

# Building Teacher Leaders' Capacity for Facilitating Adult Learning

FOR  
TEACHERS



Practicing  
Equity and Ethics



Building Relationships  
and Partnerships



Fostering  
Collaborative Culture



Advancing Instruction  
and Student Learning



Driving  
Initiatives

## Introduction

The Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework (Ohio Department of Education, 2017) recognizes the role of teacher leaders in leading and expanding professional learning opportunities and support for fellow educators, thereby strengthening the teaching profession and student success overall. The framework also emphasizes that teacher leaders must understand the needs of adult learners and have the capacity to engage their colleagues effectively in professional learning and development activities. This document, therefore, identifies some useful resources that potentially help teacher leaders facilitate adult learning.

The first two resources—both informed by the work of adult education expert Malcolm S. Knowles—underline some of the general principles of and understandings about adult learning. Therefore, these resources may be a good place to start to gain some basic information and tips on adult learning. The subsequent resources provide links to tangible tools, templates and activities that can help teacher leaders facilitate adult learning and engage educators in professional development activities.

## Resources for Building Teacher Leaders' Capacity for Facilitating Adult Learning

1. **Principles of Adult Learning & Instructional Systems Design**, available at <https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/downloads/freebies/172/pr%20pre-course%20reading%20assignment.pdf>.

This document, based on the work of adult education expert Malcolm S. Knowles, provides an overview and accompanying examples of adult learning assumptions, domains and learning styles. It highlights the following:

- Adult Learning Assumptions
  - Adults want to know why they should learn
  - Adults need to take responsibility
  - Adults bring experience to learning



- Adults are ready to learn when the need arises
- Adults are task-oriented
- The Three Learning Domains
  - Cognitive: refers to knowledge or a body of subject matter
  - Affective: refers to attitudes and beliefs
  - Behavioral: refers to practical application
- The Three Learning Styles
  - Visual learners tend to learn by looking, seeing, viewing and watching
  - Auditory learners tend to learn by listening, hearing and speaking
  - Kinesthetic learners tend to learn by experiencing, moving and doing

The document also provides some basic information on instructional design, specifically the Instructional Systems Design (ISD) model. The ISD model comprises five stages—analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation. A graphic of the five stages and the major activities that make up each stage is provided.

For a more thorough discussion about adult learning, see the book *Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* by Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson (2015).

## 2. Teaching Adults: What Every Trainer Needs to Know about Adult Learning Styles,

<https://www.ioaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/teachingadults-whattrainersneedtoknow-sml.pdf>

The handout summarizes the differences between children and adult learners, discusses adult learning styles, explains how to make trainings for adults work and provides tips for teaching adults.



**3. Public Impact’s Toolkit for Teachers and Teacher-Leaders in Opportunity Culture Schools**, available at <https://opportunityculture.org/tools-for-teachers-and-teacher-leaders-in-opportunity-culture-schools>.

Public Impact designed a set of tools to help teacher leaders emulate and build on the practices of the best “Opportunity Culture” teachers and teacher leaders nationally. The tools are designed to support multi-classroom leaders (MCLs); i.e., teachers who teach part of the time and lead small, collaborative teams of two to eight teachers, paraprofessionals and teacher residents in the same grade or subject—but are available and applicable to all other teacher leaders as well.

Specific tools that might be useful to teacher leaders include:<sup>1</sup>

- The **Multi-Classroom Leader Action Plan**, which breaks into four strands—Communication, Leading a Team, Achieving Instructional Excellence and Improving with Data—the critical steps to lead teacher teams. A planner is available for each season (summer, fall, winter, spring), identifies action items under each strand and provides checklists for the corresponding tasks. Teacher leaders can also customize the planners to fit their and their schools’ needs.
- The **Organizational Chart Template**, which can help define the overall structure of a teaching team and clarify the expectations of the teacher leader and the team as a whole.
- The **Instructional Leadership and Excellence – The Key Elements** linked resource, and the aligned discussions, videos, training materials and other developmental resources provided on the page.
- The **Multi-Classroom Leader Competencies Self-Assessment**, which allows teacher leaders to rate how well they are meeting the competencies and identify areas for development.

Various other tools are also provided for teacher leaders, including one-page summaries on team leadership and instructional excellence and sample agendas to analyze student work and analyze data.

**4. Effective Adult Learning: A Toolkit for Teaching Adults**, developed by the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice at the University of Washington, available at

<https://www.nwcphp.org/training/effective-adult-learning-a-toolkit-for-teaching-adults>

This toolkit includes four sections. The first section, **Adult Learning Overview**, identifies the foundational steps to developing and implementing an effective adult learning experience, e.g., identifying the target audience and learning objectives; developing training materials,

<sup>1</sup> These tools developed by Public Impact are free to use, reproduce and distribute; however, please see Public Impact’s Terms of Use page (<https://www.opportunityculture.org/terms-of-use/>) for guidance on how to attribute the source of the materials.



content and activities; and identifying methods for delivering training. The next section, **Learning Objectives In-Depth**, focuses on writing learning objectives and outlines four factors of strong objectives. The third section provides **Tools and Templates** to create effective trainings and includes worksheets on training needs assessments, learning interventions and curriculum design. The final section is a **Reference** guide that provides short descriptions of each reference listed.

## References

Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2015). *The adult learner. The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (15<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ohio Department of Education. (2017). *Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework*. Retrieved from [http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Equity/Educator-Equity-in-Ohio/Local-Equity-Plan-1/Local-Equitable-Access-Strategies/Ohio-Teacher-Leader-Framework\\_508\\_compliant.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Equity/Educator-Equity-in-Ohio/Local-Equity-Plan-1/Local-Equitable-Access-Strategies/Ohio-Teacher-Leader-Framework_508_compliant.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US).