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EDUCATION METHODOLOGY FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

INSTRUCTIONAL HANDBOOK

Please Read Carefully

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Goal and Objectives of the Instructional Methodology Handbook.....	5
Section I - The Foundation of Ethical and Professional Instruction.....	6
Compliance	6
Copyright and Trademarks	6
Classroom Diversity	6
Harassment Issues.....	7
Qualities of and Effective Instructor.....	8
Responsibilities and Actions of an Effective Instructor	10
Section II - Providing a Motivational Learning Environment.....	11
Seating is Important	11
The Overall Environment.....	14
Critical Elements of Effective Learning	15
Blended Learning	15
Socratic Method of Learning	15
Use of Media Devices	17
Section III - Types of Learners	20
Adult Methodology of Learning.....	21
Generational Issues.....	23
Learning Disabilities	31
Section IV - Instructor Resources	35
Course and Instructor Appraisal.....	36
"A Checklist for the Classroom Teacher"	37
Class Checklist	38
Certification vs. Qualification	39

Section V - VFIS's Philosophy of Education and Training Services 40

- Guidelines for Instructing ETC Programs 40
- Continuing Education Units/Hours 40
- Testing 40

Section VI - How to Use VFIS Education Training Materials 41

- Technical Assistance 41
- Ordering of Materials and Materials Available..... 41
- Registry of ETC Instructors..... 41

Bibliography 42

Introduction

VFIS Education, Training and Consulting Services (ETC) is a division of Glatfelter Insurance Group. VFIS is headquartered in York, Pennsylvania with regional offices throughout the United States. VFIS ETC is dedicated to provide quality instruction and guidance to emergency service organizations.

If you have attended one of our Train-the-Trainer Programs you are among a group of individuals that are vowing to uphold the standards set forth by VFIS when instructing our copyrighted programs. Although you may not be directly employed by VFIS, we consider you an ambassador for our programs.

Our programs are designed with the emergency service provider in mind. The courses have been developed based on data from risk control services and claims management. The following material is designed to help you become a better instructor.

In some situations, VFIS will employ contract instructors that will require additional qualifications and orientation to VFIS material and procedural guidelines.

Instructional Methodology Handbook Goal

To Identify the Critical Elements Necessary for Delivering a Successful Presentation

Objectives:

- Identify the ethical and professional attributes of instruction
- Recognize the qualities of an effective instructor
- Understand the elements of a motivational environment
- How to use media devices effectively
- Understand adult methodologies of instruction
- Identify types of learners
- Understand VFIS's educational and training program formats
- Understand the importance of the Application phase of learning
- Understand the value of instructional evaluation

Terms/Definitions

ALS	Advanced Life Support
BLS	Basic Life Support
ETS	Education and Training Services
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
ESO	Emergency Service Organization
LD	Learning Disability
VFIS	Volunteer Fireman's Insurance Services

SECTION I

The Foundation of Ethical and Professional Instruction

Compliance

If you are teaching a VFIS program, various factors play a role in the legal compliance with ETC programs and services. It is important to understand all programs must be delivered following the guidelines established by VFIS ETC and its parent company, The Glatfelter Insurance Group.

Staying within the guidelines of a program protects the instructor, trainer and owner of the programs. Deviating from the intent of the methodology and the program curriculum can place the instructor in a situation of potentially increased liability. It is important to conform to the program material and supporting guidelines.

Copyright and Trademarks

Copyright, trademarks and supporting laws were enacted to protect the author, owner and publisher of all materials and products from pirating. It is important to note the financial stability of a company can be dependent on reproducible material and product. Therefore, ETC maintains, through VFIS and The Glatfelter Insurance Group, a disclaimer for copyright infringement. It reads:

All Rights Reserved. No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form by any means - graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or information storage and retrieval systems - without the written permission of VFIS.

As you can imagine, much research, time, energy and funding goes into the development of an educational program. Infringement of copyrighted or trademarked material will be taken very seriously, and you expose yourself and possibly your employer, to significant liability by violating such laws.

Example - **You** are tasked with teaching some new employees within their orientation training program and have previously seen a very effective video embedded into a VFIS class on infection control. You extract the video from the copyrighted PowerPoint presentation and add it to your internet or intranet Learning Management System. Without documented permission from VFIS and the Glatfelter Insurance Group, you have just violated the law.

Classroom Diversity

Instructors are responsible for establishing a classroom format and environment that exemplifies professionalism. Each instructor should understand that many cultural, sociological, and economical factors could play into each participant's conduct and attentiveness during the education and training process. The instructor should lead by example and take into account the varying backgrounds associated with cultural diversity.

Harassment ~~Issues~~

~~Common Policies~~

When you teach, the organization you are representing likely has a policy to maintain a workplace/class environment free from the intimidation, coercion, or harassment, including sexual harassment, of any employee, client, student or other individuals while functioning as an instructor. Incidents of harassment by instructors, students, managers, vendors or the public will not be tolerated and should be reported promptly as outlined in this policy.

If a VFIS employee ever violates this policy, the VFIS office should be contacted immediately and provided with details regarding the violation of the policy.

~~Common Procedures~~

All instructors are expected to conduct themselves in a business-like manner at all times. Any behavior deemed coercive, intimidating, harassing or sexual in nature is inappropriate and prohibited. Any verbal, physical or visual conduct belittling or demeaning an individual because of his or her race, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, or similar characteristic or circumstance is prohibited.

Incidents of harassment may be subjective in nature. To assist instructors in understanding what harassment is, particularly sexual harassment, the following is the federal government's definition of this policy:

Sexual Harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other physical, verbal or visual conduct based on gender when (1) submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual Harassment can include, but is not limited to, any of the following kinds of behavior:

- Explicit sexual propositions
- Sexual innuendo
- Sexually suggestive comments
- Sexually oriented teasing or kidding
- Sexually oriented jokes
- Obscene gestures or language
- Obscene or sexually suggestive pictures, publications or drawings
- Physical contact such as patting, pinching or touching

Instructors are responsible for maintaining a classroom that is free of harassment, but all participants are responsible for helping to ensure harassment does not occur by conducting themselves in an appropriate manner and by reporting harassment they observe. **If an individual** has a complaint or allegation of harassment, he or she should report the incident to the Instructor's supervisor, and if the instructor is a VFIS employee, the VFIS office in York, PA should be contacted immediately.

If the complaint is regarding a VFIS employee, it will be investigated promptly, and the matter will be kept as confidential as possible. VFIS absolutely forbids retaliation of any kind against any individual who complains about alleged harassment and will take disciplinary action against anyone who attempts to retaliate.

If after a thorough investigation of the matter, VFIS determines harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Discipline may include guidance and counseling, written reprimand, suspension, revocation of instructor status or any other action deemed appropriate.

All instructors need to view the Sexual Harassment Policy and Program within their organizations.

Qualities of an Effective Instructor

We can all remember certain instructors or teachers who greatly influenced us. What do you remember about these individuals that made them such a good instructor? We can identify various characteristics which separate a great instructor from an adequate instructor. The instructor needs to have a genuine love for the topic they are presenting. If you disagree with the subject or just do not like it – Don't teach it! You will not be doing the participants the justice of the intent of the program. Let's look at some of the characteristics participants look for in an instructor:

- Well prepared [there is no acceptable excuse for an instructor not being Prepared]
- Enthusiastic about subject
- Cares about students
- Uses appropriate body language and eye contact
- Utilizes positive feedback
- Punctual beginning and ending class
- Uses appropriate humor
- Applies a variety of tone inflections
- Practices innovative teaching methods
- Uses appropriate gestures and movements during presentation
- Dresses appropriately
- Does not say "uh" or "um", but instead uses pauses for effect
- Talks *with* the participants instead of to or above the participants
- Intersperses appropriate real-life illustrations
- Maintains professionalism during class
- Offers flexibility [based on culture; weather; special needs, etc. There are many potential variables to take into consideration when teaching. You may have to utilize your best judgment for the betterment of the class.]
- Creates a relaxed and comfortable classroom setting
- Answers all questions honestly and with regards to whom they represent
- Admits they do not know all the answers but finds them for the participants
- Stays calm and does not become defensive
- What are ones you would like to add?

