



Real-World-Oriented Learning Facilitation Guidelines for the Adult-Ed Classroom

This time-saving guideline invites adult-ed teachers—those who want, of course—*to be remarkable, do art and make change happen* by allowing adult learners to bring out their genius and passion. In other words, this tool is designed to help instructors *get learners closer to their dreams*, one lesson and one semester at a time.

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There are lots of learning facilitation guidelines out there, but here's what makes these real-world-oriented learning facilitation guidelines different:

- They focus on preparing adult students for the real world and facilitating deep-structure learning, promoting *soft and irreplaceable skills* that are salable in the marketplace or in [the gig economy](#).
- They invite adult-ed teachers—those who care, of course—to do art, take bigger risks, teach lessons they don't fully control, and allow learners to bring out their genius and passion. In other words, the guidelines promote an education that *goes beyond compliance, beyond the test*. It's an invitation to do work that matters—true learning for real change. So these guidelines aren't for everyone.

If you are still interested, let's go over the rationale behind these learning facilitation guidelines, shall we?

You and I are responsible adult-ed professionals, and we care deeply for learners. We want them to succeed. We plan and teach good lessons, hoping learners will do well on standardized testing, get a high school diploma or learn English, make it to college or vocational training, get a job—and live happily ever after! In other words, we promote education as the future.

This sounds fantastic, but there is one big problem. What is it? It's that all education is not created equal. What do I mean? I mean *we can no longer promise learners* that a degree or compliance-based education alone will guarantee them a job, much less a successful career in this economy.

The job market today is like trying out for a high school sports team that almost every kid in the school is trying out for. The competition is extremely tough. Do you think I'm kidding? I'm not.

Not convinced yet? Then let's go over some *brutal truths*, shall we?

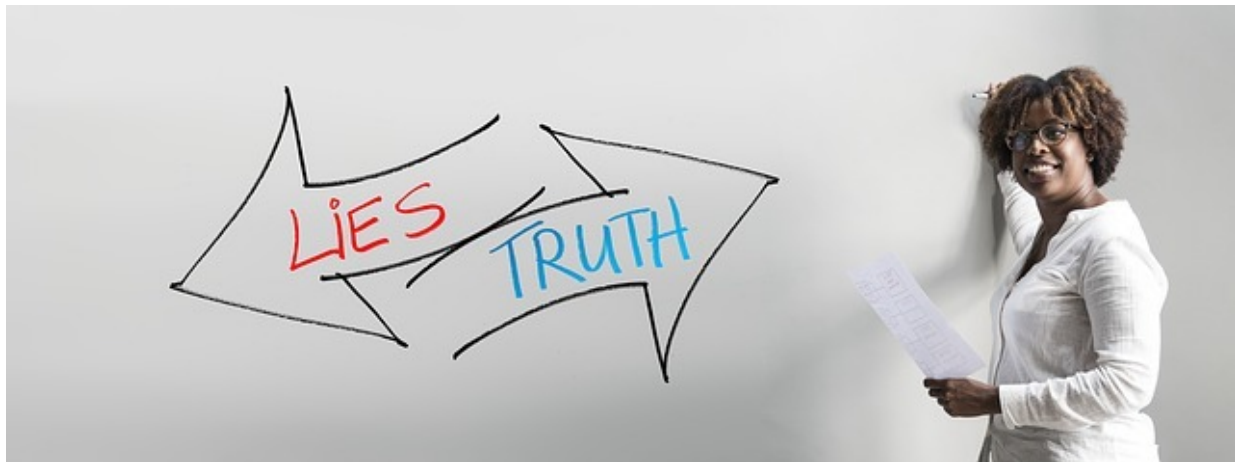


- You see, adult learners face a mountain of competition and uncertainty in the job market. To quote The Boston Globe, “[If we tell our young people that more education leads to higher earnings, we are not telling the whole truth. Higher education will increase the chances of a well-paying job, but there is no guarantee.](#)”
- Now wait till you hear about job outsourcing and layoffs! According to the financial publication The Balance, [US companies outsourced 14 million jobs in 2013](#) when about 7.5 million people were unemployed in the U.S. Unfortunately, this is an ongoing trend. What's worse, companies always use employees to balance their books. For example, according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, [1.7 million people got laid off and discharged in April 2018.](#)
- Oh, there's more. Based on [a recent BBC News article](#), by the year 2030 artificial intelligence (AI) will have killed about [800 million jobs in the U.S.](#) It's already happening. I recently discussed in a blog post [how robots are already killing millions of jobs in the U.S. and China.](#)

My point is, the real world or the job market is rough, challenging, and even cruel. In fact, the real-world job market is awaiting your adult students like a hungry lion positioning itself to take advantage of innocent prey. To escape or survive the wrath of this cutthroat economy, our learners must be able to *compete*.

