

WELCOME

Teaching, Colleges and Community Conference, (TCC) 2022

“Making Waves – Innovations in Learning.”

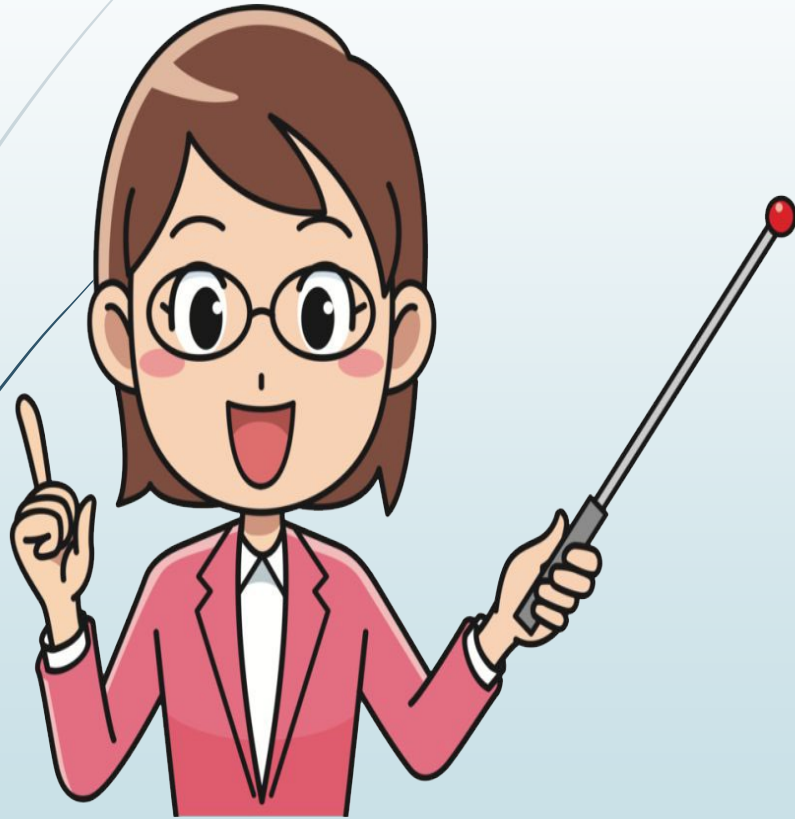




Creating Connections with Online Adult Learners

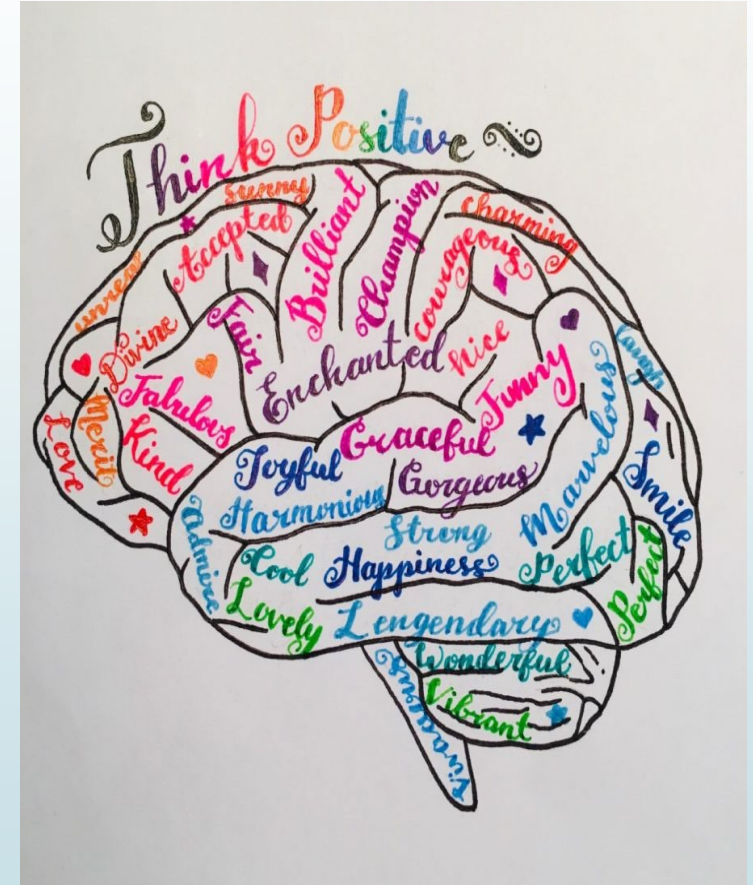
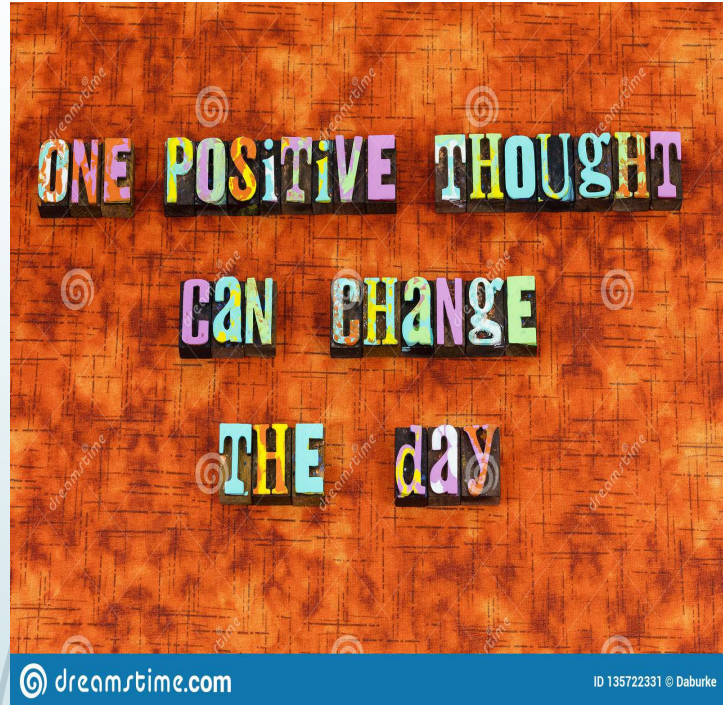
Dr. Connie Harrison and Dr. Susan Cathcart

