

The Award in Education and Training

& The Certificate in
Education and Training

2nd Edition

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Ann's website contains lots of useful information for new teachers, including: videos, resources, and details of all her text books.

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Factors contributing to learning

This chapter will introduce you to:

- The environment
- The learners
- Motivation and behaviour
- Learning theories

Occupational Standards relating to this chapter

Duties	Knowledge	Skills	Behaviours
D1, D2, D6	K1, K3, K5, K6, K10, K11, K12	S5, S15, S20	B2

The environment

Teaching and learning can take place in a variety of environments and locations such as: classrooms, the workplace, public, private or voluntary settings, indoors or outdoors, prisons, or online (live or on-demand). Although learning can take place almost anywhere, not all locations and environments will be totally suitable. For example, if it's taking place in the workplace, there could be interruptions and distractions. However, it's *how* you ensure that learning takes place that matters. It helps if you can convey interest, enthusiasm, and passion for your subject. It also helps if you can create a climate which is conducive to learning and mutual respect amongst learners. Ideally, your learners should leave wanting to come back for more.

You might be restricted by the availability of particular rooms or resources; therefore you will need to be imaginative with what's available to you. Your learners don't need to know about any organisational problems such as a lack of funding, as your professionalism should

enable you to teach your subject effectively. However, you do need to take into account any health, safety, and security issues, and let your organisation know if you have any concerns.

Helpful hint 3.1

If you can, it is best to create an environment where learners can communicate with each other, and see and hear everything that you are doing and saying. Ideally, you should move around the room regularly and interact with your learners, rather than staying at the front of the room, or sitting behind a desk.

You will need to establish a purposeful learning environment where your learners feel safe, secure, confident, and valued. The venue, toilets, and refreshment areas should all be accessible and appropriate for everyone. However, you might not be able to control the conditions of the facilities, but you should know where they are, so that you can direct your learners to them.

Having some advance knowledge about your learners will help you to check that everything is suitable for them. If it's not, you might want to talk to your learners beforehand to see if any compromises can be reached, or support obtained. For example, if a learner has English as a second language, they might appreciate you letting them know where they can take an English class. You can find out any particular learner needs from the results of initial assessments (in Chapter 4) or by talking to your learners. If your lesson includes a break, make sure that you tell your learners what time this will be, and for how long. If you don't, your learners might not be concentrating on their learning, but thinking about when they can go to the toilet, or where they can get a drink from.

What is visible on the walls, or what can be seen from the windows, could have an impact upon learning. If there is a lovely landscape with wildlife or birds outside the windows (or conversely, a busy road), your learners might be more interested in what's happening outside than inside. It might be possible to use blinds or curtains to limit the distraction. If there are posters on the walls with stimulating pictures and words, your learners will probably look at them, and subconsciously take in the information. If learners have carried out activities which involved creating posters, these could be added to the walls. Leaving them there as a visual aid could help the learning process. However, you will probably need to check in advance how you can attach things to walls, and whether or not you are allowed to.

Music or sounds can also be useful to aid learning. Tranquil music played as learners enter the room could have a calming effect upon behaviour. Upbeat music whilst energetic activities are being carried out could stimulate learning. If you do use music, it's useful to bear in mind that certain sounds can bring about memories, some of which might not be good for some learners. You will also need to be aware of any potential breach to copyright legislation which applies to some music. You can get information regarding this from the Performing Rights Society. Music is also useful during certain activities for particular subjects such as yoga, tai chi, and dancing.

If you are teaching a practical subject, you will need a suitable environment so that you can demonstrate and your learners can practise. If you are teaching a theoretical subject, you

may be fine in a room with tables and chairs, but you might need a computer and/or an interactive whiteboard. Internet and/or WiFi access might not always be available, therefore you will need to check in advance. If you are not teaching a practical subject, for example, you are facilitating a one day event or a seminar, it could be in a venue you have never been to before. If this is the case, it would be useful to telephone, email, or visit in advance. This will help you to check what facilities and resources are available, request a particular table layout, and find out how accessible the rooms are. You might need to take certain items with you if they are not provided. You could send out some pre-event materials informing people how to get there, and letting them know what facilities are available. Creating a good first impression, and being organised, should help your learners to feel that they are receiving a professional service. If they are paying to attend, they will not expect a second-best service or poor facilities.

Class sizes could affect the learning process, in both positive and negative ways. If you teach on a one-to-one basis or to a small group (in Chapter 6), you will be able to get to know your learners well, and devote more time to them. If you have a large group, this may be more difficult. You might have no control over class sizes; however, you can try using different teaching and learning approaches and activities to get around this (in Chapter 6).

Room layouts

An important influence upon the way your lesson progresses, and how you and your learners can communicate, will be the room layout. You may not be able to control this if the furniture is in fixed positions. For example, a room which has computers on workstations, or a laboratory with fixed workbenches. Hopefully, the chairs can be moved, and this might be a way to ensure that all your learners can face you, perhaps when you need them to hear what you are saying and see what you are doing.

Some training rooms have a fixed projector with a screen at the front, which all learners will need to be able to see if you are using a visual presentation. However, some training rooms now have strategically placed television screens. These enable anyone who is not near the front to see the presentation nearer to where they are seated. If this is the case, you may need to seek technical support if you are not familiar with how to operate the system.

If you can choose the layout of the room, you could decide on a furniture arrangement based on the teaching and learning activities to be carried out. For example, placing tables in groups (also known as cabaret or café style) for group activities, or having tables in rows for a lecture.

Tables in groups

This *cabaret* or *café* style (Figure 3.1) is an effective way to enable learners to work together and to interact during group activities. All learners can see the teacher and any presentation materials being used. The style is informal and the teacher can see everyone. If room permits, tables could be moved so that they are not so close together, or placed at different angles. The teacher could sit beside the desk rather than behind so as not to create a barrier, and move around the room when possible.

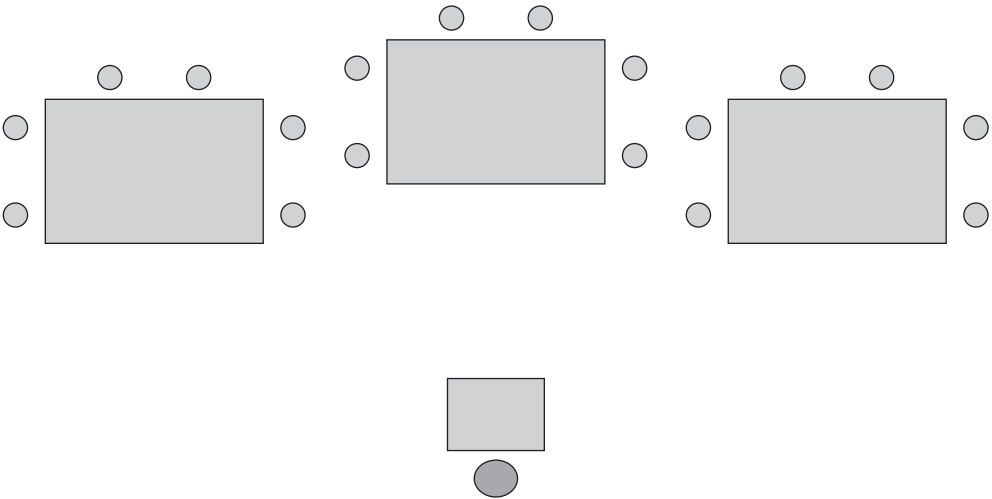


Figure 3.1 Group layout (cabaret or café style)

Tables in rows

This *classroom* style (Figure 3.2) does not lead to effective communication between learners. However, all learners can see the teacher. This layout is useful when presenting information, if group work is not required. The teacher would need good voice projection