There are a variety of things an instructor should not do. Remember you are representing VFIS when you present our programs. We are relying on your ability as an instructor to send the message we have designed in our curricula. The following is a list of some of the things you should not do:

- Yell at students
- Berate students
- Ignore concerns for safety issues
- Attempt to motivate participants with threats
- Encourage or allow off-colored humor or sexist comments
- Belittle students
- Leave your cell phone ON or answer a text while teaching
- Be unprepared to present the material
- Show bias or personal interest and not support instructional material
- Communicate the course material ineffectively
- Chew gum or tobacco
- Consume alcohol or illegal drugs before or during the class time
- Wander aimlessly, moving from place to place with no purpose [if and when you move around you should have a reason for doing so]

Here are a few do's:

- Make eye contact with all participants
- Present the material without reading from the manual
- Relate "war stories" on a limited basis with relevance to material
- Be early for the session
- Use terms at the participants level
- Move around the classroom and use appropriate gestures
- Avoid any nervousness "tick" or "twitch" – twirling hair, jingling change, clicking pen caps, etc.
- Avoid the use of gender words such as "fireman" – use "firefighter", or "emergency responder"

Most of all be YOURSELF! Don't try to be someone else. It may be beneficial to observe a good instructor in action. Adapt what they do well to fit your style. It is important to note you are who you are. As hard as you may try, you cannot be someone else, nor do you want to be someone else. Find your own instructional niche and improve upon it.

Responsibilities and Actions of an Effective Instructor

The role of the instructor is to promote a positive, dynamic class without lecturing to the participants. As an instructor, your responsibilities and actions include:

- Creating a positive, low-stress and comfortable classroom environment
- Facilitating interaction and avoiding lecture
- Understanding the importance of following the course material as outlined in the course materials provided
- Completing all required paperwork and submitting it in a timely fashion
- Developing a motivational environment for your students
- Acting as a role model during class and also outside of class
- Correcting errors with a positive reinforcement technique
- Pointing out students' strengths and efforts to succeed consistently.
- Ensuring a physically and emotionally safe learning environment.

If you need to emphasize a certain point, find three (3) separate, creative ways to deliver the idea or behavior. Take breaks every 50-60 minutes with a specific return time (no more than 5-10 minutes). Always strive to keep your attention on the students.

SECTION I

The Providing a motivational Learning Environment

Seating is Important

How many classes have you attended where the information was what you had been waiting for, but the classroom environment was so poor you did not gain any valuable information? You need to ensure the temperature, seating arrangements, noise levels, classroom layout and the acoustic properties of the classroom are conducive to learning.

The temperature is a critical factor; however, it may be beyond your control. As a good instructor, you need to be sensitive to the room temperature. You probably will find yourself warmer than most students due to moving about the classroom, and you may be stressed, which can raise your body temperature. Watch your students. If it is too warm, they will begin to become lethargic if too cold, they may lose their concentration. You may not be able to adjust the temperature to a level that is comfortable for everyone. Try your best to accommodate the majority of the group and suggest participants bring a jacket or sweater along if too cold.

Seating is another important consideration. Prior to the start of class, you should arrive early enough to see the layout of the classroom. You will then have time to adjust the layout if needed. There are a variety of ways to set-up the classroom for greater effectiveness. Do you use tables or not? How do we arrange the chairs? Where should you stand? In Richard A. Cherry's EMT Teaching text, Mr. Cherry identifies a number of seating styles. Let's take a look at some of these arrangements you can utilize depending on your class goals.

Traditional

The classroom is arranged in a typical classroom setting. All chairs and tables are aligned in a row facing the front of the classroom. This design may remind the student of their school years. For many, this may not have been a positive experience! This style makes it difficult for participants to concentrate. Attention may be distracted because of the person sitting in front of them. In some instances the view of the front of the classroom is obstructed by the person's head in front of them. This may be the typical setting and may not be avoidable due to class size or facility arrangements. Understand its limitations and adapt accordingly.



Auditorium Style

Think of the seating arrangement of a Movie Theater or large auditorium. They are designed with the participant in mind. The seats are elevated so everyone has a view. The design allows individuals to see the stage, or front, for lecture or multi-media presentations. When conducting sessions in most fire and EMS stations, you are not going to find these types of facility. However, local schools and educational facilities may have these rooms available. This setting makes group interaction and/or small breakout sessions very difficult to accomplish.



West Point or Cafeteria Style

Tables are lined in a row and the participants are facing one another across the table. This arrangement works great for Bingo. For a classroom environment, avoid it at all costs.



United Nations Style

Tables are arranged in a “U” shape. Students sit around the tables and everyone faces the open end. This allows for skill demonstrations and open discussions. It is not useful for multi-media presentations because the speaker will tend to block someone’s view. This style allows for a more open environment. If you have a small group, this may be ideal.



King Arthur Style

King Arthur wanted to promote a feeling of equality in his court. He created a table around which his knights would sit and discuss business. In order to encourage free speech, he eliminated having a “head” of the table. This style allows for more free speech and is ideal for large group discussions. It is very distracting for presentations.



Wedding Reception Style

The tables are round seating 8 – 12 at each table. For small group discussions this arrangement works well. This arrangement does not work for lectures or presentations.



Chevron Style

Chevron has some qualities of traditional, West Point, and “U” style. Great for lecture and also lends itself to group discussion and activities.



You may want to experiment with other styles of classroom arrangements. You need to keep your students in mind along with what your goals are for the class, which may dictate what you are able to do with your class seating arrangement. Good luck and don't be afraid to try something different. If you are trying to get the attention of those learners who like to change things up, after lunch or the next day, rearrange the classroom seating style and observe their reactions.

The Overall Environment

There are many distractions which hamper the ability for a student to learn. If possible, have the participants turn off their paging devices and also the in-house alert system. However, it may not be possible if the participants are on-call. If it is feasible, try to have sessions for off-duty personnel to avoid duty interruptions. The use of cell phones and “web-surfing” during class can be disruptive, so try to limit personal use of cell phones.

Turning a cell phone to vibration rather than ringing, etc. can be controversial but should be a good starting point discussion at the beginning of class. Additionally, the presence of electronic notebooks has created a new challenge for educators because some students will indicate using an e-notebook is their preference for taking notes, etc. Can your students really be absorbing your message if they are constantly looking at their smart phone or tablet?

Try gaining consensus for classroom etiquette and courtesy on these issues. If you study the “generational theories,” some people are simply addicted to their smart phone or communication device. If you “take it away,” they are unable to concentrate. One way to deal with this type of issue is to approach it as you would with someone sleeping in class; it doesn’t really harm anyone, other than that participant, but if that person starts snoring or their device becomes audibly disruptive, action must be taken. Ask the user to shut down the device.

Another interesting element of the classroom environment is where participants decide to sit. Assuming there are various options available for seating when participants arrive, most will select a seat where they are comfortable. That decision can be based on many reasons: vision, hearing, habit, colleagues, etc. If one of your classroom goals is to have participants interact with others they don’t know well, you can assign seating before class. Many of our classes have an inherent goal of getting people to change their behavior, which has not always been an easy task with personnel in emergency service organizations. If you want to demonstrate how uneasily we as humans can react to change, alter your classroom’s seat assignments after a break or lunch and see how participants react. You can then use their reactions as a brief lesson on how well (or not) we accept change.

