

## MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUES AND TIPS TO MOTIVATE ADULT LEARNERS

\* *Dr. Ankush Ramchandra Bansode,*

\*\* *Shri. Ajitkumar Neminath Chougule,*

*Assistant Professors', Mahavir Mahavidyalaya, Kolhapur*

### **Abstract:**

*Malcolm Knowles was the pioneer theorist in the field of adult learning .He identified the following characteristics of adult learners: 1) Adults are autonomous and self-directed. 2) Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. 3) Adults are goal-oriented. 4) Adults are relevancy-oriented. 5) Adults are practical, focusing on aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work. 6) Adults need to be shown respect. So, Motivational Techniques for Adult Learners are important.*

*Adults, unlike children, teenagers and students, in most cases, have a lot of things on their minds and learning course is probably the last one of them. In addition, adult learners don't see the rewards of their efforts as soon as they would expect, and giving them candy doesn't work as it works with children. Also, academic habits, once possessed are also long forgotten. Last but not the least , a lot of the learners are often forced to take on Learning course to enhance their skills, keep their job, get a job, or continue further with their career plans. All this makes it difficult to motivate learners and make them active participants. Here are some Tips to Motivate Adult Learners that can be tried upon.*

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### **Introduction:**

We all know that courses must be meaningful and motivational to learners, but unfortunately, not all Instructional designers know how to engage adult learners. When adults are required to take courses that they have no interest in, or find irrelevant to their needs, their level of motivation and consequently their retention level will be low. Teacher Educator (Facilitator) needs to work hard to come up with motivational strategies for adult learners. The introduction of learning technology and the changing workplace have of late increased the importance of adult learning. However, there comes the problem of motivating adult learners. There are a few things that stand in the way to motivating adults to start learning. In this analytical paper, we will go over understanding some of the motivational techniques and tips to motivate adult learners.

### **Objectives of the paper:**

- 1) To discuss Motivational Techniques for Adult Learners.
- 2) To discuss Tips to Motivate Adult Learners.

### **Motivational Techniques for Adult Learners:**

#### **Create real life experiences:**

Make the course meaningful to your learners by creating scenarios, roleplays, games, and demonstrations that

resemble learners' everyday work environments. This can be easily achieved by asking Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to provide realistic examples and anecdotes from their experiences. Then, use your creativity to turn their stories into meaningful interactions.

**Provide downloadable resources and job aids:**

It is unrealistic to expect learners to remember everything that was covered in the course. Therefore, it is suggested to create downloadable resources and desk guides that they can print and refer to as often as needed. If learners know that the information will always be there for them, they will be much more relaxed during the training.

**State benefits and have learners work toward their individual goals:**

All learners have different reasons for taking the training. While some want to acquire new skills, others may simply need a refresher. Allow learners to skip sections or test out of the material to move to the section they truly need to learn about.

**Have participants do a simulation or create an end product that lets them demonstrate their understanding of the material:**

Adults will be much more motivated to learn if they have an opportunity to immediately apply their new knowledge to real life situations. Asking them to do a simulation or complete a realistic exercise will reinforce their understanding of the material, improve confidence, and increase retention.

**Chunk information to accommodate busy schedules:**

We all know that adults are busy. Therefore, instructional designers should chunk their courses into manageable pieces to allow learners to take them whenever they have a small opening in their busy schedules. It is also a good idea to add bookmarks and have the programme remember where the learners left off. This way, they won't be required to complete the course in one take and could come back to it when they have time again.

**Provide immediate and constructive feedback:**

Adult learners want to know how they are doing. Furthermore, if they are not doing well they want to know why, and they want to be pointed in the right direction. Allow learners to make decisions and guide them through the learning process. Never leave them hanging and always offer explanation or provide review of the material they did not understand.

**Tips to Motivate Adult Learners:**

**1. Create useful and relevant learning experiences based on the age group and interests of your learners:**

Emphasize on the practical knowledge. It is important to design a course that provides immediate relevancy. Learning materials that can be put into practice. Adult learners appreciate more practical knowledge, rather than extraneous facts and theories.