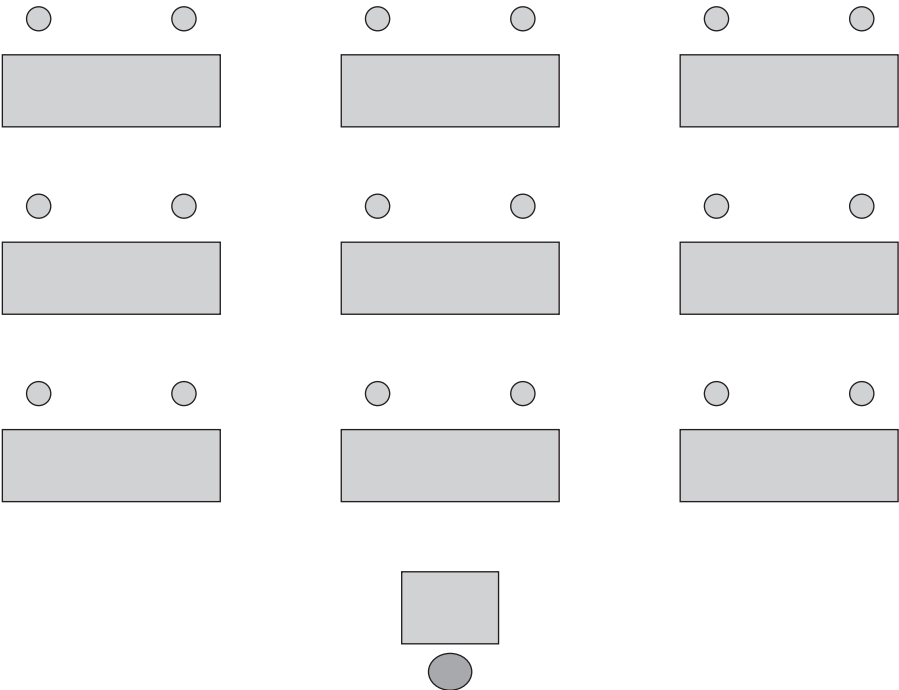


Figure 3.2 Classroom-style layout

to reach all learners at the back of the room, or use a microphone. Without the tables, more chairs could be positioned tightly in rows, allowing many learners to attend a lesson at the same time. This is known as *lecture style* and could involve the use of benches instead of chairs. If chairs are used, they might have a moveable arm on which to rest note paper. If a learner is sitting in the middle of a row and needs to leave the room for any reason, they would disrupt the rest of the row. If there are many rows, learners at the back might not be able to see or hear very well. This style could enable learners to not pay much interest or attention, and the teacher might not notice.

Horseshoe or U-shape tables

This style (Figure 3.3) allows for large group discussions between the learners and the teacher, but is not good for small group work. Learners can see the teacher and any presentation materials being used. Learners sitting at the very ends of tables may feel excluded from the group when discussions take place. More tables could be added if necessary to close the gap and create an oblong shape; the teacher then becomes part of the group.

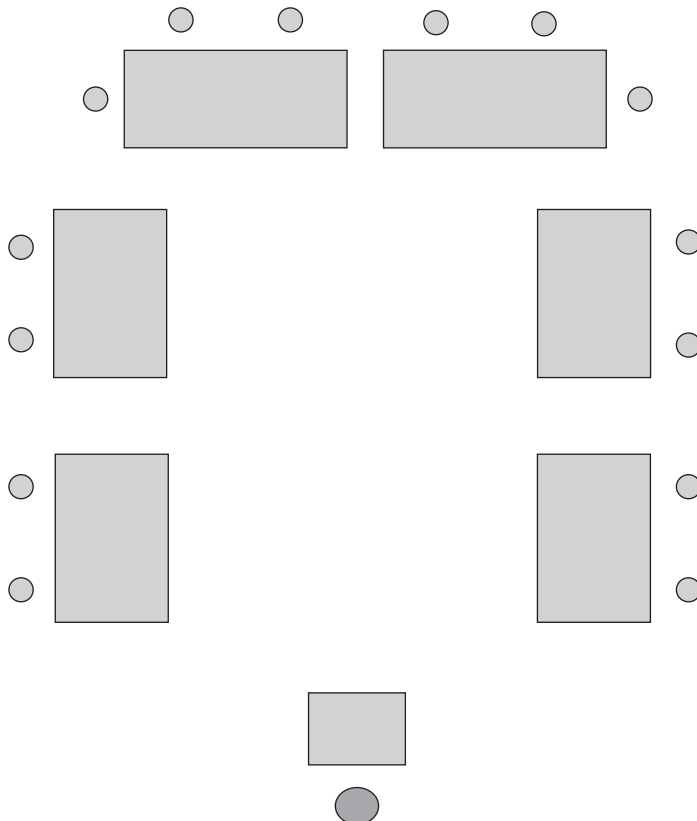


Figure 3.3 Horseshoe or U-shape layout

Boardroom style

This oblong (or a square) style (Figure 3.4) allows for discussions and group work when a large table area is needed. If the teacher sits at the table with the learners, everyone can communicate and see each other. If the teacher sits separately, some learners will have their backs to them, and not be able to see a presentation screen if used.

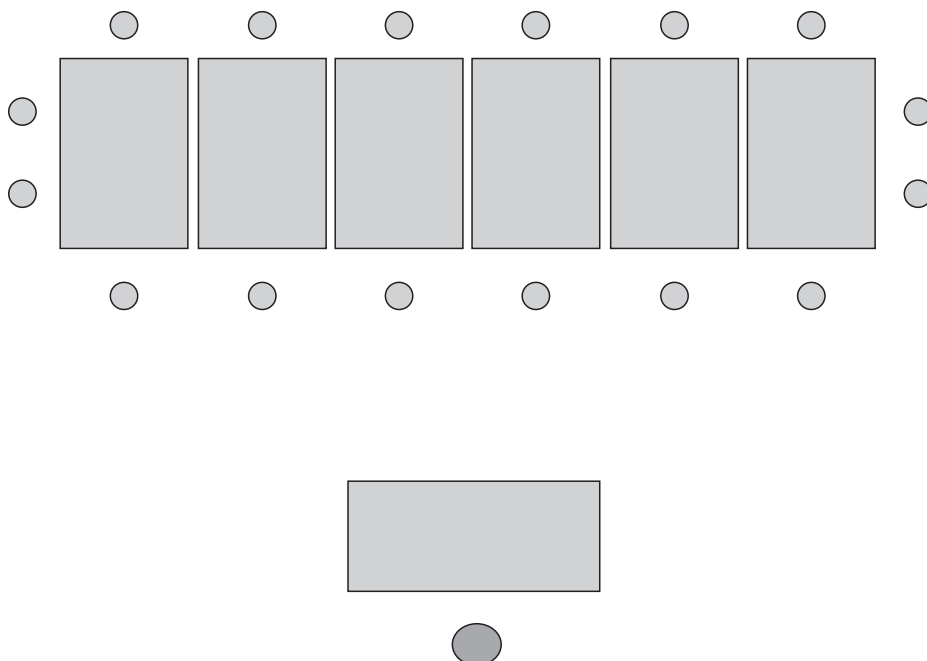


Figure 3.4 Boardroom style layout

Other layouts

If possible, you could experiment with other layouts (Figure 3.5) to see how effective they are for the type of teaching and learning activities which will take place. This can include the teacher as part of the group or not, using tables or not, or a different approach such as chairs in a circle to include everyone.

If you need to move the furniture, you should get a member of staff to help you beforehand and again afterwards. You will need to allow space for movement around the room, and for bags and coats, to ensure that there are no obstructions.