Overall, the environment you create needs to be conducive to learning. As an instructor, your students rely on your ability to make the setting comfortable but challenging. Don’t be afraid to get out of the paradigm and try something new. Education and training should be fun and exciting. Don’t give your participants a reason to say it was any other way.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

- Be Prepared!
- Capture Their Attention
- Demonstrate Relevancy (Ask the question “Why Are We Here?”)
- Know Your Audience (background, experience, past training, recent events/issues and generational differences)
- Identify Objectives (Answers their question of “What am I Going to Get Out of This?”)
- Create a Comfortable Setting (time, temperature, minimizing distractions, etc.)
- Use the Rule of 3 (if you want it to stick in their minds, present/say it three times in various ways. Evaluate (Find a method for participants to apply what was presented so you can see if they were able to learn and comprehend the material presented)

BLENDED LEARNING

Blended learning is described as an educational program combining traditional classroom methods with online media assignments. There are various definitions based on instructional methodology, but it is essentially intended to create a simultaneous independent and collaborative learning experience with online media at the student's own pace, place and time.

Students born in the last 20 years in first world countries are known as digital natives. Because of the integration of technology into their lives, they are thought to be adept users of technology. They create and share their own work.

The advent of blended learning calls for us to understand the value of various modalities, especially related to digital natives. A modified version of blended learning you can incorporate into your classroom could include:

- a. Before class, assign students to view a VFISUniversity online subject related to your class
- b. Before or during class, have them research state codes or regulations on your subject matter
- c. In small group exercises, use case studies for them to highlight lessons learned
- d. Have students bring to class their SOGs or policies related to your subject matter
- e. Conduct an internet search during the class on your topic, and discover how many options are presented
- f. Any component blending a variety of approaches beyond the traditional lecture

SOCRATIC METHOD OF LEARNING

The Socratic Method is named after the Greek philosopher Socrates and is designed to question individual's beliefs and perceptions. It can be defined as a cooperative argumentative dialogue to stimulate thinking. It has a potentially powerful role in adult learning by keeping the participants engaged.

A Socratic Circle is a systematic procedure used to examine an issue that believes critical thinking is connected to asking questions, which leads to asking further questions. It is not a debate. This approach is based on a belief that participants seek and gain a deeper understanding of concepts through thoughtful dialogue rather than memorizing information provided to them.

You can utilize the Socratic Method to obtain participant's attention and relay to them a better understanding of why you are all gathered there. Let's say you were facilitating a class on ESO rules/regulations. You can start out by asserting a thesis; for example, "it doesn't really matter what we wear as an on-duty paramedic," and the further premise is "what we know and do as a paramedic is all that really matters." This method of questioning can lead to a very interactive dialogue among members of the class.

One example of such an engagement is to sit participants in small groups (4-5) as far as possible from each other and allow them to generate dialogue about the thesis or problem statement. The basic premise of this instructional technique is to turn partial control of the classroom over to the participants. Pertinent elements of the issue highlighted should have these characteristics:

- a. Ideas and Values
- b. Complexity and Challenge
- c. Relevance to the participant's curriculum
- d. Ambiguity

Perhaps take that Presentation Slide that lists reasons of why driving ESO vehicles is a dangerous task and place your participants in Socratic Circles and assert a thesis that "the only thing that makes ESO driving dangerous is all of the other people on the road". You might be surprised what type of learning takes place.

Another reason Socratic Methodology works is because it challenges our cultural beliefs and norms. Critical conversations seek to understand various behaviors and values. To be an effective facilitator, you must be able to keep the dialogue on track and focus on the "why" underlying the conversation.

Facilitators must know when to stop a dialogue. Allocating a specific amount of time (10 mins. for example) is a simple way to control some aspects of the conversation. Observe the class, and when you feel the conversation has shifted in the groups from the learning process to discussing other topics, stop the dialogue and refocus the group. Caution should be taken with regard to participants with motives and self-serving biases.

Use of Media Devices

The use of multi-media in the classroom enhances the delivery of the material only if used properly. Whatever medium you decide to use, you need to ensure it is effective for the classroom environment. It is imperative you check all of your equipment prior to the start of the class and have a back-up plan if the device does function properly. As an instructor, you need to be conscious of your movement in front of the screen and blocking the view of participants in the classroom.

The following are examples of some of the multi-media tools available:

Computer Projection

Many of the VFIS programs are also on Power Point Presentation. As an instructor, you may need to provide both the computer and the projector for this media. Be sure you are familiar with how to use this type of media effectively. It is always wise to have a back-up means of media in case of computer failure. You will need to arrive to the classroom early to set-up this type of media and make sure it is functioning properly.

Smart Boards

A smart board is an interactive whiteboard that allows users to work with large quantities of information. The whiteboard accepts touch input from a finger, pen or other solid object. You can save your projected work and then distribute to the students for later reference.

DVDs/Flash Drives

If you are using a flash drive/thumb drive, be sure to check compatibility with the host's computer if you are using their system. ALWAYS have a back-up readily accessible. DVD adapters may not be readily accessible with notebook style computers, so ensure you have proper equipment available.

Slide Projectors

VFIS does not have any presentations requiring the use of slide projectors.

Handouts

Handouts can be an effective way to supplement classroom material with the latest information. VFIS ETS provides an ample number of handouts for instructors to use. These handouts can be copied for classroom use. Additional handouts may be used in the classroom as long as they are relevant to the class.

Easel Pads

If an easel pad is available for the classroom, it can be another effective instructional tool. An easel pad can be used to emphasize points by illustrating a situation or recording ideas generated by class discussion which may be difficult to describe. Easel pads can be used again in future classes.

Erasable Boards

Erasable or Dry Erase boards can be effective because you can use a variety of colors to get your message across. Remember to keep the student in mind when using these aids. Appropriate letter size and legibility is very important for the students in class to be able to receive the message.

Video

Actual video tapes have almost entirely been replaced by DVDs, digital files, flash drives and emerging technology. There may still be a program which utilizes videotapes as a supplement to the program. As with any other means of media, you should be prepared and verify the operation of the player and ensure everyone in the classroom can view the screen or monitor(s). You may have to make sure the monitor is large enough (anything less than a 20" monitor is inadequate in any classroom setting. A 27" – 32" monitor is recommended for most class sizes.) If the monitor is the proper size,

you should also check the angle at which most students will be viewing the monitor to guarantee all can see. Sound is another important element of the effective use of video presentations. Be sure the volume level is adequate for all students in class. It is as important not to have it too loud as it is to not have too soft. Lighting can also be a factor for adequate viewing. You may need to block outside light to prevent glare and also dim the lighting in the room.

Videos and other media are most often under copyright and should never be duplicated for any reason. Supplemental media is sometimes suggested for various programs. The instructor may use VFIS media for the instruction of a course. Any media used other than in a VFIS class requires a limited copyright release from VFIS ETC prior to using or posting to any online media.

Overhead Projectors

Although seldom used anymore, you may have the need for overhead projection. You need to ensure the projector is working before the start of class. Check to make sure the visual effectiveness of the overheads is adequate; depending on the lighting of the classroom, you may need to dim or turn off a portion or all of the lights for the best clarity. Also, any outside light source may affect the visibility of the transparency.

Effective use of the overhead projector is important also. While discussing a certain topic, you may consider using a transparency as a background visual, or if you find it may be distracting, you can turn the projector off. It is always a wise alternative to never let the projector on during the entire presentation.

SECTION III

The Types of Learners

As an instructor, you need to understand how the students in your class will differ as learners. Your teaching style usually reflects your learning style. If your students do not have the same learning characteristics as you do, they will not be able to learn as much. You may find comments in your class evaluations alluding to the fact some students had a harder time comprehending the course material due to teaching style. To understand your classroom and all of the participants in it, let's discuss the various styles. Bernice McCarthy has what is called the "4mat system." McCarthy states there are at least four learning styles, which lie between concrete and abstract thinkers. The learner has an innate style which they feel is the most comfortable for them. The four styles identified by McCarthy are these:

Imaginative Learners—These learners perceive information concretely and process it reflectively. They are good listeners but also like to share ideas. They enjoy personal involvement, commitment, and are interested in personal growth. In class they expect the instructor to produce authentic curricula, and they want to gain knowledge upon which to build. Imaginative learners enjoy involvement and group work and are willing to provide feedback. They care about fellow class participants and the instructor. These students learn best in a facilitated class environment, where the class is very interactive and participative.

