Characteristics of adult learners

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Structure

• Activity 1: brainstorm session and structuring the field
• Three adult learner specialists (Galbraith, Jarvis, Knowles)
• First principles of adult learning
Activity 1: brainstorm

• Bleu: What are strong characteristics of adults they bring to a training?
• Red: What are challenges for adults involved in training?
• White: When do adults feel good in a training?
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<th>Strong</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Feel good</th>
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Knowles (1984a)

• The need to know (autonomy, self-directed)
• Self-concept about own capabilities
• They bring in personal experiences.
• Readiness to learn.
• Have own orientation to learning.
• Motivation.
Jarvis (1992)

- Adults have a tremendous amount of experiences
- Adults move from social to social situation
Galbraith (1991)

- Adults are varied/diverse
- Adults easily resist training
- Adults prefer active strategies
- Adults prefer to apply things
- They want the learning to be authentic
- They are independent
Motivation

• Researchers focusing on adult education point at the critical role of motivation

• Recent theories emphasize “intrinsic” motivation
Motivation

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• Recent theories emphasize “intrinsic” motivation

• Clark (2003): motivation is the effort and persistence that the learner exerts in his or her learning.
Motivation

• Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan)

SDT: what drives people?

SDT: needs of people

- **Autonomy**: freedom, own decisions, choice, grab opportunities, ..
- **Belonging**: working together, sharing, accepted by others, feeling related, …
- **Competence**: I can do it, I can show what I can, willingness to grow, to feel progress, …

Conclusions

1. Consider characteristics of adults
2. Consider central role of adult needs in view of intrinsic motivation
Characteristics of adult learners

State-of-the-art perspectives on adult learning
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Refs