DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 416 367 CE 075 787

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TITLE Learning to Learn. Tierra de Oportunidad Module 30. LAES:

Latino Adult Education Services Project.

INSTITUTION Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, City of

> Industry, CA.; California State Univ. Inst., Long Beach. California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento. Youth,

SPONS AGENCY

Adult and Alternative Educational Services Div.

1997-00-00 PUB DATE

NOTE 23p.; For related modules, see CE 075 757-786.

PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

Adult Basic Education; Adult Learning; Basic Skills; DESCRIPTORS

Behavioral Objectives; Cooperative Learning; English (Second

Language); Immigrants; Learning Modules; *Learning

Motivation; *Learning Strategies; Lesson Plans; *Lifelong

Learning; Literacy Education; Study Skills; Teamwork;

Transfer of Training

IDENTIFIERS California; 353 Project

ABSTRACT

This module, which may be used as the basis for a workshop or as a special topic unit in adult basic education or English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) courses, addresses learning to learn. It is designed to help instructors explain and demonstrate how learning is part of life and provide a valuable opportunity for them to engage their students in reflecting on why they are attending an adult learning program, where they are going, and what they need to do to successfully achieve their goals. The module contains the following: an overview of the topic; the specific skills that the module emphasizes; and teaching points, learning activities, resources, and commercial textbooks. A sample lesson plan begins with a cover sheet with objectives (learners and context, room setup, to bring, to do ahead, media used, and steps). The lesson plan indicates time required, materials required, and teacher and student activities. Other contents include overhead transparency masters, handouts, presurvey, and postassessment. The objectives for this module are as follows: analyze previous learning experiences; list mentors and coaches; discover responsible learning; select and organize qualities of responsible learners; analyze the role of team work in learning; and define the "Pledge of Responsible Learners." (YLB)

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Tierra de Oportunidad

MODULE 30

Learning To Learn

Ed Kissam and Holda Dorsey

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California Department of Education Youth, Adult and Alternative Educational Services Division through Federal Grant P.L. 100-297 Section 353 Contract #4213

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INSTRUCTIONAL AREA Developing Life Long Learning

MODULE 30 Learning to Learn

Overview

To become efficient and effective learners is a challenge faced by all adult learners, particularly immigrants who have had little schooling. There are many new skills to develop and little time for practicing them, to learn <u>efficiently</u> is a concern. There are new and unfamiliar skills to acquire and nurture, so the ability to learn <u>effectively</u> is of equal concern.

The ability to learn is part natural human trait and part learned ability. Students can benefit from defining their own learning style while, at the same time, practicing flexibility and learning in different ways.

It is crucial for instructors to explain and demonstrate how learning is part of life, not a separate isolated ability. Adult students, who have had many successes in coping with the challenges they face in their lives, need to value versatility and creative problem-solving as a foundation for effective and efficient learning.

For many whose schooling took place in a traditional school environment, it is necessary to understand that efficient and effective learning does not mean being able to memorize. People learn to remember what they've learned by taking notes, reviewing teaching points, writing or stating an overview.

Efforts to put an overview together can be <u>individual</u> efforts, e.g. making notes, framing questions, drawing diagrams, outlining, practicing new skills, supplemental research and reading, or <u>group</u> efforts, e.g. discussions, debates, coaching, questioning, seeking feedback, joint teamwork. Efforts to enhance one's rate of learning and scope of learning must take place both in class and out of class.

Adult learners should be introduced to the idea that learning not only involves acquiring new information but, also, synthesizing it. As in art, we need to value innovation, elegance, and individual style in learning. Students should be encouraged to summarize in novel ways and encouraged to explore their own individual style for synthesizing information.

To gain new perspectives on the challenges of learning to learn may be for adult learners to review some of the strategies used by children to achieve tremendous rates of learning. These include: constant curiosity and a willingness to explore, a willingness to take risks by putting forward new ideas or theories, spending time on task, practicing new skills, willingness to constantly ask questions, personal flexibility, attentive listening, willingness to help others learn which strengthens





one's own skills. These are all behaviors which children and adults share in common.

Where adult learning differs from the learning of young children is that adults have the ability to reflect on how they are doing as learners, identify the problems they are experiencing, formulate and try out strategies for overcoming these problems. This process can be an individual self-reflection or a process of interacting with others. Reflection is not a luxury. It is a necessity for effective learning. It forms the foundation for discovering where one is going, in the immediate future and in the long run.