Analytic Learners—Analytic learners perceive information abstractly and process it reflectively. They are interested in theory and what the experts think, so they need details and data and are uncomfortable with subjective material. Analytic learners expect the class to enhance their knowledge, and they occasionally place factual knowledge over creativity. These types of learners enjoy assignments enhancing learning in a sequential manner to build comprehension. These students like the lecture style class – give them the facts, and they will create a hierarchal list of what is important to them.

Common Sense Learners—These learners perceive information abstractly and process it actively. They are the pragmatists in the class. They learn by testing theories and applying common sense; common sense learners are problem solvers and tend to be skill oriented. In class they expect the instructor to teach the skills they need to be economically independent in life. They may not be flexible or good at teamwork situations. The psychomotor or demonstration portions of the class are the most effective means of reaching this group.

Dynamic Learners—Dynamic learners perceive information concretely and process it actively. They learn by trial and error and believe in self-discovery. Dynamic learners like change and flexibility, are risk takers, and are at ease with people. They examine reality and try to add to it. Occasionally, this type of learner can be pushy and manipulative. In class they like assignments to do on their own and expect classes and curricula to be geared to their needs. They seek knowledge for the improvement of society and

expect opportunity for experimentation without being penalized by grades. They respond to dynamic instructors who are constantly trying new things (McCarthy, 37-43). The majority of emergency service personnel tend to be categorized in this group. These are the students who jump right in to the practical evolutions. They are going to try new ways and seek alternative means to accomplish the task at hand.

Adult Methodology of Learning

The adult learner has many traits inherent to their learning styles. Listed below is a general description of some of these traits.

The Application Phase of Learning

It is important to allow the participant to have a psychomotor session to apply the information they have just learned. The Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT) program is one program which allows participants to apply their learning. The competency course has always been a highlight of the program. It allows the participant to put the knowledge they gained during the classroom portion to use. The over-the-road emergency and non-emergency assessments continue to strengthen their focus and motivation.

Introducing New Concepts and Principles

They enjoy situations requiring problem solving rather than simply learning facts. Our courses are designed for student interaction. Class participation allows everyone to gain more from the program. We realize not everyone will agree with everything the instructor says. Our goal as an instructor is to have the participant begin to think and develop a new awareness, but not necessarily change what they do, how they do it, or why they do it. Adults learn more if they are active participants, rather than passive listeners.

Our courses are designed with a recommended time frame. As an instructor, you may lengthen the course to allow your participants more time. Avoid shortening any of the class times. Consider dividing the program into reasonable segments, taking into account anticipated attention spans and the need to get up and move around periodically. Adults learn best if they are able to proceed at a reasonable pace. Keep in mind each person learns at a different speed. You may need to keep a pace faster than some can keep up and slower than others would like. You can always work with those who had a difficult time keeping up after class. Try to find a happy medium based on your students.

Relevancy is Critical

VFIS understands even though we are all emergency service providers, each part of the country is unique. Our courses are designed to permit the instructor to have some latitude in adapting the material for their region. This allowance by no means allows you to change the intent of the course material to make it to fit your personal bias. For

example, if you are conducting a Patient Care Documentation class, use the patient care report for that agency. If you are conducting a driver safety course, use pictures of your vehicles and local roadway hazards. Use current data examples, which means you may have to update slides or handouts.

Feedback Is Necessary

Participants need to be kept informed of their progress. Positive reinforcement can be difficult to accomplish if you are not accustomed to providing it. Place yourself in the participant's position. As the instructor, if you continuously send negative reinforcement, you are going to eventually turn students off, and they will feel they are not capable of learning or doing what you expect of them. If an instructor stresses the positive side of the subject being presented by continuously reinforcing these aspects, their students will be more positive about the class and actually learn more. An example of positive reinforcement may be to describe how their personal safety or the safety of others would be impacted.

Different Learning Comprehension

Occasionally a student will have trouble keeping up with the group or may not be able to grasp a certain part of the material. There are a variety of ways you can approach this challenge. Allow input from other students; they may be able to explain the topic in such manner the student may easily understand. Sometimes by hearing it said a different way might be enough for the student to comprehend the material.

There are times where you may have a student who is a slower-paced learner and may not be getting the message. Do not allow the student to affect the entire class to the point where you are losing the rest of the group. Consider giving the class a break and talking with the student one-on-one. Advise the student you are interested in their learning, however you cannot continue to get behind schedule. Suggest the student attend the rest of the class and then either discuss the areas of concern after class or attend another class in the future. Do not embarrass or belittle the student. They may become ambivalent towards you, the class, or VFIS.

Distractions are Disruptive

On occasion you may have a difficult student in your classroom. It is very easy to allow these individuals to distract you from the intent of the class. One way to handle the situation is to speak with the individual in a private conference. Be gentle, but firm, and ask the disruptive student to tone down their behavior. The participant needs to understand future disruption will not be tolerated, and dismissal from the class may be necessary.

If you are an officer conducting the class, you may find it easier to command the attention of a group. You can utilize the suggestions, listed in the previous paragraph, as a tactic to gain the control of the class. If there is an officer in the class, you may gain their assistance in keeping class control. The message becomes very clear in extreme circumstances where you advise the participant they are dismissed, and they will not

receive credit for the hours they attended. This tactic should be used only as a last resort, and a superior officer needs to be notified immediately of your actions along with written documentation of the incident to the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

An acronym that will help you deal with a challenging student is "LEAST."

L Leave it alone.

E Eye contact.

A Action steps.

S Stop class.

T Terminate the individual's privileges.

Leave it alone. If you ignore it, it may just fix itself. The participant may be looking for attention and when you do not give it to them, they may cease their actions on their own.

Eye contact. The next step is to make direct eye contact with the participant who is creating the problem. By directing your disapproving eyes to the participant, he/she may get the message and cease. Be careful not to be too condescending or over-reactionary when using this step.

Action steps. You may need to approach the student and present your materials with the participant in close proximity to you. By being within immediate proximity of the participant, they understand their disruption and cease their actions.

Stop class. It may be a good time for a break. Stop the class, take a break and speak with the participant about their disruptions in the classroom.

Terminate the individual's privileges. This action item is the last step and most drastic. If it reaches this level, notify the student's supervisor and the organization you are representing immediately.

As an instructor, treat the adult learner the way you would want to be treated in the classroom setting. Every time you are a participant in a class, think of how you would like the instructor to conduct the class. Think about the positive aspects of the class and don't be afraid to adopt them in your instruction delivery if it is appropriate to your teaching style and personality. The adult learner expects a lot from you as an instructor.

Generational Issues

You have heard the terms "Baby Boomer," "Generation X" and others specific to the various generations. What does this mean to you, the instructor, when you are tasked with training the various generations? Which generation describes you, and how does this affect your teaching style? Answer these questions to gain understanding of each of the generations, their influences, traits, and values as you read this section. It is not always an age or generational issue due to the fact people come to your class with simply different perspectives; They are also different types of learners as discussed earlier. It is best not to pigeon hole someone in a generation but to try to understand these various perspectives on life and personal preferences.

In order to understand how to instruct your class, the first thing you need to do is determine which generation you fit into. Depending on the source, the definition and timeline of the generations may vary. If your age is between two generations, how do you know to which one you belong? In this situation, you will be referred to as being on the "fringe" or the "cusp." You will probably feel fragmented and may feel that you have no identity. Being on the fringe is actually not that bad and may be an asset. According to Bridge Works, they found these "cusp" individuals make some of the best managers, teachers and marketers. These individuals have the ability to innately understand multiple generations.

Let's first define the age ranges and categories for each generation. The chart below depicts the common terms and age ranges for each of the generations. Remember the age range varies according to the source you are referencing.

