

# *Challenge and Change*

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# DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES INVENTORY IN GRADUATE ADULT EDUCATION

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The idea for this instrument originated from the observation that although the literature of adult education provides a broad spectrum of characteristics necessary for adult educators to practice in this emerging field, an assessment instrument was needed which emphasizes the teacher's philosophical beliefs as well as personal and contextual identification, actions and competencies for guiding her/his conduct of a graduate class.

## History

In 1986, editor Chester Klevins requested topics to be included as chapters in the fourth edition of his book Materials and Methods in Adult and Continuing Education. This author suggested some, and the one selected was entitled: "Training Teachers of Adults." He realized that the length restriction would be six pages. Having read previous editions of the book he also knew this needed to be oriented toward practitioners.

In developing the chapter, he acknowledged: A popular belief which suggests that subject matter competence has been considered as automatic and sufficient qualification for teachers of adults; adult teaching experience or formal preparation for teaching the adult learner are not required for obtaining an adult education position in most institutions; and, some persons are naturally talented in teaching adults even without any training. Nevertheless, for most who are nonexperienced in teaching adults, it was assumed that a systematic training program could help them greatly in their responsibility.

As he reflected on his own practice in more than two decades as an adult educator, the author formulated the question: "What ingredients are important and necessary in preparation for teaching adults or helping adults learn?" Five important building blocks emerged out of his practice in answer to that question: (1) beliefs and notions about adult learners; (2) perceptions concerning qualities of effective teachers; (3) phases and sequences of the learning process – i.e. what theory or theories are held about how adult learning takes place?; (4) teaching tips and learning techniques which will be used in the learning experience; and (5) how will the prepared educational plan be implemented? i.e. How is it made to get up and become alive?

Later in 1987 a referred paper was presented by the author to the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult and Continuing Education based on those five building blocks. The paper posed the idea that a research agenda for preparing teachers of adults needed to emerge from practice rather than practice emerging from a research agenda which was generated and tested from a scholar's theorizing pursuit. Much healthy and heated debate enlivened that presentation.

Several weeks after that presentation the author received a phone call from a participant who attended the session, asking if he would make a proposal to research and conduct a staff development program with adult learning specialists in a community college system in a large Midwestern metropolitan center. As part of the proposal the fifty-item Instructional Perspectives Inventory (IPI) was developed. It was based on the idea of having ten questions for each of the five building blocks identified as important for "Training Teachers of Adults."

### Factor Analysis and Revision

As the questions were formulated, the author began to see that the five categories were not mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, the instrument was developed and used in the staff development program with four hundred and ten instructors in Adult Basic Education, General Educational Development, and English as a Second Language. A factor analysis was completed on the results and is reflected as follows in Figure 1.

Figure 1

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
1. Teacher empathy with learners	3.79	0.29
2. Teacher trust of learners	3.53	0.46
3. Planning and delivery of instruction	3.50	0.39
4. Accommodating learner uniqueness	3.28	0.24
5. Teacher insensitivity toward learners	2.86	0.58
6. Learner-centered learning processes (experience-based learning techniques)	2.75	0.51
7. Teacher-centered learning processes	1.89	0.53

The highest scoring item for each factor was positively correlated with the factor with the exception of factor number two, "Teacher Trust of Learners." In fact, of the three items clustered in this factor, two were negatively correlated and one positively. Thus, to strengthen the instrument for subsequent uses the negative items were dropped. Twelve new questions were developed of which ten survived in a subsequent factor analysis. Other items were dropped from the instrument because they did not correlate with any factor. New items were also added to other factors to strengthen the instrument.

The revised inventory was used with two hundred ten faculty members from a variety of subject matter areas who teach in daytime programs in another large metropolitan community college.

In the new factor analysis (Figure 2), some factors remained the same as before. Some items were ultimately dropped, because they did not relate to any factor. Forty-five questions remain.

Figure 2

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
1. Sensitivity to learner differences	3.82	0.46
2. Teacher trust of learners	3.45	0.66
3. Teacher-centered learning process	3.10	0.79
4. Experience-based learning techniques	2.70	0.82
5. Teacher insensitivity toward learners	2.42	0.68

Both lists find the highest two factors as teacher empathy/sensitivity toward learners, and teacher trust of learners. These are considered significant since this author deems it important for theory and practice to be congruent in graduate adult education. This point of view is not universally espoused in the adult education field. However, if one considers it crucial, then this empathy/sensitivity and trust must (within the teacher's capabilities) be exemplified in every aspect of her/his continuous interaction with students/participants.

