

Teaching Adult Learners. For Lancaster Consulting facilitators, these are the necessary guidelines for teaching. They are useful for anyone teaching or facilitating a group of adults in a presentation or meeting.

1. **Start with a hook.** Make your first 1-minute count. Be interesting to get the learners interested immediately. Adult learners will discredit you or tune you out quickly if they aren't interested. If you need to introduce your company or your work, do that after your hook.
2. **PowerPoint presentation.** If you are using one, show the agenda or learning objectives on the second slide. Participants feel more at ease if they know where they are going. No more than 30 words/slide. (If bulleting, no more than 5 words/bullet.) Have more to say than what's written on each slide.
3. **Practical & relevant.** Adult learners can be skeptical, wondering how the information they are about to learn is relevant to them. And adult learners don't want just theory, they want to know how to practically use what they have learned. (i.e. "Have you ever struggled with giving difficult feedback to an employee? Today you will learn the top 3 skills to confidently give feedback that gets behavioral change.")
4. **Create knowledge gaps.** Get the group curious and hungry to learn the information before you give them information. Elicit interest instead of force feeding facts. You can do this easily by asking questions (i.e. "What percentage of the American population are extraverts?") If you are lecturing, have a dialogue, not a monologue.
5. **Engage.** This is probably to most important guideline. Telling the group "speak up if you have any questions" is not enough. General rule: presenter should not speak more than 65% of the time nor for 5 minutes of lecture straight. Make the audience work. "What I hear, I forget; What I see, I remember; What I do, I understand." – Chinese proverb. Even if you don't want discussion (you'd like to do more of a lecture), ask questions every minute or so that just need a show of hands (i.e. "Let's see a show of hands from folks who already knew these stats.")
6. **Learning & communication styles.** Teach to all 3 learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic. Engage introverts and extraverts (include individual writing reflection, partner sharing, and large group discussion).
7. **Tell stories.** Relevant stories from your own experience are sticky. But make sure that the stories connect to your point. Evoke their emotions. People remember something better if they felt something. Research shows that stories increase brain activity in participants, and that abstract lecture evokes flat-lining.
8. **Less is more.** Have no more than 4 important points. And you must strategically prepare ahead of time so that you can be clear about your intended learning outcomes. It is found that immediately after a 10-minute presentation, listeners only remembered 50% of what was said. By the next day that had dropped to 25%, and a week later it was 10%.
9. **Have energy & passion for your topic.** The energy of the room rides upon yours. Get enough sleep the night before. Communicate confidently.