Era or Generation	Year Range	Generalized Age Range
Futuristic, Generation Z	Born after 1995	Entering Workforce
Millennial, Millennium, Next	1977-1995	Late 20's - 30's
Generation X,	1965-1976	40's-50's
Hackers (cusp)	Between Generations	Varies
Boomers, Baby Boomers	1946-1964	60's +
Silent, Traditionalists	1925-45	70+

Source: <http://www.generations.com/>

As you review the generations and the year and age range it equates to above, you should have noticed the variations. If you should fall into the Hackers category, do not view this as a negative attribute, but as a positive attribute to your instructional ability. You need to capitalize on the fact you are able to relate to multiple generations of individuals in the classroom.

In order to understand the learning styles of each of these generations, we need to understand a little more about their value and cultural system. As we grow older, how many times have you found yourself relating a story or event where the other individual had no clue what you were even talking about? Those members who have been in EMS for any length of time may refer to the Johnny and Roy days. As the newer generation enters into EMS, most of them have no clue what the older generations are talking about. The television show "Emergency" was a milestone in many of EMT careers. Ask any seasoned EMT or Paramedic if there were one TV show that drew them to the EMS field, what would it be, and the majority will tell you; it was "Emergency" that enticed them into the fire and EMS industry. Ask that same question to the new generation of EMS workers entering the business, and unless they have seen the show on syndicated TV, you will probably receive a totally different answer. Let's take a look at the various generations and the impacts they experienced during their life impacting their personality, values, and morals. You need to keep in mind a generation's impression is created during their childhood, which instills a lifelong perception. You do not progress to the next generation by reaching that age category. You will always be in the generational

category you were reared. We also must realize generalized perceptions of generations are a good tool to use for teaching, but someone in a generation may not adhere to all of the generalized values or traits listed.

Traditionalists, Silent Generation

The members from this era are considered cautious, unadventurous, unimaginative, withdrawn, and silent. They are sometimes considered the generation without a cause. This group has also been stigmatized by being the start of the "divorce epidemic." These individuals tended to marry earlier than previous generations.

Can you recall some of the more notable historical facets of this era? Popular movies from this time frame were: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), which is still popular with children today; *Gone with the Wind* (1939), one of the most notable films of the century; *Fantasia* (1940); and who hasn't watched *It's A Wonderful Life* (1946).

Some of the significant contributing members of this generation are: Walt Disney, Charles Lindbergh, John Steinbeck, Bob Hope, John Wayne, Jimmy Stewart, Joe DiMaggio, Billy Graham, Judy Garland, Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, John F. Kennedy, George H.W. Bush, and Walter Cronkite to name a few. Others include Margaret Thatcher, Queen Elizabeth II, Martin Luther King Jr., Peter O'Toole, Jim Henson, Dustin Hoffman, Bob Dylan, and Aretha Franklin.

Some of the more notable events included the Cold War, the Korean War, the Peace Corps, and the Sputnik in Orbit. Benny Goodman was the king of swing, and Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers created the greatest dance team of all times; Rogers and Hammerstein were the dominant force in musical comedy, with shows such as *Showboat*, *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *Pipe Dream*, and *The Sound of Music*. Cassius Clay, a.k.a. Muhammad Ali, was the world heavyweight-boxing champ and Jackie Robinson was the rookie of the year. Jackie Robinson is a great example of how one generational hero can make a lasting impression across many more generations to come. Jackie Robinson has continued his era from Traditionalist through Generation X. As an instructor, what we teach and the impact we stimulate in the classroom will effect generations to come.

During the Traditional Generation took place, America moved to the suburbs. Parents tended to be strict with their children. The trend from credit, to purchases from savings, had begun and life in the United States was grand. The car became a necessity as more people moved out of the cities. The Corvette made its appealing debut to some of the Silent youth in 1953, enticing those who found themselves old enough to drive.

The Traditional Generation can be described as patriotic, loyal, fiscally conservative, and places their faith in institutions. As educators, we may see some of these individuals in our classrooms. As individuals age and the state of the economy remains positive, we see more of this age group returning to the classroom seeking to improve their knowledge base and in most instances to do something new. EMS wasn't a thriving industry when they were growing up, and the avenue for a career was not available to them as it was for the later generations. We as educators need to consider their

traits. Be careful what we promise these folks. Promises are considered to be a great motivating factor for this generation, and they will expect you to come through with what you promise. These individuals can be a great resource to incorporate into your classroom due to their experience and wisdom on certain subject matters.

Boomer, Baby Boomer

Boomer or Baby Boomer is a term heard on a consistent basis. The world revolves around the Boomers. If you don't believe that statement, ask a member of the generation. Actually, the Boomer generation has acquired a tremendous amount of attention and for good reason.

The Boomer generation, of which already nearly half have reached retirement age or are on the edge of retirement, totals 78 million in population. By contrast, Generation X has only 48 million members. These numbers alone stand for good reason as to why we look closely at the Baby Boomers. The Boomers are very sensitive to being portrayed as aging or slowing down. Staying fit and remaining active is very important to this generation as a whole. As educators, especially younger educators, we should not view those older than us as less capable of performing tasks. The Baby Boomers were essentially the last generation of the stay at home moms. The nurturing and raising of children was of the utmost importance to this era.

Popular movies during this time era included: *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), *From Here to Eternity* (1953), and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), *Psycho* (1960), *West Side Story* (1961).

Boomers saw toys such as: the Barbie Doll, Hula Hoop, Lionel Trains, Radioflyer scooter, and Dr. Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat*. Some of the more notable individuals born during this time include: Janis Joplin, Joe Namath, Oprah Winfrey, Donald Trump, Mick Jagger, Prince Charles, Newt Gingrich, Bill Gates, Al Gore, Jr., and Steven Spielberg.

Television became popular and shows like *Saturday Night Live* debuted. The first man walked on the moon, Martin Luther King led his legacy, and we can't forget Woodstock. Elvis Presley was the king of rock n' roll, the Beatles were booming, and *West Side Story* was the most popular musical in the United States. Sports figures such as Rocky Marciano and Mickey Mantle hit the peak of their career. Jonas Salk invented the Polio vaccine, and Dr. Christian Neethling performed the first heart transplant in South Africa.

The Boomers are considered to be idealistic and competitive; they question authority, and are considered the "Me" generation. Boomers are still somewhat traditional in their culture and can be a challenge in the classroom when mixed with Generation X.

Generation X

This generation is referred to as the generation without a childhood, also known as the "latchkey kids." The name originated due to the number of mothers thrust into the workplace, which increased the number of children left at home alone to fend

for themselves. Generation Xers were confronted with drug addiction, AIDS, sexual freedom, uncontrollable violence, educational requirements, and environmental and world problems created by past generations. Generation X got its name from Douglas Coupland's 1991 novel entitled *Generation X*. The label suggested an unknown quantity and emphasized the idea that Xers were more diverse and fragmented than any other preceding generation.

The popular toys of the generation include: Game Boy, Rubik's Cube, and Transformers. Popular movies were: *The Extra Terrestrial (E.T.)*(1982.), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), and *Dances with Wolves* (1990).

Contributing members of the Generation X include: Michael Jordan, Brooke Shields, Tom Cruise, Princess Diana, Roger Clemens, Mary Lou Retton, Eddie Murphy, and Michael J. Fox.

Some of the more prominent events were: Roe versus Wade, Challenger Shuttle explodes on takeoff, the Cold War still ensues, the Berlin Wall is dismantled, Communism falls in Eastern Europe, U.S. Troops go to the Persian Gulf, and AIDS is identified. *The Muppets* by Jim Henson becomes popular, *Star Wars* is released, the *Brady Bunch* depicts the ideal family on TV, Michael Jackson is the "man with the glove," Madonna becomes known as the material girl, Oprah Winfrey is the queen of television talk shows, MTV debuts, rap music becomes popular, and *Sesame Street* is now in its 29th season and is broadcasted in more than 140 countries. Mike Tyson is the heavy weight champion, and Mary Lou Retton wins in the Olympics. Carl Lewis wins four gold medals in the Olympics, too.

