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“ORIDING”

An Adult Teaching – Learning Technique

Sharon Wooden, Nancy Baptiste, Loui Reyes

During the past twenty years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of “adult” learners among student populations in community colleges, universities, and non-credit programs. Reasons for this increase are attributed to social change including the transition to “blended life plans,” which include education in all phases of adult development, rising educational attainment, changing career patterns, increased leisure time, the changing roles of women, and equal opportunity (Cross, 1981)

Interaction with, observations of, and research about adult learners have informed adult educators that adult learners; (1) come to educational settings with diverse & rich life experiences, (2) need challenges to both their cognitive and affective domains (3) seek to find meaning and give labels to their experiences and (4) seek to find practical applications or solutions to job related concerns (Cross, 1981; Knowles, 1970, 1973; Lenz, 1982)

Many texts, teaching aids, and materials are already available to help teachers of adults utilize principles of adult learning in their teaching. However, the increased numbers of and enhanced knowledge about adult learners requires a larger body and greater development of successful adult teaching – learning materials and techniques has been on our younger learners rather than adult learners, “a neglected species” (Knowles, 1973) Adult learners often continue to be taught by the traditional method of lecture.

Throughout the authors’ experience of providing appropriate learning environments for adult learners in early childhood professional development programs, we have searched for alternatives to the lecture method of teaching-learning. The “ORID” expands upon methodology utilized with adult learners that traditionally has focused upon group discussion. The “ORID” builds upon this tradition by including both the affective and cognitive domain and gives structure and substance to a group discussion.

The “ORID” was developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) as a group facilitation technique. The technique has been used frequently in large corporations and community organizational groups that perceive the need to make major changes in their planning decision-making processes. According to Spencer (1989), “The aim of a ToP Focused Conversation is to allow group participants to reflect on an event or community shared experience...The value of such reflection is that it helps a group to identify and focus on the significance of an event” (p.46). After learning the “ORID: to review a previous class session, to review a current class session, to review a specific activity, to review a videotape, and to review a class field trip. The authors have used the “ORID: in both written and oral forms.

The “ORID” method, offered to participants by a group leader, consists of four different open-ended questions reflecting four levels of critical thinking. Responses are encouraged from all participants and no evaluations or judgments are made.

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The purpose of the first question, an objective question is to collect information, or get the facts about the experience, activity; or situation. The group leader next asks a reflective question, which elicits the participants' feeling and associated ideas about the experience, activity or situation. The third type of question the group leader asks is an interpretive question. Through this question, participants are encouraged to examine the meaning or value of the experience, activity, or situation that the group shared. During this phase of the "ORID", group members begin to synthesize the happenings of the experience and realize its effect upon the group. The final type of question that is asked is the decisional question, which requires the group to determine if an action is required or what the next step might be.

The authors were impressed with the correlation of these questions to Bloom's Taxonomy of Education Objectives (Bloom et. Al., 1956) which includes the levels of (1) memory (objective), (2) application (interpretive or decisional) and (4) critical thinking (decisional). In particular, the authors like the second level question that taps the participants' emotional responses. In most cases only the cognitive domain is addressed. Students often have great difficulty in expressing their feelings about an experience for themselves and others. The second ORID question helps to focus on the affective domain.

The authors used both written and oral "ORIDS" in large groups and small groups. For example, after students have viewed a videotape, the instructor asks the student to complete a "Video Reaction/Review" form, which includes the following four questions.

- What were the highlights of this video-tape? (*Objective: getting the facts*)
- How did you feel as you were viewing this videotape? (*Reflective, addressing Emotional responses*)
- Why was it important for you to view this videotape? (*Interpretation: considering the meaning or purpose of this experience*).
- What will you tell ;your colleagues about this videotape? Or What will you do in your classroom as a result of viewing this videotape? (*Decisional: next action*)

Written "ORIDS" are also used for documentation of professional development activity participation. In this case statements rather than questions are employed and might include:

1. Describe the activity in which you participated (type of activity, setting, other participants, etc.)
2. Describe how you felt before, during and after your participation in this activity;
3. Describe what had meaning for you in this activity.
4. Record what you would say to others about this activity.

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Oral “ORIDS” are used by the authors as a large group activity to review previous class session or at the end of a class session.

1. Sample questions might be:
2. What did we do in class today?
3. When did you get excited during class today?
4. What was the meaning for you of today's class?
5. As a result of today's class, what changes will you make in your classroom?

The strength of the “ORID” as an adult teaching-learning technique is that it takes all participants on a journey that addresses their group learning experience at various levels of the critical thinking process. The role of the group leader is to facilitate the journey. The method emphasizes the experience of the leader and helps the learner to synthesize and reflect upon her/his learning. The “ORID” is an active learning activity that addresses the special needs of the adult learner. The “ORID” can engage all participants and provide a focused, involved, sharing experience that promotes positive learning. One of the outcomes of the repeated use of “ORIDS” in the classroom is that students themselves begin to “ORID” with others.

Some of the limitations of the use of the “ORID” include excessive class size, competitive environment, and teaching-learning orientation of the facilitator. Excessive class size and competitive environments do not lend themselves to the effective use of the “ORID.” Students can easily withdraw from participation to avoid dealing with feelings. A facilitator who is uncomfortable addressing the affective domain and/or who is task/product oriented in his/her teaching methodology may have difficulty in implementing the “ORID” technique. That is to say, doing reflective teaching as exemplified by the “ORID” takes time, patience, and sensitivity on the part of the facilitator and requires a risk free environment. Thus, not all adult teaching-learning situations are conducive to the use of the “ORID.”

The “ORID” has amazing potential as a teaching-learning technique. Try it. You might find it a welcome addition to your repertoire of adult teaching-learning technique.

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- *Sharon Wooden is a professor emeritus, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, New Mexico State University*
- *Nancy Baptiste is a coordinator/college instructor, CDA Early Childhood Associate Degree Program, New Mexico State University*
- *Louie Reyes is a director of Children, Youth and Family Programs Home Education Livelihood Program*

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