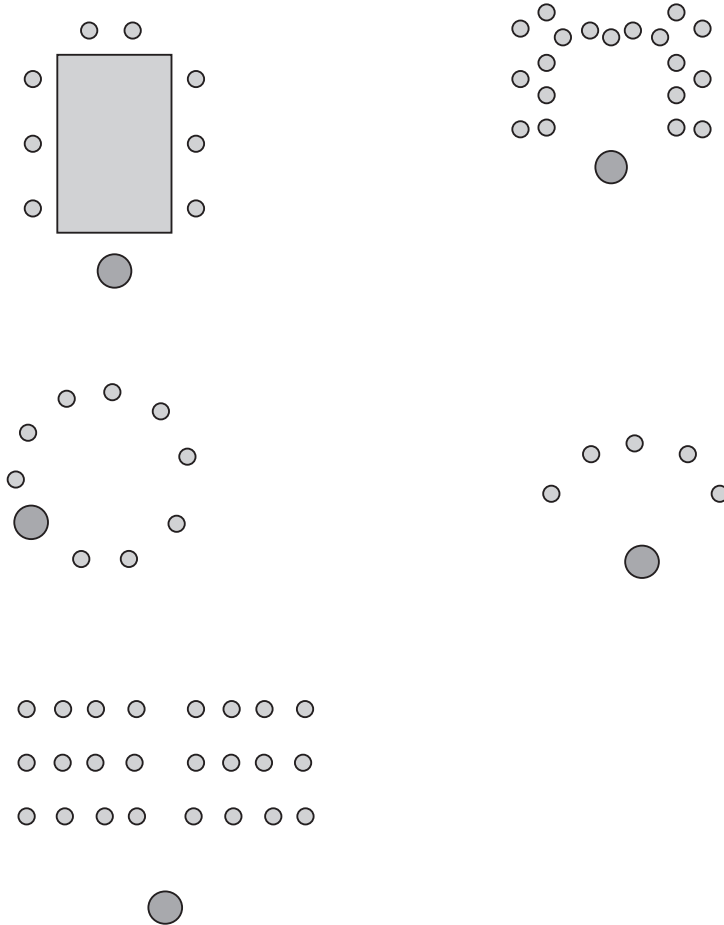


Figure 3.5 Other layouts which could be used

Activity 3.1

Take a look at the figures denoting different styles of room and table layouts. List the advantages and disadvantages of each for your subject. You might like to discuss these with a colleague. How could you overcome any disadvantages? What other room layouts could you use for your subject and why?

Managing the learning environment

The seating arrangements in a room can have a big impact upon learning. People like their comfort zones and you may find that learners will sit in the same place each time they are with you. This is often the place they sat during the first lesson. This can be useful to

help you remember their names. You can sketch a seating plan and note who sits where, as well as noting who has not participated, or who has caused disruption. Your sketch and notes will help you to plan future lessons, for example, to make sure everyone participates. Remembering and using learners' names will show respect for them, and encourage them to talk to you in confidence if they have any concerns.

Some learners like to sit with their friends, which might not help them to learn from the experience of others. If you inform your learners from the start that you will move them around, for example, when carrying out group activities, they will become used to it and accept it. If you suddenly decide half-way through a course, they might not take the change well. Moving learners around or getting them to work with others can either help or hinder their learning, depending upon individual personalities, the group's dynamics, and the maturity of the learners (in Chapter 6). This is something that you will learn by experience.

If possible, arrive early to check the layout of the room, and to prepare any materials and check equipment. You might find that the room hasn't been left in a suitable condition by the previous user, and you will need time to make it acceptable.

Example 3.1

Harry arrived at 10.25 a.m. ready for his lesson, which commenced at 10.30 a.m. He found the room was untidy with rubbish on the floor, three chairs were missing, writing was on the board, and the smartscreen wasn't working. He became very anxious when learners started arriving. He therefore didn't give a professional impression, and was flustered when he commenced the lesson, missing out some vital information as a result.

In this example, the previous occupant of the room had not left it in a fit state for the next person. If this occurs regularly, it might be an idea to talk to someone who can influence those using the rooms, to ensure that they are left ready for the next lesson.

There may be instances when you have no option but to arrive at the time the lesson is due to commence. For example, if another group is timetabled in the room prior to your lesson, or you are finishing another lesson elsewhere. When this is the case, you won't know what state the room will be in. You could ask your learners to wait outside the room for a few minutes until you check that it's acceptable. Alternatively, you could let your learners in, but tell them that you need a few minutes to set up. If this is the case, and depending upon the maturity of your learners, you could ask them to chat amongst themselves, perhaps about the current topic.

Hopefully, the environment you and your learners are in is safe. However, there could be circumstances where abuse, threatening behaviour, stealing, or bullying might occur. Learners need to know that they can feel safe, and you will need to know how to deal with a potential situation. As a teacher, you have a duty of care towards your learners. Your organisation will have policies and procedures for this.

Theory into practice 3.1

What issues might learners encounter regarding their safety in the learning environment? How can you maintain a safe and supportive environment for your learners? What can you do if something occurs which is outside of your control?

The learners

Learners in the Further Education and Skills sector include a breadth of people aged 14 and above, who will be from a variety of backgrounds, with diverse levels of experience and knowledge. All learners will have different reasons for learning something new, and you will have the opportunity to help them achieve their aspirations. The modes of attendance will vary, for example, part-time, full-time, on-the-job, online, or perhaps in a secure environment such as a prison.

The age ranges you might be involved with will bring interesting challenges, whether you are teaching in a small or large group, or training on a one-to-one basis. This section will explore some of those age ranges such as:

- 14–16 year olds
- 16–19 year olds
- adult learners
- mixed age ranges.

14–16 year olds

The 14–16 age group will still be attending compulsory education, and certain regulations, safeguarding, and disciplinary procedures will apply. For example, you could be teaching in an academy, public, private, faith, or free school. These might have different requirements to a state school. You could be teaching learners who are in residential care; for example, physically disabled youngsters who are entitled to education, but are not necessarily integrated within mainstream establishments.

Teaching this age group might bring with it issues that you will have to deal with. For example, challenging behaviour, truancy, peer pressure, negative attitudes, disruption, bullying, and the discreet use of mobile phones. Learners might want to be treated as adults but they are still classed as children. It would be beneficial to set clear boundaries and establish routines so that a climate of respect can exist. You will need patience and understanding, and must treat everyone in the group as an individual, remaining firm but fair to all. To help maintain respect, you might not want to be on first name terms, nor reveal anything personal about yourself.

This age range might be used to a style of teaching different to that which you might use with adults. For example, they might have been used to working through worksheets, reading handouts, and preparing for tests and exams. They might not have gained the ability to make notes, to practise skills, or to carry out research and present their findings. You will need to

find out what they can and can't do in this respect. Having a structure to your lessons, i.e. starting on time, having frequent changes of activities, recapping points regularly, and finishing on time, might help with attention and participation.

You could be teaching within a school environment and have to follow their rules and regulations. Alternatively the learners might come from a school to your organisation for certain classes. Sometimes, a different environment may alter their behaviour, i.e. they might act more maturely, or act over confidently and become disruptive in front of their peers.

Some learners may have learning difficulties; others may come with a learning support assistant (LSA) to help them. However, all learners will have something positive to contribute to the lesson. You will need to ensure your lessons enable everyone to participate in the learning experience, and that you do not exclude anyone for any reason.

Ensuring your lessons are meaningful, with lots of interesting and practical tasks (in Chapter 6), will help with classroom management. You might be able to relate what you are talking about to your own and your learners' current and past experiences. Bringing your subject to life with anecdotes, and relating it to current topics, trends, and the workplace, should help your learners to understand what you are talking about.

Younger learners often need lots of praise and encouragement, they appreciate you listening to them and supporting them when necessary. Praise should be about behaviours and attitudes, as well as progress and achievements. Many younger learners like to use technology whenever possible, so incorporating this appropriately could be beneficial. Some learners might not be performing well in other subjects with other teachers. They might therefore have a negative attitude towards you and/or the subject. Some might act more maturely, and others quite childishly. You will need to get to know your learners as individuals, and motivate them to want to learn. This can be quite hard with younger learners if they haven't enjoyed their learning experiences elsewhere. You may need to help build their self-esteem, and encourage them more than you would with older learners. Try and be approachable, and listen to what your learners have to say. If you ask a question and they answer wrongly, don't dismiss it, but try and relate their answer to a real situation which is relevant. Try and include all learners during the lesson, and make them feel that their contribution, however small, is valued. If you are enthusiastic about the subject, hopefully they will be.