The typical household during the time Generation X grows up is depicted with both parents working; communication could occur by using portable telephones, beepers, and e-mail. Preppie dress was the style of the generation. The information superhighway, The Internet, was christened in 1995, the first test tube baby was born, and the Hubble Space Telescope was launched to view the universe.

Generation X, of which virtually every member (male and female) is currently working, clashes with some of the Baby Boomers as they make their entrance. Education and training is the key to unlocking the relational understanding between these two generations.

You are a Hacker "cusp" – part Baby Boomer, part Xer. How can you really tell? Bridge Works' website defines this nagging question.

You're lost between a Boomer and Xer if...

- You remember when Jordache jeans were cool.
- In your fifth-grade class picture, you were wearing an Izod shirt with the collar up.
- You know by heart the words to any Weird Al Yankovic song.
- The Brady Bunch movie brought back cool memories.
- You ever rang someone's doorbell and said "landshark."
- Three words: Atari, IntelliVision and Coleco sound familiar.

- You remember Friday Night Videos before the days of MTV.
- A predominant color in your childhood photos is plaid.
- While in high school, you and your friends discussed elaborate plans to get together again at the end of the century and play Prince's "1999" until you passed out partying.
- You remember when music that was labeled alternative really was alternative.
- You took family trips BEFORE the invention of the minivan.
- You rode in the back of the station wagon and you faced the cars behind you.
- You've recently horrified yourself by using any one of the following:
 - ◊ When I was younger...
 - ◊ When I was your age...
 - ◊ You know, back when...
- Schoolhouse Rock played a HUGE part in how you actually learned the English language.
- You're starting to view getting carded to buy alcohol as a GOOD thing.
- You ever dressed to emulate a person you saw in either a Duran Duran, Madonna or Cyndi Lauper video.
- The first time you ever kissed someone at a dance came during "Crazy for You," by Madonna.
- You remember with pain the sad day when the Green Machine hit the streets and made your Big Wheel obsolete.
- The phrase "Where's the beef?" still doubles you over with laughter.
- You honestly remember when film critics raved that no movie could ever possibly get better special effects than those in the movie TRON.

Millennial Generation/Next Generation

The "Class of 2000" is born in this generation. What does that mean to us? This generation is in the workforce currently or may still be in school. What are their characteristics and how do we deal with them?

The "next" generation, as they prefer to be called, is being treated as precious. Parents and politicians alike are seeking a nurturing environment in which to raise the Millennial generation. Drugs, alcohol, profanity, improper TV, unchaperoned gatherings, aggressive behavior, AIDS, and teen pregnancy are among some of the issues parents are making a concerted effort to steer their children away from. It is considered the generation of hope.

Contributing members of this generation include: Tiger Woods, Prince William and Kate Middleton, Jessica McClure, Mark Zuckerberg and Justin Bieber. Popular toys include: Play Stations and Game Boys. Popular movies include: Titanic and Braveheart.

Some of the more notable events during this generation include: the First Childrens Summit at the UN; the 1987 stock market drastic drop – some compare this to the day the stock market crashed; Princess Diana, Princess of Wales, is fatally injured in a motor vehicle crash; Mother Teresa dies shortly after Princess Diana; South Park, The Simpsons, and Beavis and Butthead are cartoons with attitudes; video games become the major form of entertainment for the generation; Michael Jordan becomes the

Basketball Superstar, Pele is the King of Soccer, Wayne Gretzky is the man with a hot stick, Cal Ripken Jr. is the Iron Man of Baltimore; Dolly the Sheep is cloned.

Generation Z/Futuristic Generation

This generation is just beginning to enter our workforce and is the future of EMS industry. Generation Z is also known as Generation I. By the year 2050, the world's population is projected to increase from 5.5 billion to 11 billion and the production of goods and services will have quadrupled. If we look at how the world is changing, we should soon realize this generation will be viewing EMS as we know it today as history, probably ancient history. The generations we are training today will be the generation to teach Generation Z. We are building our future instructional staff through the classes we are conducting today. It is imperative as an educator to formulate our classrooms into a learning environment where participants are anxious to come and realize the value of what we have to offer. This generation

is very family oriented and involved in a variety of social causes. They are often self-directed but lack experience.

Some influences to affect this generation include: war, 9/11, terrorism, the 24 hour news cycle, instant information, Smart Phones, tablets and social media. Contributing members include: Simone Biles, Zendaya, Kendall & Kylie Jenner.

Know Your Students

Because we are all different people with different experiences, we all communicate in various ways. There is not one particular way that a group behaves; There are simply trends that some groups seem to follow.

Baby Boomers are retiring in mass quantities and leaving with extensive organizational knowledge; those in the Hackers "cusp" years will soon follow.. The Boomers have viewed those belonging to Generation X as being less loyal, independent, attention-craving and lacking experience. These two generations have differing views of the world, and expect different things. These generations have already entered the EMS industry and are in our classes on a regular basis now.

Generation Xers comprise the majority of training personnel in ESOs and place a high priority on learning and developing new skills. This demand will challenge us as trainers to continually raise the bar and bring new ideas to the classroom. They do not want to be bored with the same information. This generation also expects clear objectives. They do not accept gray areas or unclear objectives. They expect to know why they are there and what is in it for them. Boomers see this trait as being disrespectful; however Xers place a value on time and do not want to be wasting it on unnecessary things.

The new generation (Millennials) is more unique as they have now entered the emergency service industry. We are beginning to see these individuals in our classes. This next generation of individuals will provide more unique situations for us in the

classroom. This generation is considered to be self-reliant; they embody stability, heritage, volunteerism, escapism; the Millennial generation is tolerant and accepting of diverse lifestyles; more than 40% must take remedial math or English after high school; vocational experience is limited; reading, writing, and emergency service technical knowledge is needed.

This group was born between 1982 and 2003. They don't know what a 45 record is. They have always had a remote control for the TV. They have always had MTV. They were prepubescent when the Persian Gulf War was waged. They have no meaningful recollection of the Reagan era. They see Black Monday 1987 as significantly as the Great Depression. They have always known about AIDS. They have always cooked popcorn in the microwave. They don't know what hard contact lenses are. They have always had an answering machine. Most in this generation know Kansas, Chicago, Boston, America and Alabama as places, not music groups.

When it comes to training these groups, there are a variety of issues we need to take into account. First, we need to accept them. These individuals are our future. We cannot alienate them if we are looking to train them as our replacements. The emergency service industry is beginning to feel the tight labor market especially with higher paying jobs luring the younger generation into technology fields and away from emergency service jobs. If we do not accept them into our classrooms, our future emergency service personnel will disappear.

As educators, we need to establish mentoring programs. By partnering experienced, motivated employees with newer employees, we allow each group to learn more about the other. The newer generation wants to be managed in a hands-off manner while still having support when needed. This same mentality applies in the classroom. As instructors, we need to allow this group to perform and when there are questions, be there to answer them. The newer generation is made up of independent learners. As this generation enters our classrooms, we are seeing an increase for the demand of distance learning and blended learning classes.

We need to be sure we convey the meaning of our assignments and be explicit about our expectations. This group has grown up in the technology era and expects changes to occur rapidly. As instructors, we need to move faster in making changes, and we must continually alter our delivery modes. It was once thought the average attention span was about 50 minutes. It is now thought we need to change our delivery at least every 5–6 minutes. This time correlates with the change associated with current media devices and entertainment. Whether we like it or believe it, instruction has become another form of entertainment. Hopefully, we add can inject the value of learning into this perceived entertainment.

Feedback and rewards are imperative for a successful class. Be sensitive when giving feedback and give it immediately. Focus on the participant's behavior and not on their attitude. Be objective and not subjective. Rewards are important; from verbal praises to incentives such as healthy snacks or treats, when someone answers correctly or does something right, we should acknowledge it.

Jennifer Salopek outlines our lesson plan for the new instructional model in her article “The Young and the Rest of Us.”