Overview of the presentation



- ▶ Welcome and Introductions
 - ▶ *Activity*
- ▶ Understanding the Adult Learner
- ▶ Building Connections
 - ▶ *Activity*
- ▶ Importance of Personalized Feedback
 - ▶ *Activity*
- ▶ Constructive Feedback
 - ▶ *Activity*
- ▶ Summary
- ▶ Questions

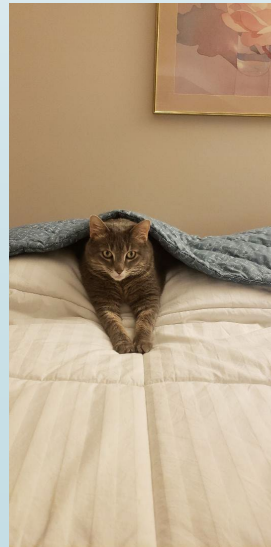
SHARING POSITIVES



Who is Dr. Harrison?



Who is Dr. Cathcart ?



- ▶ On the chat board
 - ▶ What is your name?
 - ▶ Where are you from?
 - ▶ What do you do?
 - ▶ What motivates/inspires you?



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The Why Behind the What!

- ▶ Many of us facilitate the learning experience in either online or face to face environment.
- ▶ Many of our students are adult learners.
- ▶ Many of us have discovered, that despite our best efforts to connect with learners, it doesn't always happen.
- ▶ Many of us may experience frustration and question our strategies as well as our techniques.



Why Is There a Disconnect?

- ▶ You share your expectations in a variety of different ways.
- ▶ Spend hours online providing what you consider important and relevant feedback.
- ▶ Few learners connect with you with questions about the feedback.
- ▶ Next assignment, feedback was not internalized. Same mistakes continue through the end of the term.
- ▶ Why, why, why????

What We Know about Adult Learners (Brookfield, 1991)

- Self-directed
- Empowered
- Want experiences to be valued
- Want knowledge to be validated
- Want learning to be relevant
- Build upon current knowledge base
- Do not want to feel embarrassed; egos and self-esteem are on the line





Importance of Understanding the Characteristics of Adult Learners

- ▶ It is important to
 - ▶ respect the learner's experiences
 - ▶ honor what they bring to the table
 - ▶ hear their voice
- ▶ It is important to understand that adult learners
 - ▶ may have established careers with positions of authority
 - ▶ may be respected in their fields
 - ▶ when entering into a new learning experience, they may be out of their comfort zone.

► Why happens when adult learners move out of their comfort zone?

- Vulnerable and overwhelmed
- May feel embarrassed and apprehensive
- May be resistant to change because we are challenging their assumptions
- Self esteem takes a hit

► By knowing this, what can you do?

