

Teaching adult students can be both challenging and rewarding simultaneously. Adult learners bring their life experiences into the classroom. They have certain expectations on what they feel they need to learn and how they learn. They are both scared and excited about a new chapter in their life. They need guidance, compassion, understanding, and patients. According to Robert, Carole, Pomarico, and Nolan; “understanding the wide variety of emotions that students bring to the academic experience and to incorporate emotional support mechanisms within the course work” (2011, p.16), is important to adult learners. Most adult students have children, husbands/wives, and full time jobs. Dealing with different learning styles, emotional support, and the lives of an adult learner, to me, will be the most challenging part.

To meet the first NLN core competency, it’s important to have a variety of teaching methods based on the learning styles of the adult learner. A base learning style assessment would be a great tool to utilize at the beginning of each course. Having a variety of teaching styles incorporated into the course will accommodate all types of learning.

Including evidence based practice and theory into the course, as a tool, for students to further understand the course material, is another important way to facilitate learning. It teaches where nursing has been, and where nursing is going in the future. Technology is another tool that adult learners need to be familiar with so it is important to explain, in detail, how to use the technology that will be used during the course. Having a librarian come in and teach the students what resources are available, how to use the technology, and how to access the resources is a great way to facilitate this process.

Educators need to be readily available to students to facilitate their learning and take into consideration that each student is an individual. As each student learns different, they also communicate different. It is important to communicate on each student’s level of understanding. According to Robert et al. we need to acknowledge what knowledge and skills students already have (2011).

It is also important to not be intimidating to students, as intimidation can lead to a lack in learning. Students who are intimidated will not ask questions and will become frustrated. They deserve respect and understanding. Educators need to be fair and firm at the same time. Letting the students know what is expected in the beginning will help facilitate this process.

Feedback is another important step in adult learning. According to Robert et al., students appreciate immediate feedback (2011). Students need to know how they are doing, if they are doing things correctly, and how to move forward. As the adult learner needs feedback, educators need feedback. Educators should always inquire ways to improve a course. Some questions I ask at the mid- point and end of each clinical semester are; what did you learn? What can be improved on? What did you like? What didn’t you like? These question help improve my course each semester. There are always ways to improve and make things better in the future.

Robert, T. E., Pomarico, C. A., & Nolan, M. (2011). Assessing Faculty Integration of adult learning needs in Second-Degree Nursing Education. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 32(1), 14-17. doi:10.5480/1536-5026-32.1.14