

MOTIVATIONAL SKILLS FOR ENHANCING ADULT LEARNERS EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME

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Abstract

Motivation is the key that drives adults to learn and develop interest in their studies, but most times, cultivating this interest is hard especially when the learners are adult who are engaged in so many activities. It can be really challenging to create genuine interest for some students but using the right motivational skills, will make them enjoy learning.

This paper therefore defined the context of motivation and motivational skills. It also looked at some of the motivational styles, techniques and some of the motivational skills that aid effective learning. Also, factors the teacher needs to consider before choosing any motivational skills were also emphasized. Moreso, relevance of motivational skills in relation to adult education were also extensively discussed. Finally, it concluded by encouraging educators to always use motivation to achieve effective learning.

Keywords: Motivation, adult learner, learning, motivational skills, education.

INTRODUCTION

Adult learners are increasing on a regular basis due to the introduction of various adult education programmes including online and adult literacy programmes. Also, the quest for self-improvement, advancement, development and learning to meet the 21st century work demand and challenges have also resulted in having more adults enrolled in many graduate programmes. However, the adult learners are faced with a lot of challenges due to some of the things that stand in their way preventing them from learning and participating effectively in their learning process.

Consequently, adult educators need special skills to enhance their learners' full participation and

commitment in the adult learning programmes and one of the ways to ensure their continuous learning is through proper motivation. All learners learn best when they are motivated, so do adults. However, in order to ensure maximum success in adult learning programmes, there is a great need to utilize some motivational skills to arouse their interest and also sustain their learning process.

The term "motivation" came from the latin word "movere" meaning to move. Motivation therefore has to do with our movements or actions and what determines them. Meanwhile, Motivation is a powerful tool for an impactful and sustained learning because it stimulates and spur people to learn effectively. (Beck, 2004). The author further

described motivation as a driving force that impels one to act and a means to get the desired goal. It is a condition that activates and sustains behavior towards a goal. Motivation is a major factor for successful learning because it can stimulate people's need to learn (Arends, 2015). Motivation in learning is that connecting key or compulsion which keeps the learner within the learning situation and encourages them to learn. Bakar (2014) pointed out that learners who have motives will be active in acquiring knowledge, while learners who are not motivated, will act negatively when performing tasks. Thus, the need for motivational skills.

Motivational skills, according to Gom (2009) are those actions and strategies that elicit a desired behaviour or response from a learner. These skills could be internal or external influences that contribute to productivity, satisfaction at work and meaningful contribution to education. Similarly, motivational skills play an important role in teaching profession. A self-motivated teacher is focused on his growth and that of the growth of her learners, by bringing positively and set clear goals for them.

Conversely, there are two main types of motivation, namely: Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation.

1. Intrinsic motivation: This is called internal motivation. It is the opposite of extrinsic motivation. This type of motivation comes from within. This is self determination to do something or achieve a goal. There are no external factors that drive or spur you to take the action. According to Schunk (2014) Intrinsic motivation refers to an internal driving state that stimulates an individual to perform a task. Intrinsic motivation is one for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself and is likely to lead one towards deep learning because intrinsically motivated learners would do everything to achieve and satisfy their internal desires. People who are intrinsically motivated work on task because

the find it enjoyable. Task motivation is its own reward and does not need external reward.

2. Extrinsic motivation: This is also external motivation. This type of motivation comes from external forces or your surroundings. The driving force exists outside the human body that stimulates the individual action and also have a rewarding pushing impact for the learner. According to Legault (2016) Extrinsic motivation is an incentive activated by external factors such as reward, good marks. Individuals who are extrinsically motivated, work on tasks because they believe it will bring desirable outcomes such as reward, praise or avoidance of punishment. Examples of Extrinsic motivation are motivational speakers, videos or any external factors that drives you to do something. (Legault 2016).

Both Intrinsic and Extrinsic of motivation are very important and play a huge role in improving teaching and learning thereby achieving success in life.

In addition, there are different shades of motivation styles which a teacher uses to motivate learners, they are:

1. **Achievement motivation:** This stems from achieving the goal. You are not only motivated by the reward you will get but by the joy and process involved in the achievement. (Li & Lynch, 2016).
2. **Attitude motivation:** This motivation style is acquired by the desire to change your attitude or those of others. If your motivation style is attitude motivation, then you love engaging in activities to uplift yourself and others. (Arends, 2015).
3. **Learning motivation:** This is when your motivation is learning, when your motivation is more about learning process than the reward.
4. **Reward motivation:** Reward based motivation style is one of the common types of extrinsic motivation. This motivation style is when you find motivation in rewards rather than just satisfaction of completing something. Madu & Obiozor, (2020) corroborated that behaviours that are recognized and

praised are more likely to be repeated and maintained. This does not only promote learning but motivates learners.

5. Fear motivation: This is another style of extrinsic motivation, fear motivation is finding motivation by drilling yourself into an uncomfortable situation. This type is negative yet effective, you can even turn the fear into something positive. For example, if a disease runs hereditarily in your family, then you can motivate yourself to exercise or abstain yourself from certain food to maintain a healthy routine to avoid catching that disease. (Kim & Merriam, 2014).

