keep a journal of your teaching. Even if it's not part of a course requirement, it is a valuable exercise and worth doing in as much depth as you can.

In your journal, you should keep a record of your own teaching and learning. You should react to the experiences you have as both a teacher and a learner and record your attitudes to the subject you are teaching, the methods you are using and your students.

You can incorporate into it your own evaluations of your lessons. If you like, you can also incorporate a regular SWOT analysis into your journal.

It's very easy to keep such a journal very badly. 'Taught multiplication – bad lesson' doesn't tell you a great deal for future reference. Similarly, only recording your triumphs, or dwelling only on the disasters is not going to help you at all.

Useful contacts

Adult Residential Colleges Association

ARCA is an association for residential adult education. They have member colleges throughout the country, which between them run more courses than you could possibly imagine. Great to visit as a learner, and a useful source of additional income for adult education tutors.

Secretary, PO Box 3, Washbrook, Ipswich IP8 3HF
Website: www.aredu.org.uk

Association of Part-Time Tutors (APTT)

This is a voluntary–professional support group and training organisation set up in the North-East of England in 1995. The APTT’s main remit is to provide accredited training which supports part-time teachers in the post-compulsory education sector. It also helps combat isolation at work and disseminates information on educational affairs. Organised and run on a voluntary basis by teachers themselves. Even if you don’t live in the North-East, it is a useful model for organising yourselves locally.

Contact: Bob Groves (Secretary)
Tel: 0191 263 5029
Website: www.aptt.freeuk.com
Email: bobgroves@blueyonder.co.uk

Association of Teachers and Lecturers

A professional association for teachers in schools, colleges and universities.

7 Northumberland Street, London WC2N 5RD
Tel: 020 7930 6441
Fax: 020 7930 1359
Email info@atl.org.uk

Basic Skills Agency

Supported and funded by the government, the BSA works with a variety of organisations to help people strengthen their basic skills. They also produce a magazine and have some useful resources on their website.

Commonwealth House, 1–19 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1NU
Tel: 020 7405 4017
Fax: 020 7440 6626
Website: www.basic-skills.co.uk
Email: enquiries@basic-skills.co.uk

British Dyslexia Association

Their website is chock-full of information leaflets. If you don't have access to the internet, write for more details, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

98 London Road, Reading RG1 5AU
Tel: 0118 966 2677
Fax: 0118 935 1927
Email: admin@bda-dyslexia.demon.org.uk
Website: www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk

Campaign for Learning

A charity that works to include as many people as possible in the learning process. 'Our vision . . . an inclusive society, in which learning is valued, understood, wanted and widely available to everyone. A world in which everyone is seen as having the potential to learn.' Now that's music to the ears of any adult educator.

19 Buckingham Street, London WC2N 6EF
Tel: 020 7930 1111
Fax: 020 7930 1551

Email: dlightbrown@cflearning.org.uk

Website: <http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/>

Community Education Association

For anyone interested in lifelong learning. They also organise various training events around the country.

Barford Road, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 2SH

Tel: 01480 216803

Website: www.cosmic.org.uk/cea

Community Education Development Centre (CEDC)

The CEDC promotes the idea of learning for all – trying to bring about a fairer distribution of learning opportunities. They work with all sorts of groups, such as health organisations, schools, adult education and voluntary organisations.

Unit C1, Grovelands, Longford Road, Coventry CV7 9NE

Tel: 024 7658 8440

Fax: 024 7658 8441

Email: info@cedc.org.uk

Website: www.cedc.org.uk

Dyslexia Institute

The Dyslexia Institute assesses and teaches people with dyslexia. They also fund research into dyslexia, develop teaching materials and train teachers.

133 Gresham Road, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2AJ

Tel: 01784 463851

Fax: 01784 460747

Website: www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk

Educational Centres Association

A voluntary body that aims to promote adult participation in adult education. They also produce a magazine *Centre Line*.

21 Ebbisham Drive, Norwich NR4 6HQ
Tel: 01603 502568

The Learning and Skills Development Agency

The national resource for the development of policy and practice in post-16 education and training. LASDA has taken over from FEDA (The Further Education Development Agency).

Citadel Place, Tinworth Street, London SE11 5EF
Tel: 020 7840 5400
Fax: 020 7840 5401
Email: enquiries@LSDA.org.uk
Website: LSDA.org.uk

National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE)

NATFHE is the trade union and professional association for people working with those above statutory school age. With 65,000 members NATFHE is the largest lecturers' union.