16–19 year olds

The 16–19 age group includes learners who might still be in compulsory education, are apprentices on a training programme, or are learners on a part-time, full-time, or day-release course. Non-attendance might affect their funding allowance if they receive one, and you might be required to sign documents to prove they were present. Some challenges that you may encounter with the 14–16 age range might be the same as those encountered with the 16–19 age range. For example, if learners have to attend as part of a day-release programme and are not attending voluntarily, they might not pay as much attention, or even turn up. However, some learners may have been in (or are still in) employment, and will have knowledge and experience that can be drawn on during the lessons. You might therefore have a mixture of learners in the same group. For example, some who have recently left school and some who have been in employment for a while. As a result, levels of maturity may differ. However, some school leavers might prefer being

in an adult environment to a school environment, and as such pay more attention. Never assume, or under- or over-estimate your learners' knowledge, skills and understanding, or make any presumptions about them or their past experiences.

Depending upon your subject specialism, you will find your own ways to reach each individual, giving them confidence to progress with their learning. Always provide positive encouragement to help retain motivation, and treat all questions from learners as valid.

Adult learners

Adult learners, aged 19 and over, are usually motivated to learn, either for their own personal benefit or for professional reasons. They might be retraining to enhance their job role, perhaps as a result of redundancy, or wanting a new challenge or opportunity. Their motivation ensures that they are keen and enthusiastic learners, usually attending voluntarily in their own time, and probably at unsociable hours. However, some adults might have been told to attend a course either by their employer, or as part of a programme to help them gain employment. Therefore their motivation might not be as high as you would like it to be. Some adult learners might be apprehensive or lack confidence if they have not attended education for a few years. You will need to reassure them that you are there to help.

You might find with some adult learners that they feel they know more than they do. You will need to be tactful at finding out what they do and don't know, to help them realise this. You might also feel some learners know more than you. This is nothing to worry about, and can be used to your advantage. For example, if you don't know how to use a particular computer program very well, you could involve a learner who does. This might make them feel good that they have shown the teacher what to do. Some older learners might dominate the lesson to talk about their experiences. Let them have their say at first; however, if they continue to dominate, you will have to tactfully ask them not to interrupt you, perhaps by saying that you are short of time. Alternatively, when explaining something, you could add the words 'as some of you may know' or 'some of you might already be familiar with this'. This will show that you are aware of their prior knowledge and experience, and you could use eye contact with them to show that you are acknowledging them. Depending upon your subject, there will be ways of integrating your learners' experiences to benefit everyone.

Example 3.2

Haani teaches a weekly two-hour information technology course which will last eight weeks. There are ten learners aged 19 to 65. As part of the first lesson, he asks them to introduce themselves and say a little about their experience of using a computer. He soon realises the older learners have very little experience and three have never even switched on a computer. The younger learners are more confident and have used computers at school and home. He therefore decides to sit a younger learner next to an older learner so that they can help and support each other. Each learner will be working individually through a series of tasks at their own pace, and can ask each other questions when necessary. They can therefore learn from each other as well as from Haani.

Adults are often used to being active and having self-discipline when it comes to learning. They are frequently confident to ask questions and to challenge theories. They often like to relate new learning to their own experiences. If you are asked a question you cannot answer, say you will find out. Then make sure that you tell them the answer next time you see them. While you are expected to have an in-depth knowledge of your subject, you won't know everything, and this is fine. It's best to be honest and admit when you don't know something, rather than bluff your way out of it.

Quite often, adults are not afraid of making a mistake, as they have learnt this through experience. Younger learners would not want to embarrass themselves in front of their peers. Adults are often keen to tell you and the group of their experiences, and how they have learnt from them. Conversely, some adults might lack the confidence to discuss things in front of their peers, until they get to know them better.

When teaching adults, try and plan tasks in a logical order, relate theory to practice, and involve them with discussions of their own experiences. Always clearly state the aim of your lesson and what they will be doing (in Chapter 5). With all learners, you should check their prior knowledge and experience, recap and summarise topics, repeat key points, and ask questions on an ongoing basis, to check that learning is taking place.

Adults will usually make the effort to arrive on time, have the necessary materials, e.g. pens, paper, and text books, and not be disruptive. However, you will need to consider their personal circumstances and situations. For example, if you are teaching an evening class and some of your learners have been at work all day, looking after children, travelling far, or haven't yet eaten. They could therefore be tired or hungry, which might impact upon their learning.

Some adults might have had negative experiences at school or of previous courses they have attended. This might have stayed with them and could affect their current learning. Try and get to know each learner as an individual to enable you to support their learning in an appropriate way. You could be on first name terms with adults and have a more informal delivery style if you feel this is appropriate.

Mixed age ranges

It could be that you will teach a mixture of age ranges within the same group, therefore the information in all the age groups will apply. However, a mixture in the same group could affect the learners' attitudes and the way they act and interact with each other. With different generations come different aspirations, expectations, and values. As a result, attitudes might be different towards their peers or indeed towards you as their teacher. Your age might also have an impact upon how you manage a mixed group situation, depending upon your generation and your experiences.

The demographics of populations are continually changing. What follows is generalised, and not meant to be stereotypical, but to give you an idea of the different generations and how their age might have an impact upon their learning. The dates are approximate.

- **The veteran generation** (aged 65 plus) may have been with the same employer for a long time and are now retired. They have probably paid off their mortgage, have children who have left home, and therefore have different priorities from

younger generations. They may have lots of personal interests, but be apprehensive about using technology.

- **The baby boomers** (born 1946–1965) might be retired, or working fewer hours and increasing their leisure pursuits, have grown-up children and a low (or no) mortgage. This generation will increase over the next few years and may lead to a larger number of older than younger people in the workplace.
- **Generation X** (born 1966–1976) might be mid-career, have had several jobs, and perhaps experienced redundancy and unemployment along the way. They might have a large mortgage and a growing family.
- **Generation Y** (born 1977–1994) might be unemployed, be in training, or be first or second jobbers. They could still be living with their parents or be renting, have few responsibilities, and possibly have debts. They use technology a great deal and the line between work and social use can become blurred.
- **Generation Z or the millennium generation** (born 1995–2010) have had lifelong access to technology, the internet, and social media. Access to multimedia to such an extent means they might prefer to have conversations online rather than in-person. This can lead to poor spelling and grammar when writing, as they might abbreviate words or cut words out. Personal aspects often take priority over work, due to the *immediate* and *switched on* lives they lead. This generation has been subjected to a fame culture through the many reality television shows, and is often influenced by celebrities and fashion via social media.
- **Generation Alpha** (born 2011 onwards) are mainly children of the millennium generation, with similar attributes. This age group is very familiar with technology and social media, the ease of access to streaming services, and the ordering of goods and services online. However, they may have unintentionally been exposed to disturbing and harmful content online. Unfortunately, they might have mental or physical health issues. This could be due to too much screen time, a lack of exercise, cyber bullying, and/or seeing distressing images. They had experience of online learning at home due to the pandemic. During attended school hours, they might have had restricted access to their smartphones. This generation might prefer to communicate online rather than have conversations in-person, and therefore lack some social skills. They might also have debts, rely on credit for purchases, stay in education longer (therefore start earning later), and may still live with their parents. The jobs they go into might not yet exist, due to rapid advances with technology. They are more likely to care about the environment, and have a strong sense of identity and self-awareness.

Activity 3.2

What challenges might you encounter with each age group listed, particularly regarding using technology, and how could you overcome them?