Adults also have an advantage in being able to direct their own learning. The first, and perhaps most difficult step, in this area is for adult learners to recognize their responsibility to be proactive learners and to initiate and follow through actively with efforts to learn better and faster.

The most valuable contribution an adult education class can make to an adult learner's personal development is not to finish the process of skills-building, but rather to jump start the process of lifelong self-directed learning. Every adult learner should leave an adult education class with their own personal learning toolkit of useful techniques for effective learning and their own personal plan for lifelong learning. Students in ESL classes need to practice in the community, the language structures learned in the classroom as part of their own personal plan.

Students working on <u>Tierra de Oportunidad</u> modules, should be expected to acquire the key information in the module and to build their skills as effective and efficient learners -- by participating actively in group discussions and research projects, by recognizing the importance of time on task, by working outside of class to increase their skills, by courteously questioning speakers, by working actively to help their classmates learn and by reflecting on the next steps to follow.

Basic Skills Development

This curriculum module provides a valuable opportunity for adult education instructors to engage their students in reflecting on why they are attending an adult learning program, where they are going, and what they need to do to successfully achieve their goals. We highly recommend that this module be used in every ABE and ESL class because current research suggests that adult learners will only truly benefit from being in a program if they know how to turn their adult program experience into an ongoing process of lifelong learning.

Basic Skills

Using print resources for targeted learning, e.g. manuals, catalogs, indexes; using graphs and tables; taking notes, making outlines and diagrams to assist in learning.





Formulating and posing questions; paraphrasing to check understanding.

Critical Thinking Identifying individualized strategies for

effective learning; recognizing the value of reflection, consultation, and dialogue as

tools for learning.

Learning to Learn Recognizing one's own learning style,

interests, aptitudes and aspirations; listing

personal effective learning strategies;

preparing an overall lifelong learning plan; detailing an action plan of "next steps".

Personal Qualities Increasing personal responsibility in

learning; increasing time on task building

and refining new skills, making a commitment to lifelong learning.

Uses Resources Using appropriate and available human as

well as print and electronic resources to the

maximum extent possible for learning.

Interpersonal Skills Active questioning, active listening to

clarify, coaching, tutoring, summarizing.

Working With Systems Accepting workplace as a learning

environment; applying the value of learning in structured and informal

environments.

Uses Technology Using the World Wide Web to explore

adult learning options.





Teaching Points

- 1. Lifelong learning is necessary to achieve social and economic equity in the U.S. A class will not magically build the students skills. It will help students move forward and make valuable progress toward their learning goals, it will give students a jump start to prepare them to succeed in ongoing lifelong learning. Without the commitment to keep on learning -- in their daily lives, at work, and at home -- students cannot achieve full equality in the United States.
- 2. Everyone can learn and can enjoy learning. If students develop the self-confidence to learn, if they demand that they get quality and relevant instruction, and if they take the responsibility to work actively and diligently to make the maximum use of every learning opportunity. Adult learners can take charge of their own learning. Effective learning requires active hard work, but it is also fun and rewarding.
- 3. Learning is an active process. Active learning means asking questions and making sure one really understands. Everyone learns best when they ask questions to clarify points they have not understood. Paraphrasing a point is a valuable way for a learner to confirm they have understood a fact fully or grasped an issue well; it is also an extremely useful technique for active listening in discussions with classmates, friends, family or co-workers.
- 4. Knowledge can be more easily acquired than skills which must be built by steady practice. There are important differences between gaining new information and building new skills. The most important difference is that building new skills takes practice. Adult learners should be patient and recognize that classroom instruction needs to be supplemented by constant practice in the course of everyday life. The skills development process must be nurtured. It takes years, not days, or weeks to build skills. The classroom can be a safe place to practice new skills without fear of ridicule or lack of respect. But learners must keep on practicing their new skills outside perhaps, first at home with family, then with friends and co-workers, and finally with strangers.
- 5. Learning to learn competencies include the motivation to learn from all facets of everyday life and the consideration of how classroom learning can be continued at home or at work. Motivation is the learner's responsibility, but teaching adult learners why and how to extend learning beyond the classroom must be constantly emphasized by ABE and ESL instructors.
- 6. Everyone learns best when they have developed a clear idea of why they want to learn and what they want to learn. Everyone who gets involved in adult learning needs to reflect about exactly what they want to achieve. Formulating an idea of what one wants to learn requires personal reflection but it is always useful to get feedback from others -- friends, classmates, co-workers, family,





- counselors, and instructors. One's idea of what one wants to learn and why can change as time goes on reflecting one's changing perceptions.
- 7. Adult learners should prepare a lifelong learning plan. The plan may consist of:
 a) an overall long-term framework of learning objectives, b) a set of "next steps for learning, and c) the idea of decision points at which they will reassess their plans and modify them as seems best. Students should understand that the course in which they are currently enrolled is not an end in itself but one component of an overall process of ongoing learning.
- 8. Some elements in learning are to synthesize, contextualize, and organize new information for one's personal use. Adult learners should be introduced to several basic tools or skills useful for packaging and assimilating new information. These skills include: taking notes on a presentation, jotting down questions which come to mind to ask a speaker after a presentation, summarizing a discussion or presentation, outlining a discussion or presentation, reviewing a course outline to see how each of the individual lessons fits into a whole curriculum. Students should be introduced to the idea that we all are called upon from time to time to use information in new situations and that good organization of information makes this easier.
- 9. A valuable way to solidify new knowledge and strengthen newly-acquired skills is to help others learn. Instructors can ask and expect that students participate in collaborative learning activities. These can include peer tutoring, work as part of a team, practicing skills by communicating information to family members, coworkers, or neighbors. These learning by teaching activities provide a foundation for practicing skills and reinforce the idea that learning requires responsibility and self-management.
- 10. Being a responsible participant in the class community is an important element of learning. Being a responsible member of the class means personal and collective accountability for learning. Everyone should participate in the collective decision to emphasize some areas, skip over others and subsequently remain involved in the direction the class takes. Being a responsible member of the class community should also include efforts to not waste class time needlessly, to ask for help when needed, to behave courteously and thoughtfully to classmates, guests, and the instructor, to participate fully in group activities, and to help others whenever possible.
- 11. Skills developed through daily experiences are transferable to <u>all</u> of the environments in which we function: family, work, community. Skills built in the course of managing family life or as part of participating in community affairs can be applied in the workplace and vice versa. The skills needed now and for the 21st century all relate to flexibility and versatility as a means of responding to a constantly-changing and sometimes unpredictable environment.





- 12. Adult learners should be aware that they will experience periods when they question their own ability to continue learning. Instructors can provide their students with valuable support by recognizing crises of self-confidence as normal, and by preparing students to confront these crises when they occur. Students should be made aware that it is common to move forward and then temporarily lose ground or remain static. Students should be encouraged to talk to the teacher if they feel they are having problems. Instructors should be explicit in requiring that students who plan to drop a class, tell them why they are leaving. If they do quit a class, for any reason, students should reflect on what they will do next to continue their learning plan.
- 13. Adult learners should be encouraged to reflect after each class or at the end of each day about what new skills they have acquired in the course of the class or during the day. Students should know that indicators of progress are subtle and that their learning is more effective if they consciously question every day whether they have learned anything and what practical new things they can do as a result of their learning.
- 14. Lifelong learning plans are always provisional ones. Good planning means that specific plans will always be modified without losing sight of the overall direction. Lifelong learning plans should be modified to respond to a person's changing interests, growing awareness of their abilities, reassessment of their aptitudes or aspirations, changing personal circumstances, or new, emerging opportunities.

Sample Learning Activities

- 1. Have students in the class discuss their previous experiences in adult learning, what they learned and what they have done or think they should have done to build on that beginning.
- 2. Ask students to reflect on what experiences they may have had of putting the pieces of the picture together when suddenly a whole situation or body of knowledge finally made sense to them.
- 3. Ask each student to talk about who they know, who was not a professional teacher, from whom they most enjoyed learning. What did they learn from the person and why do they think the person was a good teacher?
- 4. Talk with students about what the ways in which the metaphor of being an explorer may apply or not apply to the task of building one's ability to learn effectively. Themes to address might include: reasons for exploring, rewards, dangers, planning, preparation, partnerships to support expeditions, taking unforeseen opportunities to learn more, learning from guides, the role of scouts.