27 Britannia Street, London WC1X 9JP
Tel: 020 7837 3636
Fax: 020 7837 4403
Minicom: 020 7278 0470
Email: hq@natfhe.org.uk
Website: www.natfhe.org.uk

National Extension College

A useful supplier of all sorts of educational material as well as distance education courses.

Michael Young Centre, Purbeck Road, Cambridge CB2 2HN
Tel: 01223 400200
Fax: 01223 400399
Email: info@nec.ac.uk
Website: <http://www.nec.ac.uk/>

NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education)

This is the big one. It's the main information and professional service for adult educators. They undertake research, development, publish books, materials and journals and co-ordinate the annual *Adult Learners' Week*.

21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE

Tel: 0116 204 4200

Fax: 0116 285 4514

Email: enquiries@niace.org.uk

Website: <http://www.niace.org.uk/>

National Open College Network (NOCN)

NOCN is one of the largest awarding bodies in the UK. They specialise in awards for adults, especially for those who find traditional qualifications inaccessible or inappropriate. If you are looking for a means of accrediting a course, then there are Open College Networks throughout the country.

NOCN, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE 22 1GB

Tel: 01332 591071

Fax: 01332 597734

Website: www.nocn.ac.uk

Email: nocn@derby.ac.uk

Ruskin College

An independent college that offers 'second chance' education of a university standard to people who missed out first time around.

Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HE

Tel: 01865 310713 (enquiries)

Fax: 01865 554372

Email: enquiries@ruskin.ac.uk

Website: www.ruskin.ac.uk

Universities Association for Continuing Education

UACE is the higher education sector's association for promoting continuing education. It is possible to join on an individual basis and might be of interest to you if you were teaching at a high level in university-sector continuing education.

C/o Dr. Michael Richardson, Secretary of UACE, University of Cambridge, Board of Continuing Education, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge CB3 8AQ

Tel: 01954 280 279

Fax: 01954 280200

Email: smi20@cam.ac.uk

University of the Third Age/The Third Age Trust

Its main purpose is to encourage lifelong learning for those no longer in full-time gainful employment. They organise local U3A groups throughout the country.

26 Harrison Street, London WC1H 8JG

Tel: 020 7837 8838

Fax: 020 7837 8845

Email: national.office@u3a.org.uk

Women's Institute (National Federation of Women's Institutes)

You may still think they're all 'jam and Jerusalem', but the WI is a formidable learning institution, with its own magazine and residential college. For years, the WI kept crafts going almost single-handedly in this country. Talks to local WI groups can also be a useful source of extra income for the freelance tutor.

104 New Kings Road, London SW6 4LY

Tel: 020 7371 9300

Website: www.womens-institute.co.uk

Workers' Educational Association (WEA)

Founded in 1903, the WEA provides all sorts of adult education opportunities, but is especially keen to support 'second chancers'. They provide over 10,000 courses a year to 100,000 students. Importantly, it is controlled by its members.

WEA National Office, Temple House, 17 Victoria Park Square London E2 9PB

Tel: 020 8983 1515

Fax: 020 8983 4840

Email: national@wea.org.uk

Website: wea.org.uk

Useful Links

BBC Education

www.bbc.co.uk/education/home/

BBC Wales Education

www.bbc.co.uk/wales/education/index.shtml

Guardian EducationUnlimited

www.educationunlimited.co.uk/

Times Educational Supplement

www.tes.co.uk

Key Skills

www.dfes.gov.uk/key/

NVQ website

www.dfes.gov.uk/nvq/

National Grid for Learning – has a collection of learning resources

www.ngfl.gov.uk/

Teachernet

www.teachernet.gov.uk

Teacher Training Agency

www.canteach.gov.uk

Jargon buster

I've tried hard not to use jargon to explain jargon, but it's proved almost impossible.

Access courses

Courses that are specifically designed for adults who do not have much or any in the way of qualifications. Access courses enable them to enrol on more advanced courses by providing an alternative to formal qualifications.

Accreditation

In the old days, we tested people by means of examinations and gave them a certificate. Nowadays, there are all sorts of different ways of assessing people. Accreditation is the way in which we can issue a certificate that states that the student has reached a certain standard or level of competence.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (or experience)

As adults, we have learnt a great deal from life or work. The idea behind APL is that we can receive some kind of credit for it. There are ways in which we can have our previous experience certificated. Often, they are such cumbersome ways, that we might as well take the formal qualification that we could pass standing on our heads.