- 2. Facilitate exploration:** Even though children are famous for their exploratory nature and curiosity, adult learners, too, sometimes like to take the opportunity to construct knowledge in a way that is meaningful to them. For this reason, you should have all sorts of materials, references, infographics, short videos, lectures, podcasts and free resources available. In such a perfect learning environment learners are more likely to get inspired or find something that makes them want to learn more.

3. **Build community and integrate social media:** Keep in mind that social media websites are a powerful tool for collaboration, commenting and sharing. You can facilitate group discussions and communities. People will quickly start exchanging knowledge, and will also have fun, social media is fun!
4. **A voice behind the video is not enough:** Add a personal touch. Your course needs to have a face. Make yourself available to people, invite subject-matter experts, authors, professors and other specialists in live online discussions and question and answer sessions.
5. **Challenge through games:** Come up with different problem solving exercises and case studies. Make your learners look for and find solutions.
6. **Use humour:** Humor would work great even with the most demotivated learners on your course. When your students know you are funny, they will listen to your material carefully because they wouldn't want to miss on your witty sense of humor. You can never lose with that.
7. **Chunk information:** Chunking is essential, as it helps people remember and assimilate information. Small bits are easier to process.
8. **Add suspense:** Don't give out everything your course is about in the beginning. You need an overview, but keep some interesting points until the time is right. No one likes to read a book if they know what's about to happen.
9. **Accommodate individual interests and career goals:** Empower learners to work on these goals and individualize the training to suit their needs.
10. **Stimulate your learners:** Encourage them to think by either providing them with brain teasers, or by asking thought-provoking questions.
11. **Let learning occur through mistakes:** According to a German proverb "*you will become clever through your mistakes*". Have you heard the famous expression: "*Practice makes perfect*"? of course you have! Henry L. Roediger who started a learning experiment divided his students in two groups. Group A studied natural sciences paper for 4 sessions, while group B studied the same paper for one session and was tested on it three times. According to the experimenter, one week later, students from group B performed 50% better than Group A, even though they studied the paper less. The results clearly support the argument that "*practice makes perfect*".
12. **Make it visually-compelling:** Make use of visual media. Near about 83% of learning occurs visually.
13. **Get Emotional:** If you don't sound inspiring, if your materials are not exciting, how will you motivate your learners? Get them emotionally involved too – come up with controversial statements, tap on memories, add real-life stories.
14. **Get examples of their workplace:** Your learners may not always remember to associate what is learned with its application at the workplace. Sometimes they might need reminders and a clue to help them make that connection.
15. **Be respectful to them:** Listen them and be present. Be thoughtful of their feelings, Acknowledge them and say thank you, Address mistakes with kindness, Show kindness and courtesy, Be polite, Respect the earth and all who live here, Listen when they are talking and skip the gossip.

**16. Ask for feedback:** It is motivating to know that your opinion contributes to the course.

**17. Present the benefits of undertaking the course:** I don't know why I didn't start with this one. Sometimes outlining the benefits is all it takes.

**Conclusion:**

Lack of adequate motivation is one of the serious problems in adult education. Due to lack of motivation, the learners do not attend the centres, the volunteers are not committed to the programme and the community members either remain as spectators or criticizers instead of doing something positive to the programme. How to solve the problem? What techniques are needed for effectively motivating the adult learner? The present paper aims to address these issues generally.

Adequate motivation of adult learners, community and programme functionaries are crucial for the success of the programme. Stress should be laid on motivating the programme functionaries as they, in turn motivate the community and adult learners. Further, the programme functionaries have to feel their responsibility to participate in the programme effectively so as to create necessary conditions for their learning. In addition, motivation is situation specific in its nature and has a wider scope in the context of adult education programme. Adult education is a field oriented experiment and requires a lot of imagination in its implementation.

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**Cite This Article:**

\* **Dr. Ankush Ramchandra Bansode** & \*\* **Shri. Ajitkumar Neminath Chougule**, (2022). *Motivational Techniques and Tips to Motivate Adult Learners*, *Educreator Research Journal*, Volume-IX, Special Issue – I, Nov –Dec 2022, 67-70.