6. Social motivation: The social motivation style is when the motivation stems from determination to connect socially. When you are socially motivated your actions deprive your desires to be socially accepted.

7. Physiological motivation: This motivation style is situational. This style motivates us one way or another to fulfill our basic needs and this style is inherent in all of us. (Nolot, 2011)

Based on the foregoing, before an adult educator decides on motivating the adult learners he has to first of all consider the needs, problems and area of weakness of the learner in order to proffer the best approach of motivating the learner to learn effectively. According to Ugwa (2015) some of the factors to be considered are;

1. Age and maturity of the learner: The age and maturity level of the learner will help the facilitator to determine the type of motivation to support the learner.

2. The area of study and lesson: The type of lesson content and area of study will enable you know the needed area of support.

3. The area of weakness or strength: Before the teacher embarks on motivating a learner, the educator should take cognizance of the ability and capability of each learner in order to know the actual

area of support to give. Those weak learners need a special kind of motivation while those area they are performing well are the strength which also needs to be motivated to bring more improvement. The motivation could also come in form of praise, award among others.

4. Needs: The need of the learner should also determine the type of motivational skills to be administered.

5. Availability of instructional Resources and Materials: If the type of motivation the educator wants to use is geared towards using instructional resources or materials, he should ensure that the appropriate resources are readily available and brought for the needed action.

6. Individual differences: Adult learners may be equally motivated to participate effectively in learning process, but the type of motivation and sources of their motivation drive may be different. What spurs learner “A” maybe different from that of learner “B”. So, the teacher needs to consider the peculiarity of each learner in choosing his motivational skill. Some learners are intrinsically motivated while others are extrinsically motivated. Therefore, it is expected that educators should be equipped with varieties of motivational techniques. Educators should always be aware of the potential motivation behind the reasons why learners engage in any programme. Once the reasons are understood, it will help the teacher to determine the appropriate motivational skills to apply. Adult learners are being driven by these techniques to learn and these are what motivates them to learn.

These motivational techniques are categorized into three sub groups.

1. Goal Based: Adult learners are inclined to learn when what they are learning takes them to their desired goal. When the learning process is such that meets their demand of self-development, and achievement. The willingness to learn will be there.

2. **Activity Based:** Adult learners are motivated to learn when the process is activity oriented and participatory. The learners are keenly involved, if the learning process is based with varied instructional resources and materials and lots of activity. (Moustakas & Fokiali, 2019).

3. **Learning Based:** Adult learners here seek for knowledge that will benefit them. They are usually intrinsically motivated when the focus is about equipping and building their capacity. They enjoy exploration in learning and do not seek for any reward but self-gratification. (Dirbashi, 2017).

Recognizing these unique motivational styles and techniques of adult learner can help educators to identify the type of motivational skill that will satisfy the learners' need and make them participate effectively. Thus, the motivational skills in teaching adults include;

1. Make learning relevant: The most important motivating factor is making learning relevant to their career and personal growth aspiration. If the knowledge and skills they seek to improve on are clearly linked to their career, good life and being self-reliant. The motivation to learn will be there. Adult learners appreciate more practical knowledge rather than extraneous facts and theories, learning to draw on real life, scenarios and case studies that adult learners can relate to are naturally more interesting and when learners are interested they are motivated to learn. (Arends, 2015).

2. Make learning convenient and accessible: Adult learners have tight schedule so often what motivates adults to learn is something simple and convenience for them and that is not too stressful. Let the learning sessions be convenient and not clash with their working hours. Make learning opportunities available with the online that you know learners are already frequenting like social media and mobile phone. Learners will be able to learn on tools they

feel more comfortable and convenient with. (Moustakas & Fokiali, 2019).

3. Mentoring: Mentoring is one of the skills in motivating learner's, the teacher serves as a mentor and the learner the mentee or protégé. The facilitator always supports the learner in his area of weakness or helps the less experienced learners to become professionally proficient.

4. Provide opportunities for exploratory learning: According to Gallbraith (2004), learning activities that require decision making and problem solving motivates learners to explore more by involving them in active rather than passive learning. Adult learners like the opportunity to explore and construct knowledge. The potential benefits are endless because exploring and trying new ideas can lead to all sorts of exciting innovations.

5. Appeal to different learning preferences: in motivating adults to learn, individual preferences or individual differences is something that just can't be ignored. Each adult has his or her peculiarity and uniqueness in his style of learning and level of assimilation. Some adults learn better through visual materials, life graphics and presentation while others workshop and video keeps them engaged for long. According to Dirbashi (2017) some adults prefer live schedule learning activities while others are motivated by the freedom to learn in their own time and at their own pace. So the facilitator really has to put all these things into consideration in order to motivate them to learn. It is also important to consider which content formats are most appropriate for the learning objectives and the learning has to be learned centered. (Stefanon, 2012)

6. Create a human learning experience: Social interactions are an important part of how adults learn in their work place. Employees learn from their peers, their leaders and even their subordinates. All these social engagements motivate them to discuss new knowledge and practice new skills. Learning

activities like group projects can also be a great way of motivating teams to work together towards solving a problem or presenting an idea. (Schunk, 2014).