Adult Education

Sometimes also known as continuing education or adult and community education – there is probably some kind of difference, but I'm not sure it matters. Adult Education is generally part-time, often takes place in community halls and schools. Modern languages, fitness, computer skills, arts and crafts and learning for pleasure courses often make up the bulk of these courses.

Affective skills

These are skills that involve our attitudes and emotions.

Aims

Aims are the overall goals of your session or scheme of learning. They are usually quite vague, such as 'At the end of this course you will understand something of the history of Roman Britain'.

Andragogy

Where pedagogy is the teaching of children, andragogy is the teaching of adults.

Assessment

Assessment is concerned with making judgements about students' progress and achievements. In adult education, a great deal of assessment will be informal. Formal assessment techniques are more common with certificated or accredited courses.

Assessment – criterion-referenced

Students are assessed in relation to a set task or body of knowledge. It is this that decides whether they pass or fail, or what grade they achieve.

Assessment – norm-referenced

Instead of ranking students according to how well they have performed *per se*, norm referencing is a way of comparing how they have performed

in relation to one another. So, the end result depends on how strong the competition was in a given exam or accreditation process.

Assessment – summative and formative

Formative assessment is the periodic assessment of your students to see how they are progressing. Summative is the ‘big bang’ approach to assessment, where you assess students at the end of a block of learning.

Assessor awards

In order to assess certain National Vocational Qualifications, you may be required to hold a qualification in assessment. These are often referred to as D32 and D33.

Basic skills

The Basic Skills Agency defines basic skills as ‘the ability to read, write and speak in English (or Welsh), and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general’.

Certification

Providing formal proof that a student has reached a required standard or completed a course. In other words, you get a certificate.

Cognitive dissonance

I promised you in the Preface I knew what cognitive dissonance means. Often, we hold certain facts or ideas very close to our hearts. When we learn something new that contradicts or is at odds with our existing knowledge, we are suffering from cognitive dissonance. For instance, those who think that the battle of Waterloo was won by the Duke of Wellington are often quite upset when they find out it was Blücher who was the deciding factor.

Cognitive skills

Skills that are connected with learning information and knowledge.

Competence and competency

Competence, as you would expect, is when you are capable of doing something. What you can do is a competency. For example, 'The candidate is able to use a hammer to drive in a nail' is a statement of competence, or a competency.

Of course, the trouble with assessing learning using competence is that it doesn't tell us how well someone can do something or if they are truly expert at it.

Continuing education

Often used interchangeably with adult education. It's simply the idea that education is not something that stops, but continues throughout one's life. Lifelong learning is essentially the same thing. Universities often call the department that runs their public access courses (what used to be known as extramural departments) 'continuing education'.

Course

A series of learning outcomes linked by a theme, topic or subject.

Course plan

Otherwise known as a sequence of learning. A course plan sets out what you want your students to have achieved by the end of the course. Different tutors give different levels of detail. Overall, it is probably enough for a course plan to have a statement of the aims of the course, coupled with a list of learning outcomes.

Curriculum

A broad term that involves some idea of what should be taught. Nowadays, the word is most commonly associated with the phrase 'National Curriculum', which was a Stalinist device to ensure that we try to make our children all the same. In general adult education, the curriculum would include health and fitness, courses leading to qualifications, languages, arts and crafts and so on.

Dyslexia

A condition that makes it extremely difficult to organise letters into words. Dyslexics are also often personally disorganised.

Education

The big tough one. Philosophers, academics, greater brains than I have been attempting to define this for years. I reckon that if you know something, feel something or can do something that you couldn't do before, you've been through some kind of educational experience.

Educational gerontology

The study of how older people learn. Older learners often underestimate their own abilities. It's true that over time our short-term memories become less effective, but it doesn't mean to say that we can't learn. After all, we saw in Chapter 2 that learning isn't just about memorising.

Evaluation

In education, this is the term we use when making judgements about ourselves and our teaching as professionals.

Facilitator

Rather than actually teach a group, a facilitator acts as a sort of chairperson, ensuring that the group moves forward. You will find a great deal of facilitation takes place on courses that involve students in looking deeply at their own emotions.

Feedback

In education, feedback is the information you give a student after some kind of exercise or assessment. This could range from a simple 'well done', through to handing out the results of some highly complex marking scheme.

Formal education

The kind of tightly controlled education that takes place in schools, colleges and universities.

Functional literacy and numeracy

The ability to read and write at a level that enables you to go about daily life in modern society. Of course, as society as a whole becomes more complex and uses more and more of the written word, the level of literacy deemed to be 'functional' is a lot higher. Numeracy is the same thing, only with numbers.

