

5.8 Definition of Learning Domains

Assisting your mentee in understanding the three domains of learning can assist him or her in achieving success with determining learning needs and accomplishing goals.

Three Domains of Learning

- Cognitive — the “thinking”
- Affective — the “values”
- Psychomotor — the “doing”

The nursing profession appeals to students from various backgrounds, cultures and ages. Each individual has complex learning needs.

Characteristics of Adult Learners

1. Adults tend to be self-directed. They want to know how this is going to help them. They like to determine their own learning experiences; they recognize their style and pace. Adults need feedback; they need to know “why.”
2. Adults bring past experience to their workplaces. Previous jobs and life experiences may make orientation easier. They build their knowledge base from years of experience.
3. Adults are usually more ready to learn. They want to know how they fit into the organization/department and how to do their job to the best of their ability. They want practical answers; they want to know why a certain thing is being taught. Example: “To minimize the risk of needlesticks . . .” rather than “Sharps go in the box.”
4. Adults realize the advantage to the philosophy of life-long learning. Learning brings them self-satisfaction. They often enjoy learning for learning’s sake.

Strategies to Enhance Motivation

- Adults want to learn what is vitally important.
- Adults want to effectively use or apply what they are learning.

Try This!

Review this information with your mentee and discuss if these characteristics and strategies apply to him or her.

Possible Discussion Questions

- What kind of learning hurdles might adults face?
- What stops or slows your learning process?
- What domain is the best for you to learn?
- Who has been your best teacher? Why?

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