#### Additional Uses of the Inventory

In addition to the foregoing description, this author has used the instrument in four major ways: (1) as a heuristic device to generate interaction and inventive ideas for adult education practice and theory; (2) as a learning diagnostic instrument for adult teachers in preparation to compare themselves with others and to assess as well as plan for meeting their professional development educational needs; (3) as one learning tool to be used in conjunction with others during a full semester course or full degree program; and (4) throughout all of his practice allow the ideas to permeate his feelings, beliefs and behavior

Since theory and practice congruence is considered crucial and important, it must allow for disagreement on the part of the students. This has played itself out in a variety of ways. One student, even knowing that individual learning contract portfolios are expected as the means for substantiating course work accomplished, vowed she would not do one, and didn't. Another student chose to do her individual part of the course work in a way other than a learning contract and did a remarkable piece of work. Still another confronted the author one day in class saying that his ideas may be all right to play with in the graduate classroom, but they surely were not workable in her real world. The argument and discussion involved a lively and productive time in the class session.

These ideas were really asking and challenging the author/professor that in accordance with some items on the inventory: he respect the dignity and integrity of those learners; he engage those learners in clarifying their own aspirations; he praise those learner's ability to learn what is needed; he hear what those learners indicated as their learning needs; and, he feel those learners needed to be aware of and allow them to communicate their thoughts and feelings.

He has used the inventory in more settings besides his graduate courses at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. They include: a Graduate Adult Education course for University of Missouri Extension faculty; a Graduate Adult Education course for Kansas State University Extension faculty; an advanced methods and techniques Adult Education Graduate course at Kansas State University through a Telenet hook-up of sixty-five participants at twenty-two locations; a methods and techniques Teaching Adults Graduate Course for Brazilian adult educators at the Federal University, Belem, Para, Brazil; a Missouri state certification course for adult basic educators; an inservice education course on adult education methods and techniques for University Extension faculty in two geographical areas of Missouri; and a Missouri State Instructor Certification Program for Emergency Medical Technologists who wish to be approved as instructors for emergency medical technology.

### Outgrowth

At the time of this writing there are three doctoral dissertations at various stages of development which spring from this Instructional Perspectives Inventory. One is a study on instructor competency within a state social service agency. Another is on the influence of trust upon learning in a professional setting including health care, and the development of an instrument to measure trust in learning settings. A third study is to develop an adapted version of the inventory from the student/participant point of view, thus enabling learners to give feedback to instructors. This would be developed in a health care setting

Additionally, a University Extension faculty member who works with youth and youth workers has requested to collaborate with the author in using this for helping to upgrade the youth workers competencies as instructors.

### Sequence for Administering

Three major questions this author always asks and answers for himself whenever he chooses to use this inventory for educational purposes:

- 1 How does my selection of and how I will use this inventory in this setting fit in with my understanding of the way people learn or change (learning theory)?
2. What position does this inventory and its use hold in the context of learning objectives toward which I am working in this educational experience (learning design)?
- 3 What immediate and observable learning needs does this inventory and its use meet at this time with these participants (specific relevance)?

When these questions have been personally as well as satisfactorily addressed, a copy of the inventory, answer key and comparison data are provided to each participant.

In some instances the learning objectives and process steps of using the inventory and the outcomes desired, as well as the debriefing sequence questions, are shared at the beginning. Other times these are shared as the time for each step arrives.

Little more explanation is given than the instructions at the top of the first page. Any questions for clarification are asked for and responded to.

The inventory takes ten to fifteen minutes to administer, depending upon the speed of each learner to read and understand all the questions. Those who finish early usually take the opportunity to talk with their neighbor. This never seemed troublesome to this author. After all, self-direction does also assume responsibility for learner-controlled learning.

The self-scoring key is on the form and is quite simple with A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4, and each item lined with its appropriate factor loading. Discussion regarding the scores is open. Questions raised may be "what does this experience mean to you?" or, "how do you see the comparison of your scores and the original group of adult educators?" or "what items on your completed form do you wish to or feel a need to change, and how will you go about it?" These questions are used to reflect on the extrapolate meaning from the concrete experience. Responses are meant to also generate interaction.

Scores are sometimes recorded on a matrix chart during the class in addition to being averaged. The class average is also compared with the original group who tested the instrument. This is also discussed in an open forum.

Debriefing is accomplished by talking about whether or not the objectives were met, what went well, what could have been improved, and how one might use it in another setting.

The best grouping to use this with would be a graduate course that focuses on methods and techniques for teaching adults. However, it also can be very beneficial when used with other courses: foundations, curriculum, evaluation, comparative, international, program planning, the adult learner, or trends and issues.

### Do's and Don'ts

Do know the educational purpose for which you are using it; then, plan the steps and "stay the course" you have determined.

Don't expect this instrument to be the answer for everything; it is only one learning tool, and there are others available to use.

Don't use this as a recipe book.

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INSTRUCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES INVENTORY

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Listed below are 45 statements reflecting beliefs, feelings, and behaviors beginning or seasoned teachers of adults may or may not possess at a given moment. Please indicate how frequently each statement typically applies to you as you work with adult learners using the codes:

A = Never

B = Rarely

C = Sometimes

D = Often

How frequently do you...