Further education

Essentially, this means any kind of education that takes place after compulsory school leaving age.

Handout

A sheet of paper giving information or exercises for your students. Death by a Million Handouts is what you achieve if you inundate your students with a rain-forest's worth of paper.

Hidden curriculum

If you've heard of the term 'hidden agenda', then it will probably help you understand the idea of the hidden curriculum. This is the unspoken aspect of what takes place in the classroom. In adult education, the hidden curriculum might include increasing students' confidence, providing them with a social network or repairing the damage done to them in schools.

Higher education

This tends to be the term that we apply to universities and any kind of education that is above 'A' level standard.

Inclusion

The idea that no one should be barred from participating in the educational process. Inclusion involves broadening access to education to welcome allcomers.

Individual learning account

At the time of writing, the government has instituted a scheme whereby most people can reclaim a sum of money if they are attending a course that carries a qualification. The idea is to promote learning throughout life, so that we all become part of a 'learning society'.

Indoctrination

This is what passes for teaching in restrictive societies. Unless students follow what is being taught rigidly and without wavering, they are failures. It is rare to see indoctrination in adult education; you occasionally see it at the kind of 'training' events that are really small-scale sales rallies that use Nuremberg as a model.

Informal education

Learning that happens when you're not in a formal situation. Typical examples would include learning how to wire a plug, teaching yourself to play the guitar, looking up your family tree or finding out about Guatemala using an encyclopaedia or the internet. Museums and libraries provide huge amounts of informal education through their highly informed staff.

Intrinsic and instrumental motivation

Intrinsic motivation is when we do something for the pleasure of doing it. Instrumental motivation is when we have a set aim, such as getting a job or improving a particular skill.

Key Skills

According to the DfEE website the term Key Skills is used to define those generic skills which individuals need in order to be effective members of a flexible, adaptable and competitive workforce and for

lifelong learning. There is now a fair consensus that the Key Skills specifications originally developed by NCVQ represent, whilst not the whole story, a serviceable inventory of skills important both in employment and life generally, and for which it is possible to set national standards of performance. These Key Skills are described in terms of units, each at five levels, which stretch broadly from the equivalent of GCSE (D–G) to first degree. They cover:

- Communication
- Application of Number (AoN)
- Information Technology
- Working with Others (WVO)
- Improving Own Learning and Performance (IOLP)
- Problem Solving.

So now you know.

Learning outcomes

The objectives of a course or session. These should tell students what they will be able to do that they couldn't do before.

Learning objectives

This term has largely been replaced by learning outcomes. They're not quite the same thing, but it's too much to quibble here.

Learning styles

The following styles are based on the work of Honey:

Activist – likes to get in there and do it

Pragmatist – needs to know why he or she is learning something.

Reflector – likes the time to think about what they're learning, to observe others.

Theorist – goes for structured, theoretical, methodical approach to learning

If you read more widely, you will come across other theories, but this will at least get you started.

Lifelong learning

The traditional way of learning was for a 'front-loaded' model – school, apprenticeship, then real work. Any education at a later stage was unusual, haphazard or even impossible. Lifelong learning is the idea that education is something we need to be engaged on throughout our lives.

Memory – short-term and long-term

Where we store information that we need to accomplish something immediately. Long-term memory is where we store stuff that we might need at some later time in the future.

If you like, short-term memory is the little freezer box in the fridge, whilst long-term memory is the deep-freeze out in the garage.

Micro-teaching

Yes, teaching in miniature. This is a teaching and learning technique that you often come across on teacher education courses. A micro-teaching session involves only a handful of students and usually lasts for no more than fifteen minutes and has an aim and a limited number of learning outcomes. Topics such as making scrambled egg on toast, how to string a guitar, sewing on a button and quick methods for relaxation lend themselves well to micro-teaching.

Micro-teaching is usually observed and often video-recorded. It sounds horrendous, but can be a lot of fun. It is also a very useful way of thinking in depth about how people learn and how to break up a topic into small, manageable steps.

Non-vocational and vocational education

For years there has been a perceived divide between courses that lead to qualifications or are connected with the world of work, and those that are pursued for 'leisure' purposes.

In adult education, this has always been seen as a simplistic divide. Flower arranging may seem like the ultimate leisure activity. What happens if a student joins a leisure course in cookery and then opens a restaurant? Is the course vocational or non-vocational? I think it is the motivation of the student that makes the course vocational or non-vocational. Discuss in not more than 1,500 words . . .

