



MOTIVATING THE ADULT LEARNER

Instructor-Related Factors & Motivation, Part 1

This lesson examines how the well-intentioned instructional decisions that teachers make can have a negative effect on student motivation.

Impact Motivation

Section A, 5 things that instructors do that impact student motivation:

1. We design instruction around program goals instead of around the students' goals. Program goals are extrinsic, and will most likely lose their motivational power. Often program level goals are so far off for some students that they're actually demotivating.
2. We fail to connect literacy goals to realistic, personal goals. Consider the ways that students are able to use literacy skills to achieve personal goals
3. We place inappropriate emphasis on testing and grading. When the goals we focus on are test scores, rather than skill mastery or content mastery, we can reinforce students' negative self-concepts.
4. We forget to treat adult learners as adults. We set up so many processes and procedures in our classes that we leave little opportunity for students to be autonomous.
5. We rely on one form of content delivery. Programs assess learning styles, but don't use the information to inform instruction.

Increase Motivation

5 things that instructors can do to increase student motivation:

1. Create student-centered classrooms (based on students' perceptions of what is best for students).
 - a. Shift instructor role from transmitting knowledge to facilitating learning
 - b. Get students more actively involved in learning. When they have to experiment, do trials, and figure things out for themselves, they are active.
 - c. We can focus on assessing for mastery, versus assessing for scores. It shifts the focus from paper and pencil tests to performance-type assessment tasks that are focused on demonstrating mastery.



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2. Help students set realistic, personal goals as the focus of literacy learning
 - a. Find out what individual students value.
 - b. Find ways to blend their interests with the content.
 - c. Ask students to think about something they want to achieve in the next year; a personal goal. They can use it as a learning project. You would work with them to create a plan for achieving that goal that incorporates literacy lessons.
3. Encourage positive self-concepts by focusing on inputs that students can control. To move from focusing on outcomes to focusing on inputs, we can begin to look at three things: effort, time, and strategy use.
4. Create opportunities for students to be autonomous in the classroom
 - a. Let students choose paper topics and project topics that interest them.
 - b. Allow students to decide how they will demonstrate that they have mastered content. We are so used to paper and pencil or computerized tests that we forget that we can assess students in a variety of ways.
 - c. Engage students in classroom and program-level decision-making.
5. Appeal to every learning style by using multi-sensory approaches to content delivery.
 - a. Cognitive research tells us that the more senses we involve in a student's learning, the more likely the student is to remember it.
 - b. If we incorporate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements in our lessons, then we are teaching to each student's learning style!