7. Teacher's competent/teacher's factor: The knowledge of the teacher also has a big role to play in motivating his learners, when the teacher has good mastery of the subject or the content matter, it gives him an edge over his student and spurs the learner to learn more. An effective or competent teacher has a high impact on his learner because the learner sees him as their role model and the learner's learning achievement improves too.

8. Guidance and counseling skills: Giving learners access to advice and guidance can also make the learning experience more motivating. Adult learners come to learn with many problems, it could be psychological, sociological, and physiological problems. The adult educator should look beyond academics and observe those learners that have problems and counsel and advise them on how to solve their different problems. These steps do not only motivate them, it also prevents adults from feeling isolated or alone in their journey of learning. (Madu & Obiozor, 2020).

9. Reward learning with fun and games: Gamification is all about making learning fun for adults by introducing many interesting games like small wins, fostering competitions, using role play method, video clips into learning experience. Ulstad et al (2016) opined that bringing all useful instructional resources helps to simplify and clarify difficult concepts and make learning for the learner interesting and enjoyable, this could be the trick you need to motivate adults to learn.

10. Constructive feedback: Motivating adults to learn requires regular feedback mechanism. This can be a real time quantitative feedback like automated grading on a quiz or it could be personal written feedback. Feedback is what helps adults to measure

their learning progress or to refocus on the areas that need extra attention. According to Lin & Sandmann,(2018). Feedback works as a motivating factor in adult learning when it is constructive, practical and tailored to the individual learner. When giving feedback, start from the area of strength of the learners first before the areas of weakness. Feedback should emphasis ways for a learner to leverage their strength and improve the development areas rather than focusing on their mistakes and weakness. (Lee & Pang, 2014)

The relevance of motivational skills in adult education cannot be over emphasized as motivation has significant contribution in enhancing learner's effective participation in Adult Education. Learning cannot really take place effectively without motivation. Motivation is a means or source to move the person to the task and also a willingness to do something and continued by the actions and ability to satisfy some needs for the individual. (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012).

Dirbashi (2017) supports that motivation is a driving force by which humans achieve their goals, it guides the people to attain their goal. Moreover, motivation is an inevitable aspect of learning. Some of the relevance or importance of motivation in adult education are as follows;

- ❖ Motivation arouses the adult learners' interest to learn and sustain learning and it further makes learning convenient and less complicated for him.
- ❖ Motivation helps to improve initiatives, the cognitive processing skills and improves the overall performance of Adult learners.
- ❖ Motivation creates conducive environment for cognitive arousal that inspires the learners intellectually and physically, so that they could achieve their predetermined goal.
- ❖ Motivation fosters creativity and critical thinking. It enables the adult learner think far beyond the confines of the classrooms and become more

creative in achieving the set goals very enthusiastically and energetically. (Li & Lynch, 2016).

❖ Motivation increases the speed of work and performance of learning. Bakar (2014) affirms that motivation increases the performance of learning by influencing the rate of learning, the retention of information and the desire to learn. Therefore motivation provides the effort and energy that a learner needs to achieve a task.

❖ It directs learners behaviour towards particular goals. It determines the specific goals towards which adult learners strive, thus making them achieve their potentials, find success and achieve his personal goals. If an individual is motivated, he will have job satisfaction and this will help in self-development.

❖ A sense of competence is enhanced through motivation, when the teacher supports the learner regularly, Souders (2020) posit that it makes the learner more competent in learning a skill or any concept. Therefore teachers mentoring the learner, encourages a sense of competence, when students have firm sense that they are regarded as being competent, it spurs them to learn more.

❖ Motivation cultivates resilience and self-efficacy. Some adults enter literacy education questioning their abilities to learn and cope with education but proper motivation instills self confidence back to the learner, that he can achieve the set target. It also enhances learners general self-esteem leading to increase in achievement, self-efficacy and self development. (Lin et al, 2018).

❖ Due to motivation, students will be interested in learning and willing to carry out any task to achieve their goal.

CONCLUSION

The key factor in adult education is motivating adults to learn. Adult learning is seen as a form participation in social practice and it occurs in all

context of people's lives. Current theories of adult learning shows that adults learn in different ways for different reasons and their levels of assimilation are different because of their previous education, background, experiences and coupled with challenges which could be sociological, psychological, and physiological. Going through all these experiences hinder effective adult learning. Consequently upon that, it is very important to ensure that adult learners are highly motivated so as to achieve the desired goal.

Adult learning is not just about behavior and cognitive processing, it also increases the adult learner's expertise in many field of endeavor, which is accompanied by an increasing awareness of developmental project and community development. So to make teaching and learning effective, the learners should be well motivated towards learning that triggers them to explore more. Motivation is an important learning variable in adult Education, as it influences positively the input, output and outcomes of any teaching and learning process. Notably, motivational variables have potentiating effects on Adult learning and should not be overlooked.

Finally, Educators are encouraged to utilize all the motivational skills in every learning activities as this will enhance adult learners effective participation in the learning process and also improve their achievements.

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