Know About Adult Learners

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The Organization and Delivery of Adult Education – Quote 1 of 5

The second quote I have chosen to reflect upon is (Merriam and Brockett, 2007, p. 146) from the ‘The Organization and Delivery of Adult Education’ (item 1 of 5). They state “the more we know about adult learners, the changes they go through, and how these changes motivate and interact with learning, the better we can structure learning experiences that both respond to and stimulate development.”

Objective: This quote discusses how understanding adult development can help educators structure learning experiences that will create better responses from the learners. This understanding helps instructors engage students because their different experience and backgrounds can be used to change how course concepts are taught for maximum impact. What caught my attention was how knowing more about the learners can help predict how they may respond and allow trainers to have customized next step(s) ready to progress them to the next level.

Reflective: After reading the quote (Merriam and Brockett, 2007, p. 146) and then doing further research, I realized that learning analytics, educational data mining and intelligent online learning systems, can play a huge role in assisting adult educators understand learners better. I will need to continue to research these areas because my understanding is only at the rudimentary stage. “Learning Analytics” (Siemens 2010) uses learner-produced data, and analysis models to discover information and social connections for predicting and advising an individual's learning. The International Educational Data Mining Society defines the term
“Educational Data Mining” a discipline concerned with developing methods for exploring the unique types of data that come from educational settings. Using those methods helps educators better understand students, and the settings which they learn in. Intelligent online systems (like Khan Academy) can provide immediate and customized instruction or feedback to learners based on their personal responses. I will continue to review these resources every few months to insure that I stay current with new developments in these fields.

Interpretive: From an early age, I have been fascinated with technology and how it can improve our lives and our productivity. When I read the quote (Merriam and Brockett, 2007, p. 146) I had an “Aha” moment. I realized that if I have a better understanding of students’ education, work experience, gender and cultural differences, I could adjust course content that could help them reach their own specific training goals. I also realized I could not acquire this information on my own. I would need to use analytics, data mining, assessment and other tools because the task of understanding each individual learner is gargantuan. Educators may not always be able to provide each student with the one-on-one time needed to truly flourish. However, the tools mentioned can provide educators with key insights proven to increase better learning outcomes and student satisfaction. I will continue to research the existing tools as they mature in scope and capability to know how they can help me and my students improve learning. I also plan to do a search for new emerging tools like this, every two months. This is necessary because many new resources will be developed and utilize best of breed tools to maximize learning outcomes. It is important to keep searching better tools, since resources are constantly changing and we want to maximize learning the best way possible for each individual.

Decisional: This quote emphasises the need for educators to understand the individual learner’s needs, so we can construct positive learning environments. I need to be aware what hot
buttons are relevant for each person to respond to the course material in the best way. I plan to use Consulting Resource Group International (CRG) assessment tools (similar to Myers-Briggs) to assist me in determining my clients learning and teaching styles. I will use CRG resources to develop class discussions, examples and projects that are able to stimulate the individual styles and interests, so the opportunity to learn is greatly enhanced. Moving forward in my role as an adult educator, I will use analytics, data mining, assessments, intelligent online systems and similar tools to help my students achieve the best outcomes.
References