- Encourage communication
- Create a safe and supportive learning environment
- Pave the way for connections using several strategies





Benefits of Connecting with Learners

- Increases learner engagement with each other and with instructor
- Builds trust
- Increases motivation to learn
- Increases performance (Radovan & Makoyec, 2015)

- *A learner's voice - Being able to connect over Zoom or some videoconference platform helps add energy and drive to keep pushing when you see other classmates striving too (Anonymous, 2022).*
- *Your approach is AMAZING and so helpful. I feel like we are in a real classroom because of all these extra steps you are taking for us.*

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Strategies that Help Build Connections

- First strategy - Scheduling virtual meetings
- Second strategy - Providing personalized written feedback in the discussion board and/or assignments

Activity

We've listed 2 types of strategies, but you might have more - In the chat box, share with us how you have connected with learners?



First Strategy - Virtual Meetings

- Builds connections with the learners
 - Builds trust
 - Creates a collegial learning environment
 - Builds peer to peer connections
- *A learner's voice -- The most positive experience has been the weekly Zoom meetings. The meetings provided us another opportunity to ask questions, clear misunderstandings, and actually "see" our facilitator and classmates (Anonymous, 2022).*





Strategies to Optimize Meetings

- ▶ Request that learners keep their camera on
- ▶ Start with the sharing of something positive or an ice breaker (“who are you activity?”)
- ▶ Opportunity to set your expectations that establish the parameter of the course
- ▶ Invite learners to share their expectations as this allows them to become an active participant in their learning experience
- ▶ Encourage learners to ask questions



Second Strategy - Personalized Feedback

- ▶ Promotes growth and development
- ▶ Inspires learners to challenge their assumptions
- ▶ Provides explicit language beyond, for example, “good job, excellent response, or I agree”
- ▶ Provides feedback that is personal, positive, and constructive
- ▶ Recognizes that feedback can impact a learner’s self-esteem

- ▶ *A learner’s voice – What helped me the most was the specific and transformative feedback given in this course. Without that guidance and instruction, I would have not grown (Anonymous, 2022).*



Positive Feedback - Activity

- Our example -Your expertise in language arts (math, science, etc.) is supporting your writing in a variety of ways. Your words are clear and concise.
- *Dissecting Our Example – On Chat Board*
 - *What elements support the adult learner? Why is it considered positive feedback? How so?*



Why Positive Feedback is Important?

- ▶ *A learner's voice*

- ▶ *.....gave me constructive feedback and praised my efforts in a way that was personal and related to my role as a doctoral student. This was quite beneficial to me, and I hadn't realized how much I needed to hear some positive feedback to know I would be able to handle the pressure and workload with all of the other things impacting my life and schedule (Anonymous, 2022).*



Activity



Your turn!

On Chat Board –
What positive words/phrases would you use to
provide feedback?



Examples of Constructive Feedback

- This is a relevant topic, but have you considered expanding your thoughts and/or discussion to help your outside reader fully understand the benefits of XYZ?
- A bias may be showing here. It is important to remain objective and be open to what the data tells you. Remember to let the data speak for itself.
- The content was relevant and comprehensive, but what you wrote was difficult to follow because your paper lacked organization. Headings would have improved the flow and readability of the paper. Please refer to pages XXX in the *APA Manual* (7th ed.) for additional guidance.



Constructive Feedback – Activity

Our example - *It appears you did not cite here. It is important to respect and give credit to the person(s) who conducted the research you are using here to support your point.*

► *Dissecting Our Example – On Chat Board -*

► *In what way will this feedback support adult learning and help the learner grow?*

Words From a Learner!

- ▶ I advise new learners coming into this course to be open minded and vulnerable with this discussion board post. This is the first course I have taken throughout my BBA and MBA where I was challenged with sharing a positive note from our personal lives. Quite frankly, all my other MBA courses were robotic in the sense that you logged in, did the work to pacify the degree needs, finished the course, and move to the next one. This class has offered a sense of personability to the learning that, for me anyway, challenged me to dig a little deeper into who I am while going through the motions of learning, if you will.

Summary

- ▶ It is important to honor the characteristics of adult learners
- ▶ It is important to build connections in a variety of ways
- ▶ The words you use have an impact
- ▶ The goal is to help learners know there are no failures, only discoveries!





Questions?



References



- ▶ Brookfield, S. D. (1991). *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. Wiley.
- ▶ Radovan, M., & Makovec, D. (2015). Adult learners' learning environment perceptions and satisfaction in formal education – Case study of four East-European countries. *International Educational Studies*, 8(2), 101-112.