Modes of attendance

The modes of attendance of learners will vary depending upon when and where your courses are offered. Not all learners will attend traditional classes; some might take an online course, or learn on-the-job if they are in employment. This section will explore some of the modes of attendance you might come across, such as:

- apprentice learners
- remote/online learners
- offender learners
- part-time or full-time learners
- workplace learners.

Apprentice learners

Apprenticeships are usually for vocational subjects and should lead to a full-time job at the end of the training period. Some apprenticeship programmes also include formal qualifications, but all will involve the apprentice working towards a set of standards. Learners who are taking an apprenticeship programme will participate in a combination of practical training in the workplace, known as *on-the-job*, and training elsewhere, known as *off-the-job*. Training can also take place *near-to-the job*, for example, in a separate area such as a mobile unit on a construction site.

You might be involved with an apprentice learner or an employee partaking in on-the-job training. Alternatively, it might be that you are working in a training organisation or a college, and the learner or employee comes to you for a day-release class. You might not know much about where they work, or you might be able to visit them at work to see how they are progressing. You should always liaise with their supervisor regarding what they are doing at work, and the progress they are making. It's important to make sure that what you are planning to teach ties in with what the learner is doing in their place of work. Off-the-job training should complement on-the-job training and vice versa.

There will be a set of standards which apprentices will need to have achieved by the end of their programme. The process of assessing them is known as *end-point assessment*, and is usually carried out by someone the apprentice has never met. This is a bit like learning to drive; you might teach the person to drive but someone else will assess them during the test. However, you will still need to formatively assess the learner's progress and ensure that they are ready for end-point assessment. If the learner is also taking a qualification, the usual assessment requirements will apply (in Chapter 7). Apprenticeship learners might also be required to take qualifications in English, maths, and digital skills (in Chapter 5). You may need to support them with these skills, and liaise with the person responsible for their progress in these subjects.

Remote/online learners

Remote and online learners are those that are learning away from a formal attended teaching environment. They might be isolated from the teacher and their peers. Learners need to be self-motivated, committed, and able to devote a suitable amount of time to this

type of study. Remote learning could involve the use of technology and/or the use of learning materials which are sent and returned via a postal service.

Learning is increasingly taking place online (live or on-demand), enabling it to occur at any time and in any place where there is an internet-enabled device. Courses can be tailored to meet individual requirements, and learners can work at their own pace. If you are teaching online, you might never meet your learners, but communicate via the online program (in Chapter 5).

Offender learners

Offender learners might be in a young offender institution, on remand or detention, or in a prison. It might be compulsory that they attend training, and while some will be keen to learn, others may not. This will bring its own challenges regarding motivation, and there might also be some behavioural issues to contend with. You will need to allow extra time before and after a lesson to go through the security procedures of getting into and out of the building and rooms. If you are teaching in this type of environment, you will need to be careful not to allow yourself to become conditioned to situations. You will need to remember that your learners are there to gain the knowledge and skills to help them upon their release. You will also have strict guidelines and security procedures to follow. It could be that some of your learners are released or moved elsewhere part way through their training. Others might start at different points, and will need to catch up on what has been taught so far. Some may drop in and out of your lessons due to the prison regime, perhaps where offenders are attending other activities. You might even arrive to teach a lesson and find that the learners have been locked in their rooms due to operational issues. Some might be in court or with visitors and will miss a lesson. Keeping an accurate and up-to-date track of individual progress and achievement will be important. Records may need to be passed onto other places if the learners move elsewhere.

Part-time or full-time learners

Some learners who have employment, family, or other commitments might prefer to study on a part-time basis. This could be to spread their learning out over a longer time frame, or to help with their budgeting and travel constraints. Classes might range from a few hours per week, one day a week, weekends, or evening classes.

Full-time learning has different hours and time frames depending upon the subject and funding. Some full-time attended classes might only be 16 hours per week, with the rest of the time for self-study. Others could be longer and spread over different days and times. Some courses are classed as *intensive*, meaning the subject is covered quickly in a smaller amount of time, for example, every day for one week. Others might take from a few weeks to several years.

Helpful hint 3.2

It's useful to keep in touch with your learners between classes as they may need ongoing encouragement to remain motivated, whether part-time or full-time. This could be via your organisation's online platform, or by email. However, you must keep all communication professional and not get personal.

Workplace learners

Workplace learners are those who are learning in their place of work, and could be aged 16 and upwards. They might be learning a new task or a procedure, be observed to meet certain work standards, or receive training as part of an apprenticeship programme.

If you are employed in the same organisation as your learners, i.e. training staff on-the-job, the way you do this will usually be on an individual or small group basis. It will give you the opportunity to spend more time with your learners. However, it might also mean that you are interrupted regularly to give advice and support. It might also be that your learners want to digress and talk about other aspects which are not relevant at the time. You will need to balance this with other priorities, such as the commitments and deadlines of your own job role.

You might be required to train a learner who is attending your organisation as part of a work experience programme. They could be with you one day a week, or a full week, or more. Even though they might not be in paid employment, you should treat them as a member of staff and make them feel welcome. They might have certain tasks that they will need to learn and carry out. Therefore you might need to assess their progress and liaise with staff from the organisation they are from. Work experience isn't about making the tea and carrying out menial jobs, it's about carrying out real job roles, but under supervision.

Theory into practice 3.2

If you could teach any age range, for any mode of attendance, in any location or environment, what would this be and why? Now consider the reality of who you will teach, when, and where, for your particular subject. How different are your responses to the first question, and what does this tell you?

Motivation and behaviour

Motivation is the incentive or reason why someone chooses to do something. It's useful to be aware of what motivates your learners, as their enthusiasm might affect their learning (in a positive or a negative way) and possibly their behaviour. A learner attending a lesson because they have been told to, may not be as well motivated as a learner who is there because they want to be. Behaviour is all about how you and your learners interact with each other in an acceptable way.

Finding out the expectations of your learners and what motivates them should help you to facilitate the course in a way that will lead to successful learner achievement. Expectations could be ascertained in advance, or during the first lesson, and can simply be by asking your learners what they are. If their expectations don't match with what will take place, tell them why. Learners will want to know what's in it for them, and why they should attend. They need to know the value of the course either personally and/or professionally. It could be that they have been recommended to take a particular course, or are on the

wrong course and they didn't realise it. It's best to find this out at the beginning, rather than part way through. If not, you might encounter some behaviour and disruption issues if the lessons aren't what the learners expected. You should explain to your learners if you won't meet any of their expectations, or direct them to a more suitable course. For example, they might have been told by their employer that they must attend a particular course, but it's not suitable or appropriate at this point in time.

Motivation

Motivation is either intrinsic (from within) meaning the learner wants to learn for their own fulfilment; or extrinsic (from without) meaning there may be an external factor motivating them; for example, a promotion at work.

Intrinsic can include:

- a passion for the subject
- for enjoyment and fulfilment
- for personal reasons
- for social interaction
- the desire to achieve something new
- to complete something previously started
- to gain confidence
- to improve self-esteem and self-worth
- to meet people
- to overcome personal challenges
- to prove to themselves that something can be achieved

Extrinsic can include:

- for a promotion
- for professional reasons
- the requirement of a job role
- to achieve a qualification
- to advance their career
- to gain a pay rise
- to gain acceptance and approval of others
- to please others or make them proud
- to prove to others something can be achieved
- to receive a bonus or a commission

If learners are keen and pro-active towards their learning, they should be self-motivated. For example, by obtaining the relevant resources and text books, asking for help when necessary, getting actively involved during lessons, and taking control of their studies. Conversely, if learners are passive, their motivation to learn may be less. For example, expecting the teacher to supply their resources, not asking for help when necessary, not participating during the lesson, and not wanting to take control of their studies. Passive learners might blame the teacher when they don't achieve something, whereas active learners might just blame themselves.