- 5. After the presentation of an overview and selected teaching points, ask the class to collectively develop a "Pledge for Responsible Learners" outlining their resolutions as a group to use their time in class wisely, help classmates learn, and extend their learning beyond the classroom. A copy of this pledge can then be made for each student, and enlarged to post in the classroom.
- 6. Ask students to share their basic reasons for deciding to enroll in the class. Probe each students' presentation to get an idea of: why they enrolled in the class, what specific skills do they most want to develop, and what they expect to do after the class which is different than before. Compare and contrast individual aspirations and expectations.
- 7. In a group discussion, develop a chart comparing and contrasting the main features of children's learning and adults' learning. Point out that this chart is an example of a tool for organizing information.
- 8. Have students discuss what they think teamwork means and how it is related to coaching and learning to be a better athlete or a better learner.
- 7. Have students who are parents talk about how they approach teaching their children and what they've learned about how their children learn.
- 9. Have each student prepare an individual learning plan specifying; a) what they hope to achieve in the class, b) what they plan to do next to continue the learning they started in class, and c) what their medium-term 1 2 years, and long term 3 10 years, plans are for increasing their knowledge and skills.
- 10. Work with students to generate lists which distinguish <u>effective</u> learning, i.e., indepth understanding, solid grasp of information, ability to deploy new skills and information, from <u>efficient</u> learning, i.e., learning rapidly, seizing opportunities to ask questions, seeking out new more easily accessible information sources. What are the tradeoffs between effective and efficient learning?
- 11. Have students revise their initial personal learning plan to develop an end-of-course plan revised and refined. Ask students to include in the plan checkpoints for reviewing and revising their strategies and learning objectives.
- 12. Schedule an individual session for each student with a school counselor, or even a qualified volunteer, for discussing their future plans.
- 13. Ask each student in the class to list the four most important things they have learned in the course of the class about how to learn effectively and efficiently. Combine these individual learning points into an overall aggregate of the different kinds of lessons that can be learned about how to learn.





14. Ask each student to prepare a personal learning tool kit a list about what they know about their own learning style and effective learning in general. The list or outline should include at least: a) important points they want to remember about effective learning, b) the main things they know about their own learning style, c) the main areas they need to work on, e.g. practicing skills more, helping others more, d) their personal resolutions for continuing and sustaining their learning progress.

To reinforce the idea of adult learning as a proactive, structured, individual responsibility, combined with a collective responsibility to help co-learners, all students in the class should be asked, as part of the closing session to present a lifelong learning plan. These plans need not be overly formal but they should represent a significant commitment on the part of each individual to do whatever it takes to achieve their personal learning objectives. If program resources are available, individual learning plans prepared as part of class activities toward the end of the course might be typed and formatted elegantly for presentation at the class closing. Presenting lifelong learning plans as a culmination of the class activity convey more accurately than a course completion certificate, the idea that participating in an adult education program is one component of an overall strategy for personal development.

Resources Checklist

- Integrated Curriculum for Achieving Necessary Skills, Adult Basic and Literacy Educators Network of Washington, 1995.
- This volume is a rich resource for content-related activities, for classroom activities, and for useful instructional strategies. It includes a section specifically on <u>Learning to Learn</u>. The section includes classroom activities and handouts. The organization's phone number is (206) 587-3880.
- SCANS, Teaching the SCANS Competencies, U.S. Department of Labor, 1993. This is one of the key publications which articulate the national SCANS framework which forms the basis of the adult education component of Education Goals 2000. This publication is oriented primarily toward high school instruction but it, nonetheless, is a valuable resource for adult education instructors. The section on assessing students' acquisition of SCANS-linked competencies is particularly valuable. It also has information on some innovative program designs and resources.
- SCANS, What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000, U.S. Department of Labor, 1991.

This is a short and excellent overview of the SCANS framework.





- Carnevale, Anthony, Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want, American Society for Training and Development/U.S. Department of Labor, 1991. This is a short and straightforward review of contemporary skills demands and learning challenges for career advancement..
- Spruck Wrigley, Heide and Guth, Gloria J.A., Bringing Literacy to Life: Issues and Options in Adult ESL Literacy, Aguirre International, 1992.

 This book is based on a multi-year study for OVAE, U.S. Department of Education. It is a valuable resource for designing a course to maximize students' ability to build their learning ability within the context of an ESL course. It is organized to provide background information, suggestions on "best practices", ideas for activities and issues to reflect on in programs oriented toward lifelong learning. The publisher's phone number is: (650) 349-1842.
- Kagan, Spencer, Cooperative Learning, Kagan Cooperative Learning, California, 1992.

