

MOTIVATION FACTORS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Inna Tryhub

National University of Food Technologies (Kiev, Ukraine)

Many aspects of effective teaching apply to all age groups. However, adults have had more life experiences and in many ways are differently motivated than children. Adults are more self-directed in their learning and have a greater need to know why they should learn something. They have set habits and strong tastes. They may have prejudices, which are detrimental to the learning environment. They want a choice in what they learn. These characteristics of adult learners can be addressed in the learning environment to optimize learning. Understanding the principles of adult learning can help teachers become better facilitators of learning. The importance of these principles is recognized in educational and business settings [1]. This article discusses the differences in how adults learn.

Key words: teacher, motivation, lack of motivation, adult learning.

Introduction. Until recently there has been no effort to test whether teachers actually use a different style when teaching adults. In two different studies [2], researchers found that teachers believed adults to be significantly more intellectually curious, motivated to learn, willing to take responsibility for their learning, willing to work hard at learning, clear about what they want to learn, and concerned with the practical applications and implications of learning than were children and adolescents.

Formulation of the problem. This article is intended to bring general information on motivation and the lack of it.

Results. The assumption that teachers of adults should use a style of teaching different from that used with children is based on “informed professional opinion; philosophical assumptions associated with humanistic psychology and progressive education; and a growing body of research and theory on adult learning, development, and socialization”[2],[3]. Although teachers perceive adults as being

different, these perceptions do not automatically translate into differences in approaches to teaching [3]. Perhaps the real issue is not whether learner-centered methods are universally applied by teachers of adults, but rather for what purposes and under what conditions such methods (and others) are most appropriate and effective and in fact are used by teachers [2]. The educational approach should be based on the purpose of the teaching-learning situation, on the goals of the learners, the educational content, and other factors. The concept of adult learning is relatively new, and more research is needed in this area to determine the most effective applications of adult learning principles.

There are some aspects of adult learning. One of them is motivation: internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job, role or subject, or to make an effort to attain a goal. Motivation results from the interaction of both conscious and unconscious factors such as the [1] intensity of desire or need, [2] incentive or reward value of the goal, and [3] expectations of the individual and of his or her peers. These factors are the reasons one has for behaving a certain way. An example is an adult student that spends extra time studying for a test because he or she wants a better grade in the class. Motivating factors include achievement, advancement, autonomy, personal growth, recognition, responsibility, and the work itself.

Each teacher knows that motivation is one of the most important keys to success. When there is lack of motivation, you either get no results, or only mediocre ones, whereas, when there is motivation, you attain greater and better results and achievements. Compare a student who lacks motivation and who hardly studies, to a student who is highly motivated, and who devotes many hours to his studies. Each student will get absolutely different grades. Lack of motivation means lack of enthusiasm, zest and ambition, whereas the possession of motivation is a sign of strong desire, energy and enthusiasm, and the willingness to do whatever it takes to achieve what one sets out to do. A motivated person is a happier person, more energetic, and sees the positive end result in his or her mind.

What can adult student do to enhance own motivation?

1. Set a goal. If adult student has a major goal, it would be a good idea if he splits it into several minor goals, each small goal leading to his major goal.
2. Understand that finishing what he starts is important. Hammer into his mind that whatever he starts he has to finish. Develop the habit of going to the finish line.
3. Socialize with achievers and people with similar interests or goals, since motivation and positive attitude are contagious. Associate with motivated people, who share his interests.
4. Never procrastinate anything. Procrastination leads to laziness, and laziness leads to lack of motivation.
5. Persistence, patience and not giving up, despite failure and difficulties, keep the flame of motivation burning.
6. Read about the subjects of your interest. This will keep his enthusiasm and ambition alive.
7. Look at photos of things you want to get, achieve or do. This will strengthen your desire and make your subconscious mind work with you.
8. Visualize his goals as achieved, adding a feeling of happiness and joy.

Motivation and enthusiasm manifest as desire and interest, and as a driving force that pushes you to take action and pursue goals. Lack of motivation and lack of enthusiasm are two of the main reasons for failure and of living a mediocre life. Lack of motivation and enthusiasm denotes absence, or deficiency in desire, interest and driving force.

Student lacking in motivation and enthusiasm are usually passive, blame everything and everyone for their circumstances, and often, come up with many excuses, why they shouldn't or cannot do this or that. On the other hand, a motivated person is energetic and positive, takes action to improve his or her life, and does not give up when there are problems.

What are the reasons for lack of motivation and enthusiasm during lifelong learning? There are: lack of faith in one's abilities; fear of failure, due to failure in the past; low self-esteem; lack of enough interest; fear of what others might say; the habit

of procrastination; laziness; no awareness of the importance and usefulness of the subject or goal; the feeling or belief that there are other more important things to do; not having the time to delve into the subject or goal; being too stressed or nervous; absence of enough stimuli or incentives.

