

Incentivar e estimular os idosos a participar nas actividades de aprendizagem é uma das políticas da sociedade da terceira idade. Por isso, o educador dos idosos deve satisfazer o melhor possível as suas necessidades educativas conforme o padrão de desenho e aplicação das actividades de aprendizagem. Em primeiro lugar, ao desenhar actividades de aprendizagem, é necessário considerar o seguinte:

1. O conteúdo das actividades de aprendizagem para os idosos deve ser variável, com vista a satisfazer as necessidades e interesses de estudo da terceira idade, de acordo com a natureza diversificada da sociedade;
2. As actividades de aprendizagem para os idosos devem proporcionar conhecimentos profissionais e intelectuais que os preparem para mudar de emprego ou prestar trabalho a tempo parcial;
3. As actividades de aprendizagem para os idosos devem ajudá-los a adaptarem-se ao envelhecimento e a adiá-lo;
4. As actividades de aprendizagem para os idosos devem incluir acompanhamento psicológico a fim de resolver crises psicológicas e aliviar preocupações;
5. As actividades de aprendizagem da terceira idade devem ajudar os idosos a adaptar-se e desenvolver novas relações sociais, como por exemplo, disponibilizar formação na prestação de voluntariado para as situações de perda do cônjuge ou amigo íntimo;
6. As actividades de aprendizagem para os idosos devem dar informação técnica nas áreas de descanso, turismo e gestão, com vista a facilitar a organização das suas vidas pessoais, o bom aproveitamento das pensões de reforma e o tratamento das respectivas heranças.

Por outro lado, para realizar qualquer actividade de aprendizagem para a terceira idade é necessário considerar características físicas e mentais dessas pessoas e também circunstâncias sociais. Neste caso, os princípios de aplicação são:

1. Ao desenvolver actividades de aprendizagem, é preciso ter em consideração que a capacidade física dos idosos decai dia a dia;
2. Os encargos com as actividades de aprendizagem devem ser razoáveis para os idosos;
3. O alojamento deve ser confortável;
4. O ambiente das actividades de aprendizagem deve corresponder às características físicas e mentais dos alunos idosos;
5. O conteúdo das actividades de estudo deve estimular o interesse dos idosos e satisfazer as suas necessidades;
6. Ao organizar-se actividades de aprendizagem, deve ter-se em consideração o transporte para os idosos.

Conclusão

O objectivo da educação de idosos é ajudá-los a concluir um processo de aprendizagem que auxilie a sua reinserção social. A participação dos idosos nas actividades de aprendizagem pode proporcionar uma vida mais dinâmica, melhorando a saúde física e mental, elevando qualidade da vida e possibilitando a entrada na terceira idade de forma pacífica (Lemme, 2006). Os princípios para projectar actividades de aprendizagem para os idosos devem disponibilizar meios e métodos viáveis correspondentes às suas necessidades de estudo e desejo de desenvolvimento. Devem também ser capazes de incentivá-los a participar nas actividades de aprendizagem, aperfeiçoando o nível de satisfação com a vida e criando, assim, os novos significados e valores para a vida.

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03 Design and Implementation Principles for Senior Learning Activity

Preface

With the advancement of medical science and development of technology, the life span of people is lengthened generally in 21st century. Aging community is a worldwide phenomenon. For the sake of the coming of aging community, the United Nations designated 1999 as the "International Year of Older Persons" to emphasize their strong concerns and values on older persons. Among others, education is the key factor to promote the successful development of aging community. As to this senior learner, education can re-position his/her roles and responsibilities with new meanings, and help contribute to the success of aging. (Chen Xin Lan) 2007. From the point of view of senior community, education enables the senior to adapt to and serve society. Furthermore, it enhances the development and improvement of country and society.

One of the reasons senior community considers education as important is affected by the global thought of life-long learning. Life-long learning advocates that everyone needs to learn all the time to achieve self-grow up and self-fulfillment. To prepare for the coming of senior community, one of the important strategies of every country is to provide learning for seniors. (Wang Fu Shun, 2004). Therefore senior society needs education to help senior learners to broaden their view through educational activity, with the success of aging.

Since education is one of the ways to deal with "senior community", every country should actively plan learning activities for the senior. There are three research purposes of this article: the first one is to eliminate the illusion on seniors by people in common; the second one is to understand well the necessity of seniors to participate in learning activities and lastly to explore the design and implementation principles for senior's learning activity, providing reference for educational workers on senior.