Background Resources

- Smith, Robert M. and Associates, Learning to Learn Across the Lifespan, Jossey-Bass, 1990.
- Kissam, Edward and Reder, Stephen, Responding to Diversity: Strategies for Meeting the Adult Education Needs of Limited English Proficient Adults in California, Final Report to Adult Education Policy and Planning Unit, California Department of Education, April, 1997.
- This report provides an overview of the learning demands placed on limited-English adult learners in California. Chapter 4 outlines how adult education programs can implement a counseling component, beginning with orientation sessions and ending with closing sessions to formulate lifelong learning plans.
- Kissam, Edward, "Reinventing Citizenship Instruction", Inter-American Institute on Migration and Labor, Washington, DC, May, 1994. Available from the author at (650) 513-6224.

Organizational Resources

Staff Development Institute (SDI)
 Sacramento County Office of Education
 9738 Lincoln Village Drive
 Sacramento, CA 94827
 (800) 488-1788

SDI offers training on the SCANS framework of skills areas which includes "learning to learn". Call SDI for training availability and options.



E. Kissam

"Tierra de Oportunidad" - Module 30 Learning to Learn



• ABLE Adult Basic and Literacy Educators Network 1701 Broadway Seattle, WA 98122 (206) 587-3880.

This network developed the ICANS materials. It also maintains a resource library. It is likely to be involved in ongoing efforts to support effective teaching of the SCANS framework of skills, including "learning to learn".





30. Learning To Learn

OBJECTIVES

- Analyze previous learning experiences;
- List mentors and coaches;
- Discover responsible learning;
- Select and organize qualities of responsible learners;
- Analyze the role of team work in learning;
- Define "Pledge of Responsible Learners".

LEARNERS & CONTEXT

Adult students. Average ability of the group is medium. The range of ability is wide. Motivation is high. There are many learners whose English is limited.

TO BRING

Flip chart paper Color pens Sticky dots Color tags: red, blue, green and yellow

TO DO AHEAD

Set up computer for students use. Make arrangements for students access to duplicating machine

MEDIA USED

Overhead, flipchart, sticky dots, computer, color tags.

STEPS

Previous experiences
Introduction
Why did you remember?
Report
Who taught what?
How do you learn?
Feedback
Effective learning
Break
Choose three
Pledge
The document
Reflection
Life Long Learning



Closure



Previous experiences

Teacher tells the students that in this unit they are going to review past learning experiences make a connection with their future learning experiences.

(15 min)

Motivation

• Establish Relevance to Past

Teacher distributes color tags to the students: red, blue, green and yellow.

Teacher asks students to sit in teams of four, each team member must have a different color tag. Students are to brainstorm previous learning experiences and

write them on one sheet of paper.

The student in the team with the shortest hair starts writing a memory and passing the paper to the right to the next student, who in turn will write a memory and pass

the paper to the next student.

Good or bad experiences that they remember may be listed.

Teacher allows the exercise to continue until the writing stops.

Introduction

(10 min)

Information Preview

• State Objectives Informally

overhead

Teacher states the objectives of the lesson.

Today we will:

Analyze previous learning experiences;

List mentors and coaches;

Discover responsible learning;

Select and organize qualities of responsible learners;

Analyze role of teamwork in learning; Define Pledge of Responsible Learners.

We will also practice:

participating as a member of a team;

helping others;

negotiating toward an agreement.

Why did you remember?

Teacher asks the students to work with their team.

(15 min)

Information Acquisition

Inquiry - Group

Students are to review their list of previous learning experiences,

analyze why they remember the experience,

what they learned,

and what they have done, or

think they should have done to build on that learning.

Report

Teacher asks teams to report back one highlight of their findings.

(10 min)

Practice & Feedback
• Group Feedback

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Who taught what?

Teacher asks green tag members to join another team.

(15 min)

Information Acquisition
• Analogies

When the teams are ready, the teacher asks students to now think of times when they have learned from someone who was not a school teacher.

What did they learn? and Why do they think that the person was a good teacher?

How do you learn?

(10 min)

Information Acquisition
• Inquiry - Individual

Teacher asks students in their groups to analyze how they learned, what kind of activities or experiences made learning effective and memorable.

Feedback

(10 min)

Practice & Feedback
• Peer Feedback

Teacher asks yellow tag members to join another team and report on the analysis results from hiis prior team.

The new team members can give input to the report.

Effective learning

(10 min)

Practice & Feedback
• Brainstorming

Teacher asks students to reflect on all the work they have done and list what an individual can do to be a responsible learner.

Again, team members will pass the paper around and write their brainstorm ideas.

