

Introduction

Within the realm of adult education there are many ideas and concepts that are still trying to be identified and understood. Of these concepts comes the questions of what motivates an adult learner? What effects do reflections have on the learners? And what separates adult learners from child learners? These questions stem from concepts picked up through this module because of how they connect specifically back to Matthew Crawford's *Shop Class As Soulcraft*. I plan on being able to connect Crawford's experiences to how these ideas of motivation, reflection and identification are relevant in the development of education as a whole. With these concepts in mind, I plan to determine how important each is in the process of the adult education.

Process of Learning

What is the difference between child learners and adult learners? A question that has been asked countless times through this course, and the simple answer to give would be the age of learner is the difference. If we expected the answer to be that simple, than there wouldn't be much context to this course and we would not look to find the deeper meaning in the question. The concept of separating these two groups of learners is not simply based on age alone. I believe that the separation comes from the experiences both have in life and how their education is implemented. How adult learners are not only able to educate themselves at a different level, but being able to identify with things on a different level from experience. "Adults have more experience than children in the pragmatic realities of life, and have developed many ways of perceiving and understanding that experience. The adult's personal model of reality simultaneously defines, creates, and restricts perceptions and understanding of new experience" (MacKeracher, 2004). The experiences that adults face throughout life are what they are able to use in their future education. Crawford was able to identify his experience in life in order to get himself back on track with what he wanted to do. The way he was able to use his personal experience to help him not only advance him in the right direction, but he used experience as a form of reflection to help guide him on his journey to self-discovery. Once education is capable of identifying the difference between adult and child learners, the next phase is for the adult learners to be able to use their experiences to reflect and guide themselves forward.

One of the more important themes of Crawford's book was his reflection on himself and his experiences and how his choices in the past have lead him to where he was. He used the art of reflection to find where he had gone astray from what made him happy, Crawford was able to identify what once really made him happy and decided to make the change for him. Once he was able to realize what he felt his true calling was, he made an effort to achieve it (Crawford, 2009). The idea of reflection can seem to be odd for the advancement of education, but it is the most important tool for adult learners. As life advances forward for the individual and we develop from the student to the adult, we lose some ideas of education long the way; most adults fall into habits and never break them. The habits can help adults get by day-to-day, but that leaves most like the automaton robots that Paulo Freire fears the education systems is pumping out. Adults need the power of reflection, not only to help them stick to their values, but to help them learn from their experiences and re-direct onto the course they want to be on. "Learning happens only

when there is reflective thought and internal 'processing' by the learner, in a way that actively makes sense of an experience and links it to previous learning" (Foley, 2004). The reflective process is critical in the experience of an adult learner because reflection allows the individual the opportunity use past experience to grow and learn, and make changes, like in the case of Crawford. If Crawford did not reflect on what he was doing and what lead him to that point, he would have never found him motivated to make the change for the better. Which leads to my final concept; motivation.

Once the adult learners are able to identify their experiences and reflect to learn from them, the final concept for adult learners is what motivates them to continue to learn. If an adult learner has already reached the reflective process, that would answer the question of what motivates their education, what it really comes down to is whether they are willing to put forth the effort. For Crawford, it was his past experiences that motivated him to make the changes necessary to make him happy. He found his motivation through the reflective process. Not every adult learner is able to find the motivation necessary just off the reflective process though, if only it were that simple. To not go into too much detail, but still have the clear concept there are other forces in play once the reflective process is done to help inspire the motivation within the learner. "Attitudes powerfully affect human behaviour and learning because they help people make sense of their world and give cues as to what behaviour will be most helpful in dealing with that world" (Wlodkowski, 1999). The point Wlodkowski is making here is that the attitude of the learner plays a factor in their motivation because their attitude will help them determine how to react to situations, and the learners with a more positive attitude and outlook, will have a higher chance of succeeding in their goals, like Crawford did when he decided to make the change in his life for the better.

Conclusion

Adult education is a very broad subject that still has many questions that need to be answered. For now, the ideas of motivation, reflection and identification can be seen as key concepts that help the development of adult learners and their advancement of education. Matthew Crawford was able to identify his experiences, reflect upon them, and then use the motivation necessary to make a change in his life that would lead him on a happier path. Crawford is one of the many adult in the world that have been able to make these changes at such a late stage in their life, whereas most adults would just give up and believe that it is too late to make the change. Crawford's positive attitude was a key factor in his transformation from an unhappy adult getting by day-to-day, to someone who is truly happy at what they do. The identification, reflection and motivation he has been able to show is a great example of how a person can change their life completely by using the values we were all taught when we were in school. (1157)

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References

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