NVQ

National Vocational Qualifications. Some people refer to them as ‘not very qualified’, but I would hate to pass comment. NVQs are a government-led initiative to show people that vocational, work-based training and qualifications are important.

Programme of learning

The word ‘course’ implies that you are going to study something in a classroom or training centre. A programme of learning includes ‘courses’ in this sense, but also includes self-directed study.

Progression route

Yuck, I hate this term. All it means is the path that you can take to move from one course to another. For instance, if you want to do a degree, you might take GCSEs, followed by A levels, then the degree. That is a progression route, although an adult might more typically take an access course to gain entry to a university.

Psychomotor skills

These are physical skills, such as learning to play football.

Reflective practitioner

This term gets bandied about a lot on teacher-training courses. What it means is that you should think about how you are doing your job. This might mean jotting down a few comments about how a class went or which exercises were successful (or not). Teachers who think about their teaching are well on their way to being good teachers.

Scheme of learning

This is also known as a scheme of work or a course plan. It is a more generalised plan of what you and your students are going to do over a series of sessions.

Session plan

Also called a lesson plan, but we use the word 'session' for adults as it seems a lot more grown up. It's a plan of what you and your students are going to do in any particular meeting. It will include aims and learning outcomes. You should also include details of the various activities you have planned to make sure you meet these aims and outcomes.

Special needs

A huge subject for study in its own right. Special needs includes all those people who have difficulties with learning for whatever reason. This might be due to a physical disability, learning difficulty or because the learner was unable to benefit from childhood education.

Subject

This is a large area of study and learning, such as Art, Spanish, Management Sciences. Sometimes, such as with the case of 'Art', subjects can be seen in general terms, but they can also be more specific, e.g. 'Water-colour painting for beginners'.

Syllabus

This is normally what is issued by an examination board or an accreditation body. It lists the topics and learning outcomes that they intend to assess.

Topic

Topics are subjects within subjects. If the subject is British History, then the topic might be the Roman Invasion of Britain. Topic-based work can be a very good approach for adult education, although adults may perceive the word itself as smacking of junior school.

Worksheet

A kind of handout that contains exercises or tasks that students normally also complete on the paper itself.

Acronyms

The trouble with any job is that it breeds acronyms. It always seems so much more professional to speak in letters than it does to use real words. I haven't just limited the list to the education of adults, but included a load more as well. There are examination and assessment bodies, governmental bodies, local authorities, professional associations and the abbreviations of assessment.

Some of the organisations are defunct, or have metamorphosed themselves into yet another set of letters. But their old acronyms linger like the smell of old football socks.

I'm not pretending I've got everything here, but by using this list you should be able to bluff your way into any sector of education.

A LEVEL	Advanced Level
ACE	Adult Continuing Education
AE	Adult Education
AEB	Associated Examining Board
AEC	Adult Education Centre
AHRB	Arts and Humanities Research Board
ALBSU	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
APTT	Association of Part-Time Tutors
APU	Assessment of Performance Unit
AS LEVEL	Advanced Subsidiary Level
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BAOL	British Association of Open Learning
BDA	British Dyslexia Association

BECTA	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
BOAL	British Association of Open Learning
BSA	Basic Skills Agency
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CELL	Centre of Excellence in Lifelong Learning
CILT	Centre for Information on Language Teaching
CLAIT	Computer Literacy and Information Technology
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRE	Campaign for Racial Equality
DENI	Department of Education for Northern Ireland
DFES	Department for Education and Skills
DSS	Department of Social Security
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EAZ	Education Action Zone
EC	European Community
EDEXCEL	Educational Excellence Foundation
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
ESREA	European Society for Research on the Education of Adults
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
FEDA	Further Education Development Agency
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation
FEU	Further Education Unit
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
GTC	General Teaching Council
GTCW	General Teaching Council for Wales
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Health Education Authority
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies

IER	Institute for Employment Research
IES	Institute for Employment Studies
ILT	Institute for Learning and Teaching
IT	Information Technology
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
JANET	Joint Academic Network
JIP	Joint Investment Plan
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
KS	Key Stage
LDD	Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities
LEA	Local Education Authority
LGA	Local Government Association
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NC	National Curriculum
NCET	National Council for Educational Technology (now Becta)
NCETW	National Council for Education and Training in Wales
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NEAB	Northern Examinations and Assessment Board
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NGfl	National Grid for Learning
NIACE	National Institute for Continuing Education
NLT	National Literacy Trust
NOF	New Opportunities Fund of the National Lottery
NUS	National Union of Students
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NYA	National Youth Agency
OCN	Open College Network
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OU	Open University
PAT	Professional Association of Teachers
PLAR	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
ROA	Record of Achievement
RSAEB	RSA Examinations Board
S/NVQ	Scottish National Vocational Qualification