You could try using activities which are interactive rather than just talking to your learners (in Chapter 6). People are becoming accustomed to being more interactive due to access to social media. For example, some popular live television programmes encourage their audiences to get involved with online polls, and to communicate in real time via emails, texts, and

social media. News and weather programmes also encourage interaction by asking viewers to send in pictures and videos of relevant events. This way, people feel engaged, are involved, and are active, rather than passive. Keeping your learners active and involved will hopefully keep them motivated to learn. Try to be positive and tell your learners that you believe they can achieve; this may help with their motivation and learning. Sadly, some learners might have come from a background where they were often told that they were no good.

Activity 3.3

If you are currently teaching, do you know what has motivated each of your learners to attend your lessons? If not, try and find out so that you can maintain their motivation. If you are not currently teaching, think about what motivated you to learn something recently (perhaps if you are working towards a teacher training qualification), and how that motivation has had a positive or a negative impact upon your learning.

Whatever level of motivation your learners have, will be transformed, for better or worse, by what happens during their experience with you. You therefore need to promote a professional relationship that leads to individual trust and respect. Some learners may seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, but many need or expect you to inspire and engage them. It's hard to get someone to do something if they can't see a real benefit for themselves. You could try and relate the topic to something they are interested in, such as a hobby or a leisure activity. You could also relate the learning to how it will be applied in practice in the workplace. You might have stories you can tell your learners if you have worked in the subject area, for example, if you are teaching retail skills and you worked in a department store.

To help motivate your learners you can:

- ask open questions to keep them involved (ones that begin with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* – not closed questions, which just lead to yes or no responses)
- avoid creating intense competition, although some competition can be engaging and fun
- avoid talking down to your learners or making them feel silly or embarrassed
- be aware of attention-span limits (some learners may lose focus quickly)
- give praise and encouragement when it's deserved
- maintain an organised and orderly atmosphere
- make tasks interesting, practical, and relevant
- negotiate realistic and achievable targets
- offer support when necessary, but don't overdo it

- provide ongoing constructive and developmental feedback so that learners know how they are progressing, and what they still need to do
- stretch and challenge each learner's potential
- treat learners with respect and as individuals
- try not to be too critical, but be positive when you can
- use learners' names to show that you know them as individuals
- use icebreakers and energisers (in Chapter 6) to get learners actively working together
- vary your teaching activities (in Chapter 6) and assessment approaches (in Chapter 7).

Keeping yourself motivated might also be a challenge. There could be situations which occur which might make you feel like this isn't the job for you. It's hard work being a teacher; however, it's a very rewarding job, and you have the opportunity to help so many people. When times are hard, remember all the good you have done for your learners in the past, and that you will do in the future. Make sure that you have someone you can talk to, such as a mentor. Don't keep things to yourself, as any problems or concerns you have could escalate in your own mind. It's probable that your mentor has also experienced what you are feeling, and can give you some useful advice. Things can and will go wrong; just learn from your experiences, be honest with yourself, and remember why you wanted to be a teacher. If you can be enthusiastic and passionate about your subject, this might motivate and enthuse your learners. If not, they might wonder why they should bother attending, if you are not showing an interest in the subject, or are demonstrating that you are not enjoying your job.

Keller's (1987) ARCS model of motivation

Keller (1987) combined existing research on psychological motivation and created the ARCS model: **A**ttention, **R**elevance, **C**onfidence, and **S**atisfaction. Having some knowledge of this model might help you to motivate your learners.

Attention is the first and most important aspect of the ARCS model which is about gaining and maintaining your learners' attention. Keller's strategies for attention include:

- stimulating the five senses - ensuring that you reach all learners through sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, although this might not always be possible
- inquiry arousal - using thought provoking questions and challenges
- variability - using various teaching and learning approaches, activities, and media.

Relevance is the second aspect. To ensure motivation is retained, the learner has to believe the lesson content is relevant to them. It's about addressing the learner's question of *What's in it for me?* The benefits should clearly be stated to the learner to enable them to see what they will gain.

Confidence is the third aspect. This is to help learners put an effort into their learning, and to think that they are capable of achieving. Learners should always be given constructive and developmental feedback to help maintain their motivation. Clear targets and deadlines need to be discussed and agreed.

Satisfaction is the final aspect. Learners must obtain some type of satisfaction or reward from their learning experience. This could be in the form of a sense of achievement, or of gaining a qualification. Satisfaction could also come from external rewards such as praise from others, a pay rise, more responsibility at work, or a promotion. Ultimately, the best way for learners to achieve satisfaction is for them to put their new skills and knowledge to immediate use.

Behaviour management

Depending upon the age range of your learners, the subject and the environment in which you will teach, you might encounter issues which you will need to deal with immediately. However, it's not just about being *reactive* to a situation. Ideally, you need to be *pro-active* and promote appropriate behaviour and respect whenever possible, to stop issues arising in the first place. Your organisation should have a behaviour code of practice, or a policy which you will need to find out about.

Being a role model for good behaviour might encourage the same from your learners. This can include being polite, showing respect, and saying *please* and *thank you*. Welcoming learners to your lesson when they arrive, with a smile on your face, can give a good impression. Some teachers like to stand at the door as their learners enter. This gives an air of authority, and shows that the teacher is in control. Some teachers like to shake hands with each learner as they arrive, or to say hello and state the learner's name. This is a little more informal, but still shows that the teacher is in control, and that they know everyone's name. This might be better than being occupied inside the room and ignoring the learners as they arrive.

Behaviour issues could occur because learners:

- are being bullied, or are a bully
- are bored
- are not being stretched or challenged enough
- are not respecting other learners' faiths, cultures, values, and/or beliefs
- are seeking attention
- don't understand what you are saying or doing
- don't want to interrupt you, or embarrass themselves by asking a question
- have a learning difficulty and/or disability
- have an attention span which is different to other learners.

Behaviour patterns could highlight the need for additional support, as disruption could be a way of asking for help. A way of dealing with a situation is to tactfully say to the learner, 'I notice you are not paying attention/are being disruptive, is there any reason for that?' They might not have anything to say, and will hopefully then focus on the lesson. However, there might be a valid reason, in which case you can tell your learner you will have a chat with them later. Alternatively, you could redirect them in some way to focus them on the current task.

Example 3.3

Simon has a group of 24 learners and one particular learner, Mike, often disrupts the lesson. During one lesson, when the learners were working on an individual activity, Mike shouted across the room to another learner 'What did you watch on TV last night?' The other learner did not respond and so Mike shouted again. Simon went over to Mike and asked 'How far have you got with this task?' Simon had redirected the situation to be about the work, not the shouting.

You may find it useful to maintain a record of the individual behaviour of your learners during lessons. This could help you to prepare for future incidents. For example, noting a particular learner who becomes disruptive after a certain time period has elapsed, or another who becomes annoyed when asked to carry out a theory task. This information can be useful when planning future lessons. For example, the timing of breaks, the use of energiser activities, or planning who will work with whom for a paired activity.

Ways to demonstrate and promote positive behaviour include:

- admitting to your mistakes rather than bluffing your way out of them
- avoiding any conflict with individual learners, as this could impact upon the group
- being consistent i.e. challenging rule breaking each time it occurs
- being fair to everyone by not having a favourite learner, or by letting some learners get away with things
- being pleasant and polite
- challenging inappropriate behaviour, comments, and bad language
- demonstrating positive body language, and using eye contact
- demonstrating good practice, and leading by example
- encouraging trust, respect, honesty, politeness, and consideration towards others
- ensuring that you are non-judgemental
- listening to others' points of view and not imposing your own
- reminding learners of the ground rules, and keeping them on display
- trying not to talk at your learners, but talk with them, and listen to what they say.