- 1. Use a variety of teaching techniques?
- 2. Use buzz groups (learners grouped together to process information from lectures)?
- 3. Believe that your primary goal is to provide learners as much information as possible?
- 4. Feel fully prepared to teach?
- 5. Have difficulty understanding learner points-of-view?
- 6. Expect and accept learner frustration as they grapple with problems?
- 7. Purposefully communicate to learners that each is uniquely important?
- 8. Express confidence that learners will develop the skills they need?
- 9. Search for or create new teaching techniques?
- 10. Teach through simulations of real-life settings?
- 11. Teach exactly what and how you have planned?
- 12. Notice and acknowledge to learners positive changes in them?
- 13. Have difficulty getting your point across to learners?
- 14. Believe that learners vary in the way they acquire, process, and apply subject matter knowledge?
- 15. Really listen to what learners have to say?
- 16. Trust learners to know what their own goals, dreams, and realities are like?
- 17. Encourage learners to solicit assistance from other learners?
- 18. Feel impatient with learner progress?
- 19. Balance your efforts between learner content acquisition and motivation?
- 20. Try to make your presentations clear enough to forestall all learner questions?
- 21. Conduct group discussions?
- 22. Establish instructional objectives
- 23. Use a variety of instructional media?

A = Never

B = Rarely

C = Sometimes

D = Often

How frequently do you...

- 24. Use listening teams (learners grouped together to listen for a specific purpose) during lectures?
- 25. Believe that your teaching skills are as refined as they can be?
- 26. Express appreciation to learners who actively participate?
- 27. Experience frustration with learner apathy?
- 28. Prize the learner's ability to learn what is needed?
- 29. Feel learners need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings?
- 30. Enable learners to evaluate their own progress in learning?
- 31. Fear what learners indicate their learning needs are?
- 32. Have difficulty with the amount of time learners need to grasp various concepts?
- 33. Promote positive self-esteem in learners?
- 34. Require learners to follow the precise learning experiences you provide them?
- 35. Conduct role plays?
- 36. Get bored with the many questions learners ask?
- 37. Individualize the pace of learning for each learner?
- 38. Help learners explore their own abilities?
- 39. Engage learners in clarifying their own aspirations?
- 40. Ask the learners how they would approach a learning task?
- 41. Feel irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting?
- 42. Integrate teaching technique with subject matter content?
- 43. Develop supportive relationships with your learners?
- 44. Experience unconditional positive regard for your learners?
- 45. Respect the dignity and integrity of the learners?

SCORING

- A = 1
- B = 2
- C = 3
- D = 4

INSTRUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE INVENTORY  
FACTORS

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
4	7	1	6	5	2	3
12	8	9	14	13	10	11
19	16	22	15	18	21	20
26	28	23	17	27	24	25
33	29	42	37	32	35	34
TOTAL	30	TOTAL	38	36	TOTAL	TOTAL
	31		40	41		
	39		TOTAL	TOTAL		
	43					
	44					
	45					
	TOTAL					

FACTORS

	<u>MEAN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>POSSIBLE</u>
(1) Teacher Empathy With Learners _____	3.8	= 19.0	_____ 20
(2) Teacher Trust of Learners _____	3.6	= 39.6	_____ 44
(3) Planning and Delivery of Instruction _____	3.5	= 17.5	_____ 20
(4) Accomodating Learner Uniqueness _____	3.3	= 23.1	_____ 28
(5) Teacher Insensicivity Toward Learners _____	2.9	= 20.3	_____ 28
(6) Experience Based Learning Techniques (Learner-Cantered Learning Processes) _____	2.7	= 13.5	_____ 20
(7) Teacher-Centered Learning Processes _____	1.9	= 9.5	_____ 20

INSTRUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE INVENTORY  
FACTORS

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
4 _____	7 _____	1 _____	6 _____	5 _____	2 _____	3 _____
12 _____	8 _____	9 _____	14 _____	13 _____	10 _____	11 _____
19 _____	16 _____	22 _____	15 _____	18 _____	21 _____	20 _____
26 _____	28 _____	23 _____	17 _____	27 _____	24 _____	25 _____
33 _____	29 _____	42 _____	37 _____	32 _____	35 _____	34 _____
TOTAL _____	30 _____	TOTAL _____	38 _____	36 _____	TOTAL _____	TOTAL _____
	31 _____		40 _____	41 _____		
	39 _____		TOTAL _____	TOTAL _____		
	43 _____					
	44 _____					
	45 _____					
	TOTAL _____					

FACTORS

- (1) Teacher Empathy With Learners \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Teacher Trust of Learners \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Planning and Delivery of Instruction \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Accomodating Learner Uniqueness \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Teacher Insensitivity Toward Learners \_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Experience Based Learning Techniques  
(Learner-Centered Learning Processes) \_\_\_\_\_
- (7) Teacher-Centered Learning Processes \_\_\_\_\_