Break

(10 min)

Other
• Break

Students may take a few minutes to stretch while teacher takes care of paperwork and attendance report.

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Choose three

(15 min)

Practice & Feedback
• Creative Practice

flipchart

Teacher asks the blue team members to join another team.

The students are to negotiate within their team and select, from their list of ideas, the best three.

The students need to write their selection on the flip chart paper and post it where everyone can see.

Pledge

(15 min)

Practice & Feedback
• Creative Practice

sticky dots

Teacher distributes three sticky dots to each student. Students will use their dots to select the three most important attitudes of a responsible learner.

Teacher explains that as a team they are going to write the

"Pledge of Responsible Learners".

Teacher reviews what the students will do with the sticky dots.

The document

(15 min)

Practice & Feedback
• Creative Practice

computer hands-on

Teacher asks students to volunteer to type the selection in the computer and design a good format for the document.

As volunteers work with the design, the other students decide if they want to distribute copies of the document to other adult learners, to their family members, or other interested persons.

Teacher thanks the students for creating such important document. Teacher asks everone to give a hand to the class.

Reflection

(10 min)

(15 min)

Closure

Reflection

Teacher asks students to take their places and quietly reflect on the role of teamwork in the learning process.

Life Long Learning

•

Motivation

• Establish Future Relevance

Teacher asks students to report on how this lesson relates to future activities as learners and what life-long learning means to them.

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Closure

(5 min)

Closure

• Instructor Summary

Teacher reviews the objectives:

Analyzed previous learning experiences;

Listed mentors and coaches;

Discovered responsible learning;

Selected and organized qualities of responsible learners;

Analyzde role of teamwork in learning; Defined Pledge of Responsible Learners.

We will also practiced:

participating as a member of a team;

helping others;

negotiating toward an agreement.

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Learning To Learn

OBJECTIVES

Today we will:

- Analyze previous learning experiences;
- List mentors and coaches;
- Discover responsible learning;
- Select and organize qualities of responsible learners;
- Analyze the role of team work in learning;
- Define "Pledge of Responsible Learners".

We will also practice:

- participating as a member of a team;
- negotiating toward an agreement;
- helping others.



HDorsey

"Tierra de Oportunidad" Module 30



Date:
Student Name
Teacher Name
Student Survey:
Learning to Learn
Please answer the following questions so that you and the instructor can have a better idea how much you already know about the subject of <i>learning how to learn</i> . By this we mean what activities or conditions help you to learn better and faster.
1. What do you hope to learn by taking this class or workshop?
2. What plans do you have for continuing to learn after this class or workshop is over? What are your long - range learning goals?
3. In a class or workshop what kind of activities help you to learn?
4. What are some of the things you could do in and outside of class to learn more or improve your skills?
5. What gets in the way of learning and slows you down or prevents you from learning?





			ple in a class or at work, do you u could do to learn faster and
Detter.	Yes	No	
learning?	-	your attitude about you	r ability to learn affects your Not sure
8. If you nee	eded to learn 6 r	new words, how would y	you learn them best and fastest?
by se	eing them	by hearing them s	spoken by writing them
Othe	er, please tell	us:	Can't say
		What kind of things do	es she or he do in the class? How facilitate learning?
	that, what resul		ple learn new things? And, if d it make you feel (more or less
you read—p Whatever yo material or a	amphlets, manu ou read, how do another, or for o	uals, advertisements, ne you do things different	the different kinds of things wspapers, magazines, books. ly when you read one kind of ike passing the driving test or you read?





Date:
Student Name
Teacher Name
Module 30 Learning to Learn
1. Imagine you are talking to a friend about what you have learned in this class or workshop dealing with learning how to learn. Write a brief description describing what you have learned.
2. List three things that you can do the next time you take a class or are in a learning situation so that you will learn better and faster.
3. Next time you enroll in a class, what can you do to help the instructor help you learn more or learn faster? And, will you do it?





4. The instructor will assign you to a small group.

Think about how you would like your life to be in 10 years. Write a description of it and list 3 to 5 steps that you will need to take in order for this life long goal to be realized. Present your plan to your small group. Get comments from three other students offering suggestions and support.						
a. Description of what you would like your life to be like in 10 years.						
b. What does this mean for the skills or knowledge or abilities you will need to master?						
c. List 3 to 5 steps you should take to realize your goals?						
d. Description of what you will be doing next year to move toward your goal.						
e. Who will you talk to, ask to help you, or what resources in the community will you use to help you?						

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