**Module III**

**Activating teaching/learning methods**

Topic 3.3

Adult teaching

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b97TNZisixM>

# Adult teaching

Adults learn best when:

* in the learning process, they have the opportunity to refer to their previous
experience and knowledge, new information is consistent with their previous experience - material in conflict with existing knowledge and experience is absorbed much slower,
* their experience is considered valuable,
* they understand the meaning, they value what they learn,
* can express themselves without fear of "censorship",
* they can make mistakes without being "judged" or "punished",
* are actively involved in the learning process,
* affect the scope, pace, timing and manner of learning
* they learn in a practical approach
* they learn primarily in response to a change situation, the greater the change (within

tolerance of the individual), the greater the need for learning

* learning is a mean of coping with change, not an end in itself.

Researchers identified three basic factors that ensure successful adult learning:

* The first concerns the experience of learners, the second - the role of teacher authority and credibility, and the third - the issue of involvement in the learning process. The basic source of knowledge for adults is not the reading or the observed situation, but experience related to the daily work performed. Carrying out professional activities teaches more than information on how to work, and taking up daily duties provides unquestionable knowledge about how to be effective. This has serious consequences for the adult learning process, and ignoring them is a major cause of educational failure. After all, adults are not like a blank blackboard prepared for writing by a teacher. They study, but often have their own baggage of knowledge, habits, proven ways of acting, their own opinions and beliefs. For them, experience is the starting point, reference point and reaching point. Therefore, educators must recognize and appreciate the participants' experience and create the conditions for its use in the learning process.
* The second rule of adult learning is that when learning it is not possible to get all the answers. This means that an academic teacher should not try to demonstrate that he knows everything about a given issue. The ability to say "do not know" is particularly important in the context of the role it plays in the education of the adult student. If he assumes rather the attitude of advisors, facilitator and moderator processes occurring during the study than an all-expert, it might refer to the experience of learners, to initiate a discussion. The teacher must be aware that there are no simple and always working solutions, and his job is to use the dormant potential of the students to solve specific problems and tasks, while providing helpful solutions and guidance from the teacher.
* The third rule is that learning is not a passive process. An adult does not learn by listening to hourly lectures. He learns only when he is actively involved in the learning process. This requires proper planning and the selection of adequate teaching methods. In order to actively involve the student in what is happening during the learning process, it is necessary to create a safe atmosphere. If the learner feels insecure, feels that he or she is being tested and that his behaviour is being assessed, he will not be willing to take the proposed actions.

# Learning styles

In lifelong learning, the way to have relative control over emerging perceptual obstacles, is to adjust the way you learn knowledge to the individual's abilities.

Acceleration of knowledge acquisition may occur by adapting the transfer of knowledge to individual learning styles, which allows for faster memorization of new information or learning new skills. Human senses are related to the way of acquiring knowledge, so we can distinguish groups: visual, auditory or kinaesthetic, depending on the preferences of the individual senses through which the brain receives information. The visual sense perceives what is visible. The brain creates images from it, just as it does when sleeping or thinking. The auditory sense is both the information acquired while listening, but also the perception of what transmits to us our inner voice without the help of words. The kinaesthetic sense is information for the brain about the position of our body in space. It consists in the perception of stimuli related to movement (pressure, positioning, stretching).

By modifying the presentation and learning method to suit your preferred learning style, you can memorize material faster. The awareness of the style preferred by the "student" should be a guideline both for him during independent learning and for the person who plays the role of a "teacher", when choosing the method of transferring knowledge.

* A visual learner is a person who prefers to think with pictures rather than words, therefore he also prefers visual learning. Maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, drawings and other visual elements are a form of information transfer that will allow him to remember the conveyed content faster. Everything that he can see around him can be distracting, so when studying it is important to keep the elements in order. The way to assimilate a verbal message is to turn it into a picture, marking the exact colour, shape, nice appearance of an outfit, apartment, book etc.
* A hearing learner is a person who learns most effectively when he hears information. Lectures, group discussions, speaking, debates are the preferred form of information exchange. Effective learning by the listener is fostered by silence, so that excessive auditory stimuli do not distract him. It is distinguished by a good memory for the content of heard conversations, proper names, rhymes, music or sounds. It will be difficult for him to read maps, charts or tables, when they are not discussed in detail.
* Kinaesthetic - is a person who learns most effectively by performing an activity. The knowledge that he absorbs the fastest is knowledge derived from experience, exemplary exercises. Demonstrations, videos, real-world reference, case studies or exercises are a good way to convey knowledge in a kinaesthetic fashion, which allows you to apply your newly acquired knowledge in your daily life. Kinaesthetic realize themselves by acting, not by thinking about a task before starting it, which often results in a lack of adequate preparation, but also teaches the art of improvisation.