Now, the key question is, “How do we prepare our adult students for that world?” Keep reading...

As adult-ed teachers, we are in the driver’s seat, so we must tell students the truth and *show them the way to true learning* rather than just teaching for compliance testing. Don’t avoid giving them the truth because you think—as the movie line goes in “A Few Good Men”—you think they “can’t handle the truth.” Instead, realize that you are able to prepare them for the future like few others can, then rise to the challenge of giving your students the honesty they need.



Let's ponder on this:

- A degree is still important because it helps learners catch employers’ attention and ears. But hiring managers are interested in what learners have to offer—real skills and competencies. That is to say, *what sets learners apart* is their ability to solve real problems, adjust to changes and learn new things, and work well on a team. Therefore, our responsibility is to prepare our students accordingly.

- Adult students are capable of much more than they think they are, but most of them probably view standardized tests as the ultimate way to measure their abilities and worth. You and I should challenge and change this *mindset*. Why? Because this view of standardized testing is a guaranteed way for students to *hide their genius, fail to reach their real dreams*, and get by with just the minimum. In other words, it helps them to become average.
- And here's a point you don't want to miss. **Change should be the main goal of adult education**. The purpose of adult-ed teaching is learning—*true learning*. Therefore, test scores, grades, diplomas and certificates are byproducts, not the main focus, of teaching. As motivational speaker Leo Buscaglia puts it, “Change is the end result of all true learning.” Really? Yes, indeed! As adult educators, our true calling is to transform adult students into **successful lifelong learners** equipped to face the *real world*.

Now, you maybe wondering, “How do we make this transformation happen?” This is a smart question! And this where earning facilitation guidelines come in handy. These guidelines serve as a detailed *roadmap* to guide classroom instruction and connect it to new places—in our case, to the outside world.



The best way to teach in a transformational way is to not let your expectations of your learners (your bias about them) get in the way. Instead, set the bar high for all your learners. That is, *promote a race to the top* that enables students to become proficient in reading, speaking, math, science, English, teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking (depending on the topic you teach).

Setting the bar high also means pushing students to perform beyond what the test expects or requires of them. And the more we teach for *mastery* and focus on deep-structure learning, the easier the test will look. In other words, the test will take care of itself.



The good thing is that our work will speak for itself because our learners will show higher order skills all across subject areas.

For example, they will

- Show the ability to set goals, prioritize and focus on things that matter
- Read, understand, summarize, and present all kinds of texts, both orally and in writing
- Express themselves with tact publicly and ask pertinent questions
- Read between the lines and make inferences
- Show agency and the ability to learn new things on their own
- Use the appropriate frame of reference to approach math problems and scientific information produced for a variety of contexts or situations
- Show the ability to understand and use [abstract conceptualization](#), information, and evidence/data to make generalizations
- Think critically, approaching and [solving complex problems](#) with a growth mindset
- Connect classroom learning and skills to real-world situations and discuss current trends
- Show emotional intelligence and self-control during discussions
- Develop soft and irreplaceable skills and competencies
- Explore their talents and potential

I could go on and on...but you get the point, right?

Now, I know what you are thinking: “This sounds hard!” Yes, it’s challenging to prep learners for the real world. We can’t just plan out our lessons on the back of napkin after dinner and walk into class the next day expecting to make a difference. It takes a LOT of planning.

In fact, transforming our students into lifelong learners with strong *21st-century skills* is like climbing Mount Everest! But what other option do we have? This is the emotional labor you and I signed up for, so we ought to do it and keep our promise to learners, helping them to *become better*, one classroom session at a time.