Unlike the reasons for lack of motivation and enthusiasm, there are at least six factors serve as sources of motivation for adult learning [4]: social relationships; external expectations; social welfare; personal advancement; escape or stimulation; cognitive interest.

What is motivates humans to behave in certain ways has been an area of study for scholars for many centuries? As of 2011, there are six main theories of motivation which help us as a teachers to improve lifelong learning . These modern theories take into account past theories presented by theorists such as Abraham Maslow. Motivation theories have been utilized to understand human behavior (in our case - to understand behavior of adult students) in work settings, educational endeavors and interpersonal relationships. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is useful to know for understanding some basic drivers. It's also useful to know David McClelland's Theory of Needs, and that focuses on achievement, affiliation, and power as key drivers. We know also such theories as ERG (Existence, Relatedness and Growth needs) Theory by Clayton Paul Alderfer, an American psychologist; Goal-Setting Theory of Motivation by Edwin Locke; Reinforcement Theory of Motivation is often connected with B.F. Skinner; Equity Theory of Motivation by John Stacey Adams, a behavioral psychologist; Expectancy Theory of Motivation was developed by Victor Vroom. Each teacher must understand that it is hard to change the world, or even just world of students for that matter, if students lack the motivation or drive. The best thing student can do is arm yourself with motivation techniques that work, and motivation theories that explain why they work.

The best way to motivate adult learners is to enhance their reasons for participation and decrease the barriers. Instructors can motivate learners by establishing a friendly, open atmosphere of helpfulness and by setting the degree of

difficulty of the learning experience high enough to challenge participants but not so high that they become frustrated by information overload.

Teaching is not something that should be done to the learner. The learner should be actively involved in learning and should be encouraged to be active. He or she should be given an opportunity to practice new behavior in a safe, supporting situation. Active participation engages learners in the learning process and enhances retention of new concepts. Active learning techniques include activities that are student-centered (not a “talking head” lecture), encourage sharing of experiences and questioning, and weave discussion sections with exercises that require learners to practice a skill or apply knowledge.

Not all people learn in the same way. Research shows that there are many different learning styles or characteristic ways that adults prefer to learn. Individual learning styles are influenced by personality, intelligence, education, experiences, culture, and sensory and cognitive preferences. To engage all learners, it is best to vary the methods in which information is communicated. These methods can include small- and large-group discussion, role-playing, lecturing, case studies, games, questioning, and varying technology (media, video, computer, interactive work). Studies reveal that over a period of 3 days, the retention of learning is 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see (demonstration), 50% of what we see and hear (discussion), 70% of what we say (practice), and 90% of what we say as we do (teach others, immediate use). It follows that an effective learning protocol is to watch one (demonstration), do one (practice), and teach one (use new learning).

There are several different “learning intelligences” or ways in which individuals can learn information. Instructors should attempt to include as many of these different intelligences as possible in the design of their educational activities. These intelligences are linguistic (language and words), logical and mathematical (numbers and problems), spatial (perception of objects through senses), kinesthetic (use of body to learn), interpersonal (social skills, working with others), intrapersonal (learn on one’s own), musical (learning through music), and naturalistic (learning through the natural world). Providing timely feedback leads to successful learning and mastery of

content and skills. Critical reflection is an important element of adult learning programs. It has been suggested that people do not learn from experience, but rather they learn from reflecting on experience [5]. Writing reflective journals can be helpful in enabling adults to keep track of changes in their behavior or actions as a result of new learning and to keep track of how those changes affect their practice over time. Journals allow adults to chart their own courses and to be aware of their personal growth and development.

Conclusion. In general, all theories of adult education are based on valuing the prior learning and experience of adults . Adult learning requires building on this prior learning, using methods that treat learners with respect, and recognizing that people have different learning styles and have a variety of responsibilities and time commitments. Effective educators also recognize that adults often learn collectively from each other. The optimal role of the adult learner in the learning situation is that of a self-directed, self-motivated manager of personal learning who collaborates as an active participant in the learning process and who takes responsibility for learning. Educators will be more successful if they understand the basic principles of adult learning and apply these principles in their teaching.

Literature

1. Flaxington BD, Cohen LA. Using adult-learning principles to educate employees about investments. Profit Sharing 1996; Sept.-October: 12-14.
2. Beder HW, Darkenwald GG. Differences between teaching adults and pre-adults: some propositions and findings. Adult Education 1982; 32:142-155.
3. Imel S. Teaching adults: is it different? ERIC Digest No. 82.
4. Lieb S. Principles of adult learning. Available at: <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-2.htm>. Accessed February 5. 2004.
5. Pennsylvania Pathways: Professional Development for Child Caregivers. Training Resource Manual, Adult Learning Principles.