Each style is different and each has advantages and limitations. The most effective style is the individual style of the individual, allowing him to absorb information more effectively. In lifelong learning, it is worth trying to work with techniques from different styles and choose the one that best suits the individual's preferences.

# Reflexivity in the learning process

Be aware of what influences the outcomes of lifelong learning. Participation in education is an obvious stage, but it is the personal competence that is the ability to reflect on the learning process that turns out to be indispensable in achieving a high level of commitment to the permanent process of acquiring knowledge. A necessary element of reflection is a critical attitude towards education, towards oneself and others. Reflexivity is a paradigm of human life and personal, professional and social development. It refers to several universal principles:

* autonomy - courageous ways of understanding and explaining beyond the usual patterns, used regardless of the disapproval of the otherwise-thinking majority,
* reflexivity - inquisitive and comprehensive examination, taking into account the context and foreseeable consequences,
* systemic - expanding the context based on the knowledge and experience of others, which aims to reveal new dependencies,
* reference to objective reasons - searching for justifications for one's reason, criticism of what we know and what we learn from others.

The state of permanent learning often requires you to chart your own course in a scattered and changing world. According to A. Giddens, the key to achieve it is to combine experience with reflection: reflexivity, as an increased awareness of sensory impressions, thoughts and feelings, focused on the development of the self and its functioning, and experience, i.e. drawing from previous experiences, which will allow for going beyond previous limitations. This combination will contribute to the emergence of new patterns of understanding and action, allowing for context-independent activity. This is what a critical reflexive approach is for, which is universal because it is concerned with both the context of the individual and social development. The information absorbed often has emotional significance, which is why it is so important to ensure that in the process of acquiring knowledge, these emotional threats are channelled or downplayed.

# Competences

Competence approach to teaching and student development planning is not a new concept. Its nearly forty-year history began with a simple statement: knowledge of formal education, years of experience, and the result of general intelligence tests does not predict well how someone will perform at work - so there must be other characteristics that determine this. Due to this fact, the essence of the concept of competence has become a close connection with action in a specific context, the statement was made that competence is "something that makes a person cope with a specific type of task".

There are many different definitions of competences, e.g .:

* "Ability to perform a task in accordance with recognized and defined standards for a given professional group” (Levy-Laboyer);
* "The intrinsic characterization of an individual causally related to an effective or outstanding level of performance at work" (Boyatzis).

It is worth remembering that such broadly understood competences are not only "hard" substantive knowledge and skills, but also a whole range of motives, features, beliefs, experiences and ideas about oneself and others - provided that they are related to the professional context and affect A popular simplification of this complexity among Polish teachers and lecturers is the division of competences into knowledge, skills and attitudes, introduced by Kossowska and Sołtysińska (2002), built on the fourth component - experience. Attitude is an emotional attitude towards someone or something related to certain beliefs and propensities to behave in a certain way. Using this distinction, we can "translate" the question of competence into the following more specific questions:

* What should learners know in order to complete their tasks effectively?
* What kind of facts, models and concepts, operating procedures should they learn?
* What information do they need about themselves?
* What skills - motor skills, i.e. related to performing certain physical activities and cognitive skills, i.e. related to thinking and problem solving - are needed to cope with tasks?
* What must be able to do the student to effectively assimilate knowledge ?
* What attitudes - towards tasks, effects, colleagues - should the student show ?
* What should be the attitude to learning, change, solve problems, sharing knowledge with others?
* Which of these attitudes will have the greatest impact on motivation, relationships with others and further development?

While competencies are by definition specific to a particular type of task, we assume that they correspond to a certain class of situation rather than a single, well-defined behaviour. Thanks to this, we can expect that a person who has learned to cooperate in a team, e.g. during classes, will be able to use the acquired competences by cooperating in real professional contexts. Taking this into account, competencies are defined in relation to certain, more general classes of tasks and situations in the academic or professional life.

# Main assumptions of activating teaching methods

* Teacher and student are partners - both sides are equally responsible for the results of working together. Together they decide how to get results.
* The teacher and the student assume new roles and tasks - that is, the teacher ceases to be an all-knowing authority, becomes an advisor and organizer. The student transforms from a passive recipient into an active participant in planning, organizing and evaluating their own work. To make this role change possible, both sides need to articulate their needs and methodological support.
* The task of the school is to prepare the student for independent work - the student needs guidance on how to organize his own workshop, how to rationally plan time, how to learn outside the school and how to learn independently (at home, during project implementation, during individual work in lessons).
* Activating the inner potential of the teacher and student - they do not need ready-made solutions, but examples, impulses and encouragement to experiment and different methods of obtaining knowledge.
* Looking for perfect solutions - each method has its strengths and weaknesses.

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