But since it’s hard, maybe a real-world-oriented learning facilitation guidelines is a good place to start. They might help you prioritize cognitive tasks, metacognitive skills, and real-world examples and experiences. And coupled with the right tools and strategies, maybe these learning facilitation guidelines can help students transform shallow learning into *flexible knowledge*.

The guidelines are divided into 7 sections: 1) *Real-Word Teaching Goals*, 2) *Learner-Centered Facilitation*, 3) *Decision-Making*, 4) *Effective Classroom Practice*, 5) *Learning Reinforcement*, 6) *Assessment & Evaluation* and 7) *Learning or Knowledge Transfer*. You shouldn’t expect to address all the principles and all 30 questions in these guidelines in every lesson you teach. But using some of them to plan a chapter or unit is a step in the right direction.

Now, let’s review the principles and the questions in the ***real-world-oriented learning facilitation guidelines***.

Real-World-Oriented Learning Facilitation Guidelines

When you plan your module or lesson unit, keep these *principles* in mind. They can help you drive instruction and create learning tasks that mimic the *real world*.

Section 1- Real-World Teaching Goals:

Answer here

Section 2- Learner-Centered Facilitation:

Answer here

Section 3- Decision-Making:

Answer here

Section 4- Effective Classroom Practice:

Answer here

Section 5- Learning Reinforcement:

Answer here

Section 6- Assessment & Evaluation:

Answer here

Section 7- Learning or Knowledge Transfer:

Answer here

Section 1- Real-World Teaching Goals:	✓
1. Promote deep-structure learning, mastery and learner autonomy	
2. Transfer classroom learning to real-world situations	
3. Promote growth mindset, protect students against learning stereotypes and address self-esteem issues (past learning experiences may prevent learners from doing their best)	
4. Develop speaking or communication skills (regardless of the subject you teach)	
5. Increase reading comprehension skills (summarizing, analyzing evidence) Develop writing skills	
6. Develop writing skills	
7. Promote students'critical thinking skills	
8. Increase technology literacy skills	
9. Develop emotional intelligence , self-regulation and leadership skills	

Section 2- Learning-Centered Facilitation:	✓
1. Start with real world-driving questions and encourage students to pose additional questions	
2. Pique learners' curiosity (it might force them to think about and engage with the content in a deeper way—which leads to better information retention)	
3. Use inquiry-based approach to develop thinking skills and use experiential learning to promote learning by doing and reflecting	
4. Make the learning process rigorous (challenge assumptions and make learners think on their feet)	
5. Avoid giving answers out for free (leave it up to learners to search, discover, explore and support their thoughts and ideas)	
6. Leverage learners' passion and interest (afford them space to personalize and individualize their assignments or projects)	
7. Utilize content's best modality (the best way to teach a subject) and expose learners to materials in a variety of ways (videos, demonstration, texts, realia, authentic materials and real life examples)	
8. Create a risk free-environment but help learners to acknowledge and deal with their fear	
9. Bring experts or other professionals into the class and encourage learners to have their questions answered	

Section 3- Decision-Making:	✓
1. Create space for learners to participate in decision-making and share their opinions, thoughts and feelings	
2. Give learners time and space to contemplate how they best think, work, and learn—that is, to reflect on identifying key issues, make adjustments and request appropriate help	
3. Encourage students to create learning products that match their level of readiness, and their personal and career goals	
4. Use learning activities that involve students analyzing and discussing content , negotiating meaning, making joint decisions, and creating products to showcase their comprehension and skills	

Section 4- Effective Classroom Practice:	✓
1. Teach how to learn or the best ways to access and practice your content (act like a mentor or a coach)	
2. Build learners' background knowledge in your content area (analyzing, synthesizing, and critiquing skills depend on it)	
3. Promote effective and consistent practice (with intent and free of distraction)	
4. Teach effective study skills (discuss study skills and best ways to learn and master target content)	
5. Use activities that make learners think deeply about new content and skills	
6. Welcome mistakes and celebrate efforts and hard work	
7. Distribute practice sessions over several weeks (avoid massed practices or cramming)	
8. Promote collaboration, peer-learning, and value social interactions (teamwork, group discussions)	
9. Avoid idle time but promote healthy breaks	