- Make it make sense
- Make it fun
- Make it personal
- Make it fast paced
- Make it involving
- Make it chunky
- Make it safe to participate
- Make it yours
- Make it theirs
- Make it learner centered
- Make it positive
- Make it matter
- Make it comfortable
- Make testing less stressful
- Make trainees’ experience count
- Make it safe to disagree

As the newer generations continue to enter the workforce and also our classrooms, we will continue to need to deal with the ever-changing value systems and the need to adapt our delivery methods accordingly. The limited resources found on the various generations have proved to be very interesting. We can do just as well by stopping, looking around and viewing people for who they are and not who we want them to be. Once we have accepted that not everyone is the same as we are, we can then begin to adapt our teaching styles to accommodate these unique and wonderful individuals.

Learning Disabilities

As an instructor, you need to be aware the individual may be able to learn information presented in one way, but not in others. The individual may be able to explain things verbally but have difficulty writing ideas on paper. Other factors to consider include: misreading or miscopying, misinterpreting language, or poor comprehension of what is said. These individuals may find it difficult to memorize information.

Your job as an educator is to be aware and sensitive to student needs in your class. It is not your responsibility to identify those in your classes with a learning disability. It is your responsibility to reasonably accommodate those individuals with a learning disability.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities has defined some words commonly associated with learning disabilities.

Dyslexia—perhaps the most commonly known; primarily is used to describe difficulty with language processing and its impact on reading, writing and spelling.

Dyspraxia (Apraxia)—difficulty with motor planning; impacts a person’s ability to coordinate appropriate body movements.

Dysgraphia—involves difficulty with writing; problems might be seen in the actual motor patterns used in writing; difficulties with spelling and the formulation of written composition may also be a part of dysgraphia.

Auditory Discrimination— a key component of efficient language use, and is necessary to “break the code” for reading; it involves being able to perceive the differences between speech sounds, and to sequence these sounds into meaningful words.

Visual Perception— critical to the reading and writing processes as it addresses the ability to notice important details and assign meaning to what we see..

Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD)—may co-occur with learning disabilities (incidence estimates vary); features can include: marked over-activity, distractibility and/or impulsivity which in turn can interfere with an individual's availability to benefit from instruction.

In 1963, the term “learning disability” was introduced to describe the characteristics of a group of individuals of at least average intelligence who seemed less capable of school success, but who had unexplained difficulties in acquiring basic social and academic skills. There have been a variety of discussions among experts as to developing a definition both clinically and educationally useful which also encompasses the wide range of characteristics found in those with learning disabilities.

Professionals agree individuals do not have a learning disability when the learning problems and/or school failures are due primarily to: impaired vision, mental retardation, emotional difficulties, hearing loss, environmental factors, or physical disabilities. Learning disabilities affect children and adults, and range from relatively mild to severe.

The criteria used to potentially delineate whether an individual has a learning disability include the following criteria:

- Has an average or above average intelligence
- Exhibits unexpected discrepancy between potential and actual achievement
- Performs poorly because of difficulty in one or more of the following areas: listening, reading, speaking, reasoning, writing, or mathematical skills.

Additional learning disabilities may also include difficulties in concentration and attention, memory and social skills.

There is no known exact correlation or cause of learning disabilities. A variety of factors may contribute to their occurrence. Learning disabilities may be due to:

- Heredity. Learning disabilities tend to run in families. Similar difficulties have been discovered in the same family.
- Problems during pregnancy and birth. Illness or injury during or before birth may cause learning disabilities. Learning disabilities may also be caused by the use of drugs and alcohol during pregnancy. Other factors may include: RH incompatibility with the mother (if untreated), premature or prolonged labor, lack of oxygen or low birth weight.
- Incidents after birth. Head injuries, nutritional deprivation, poisonous substances, (e.g., lead) and child abuse can contribute to learning disabilities.

Learning disabilities can have a significant impact on one's life. Learning disabilities can be life-long. They can affect one's life including education, employment, daily activities, and interpersonal relationships.

The following are some of the more predominant characteristics of learning disabilities in adults.

- Reading or reading comprehension
- Math calculations, math language and math concepts
- Social skills or interpreting social cues
- Following a schedule, being on time or meeting deadlines
- Reading or following maps
- Balancing a checkbook
- Following directions, especially on multi-step tasks
- Writing, sentence structure, spelling and organizing written work
- Telling or understanding jokes

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is very clear as to which individuals should be included in the transition services available to children with learning disabilities. Hopefully this Act has identified the individual with a learning disability and directed them towards the proper path for their learning years. As an instructor, these individuals entering into our profession will have recognized their learning disability. We need to remember there are still a number of individuals in our society who have not had the luxury of having these services available to them.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) protect individuals with learning disabilities from discrimination. Students who have documented their learning disabilities are entitled to accommodations to support their educational success. Students are responsible for making their learning disabilities known and for requesting adjustments in order to receive Section 504 accommodations. The types of accommodations include:

- Extended time on tests
- Note-takers
- Assistance from the use of technology devices (tape recorders or laptop computers)
- Modified assignments
- Alternative assessments and test formats

The ADA is a federal anti-discriminatory statute designed to remove barriers preventing qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same employment opportunities available to persons without disabilities. Employers cannot discriminate against employees with disabilities. This prohibition covers all aspects of the employment process including:

- Application and promotion
- Testing and medical exams
- Hiring and layoff/recall
- Assignments and termination
- Evaluation and comprehension
- Disciplinary actions and leave
- Training and benefits

Employers are responsible and required to make reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants or employees with disabilities. Some examples of reasonable accommodations include:

- Restructuring of the job
- Modifying work schedules
- Reassigning to another position
- Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices
- Adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies
- Providing qualified readers or interpreters
- Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by, individuals with disabilities.

Keep in mind: you are not required, nor are you expected, to lower quality or quantity of standards to make an accommodation. Nor are you required to provide personal items, such as glasses or hearing aids, as accommodations.

Individuals with learning disabilities may have difficulty with social skills. These difficulties may spill over into the classroom. As an instructor, we need to be sensitive to these issues. Some social issues include:

- Self-esteem
- Interpersonal relationships
- Workplace functioning
- Community participation

Additional considerations to take into account when dealing with learning disabilities is the fact of the disability being overlooked as a hidden handicap. Learning disabilities are often not easily recognized, accepted, or considered serious once recognized. Attention deficits and hyperactivity sometimes co-occur with learning disabilities but not always. Learning disabilities are NOT the same as the following handicaps: mental retardation, autism, deafness, blindness, or behavioral disorders.

For further information regarding this issue, there are a variety of resources. The National Center for Learning Disabilities is excellent resource to gain more information and knowledge on learning disabilities. You can contact them through the web at www.nclد.org or contact them at 1-888-575-7373. The U.S. Department of Justice, ADA Information line is 1-800-514-0301.

National Center for Learning Disabilities has a checklist on their website, which has a lot of applicability to our classrooms.

SECTION IV

Instructor Resources

Course and Instructor Appraisals (Evaluations)

We all like to receive feedback on our performance, and one option is to provide a formal program appraisal or evaluation document. We have included an example, but you may also want to develop your own based on unique subject matter, etc. The only way we can improve the content and delivery of our program is to solicit honest opinions of those in the classroom. As a professional instructor, you should be open to constructive criticism. Most emergency service personnel have attended many classes and know what they prefer regarding instructional methodology and subject matter. We suggest you consider distributing such a form, at the beginning of class, so participants can make notations throughout the class. If you distribute such a document at the end of course, they may be in a rush to get out the door and not take the time to provide good feedback, or they may have forgotten a key element that occurred 6 hours ago. If you are teaching a VFIS course and you receive informative suggestions or comments about the subject matter or A/V, please forward that on to our VFIS offices.



