

Study Circle Study Guide: Motivating the Adult Learner

Unit 4: Instructor-Related Factors & Motivation – Part 2

Learning Focus

As instructors, we have tremendous influence on student motivation. The words we choose, the feedback we provide, the materials we use, and the attitudes we bring into the classroom all shape how adult learners see themselves and their ability to succeed. This session explores practical ways instructors can create a learning environment that builds confidence, persistence, and motivation.

Five Instructor-Related Factors That Influence Motivation

As you participate in the training, consider how each of these areas impacts your own classroom.

- ☐ What we do in the classroom
- ☐ What we say to our students
- ☐ Strategies we use
- ☐ Materials we use
- ☐ Our attitudes and dispositions

Reflection:

Which of these areas do you think has the greatest impact on student motivation? Why?

Feedback That Builds Motivation

Effective feedback is:

C – Clear

- Connects student effort to their learning goals.

A – Actionable

- Gives students specific next steps for improvement.

S – Specific

- Identifies exactly what was done well and what can be improved.

T – Timely

- Is provided as close to the learning experience as possible.

Think About It

Recall a recent conversation with one of your students.

What feedback did you provide that encouraged continued learning?

What feedback could have been clearer, more specific, or actionable?

The Power of Our Words

Instructor language can either strengthen or weaken student motivation.

During the upcoming discussion, consider how you might respond when students say things like:

- "I'm just not good at math."
- "I always fail tests."
- "English is impossible for me."

How can you shift the conversation toward effort, growth, and strategies instead of limitations?

Notes:

Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

Motivating classrooms are built on respect.

Consider how you can:

- ✓ Use person-first language
- ✓ Avoid stereotypes and sweeping generalizations
- ✓ Select engaging, age-appropriate, and culturally inclusive materials
- ✓ Create a classroom where students feel respected, valued, and safe to participate

Reflection

What is one thing you can do to make your classroom more welcoming and inclusive?

Instructor Reflection

Our own beliefs and expectations influence our interactions with students.

Take a moment to reflect.

- How do my assumptions influence the way I teach?
- How do I demonstrate respect for adult learners?
- How do I communicate that I believe every student can succeed?

Notes:

My Takeaways

Three ideas I want to remember for the discussion:

1.

2.

3.

One Action I'll Take This Month

The one change I will intentionally make in my instruction is:
