

Learning Culture Abstract

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Motivation

During my Jones International University Masters of Education experience, I've become very aware of how vital it is for educators of adults to understand their approach to planning, design, and implementation of instruction. I've focused on the fire service as an educational model, and believe many pedagogical methods are employed when Andragogical methods would be more effective. In my "Learning Culture" guide, I attempt to find a way to show how these methods are effective for fire service education.

Problem statement

I have borrowed from many JIU courses to identify how we as educators of fire service adults can provide well designed curriculums and deliveries that complement their individual learning needs and levels. Many times I've watched instruction of fire service adults being delivered from a high- direction and high-dependency approach. These kinds of methods certainly have their place, but much research exists to provide a much more effective method of instructing adults.

Approach

I took the concepts from adult learning theory, complexity science, instructional design, and other research to design a Learning Culture Guide. This guide is meant to help the fire service educator identify how to plan, design, and facilitate adult learning within a Fire Service Learning Culture.

Results

I designed a Collaborative Learning Progression (CLP) chart, which details two progressions between learner and instructor. The first, a collaborative learner progression, details learners without knowledge or experience of the material. These learners need much direction, and are dependent on the instructor for their success. This typically represents the fire service recruit firefighter's first few months. As

recruit firefighters progress through the first few weeks of a introductory academy, they begin to acquire knowledge and experience. This new knowledge and experience can allow the instructor to modify their instructional approach to become more of a facilitator -- allowing the recruit to have the manipulation space to experiment with the material for themselves. This progression is detailed on Chart 4.1 of my EDU669 project.

The second collaborative learner progression details learners who have developed into mid or advanced career knowledge status. In their careers they have a constant need for updated information, whether it is from new paradigms, technology, information, or procedures. The CLP shows how these incumbents may revert back to needing high direction and being highly dependent on the instructor. Because they come into the learning environment with different levels of knowledge, the time frame from high-direction and high-dependency to the instructor moving into the facilitator role will depend upon how well they add this new knowledge to their existing knowledge. Eventually, the goal is for the instructor and learner to become collaborative learners.

Conclusions

I have presented these concepts to many peers in the fire service, with very positive comments and encouragement. I've implemented these concepts while developing learning environments for US and Mexican fire departments with proven success. In the end, the true measure of learning is whether those involved can apply their new knowledge in novel situations.