Course and Instructor Critique

Location: _____ Instructor: _____

How did you learn about this class? _____

Would you recommend this course to others? _____

What other courses would you like VFIS to offer? _____

N/A – Not Applicable, 1 – Poor, 2 – Fair, 3 – Good, 4 – Very Good, 5 – Excellent

COURSE Rating	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Course Content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course Usefulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PowerPoint/Video/DVD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Participation Opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INSTRUCTOR Rating	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enthusiasm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of subject matter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to communicate objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to facilitate discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to answer questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is **most** valuable about this course?

What is **least** valuable about this course?

OTHER COMMENTS:

VFIS Education, Training and Consulting thank you for your input
 Please direct any additional comments or requests to csapps@vfis.com or call 1-800-233-1957

"A CHECKLIST FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHER"

- Call on the student by name before addressing them or asking them to recite. Maintain eye contact while speaking with them.
- Praise correct and acceptable work, do not just focus on mistakes.
- Recognize and give credit for oral participation in class.
- Be cognizant of your own communication styles - is your handwriting on the dry erase board large enough? Neat enough? Do you speak slowly and clearly? Do you use ample visual aids?
- If grades on written material are given, consider designating one grade for content, thought and effort and another grade for spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Allow the opportunity for oral tests in each subject if it will help demonstrate their learning.
- Encourage student interests and talents by allowing them to occasionally contribute a project instead of a written theme. Find their talents and emphasize whenever possible.
- Create an interactive classroom. Not all courses have to be lecture all the time.
- Help your students get organized.
- Provide an opportunity for extra time on tests by allowing them to return during a break, lunch or after class to complete a test.
- Make any homework assignments accessible at home and/or online, i.e., an assignments notebook or intranet site. Modern students are used to accessing everything online.
- Allow students to bring a recorder to class on review days. They often cannot write complete notes easily nor read them for study if they do.
- Avoid putting students under pressure of time during initial learning if it can be avoided. Proficiency is developed by repetitive use or exposure to an objective.
- Do not ask students to read aloud without preparation.
- Know what learning disabilities are and are not - read resource materials on learning disabilities.
- Convey a positive attitude about special learners; people take their cues from the teacher's attitudes-you are the primary role model.
- Seat students with learning differences as near the teacher as possible, but include them as part of the regular classroom. The front row is ideal, away from distractions like windows.
- Surround students with learning differences with good role models. Encourage peer tutoring and cooperative learning. Consider allowing peer note-taking if writing rapidly is difficult for the LD student.
- Be creative-help all students feel comfortable about asking questions. Often people with learning disabilities do not like to ask for help, but they may get involved with breakout groups.
- Follow as structured a schedule as possible; when changes are necessary, try to make transitions between activities as painless as possible. Transitions are often tough for students. Preparing for transitions, providing structure and warning student in advance that changes are coming are easy ways to begin.
- Provide clear and concise instructions. Repeat whenever necessary.
- Remember praise always encourages all students.

Class Checklist

Prior to Class:

Course Location: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Contact Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Instructor Name: _____

Directions: _____

AV Equipment Needed:

_____ TV	_____ LCD Projector
_____ Computer	_____ Speakers/Audio Amplifier
_____ Wi-Fi Connection	_____ DVD Player
_____ Slide Projector	_____ Overhead Projector

Other Materials:

_____ Participant Manuals # _____

_____ Handouts # _____

Class:

_____ Set up room
_____ Check AV Equipment
_____ Tear out Evaluations & Course Certificates
_____ Be sure to leave the facility better than you found it
_____ Identify Exits
_____ Identify Restrooms
_____ Identify drinks/foods

After Class:

_____ Check all paperwork
_____ Send course rosters and evaluations (original copies) to VFIS; ETS

Notes:

Certification vs. Qualifications

Because instructors may teach outside their normal geographical region, it is important they know and understand certain terminology. The terms Certificate; Certification; Certificate of Completion and Qualification often are misrepresented.

CERTIFICATION is primarily provided by government agencies that have the authority to certify certain professional levels. Examples may include Emergency Medical Technicians; Fire Fighters; Fire Officers, etc. Unless you are directly working for such an agency, it is likely that your course and even testing does not provide a certification to someone.

CERTIFICATES OR CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION – some educational authorities or professional associations may provide a certificate after the successful conclusion of a course, which may or may not involve a testing mechanism. The certificate essentially indicates an individual was present in the class and completed the associated requirements.

QUALIFICATIONS – this documentation may occur within an organization, once the member or employee has met certain specifications regarding a formal position or title. Emergency Service Organizations (ESOs) often have Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) identifying such standards or achievements to obtain the stated recognition. Example- an ESO may state in order to be formally qualified as an apparatus driver, the candidate must first take a course on driving safety, pass a state certification examination and become qualified by their organization after a supervisor provides written documentation the candidate meets all the organizational criteria.

Proper documentation and maintenance of such documents or qualifying elements is critically important for professional development and personal record keeping.

SECTION V

VFIS's Philosophy of Education Training and Consulting Services

Today's emergency service industry is faced with increasing public demands for services, as well as costly and time consuming mandates. If we do not progress, the 21st century will certainly be devastating to the integrity and mere existence of some providers and departments. Education, Training and Consulting Services Group continues to strive to move through the 21st century by producing quality educational and training materials. These materials are essential components in the effort to reduce the loss potential of emergency organizations.

VFIS Education, Training and Consulting embraces the commitment to support emergency services far beyond providing outstanding insurance coverage.

Continuing Education Units/Hours (CEU/CEH)

Many states already have adopted and/or awarded CEU/CEH (Continuing Education Units/Hours) for many VFIS programs. A program material submission packet is available. The packet contains specific program objectives which correlate with the National Standard Curriculums for First Responder, EMT, and EMT-Paramedic and many federal and state requirement issues.

In some cases, courses you teach may be eligible for this distinction. The purpose of CEU/CEH is to validate the educational integrity of your activities. The goal of continuing educational programs is to evaluate continuing educational offerings while assuring participants of the quality for these activities. All continuing educational sponsors must apply for eligibility and satisfy an organization's evaluation criteria.

Testing

Some programs include a written and/or a practical evaluation to document the student's understanding of the course material. These evaluations are to be used as a means for the student to identify their weak areas and possibly document required continuing education credits. The instructor should also note any consistency in students missing the same question. This may indicate the instructors need to evaluate their instruction for this particular area. VFIS strongly denounces the instructor teaching to the test or giving answers to the test in any situations.

SECTION V

How to use VFIS Educational Training Materials

We have designed our courses with both the student and instructor in mind. The material is researched then developed with information and past trends VFIS has determined to be relevant to the topic. It is imperative you as the instructor, follow the format as found in the programs. When an instructor begins to insert personal bias into a program, they not only interject personal beliefs that may have no validity, but now assume liability for the course content.

The participant manual is designed to provide the student with additional information pertinent to the subject. An effective instructor does not read the information directly from the instructor manual or PowerPoint slides. This insults the intelligence of your students, plus, the manual is designed as a workbook for the student to take notes and read/reference outside of class.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for any program is usually available during normal business hours, 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time Monday through Friday. Although most questions can be readily answered, others may require consultation or research, briefly delaying a response.

Ordering of Materials and Materials Available

The ETC department is the distribution center for materials. If you are an insurance client with VFIS, then you need to go through your VFIS representative unless they otherwise direct. All orders must be submitted in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance to allow time to ship materials. Please remember to include a postal service street mailing address (no Post Office (P.O.) Boxes). For prices, please contact 1-800-233-1957.

The Registry of ETC Instructors

ETC maintains a Registry of all instructors who have successfully completed a VFIS Train- the-Trainer course at our headquarters facility in York, PA. The Registry provides many services to our Instructors and Trainers, including:

1. Training and update information provided through a newsletter, technical information reports, electronic mailings, our website and other special mailings
2. Notifying instructors and trainers of changes in training, programs, materials, etc.
3. Providing any updates to training materials
4. Maintaining records of instructor and trainer status
5. Providing answers to technical and training questions
6. Providing ongoing quality assurance monitoring and assistance

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