Janessa Boomhour

Student Number : 000467983

PIDP 3100 - Foundations of Adult Education

**Objective**

*“Instead of asking what motivates adults to study, research should focus on who states that this is a problem, and why, and the reasons for this conclusion*, writes Helen Ahl about adult motivation (p.162). How does this resonate with you? Upon first reading I think it seems back assword from how I would normally view motivation. But maybe I had been writing off looking down these roads since they didn’t align with my “known” truths. It just seems too off the mark to work.

**Reflective**

When I read about Wlodkowski’s Integrated Levels of Adult Motivation, I thought the concept was great. It sorta aligned with what I felt and how I conducted my classroom. However, even using some of the techniques such as inclusion, enhancing meaning and engendering confidence, the “plan” didn’t seem to motivate some students. Maybe this new totally different concept could hold the key for some students and their lack of motivation.

**Interpretive**

I must say that finding any information on Helen Ahl is very difficult. Youtube only has Swedish speaking videos, and articles online are basically non existent unless you want to pay big money for a published one. Perhaps this reason alone is why I never noticed this concept or heard of anybody talking about it. Also, the theory seems so terrible that maybe it’s often not discussed as a viable option in teaching. Although it might be the opposite to Wlodkowski’s theory, it is basically undetectable online in English.

I think it’s interesting the way Helen Ahl talks about students and teacher relationships. She makes points such as the fact that the problem lies in the relationship between the learner and those providing learning opportunities and their own motives. I believe that’s true. A student who joins my course because they wanted to enjoy the forklift training course that we did for 5 days out of the 90 days of class, will be uninterested in the rest of class past those 5 days. I mean maybe the teacher can capture the student and give them motivation for the rest of the course, but truly what Helen is saying is, who decides that’s a problem and why? If the student got what they wanted from the course (the forklift aspect) and was “unmotivated” for the rest, is that a problem? Who says it is? The teachers motives are that the students pass the entire course and make the instructor look successful by having such a high student pass rate. So going back to the quote, who says the lack of motivation is a problem in that scenario? The teacher does, the student got what they wanted.

Helen also believes that motivation does not just live inside an adult and if you take away certain impediments that it will still be there. She believes unmotivated people are viewed that way because it’s a construct of those seeing it lacking in others. Easily put, adults motivation or lack of is best understood in those who formulate the problem. To me it almost sounds like Helen understand the usual way of viewing lack of motivation is a bit like a projection. If the student is doing bad, it couldn’t be you’re teaching, it must be the student. Helen believes that perhaps it isn’t either of you. The motivation isn’t hidden and needs to be coaxed out. It isn’t there, and why does that matter. Does it need to be there?

**Decisional**

The way Helen talks about this is interesting. A student could go through 6 years of law school to just not do the last class and flunk out of the program. They could be looked at as an unmotivated student, with a teacher who isn’t making their class enjoyable and enticing for all. But rather Helen seems to understand that you might project that they are unmotivated, but maybe they just didn’t like their career course. Maybe they are happy with their decision. Who is deciding that this is lack of motivation and not actually just a good result for the student (even though it’s not what the teacher wants). Helen’s thoughts lack effort on the teachers part, but I do like that she is questioning why. Why do we call students unmotivated, is this how they view themselves? Or is this something we as adults in power gave the situation. I will definitely be mindful of this in teaching. Everybody comes to class with a different reason for being there, my end goal of them passing, is a projection of what I want. It’s doesn’t necessarily mean they are unmotivated if they aren’t doing what I want and trying to pass the course.

**This work by Janessa Boomhour is marked with CC0 1.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0>**

References:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02601370600772384