If you do experience any issues, you will need to handle the situation professionally, i.e. by not becoming emotional, and by keeping to the facts. If a learner insists on interrupting, you could hold up your hand, palm facing them, in the hope that this stops them. If not, you could ask them to make a note of the questions they were going to ask, and state that you will answer them towards the end of the lesson. This should help to minimise any effect it may have on teaching and learning. If you do need to show disapproval, you could make it clear that it's because of the way they have behaved, not because it's them as a person. Don't just ignore the behaviour thinking it will go away, address it immediately. However, with experience, you will realise that some things can be ignored, providing this does not affect the safety of your learners. For example, if a learner is attention seeking, they might stop when they realise that they are not getting the attention they wanted.

You can help to maintain motivation and promote positive behaviour by including all learners during the lesson. Don't leave anyone out, ensure everyone is asked a question, or is involved in some way. Try and keep your lessons active wherever possible, and teach your subject in an interesting and challenging way. Ultimately, you will need to find your own way of dealing with situations based upon your experiences. Don't show favouritism, lose your temper, swear, or make any threats. Try to have a positive approach, praise performance and good behaviour, and be consistent and fair to everyone. Most learners respond positively to a well-organised course taught by an enthusiastic teacher, who has a genuine interest in them and the subject.

There may be occasions during your lessons where behaviours exist that are offensive, directly discriminate, or are distressing to others (or to you). This behaviour may be obvious, but it can also be unintentional and subtle. It might involve a learner using nicknames, teasing, name-calling, or excluding someone. Although it might not have a malicious intent, it will still be upsetting.

There are various ways of managing this depending on the circumstances, such as:

- challenging prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping as it occurs
- creating an acceptable behaviour contract which learners sign up to, and revisit it regularly, perhaps as part of the ground rules
- establishing at the start of the programme what the unacceptable behaviours are
- embracing learner diversity within the group
- encouraging your learners to confidentially discuss any of their own behaviour concerns they have, for example, a learner with autism
- ensuring all resources are inclusive through the use of positive images which represent all aspects of society.

Attention spans

An attention span is the amount of time which a learner can concentrate without being distracted. This will vary according to their age range; often younger learners will concentrate less, and older ones more. Being able to focus without being distracted is crucial for learning to take place. There are two types of attention, *focused* and *sustained*.

- Focused attention is a short-term response to something that attracts awareness and is very brief. For example, a phone rings, or there's an unexpected occurrence. After a few seconds, it is likely that the person will return to what they were originally doing, or focus on something else.
- Sustained attention is a longer-term response which will enable the achievement of something over a period of time. For example, if the task is to take a few photos, choose the best three and upload them to a website, then the person showing sustained attention will stay on task and achieve it fully. A person who loses attention might take a few photos but move on to doing something else before choosing and uploading the best three.

Most adults are able to sustain attention on one thing for about 20 minutes (Cornish and Dukette, 2009, page 73). They can then choose to refocus on the same thing for another 20 minutes. This ability to renew concentration enables people to stay on task for as long as necessary. However, there are other factors to take into consideration, such as self-motivation, ability, tiredness, hunger and thirst. If a learner is really hungry their concentration may lapse as a result. If you find that your learners are losing focus, ask them if there's anything distracting them, as you might be able to resolve it. For example, opening a window if it's too warm.

Helpful hint 3.3

When planning your lessons, try and use several short tasks to enable your learners to stay focused. If you do need to use longer tasks, try and break them down into 20 minutes for each, with a chance for a discussion or something different in between.

If you teach long lessons, for example over an hour, try and include a break to enable your learners to experience a change of scenery, obtain refreshments, and visit the toilet if necessary.

You might find that attention spans are decreasing due to the use of technology. For example, searching the internet, changing television channels, and using electronic devices and mobile phones can reduce concentration time. If you have learners who regularly use mobile devices, they may have reduced attention spans, and therefore will need to move on to other tasks more frequently. If applicable, you could incorporate the use of information and communication technology (ICT); for example, researching current topics online, and creating a presentation regarding their findings. Recent research regarding learners' attention spans varies widely, with some unverified studies stating that it's seconds rather than minutes for most teenagers' attention spans. The blame is placed upon their use of mobile devices.

Retention of learning

Whatever teaching and learning approaches and activities you choose to use with your learners, you will want them to retain what they have learnt. There is an old Chinese proverb: *I hear – I forget, I see – I remember, I do – I understand*. When you hear lots of information you may find it difficult to remember it all. If you can see something taking place that represents what you hear, you should remember more. However, if you actually carry out the task which

relates to what you have heard and seen, you will understand the full process and remember how to do it again. There are many theories regarding the retention of learning, which might not all have been based on credible research. However, it's useful to be aware of some of them.

Ebbinghaus's (1913) *forgetting curve* demonstrates how new knowledge and information can be lost over time if there is no attempt to retain it. He stated that people tend to halve their memory in a few days or weeks, unless they make an effort to review the new material, for example, by repeating it and making sense of it. The speed of forgetting also depends on other factors, such as how difficult and how meaningful the subject is, as well as factors like stress and sleep. Ebbinghaus was also the first person to describe the *learning curve*. The biggest increase in retention is immediately after learning takes place, but it then gradually evens out, and becomes less over time. To help your learners to retain new knowledge and information, you could devise activities which help them to repeat, recap, recall, and discuss what they have just learnt.

Pike (1989) stated: *Studies show that over a period of three days, learning retention is as follows:*

- 10% of what you read
- 20% of what you hear
- 30% of what you see
- 50% of what you see and hear
- 70% of what you say
- 90% of what you say and you do

If your learners can incorporate *reading, hearing, seeing, saying, and doing* during your lessons, their learning retention should increase. Once learners put theory into practice they should begin to understand what they have learnt. Some people learn by imitating others, while they might then be able to perform the task, they might not know *why* they are doing it. Therefore, skills and knowledge should be learnt together to ensure that understanding takes place.

Maslow's (1987) Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1987) introduced a *Hierarchy of Needs* in 1954 which can relate to motivation and the ability to achieve something. He rejected the idea that human behaviour was determined by childhood events. He felt that obstacles should be removed that prevent a person from achieving their goals. He argued that there are five *needs* which represent different levels of motivation that must be met. The highest level was labelled *self-actualisation*, meaning people are fully functional, possess a healthy personality, and take responsibility for themselves and their actions. He also believed that people should be able to move through these needs to the highest level, provided that they are given an education that promotes growth. There are critics of this theory, as it was not widely tested. However, it's useful to have an idea of the implications of the levels upon your learners and learning.

Figure 3.6 shows the needs expressed as they might relate to learning, starting at the base of the pyramid.