Illusion on Senior Learner

In general, people are afraid of becoming old and have prejudice on older persons. This kind of thinking brings up misconception on senior learner. This negative concept misunderstands that senior learner and forms a stiff impression, which is quite unfair to senior learner. In detail, there are several illusions: (Bryan, 1993):

1. Senior learner is incapable of learning new things;
2. Senior learner has no extra energy to participate in learning activity;
3. Senior learner's intelligence is not as good as young people;

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4. Senior learner is unsuitable to undergo achievement test;
5. Senior learner seldom thinks about changes, cannot manage his/her daily things. He/she is pessimistic and always relies on others;
6. Senior learner is useless and unproductive.

In conclusion, the above illusions result from the lack of or misunderstanding on senior learner. In fact, senior learner has ability to learn again. The development of his/her intelligence and wisdom character is better than young people. He/she is optimistic, aggressive and ready to contribute. This kind of mind can achieve its highest level through education learning. When illusion is clearly identified, it helps to get rid of the impression that senior learner is stiff. It also helps the teaching staff to plan courses and activities for them. If a senior is able to participate in learning activities after retirement, he/she is able to initiate a new life plan which includes a development of his/her new interest, individual independence, learning, serving and leisure.

Necessity of Senior Learning

Senior learning means that senior undergoes learning activities to increase his/her new knowledge, to obtain technical ability and change his/her point of views on attitude and value. As a result, senior learner has the abilities to achieve self-satisfaction, overcome difficult situations and enhance his capability to deal with his own living. Due to the effect of life-long learning ideals and change of social situation, senior learning has received much attention. In detail, there are four main reasons for the senior to know the necessity of learning again (Hiemstra, 1985:169-170):

1. Realize that social environment changes instantly; technology develops rapidly and the whole world changes rapidly too;
2. Knowledge for work becomes out-of-date rapidly because of the above environmental changes;
3. Aging is growing up steadily while aging population is increasing;
4. Senior's ways of living change according to social changes; he/she needs to develop new hobbies in order to increase the joy of life through learning.

Design and Implementation Principles for Senior Learning Activity

One of the strategies to tackle senior community is to encourage and stimulate the senior to participate in learning activity. Therefore, teaching staff for senior must fully satisfy the seniors with participating and learning chances on design and implementation principles for senior learning activity. When teaching staff begin to design learning activity, they must give due considerations to the following principles:

1. Senior learning activity's content must be various widely to satisfy the needs and interest of senior learner in order to suit the diversified society;
2. Senior learning activity must be able to provide working knowledge and intelligence as a preparation for the senior to switch to another line of work or to take up a side job;
3. Senior learning activity's content should teach the senior learner how to adapt to the stages of aging and how to slow down aging;
4. Senior learning activity's connotation should include psychological adjustment and guidance for the senior learn, in order to help him/her to overcome psychological crises and smooth over pressure;
5. Senior learning activity needs to help senior learner to adapt and develop new relationship with society, for example, in adjusting to the loss of spouse or good friends and providing volunteer's training etc.;

6. Senior learning activity must provide knowledge and technique on leisure, tour and management for him/her to manage well his/her living, use his/her retirement fund appropriately and handle his/her estate etc.

In addition, the implementation of whatever learning activity must consider senior learner's physiological, mental and social characteristics. Therefore, the implementation principles should include the following six items:

1. Learning activity's carrying out should consider the burden on the physical strength of senior;
2. Learning activity's fees should be affordable by senior;
3. Learning activity's accommodation should make the senior learner feel comfortable;
4. Learning activity's environment should consider the characteristics of body and mind of senior learner;
5. Learning activity's content should be able to increase the interest of senior learner and satisfy his/her needs;
6. Learning activity's arrangement should consider the transportation convenience of the senior learner.

Conclusion

The purpose of senior learning is to provide the senior learner to undergo a complete process to re-customize to society through learning again and fulfill a meaningful learning. The senior is able to develop his/her life positively; enhance body and mind healthiness and improve quality of life by participating in learning activity. Thus he/she has successful aging (Lemme, 2006). The plan and design principles of senior learning activity target at the learning needs and development task of the senior and provide ways and channels of solving problems. The purpose is to encourage senior to participate in learning activity and gradually heighten his/her living satisfaction and re-cultivate the meaning and values of life.

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