SAT	Standard Assessment Task
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SQA	Scottish Qualification Authority
SSA	Student Support Agency
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UCEA	Universities and Colleges Employers Association
WJEC	Welsh Joint Education Council
WOED	Welsh Office Education Department
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Agency
SCEC	Scottish Community Education Council (now Community Learning Scotland)
SCET	Scottish Council for Educational Technology
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council

If you're fed up with all these abbreviations, then why not join LAGUNA – the League Against the Gratuitous Use of Nonsensical Acronyms.

Some useful bits and pieces for your teaching box

This is the kind of equipment that will probably form part of your basic teaching kit. If you are a fully fledged stationery lover, you will find that it is worth becoming an adult teacher just so that you can go shopping for all the equipment. If you are lucky, a generous employer might furnish you with much of it and you can spend the money saved on a good night out.

For your own writing needs, a pencil case containing:

- ball-point pens – in a variety of colours
- pencil, rubber, pencil sharpener
- felt-tip pens – in a variety of colours
- Tippex/Snopake
- fountain pen, blotting paper and ink cartridges (if you're into proper pens)
- ruler, calibrated in inches for the old folk and centimetres for the young'uns.

So that you know what you're doing in the session:

- teaching notebook
- teaching notes
- teaching file or folder, containing course and session plans
- folder containing handouts
- A4 paper
- card
- specialist equipment for that particular session

- diary
- textbooks
- calculator.

In case anything needs sticking to anything else:

- Bluetack
- Pritt stick
- Sellotape
- stapler, staple remover and staples
- drawing pins
- needle and thread
- safety pins
- string.

In case anything needs removing from anything else:

- scissors
- sharp knife.

So you know who your students are:

- name badges or sticky labels
- the register
- your own list of the students' names.

For displays, explanations and boardwork:

- chalk
- board markers (check they are the correct ones for the whiteboard)
- highlighter pen
- OHP pens – permanent and water-soluble
- OHP acetates
- spare bulb and fuse for the OHP
- flipchart paper
- flipchart marker
- board cleaner – tissues or kitchen towel can often substitute.

For when you sustain an injury or an emergency:

- mobile phone, phone card or change for the phone
- Paracetamol
- sticking plasters.

(You may not be allowed to hand them out to the students, but they're pretty handy for your own use.)

Your own specialist equipment

This will vary enormously according to what you are going to teach, but might include such items as craft materials, audio or video tapes, cassette player, slide projector. I keep my own list of what I need for particular subjects and check it off before I go anywhere.

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Some alternative suggestions for reading and viewing

I suspect that there is as much to be learned by reading books and watching films that deal intelligently with education and human behaviour. Forget the kind of film where our embattled hero takes on a class of thirty psychopaths and turns them into literary geniuses (or genii), they're just tedious; but some books and films that you might like to think about could include such classics as:

Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw. We all know the basic story of Shaw's *Pygmalion*, because we've seen *My Fair Lady*. The original play is more useful to you as a tutor.

Educating Rita by Willie Russell is an up-dated version of the story, but shows how education can be both liberating and a burden.

A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess shows how you can destroy the good in someone along with the evil.

Lord of the Flies by William Golding. Without proper forms of organisation, groups can go appallingly wrong.

On the other hand, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey, show just how organisations can ruin lives.

The Education of Hyman Kaplan by Leo Rosten tells the story of Hyman Kaplan, everyone's nightmare student. The book also demonstrates just how difficult English can be as our immigrant hero gets to grips with his new language.

Sophie's World by Jostein Gaardner gives an introduction to philosophical ideas.

Escape from the Rat Race by Nicholas Corder tells you how to live a simpler life, with a less affluent lifestyle – which is exactly what you'll have to do if you depend on part-time adult education teaching for your income.

Other publications that might be of use

The National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) publishes a range of materials, including *The Adult Learning Yearbook* and a magazine *Adults Learning*, which produces ten issues per year, covering the education and training of adults – there is a reduced price for part-time lecturers and students.

Hobsons publish the *Directory of Further Education*.

Kogan Page publish an *International Directory of Adult and Continuing Education*.

ARCA (The Adult Residential Colleges Association) produces a book listing residential courses under the title *Time to Learn*.

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