Section 5- Learning Reinforcement:	✓
1. Use well designed extension activities or projects to reinforce classroom learning and new skills	
2. Use the case-based Learning approach to create opportunities for learners to use critical thinking and analytical skills to work in groups or in pairs on real world challenges	
3. Implement project-based learning activities that mimic the real world (student should solve meaningful and complex problems for a real audience)	
4. Use problem-based learning model to foster classroom collaboration, allowing learners to show critical thinking skills and creativity	

Section 6- Assessment & Evaluation:	✓
1. Assess and evaluate students' learning with authentic assessment tools and activities that simulate real-life contexts	
2. Collect and use learners' performance data to make adjustment as necessary	
3. Keep learners informed on how they are doing as it relates to specific standards, goal, or rubric they are supposed to meet	
4. Hold groups and individual learners accountable (use participation rubrics and guidelines) Provide effective feedback (timely, corrective, criterion-based, student-facilitated feedback)	
5. Use rubrics and guidelines to set clear learning and evaluation expectations	
6. Implement learning/assessment portfolio for all adult students	
7. Promote self-reflection on learning (provide learners with quiet time for that purpose)	
8. Never ask "Do you understand?" to assess learning; instead observe performance on concrete tasks	

Section 7- Learning or Knowledge Transfer:	✓
1. Create tasks that allow learners to transfer knowledge learned in class to real-world situations	
2. Motivate learners to work on open-ended problems that require the utilization of real world-skills	
3. Expose learners to experiences outside the classroom setting (create opportunities for learners to manipulate content, to engage in meaningful discussions, and to complete meaningful projects)	
4. Raise learners' awareness on the importance of irreplaceable skills (by that I mean artistic and soft skills—skills that lead to jobs robots cannot do well or at all)	

When you plan your module or lesson unit, keep these questions in mind. They can help you think deeper about how to drive instruction that reflects the real world.

1. What are your real-world learning objectives?	16. How will you differentiate instruction?
2. What are your real-world driving questions for your students?	17. What learning activities will mimic real world situations?
3. How and when will students discuss standards?	18. How will learners reinforce their learning and skills?
4. What are the main skills students will practice and master?	19. What opportunity for independent practice will students have?
5. What real-world stories or examples will you share?	20. What opportunity for team-work practice will students have?
6. How will you trigger your learners' interest?	21. How much time will be dedicated to discussion?
7. How will you activate prior knowledge?	22. How much time will be dedicated to collaboration or project?
8. How will learners develop or access new factual knowledge?	23. What authentic materials will students use?
9. What are the key terms or concepts that learners should know?	24. What opportunity for authentic assessment will learners have?
10. What and how will learners contribute to the lessons?	25. How will learners demonstrate critical thinking skills?
11. What authentic products will learners create?	26. What speaking or presentation opportunity will students have?
12. What rubrics will you use for evaluation?	27. How often will learners reflect on the learning process?
13. How will you make learners think deeply about content?	28. How will the key skills and content be presented on the test?
14. How will you facilitate or promote independent study time?	29. How will the lessons meet WIOA expectations?
15. How will learners use technology to foster learning?	30. How will you measure deeper learning and mastery?

Now, your turn...

Now, let me to ask you: What are you going to do with this information?

I urge you to use it to go change your adult students for the best!



Here's the link to the guidelines:

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/beacon.cnd/35874fc3bc4405f0.pdf?](https://s3.amazonaws.com/beacon.cnd/35874fc3bc4405f0.pdf?t=1621268128)

[t=1621268128](https://s3.amazonaws.com/beacon.cnd/35874fc3bc4405f0.pdf?t=1621268128). Click any button below to share it in your network.



Coaching for Better Learning

Our goal is to ensure adult ed teachers have the tools and insights to continue to be successful change-makers. When you receive our insights, you can share what you've learned and put the knowledge into action in your local adult ed classroom.

To impact students' lives, CBL relies on you and your commitment to transforming adult students into lifelong learners *equipped for the real world*.

And we're proud to develop and produce rigorous content that challenges you and, we hope, inspires you to keep meeting your adult students' needs *by taking them a little closer to their dreams*— one lesson at a time.

Thank you for sharing these insights with other adult ed professionals who might need them.

Teddy Edouard (Learning Coach & Consultant)

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Have Questions?

Click the **button** below to send us know a *note*. Then head over to our Blog page to *access* some of the *best practices* we've already shared in our community.

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