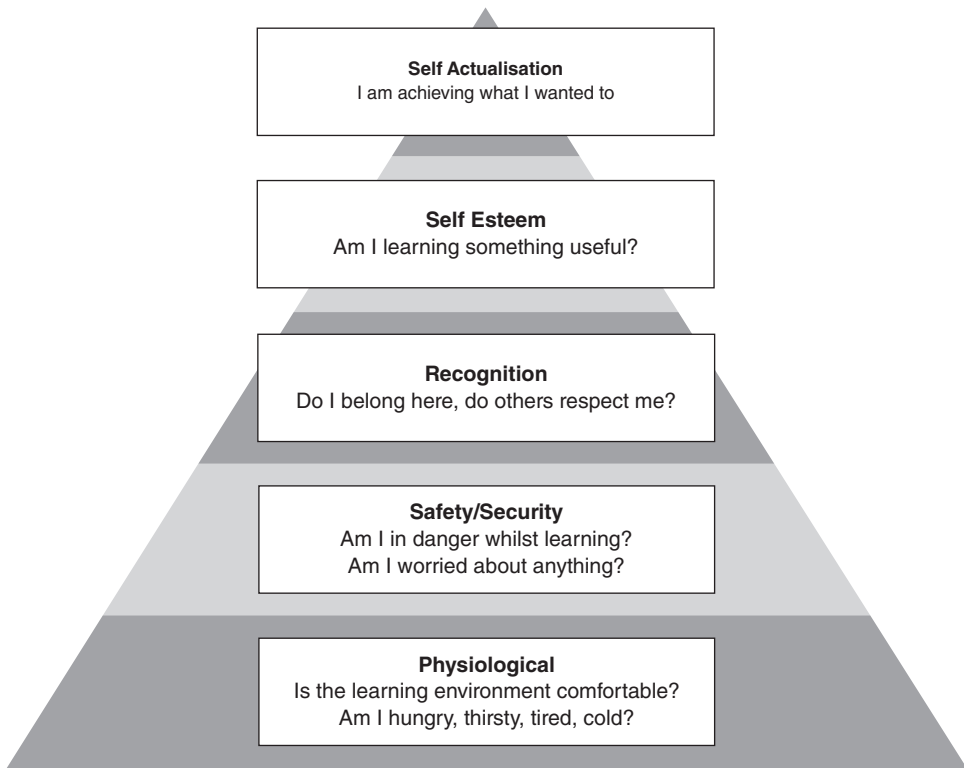


Figure 3.6 Maslow's (1987) Hierarchy of Needs expressed in educational terms

When learners satisfy their needs at one level, they should be able to progress to the next level. Something may set them back a level, but they should want to keep striving upwards. It is these needs that stimulate learning to take place. However, some people may not want to progress through the levels and may be quite content where they are at that moment in time. There might also be age or cultural factors which could impact upon progression through the levels. You could think of the needs as relevant to your role too. If you are hungry, thirsty, tired, or cold as in the first level, you might not perform well.

To help your learners' motivation, try and ensure that the environment you create meets your learners' first level needs. This will enable them to feel comfortable and secure enough to learn and progress to the higher levels. You will need to appreciate that some learners may not have these lower needs met in their home lives, making it difficult for them to move on to the higher levels. It's also worth considering religious traditions such as Ramadan, when some people abstain from food and drink during daylight hours.

While you may be very good at teaching your subject, you might have no control over the environment, and you will need to create a suitable atmosphere for learning to take place. However, your enthusiasm and passion for your subject should help to engage and motivate

your learners. If you can also make your lesson interesting, active, and varied, your learners will enjoy the experience, and remember more about the subject and you, rather than the environment or lack of facilities.

Theory into practice 3.3

What situations might arise with your learners which could lead to issues with motivation and/or behaviour? How could you effectively deal with these? Research theories of behaviour management, or read relevant text books regarding behaviour to gain more information. You might also like to research different attention spans.

Learning theories

There are many different theories regarding how people learn. These are based on ideas, thoughts, and experiences, but not all are based on credible research. They are often contradictory depending upon the perspective of the theorist. You may even develop your own theory, or challenge existing ones based upon your own experiences. However, all learning should lead to a change in behaviour, which demonstrates that learning has taken place. There are also some theories regarding working with groups and individuals in Chapter 6.

People learn in different ways, perhaps influenced by events in their childhood, at school, and/or personal and professional relationships. Do you prefer to watch someone perform a task, and then carry it out yourself, or would you rather try the task out for yourself first? This will be a guide as to how you prefer to learn something. If you have never taught before, you might tend to teach your lessons in the way in which you prefer to learn; although it will suit you, it might not suit your learners. When you learn something new, you should adapt, change, or modify your behaviour as a result; the same will apply with your learners.

Helpful hint 3.4

Some theories have been contradicted over time, and you will need to make up your own mind if they will work for you and your learners. Never be afraid to try something different, and to step out of your comfort zone. You could tell your learners it's an experiment, and ask for their feedback.

This section will briefly explain some of these theories (in alphabetical order), which you may wish to research further.

Behaviourism theory

Skinner (1974) believed that behaviour is a function of its consequences, i.e. learners will repeat the desired behaviour if positive reinforcement is given. The behaviour should not

be repeated if negative feedback is given. Providing immediate feedback, whether positive or negative, should enable your learners to behave in a certain way. Positive reinforcement or rewards can include verbal feedback such as *That's great, you've produced that document without any errors* or *You're certainly getting on well with that task* through to more tangible rewards such as a certificate at the end of the course, or a promotion or pay rise. Other behaviourist theorists include Pavlov (1927) and Watson (1928).

Example 3.4

Jamie was sawing a piece of wood as part of a carpentry course and hadn't paid attention to the health and safety regulations. The saw kept slipping and he cut his hand. His teacher gave him negative feedback, and this, along with his cut, ensured he was more careful in future.

Conditions of learning

Gagne (1985) stated that there are several different types or levels of learning. Each different type requires different types of teaching. Gagne identified five major conditions of learning. These are:

- intellectual skills
- cognitive strategies
- verbal information
- attitudes
- motor skills.

Different internal and external conditions are required for each. For example, for motor skills to be learnt, there must be the opportunity for your learner to practise new skills rather than just observe them. For attitudes, your learner must be able to explore these; for example, by discussing them. In addition, this theory outlines nine events that activate the processes needed for effective learning to take place. Gagne believed that all lessons should include this sequence of nine events. Each event has a corresponding cognitive process (in brackets below).

1. Gaining attention (reception)
2. Informing learners of the objective (expectancy)
3. Stimulating recall of prior learning (retrieval)
4. Presenting the stimulus (selective perception)
5. Providing learning guidance (semantic encoding)
6. Eliciting performance (responding)
7. Providing feedback (reinforcement)

8. Assessing performance (retrieval)
9. Enhancing retention and transfer (generalisation)

Example 3.5

Ellie, a new teacher, can ensure all these events take place in her baking lessons by:

1. *Gaining attention – showing an example of what the learners will achieve during the lesson, e.g. an iced wedding cake.*
2. *Identifying the objective – stating that the learners will be able to ice a wedding cake by the end of the lesson.*
3. *Recalling prior learning – asking the learners if they have ever iced a wedding cake before.*
4. *Presenting stimulus – explaining how they will ice the wedding cake and what utensils they will need to use.*
5. *Guiding learning – demonstrating how to ice a wedding cake.*
6. *Eliciting performance – encouraging the learners to begin icing a wedding cake.*
7. *Providing feedback – informing the learners how they are progressing.*
8. *Assessing performance – ensuring the learners are correctly icing the wedding cake by observing and asking questions.*
9. *Enhancing retention/transfer – summarising the learning, relating it to real life events, providing feedback, and explaining what will be covered in the next lesson.*

Connectivism theory

Siemens (2005) developed a theory based on the importance of networks and connections in learning. It emerged in response to the digital age's increasing complexity, and the abundance of information available through technology. Learning occurs through the creation and navigation of networks of connections between people, resources, and information sources.

Cognitive Load Theory

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) devised by Sweller (1988) suggests that a person's working memory can only handle a limited amount of information. When teaching, you should seek to minimise the burden on working memory to maximise learning.

Sweller advocates building upon prior knowledge by activating the long term memory first, through the use of discussions and activities. This will bring information into the working memory so that it can be dealt with more easily. Another method to minimise the burden on working memory is to combine both visual and verbal information when presenting new content to learners.

Cognitivism theory

This theory is about people constructing their own understanding and knowledge by experiencing something and reflecting on it. Learning is therefore an active process of personal

interpretation. Jean Piaget (1959) believed that people construct knowledge rather than receive it. He believed that children are born with a very basic mental structure (genetically inherited and evolved) on which all subsequent learning and knowledge is based. This experience and knowledge is then influenced by their emotional, biological, and mental stages of development.

Jerome Bruner (1960) argued that the purpose of education is not to impart knowledge, but to facilitate thinking and problem solving skills. These skills should be transferable to a range of situations. He believed that behaviour modification was a result of discovery learning, rather than being told something. For example, giving the learner the information they need to solve a problem, but not organising it for them. Learners should be active and construct their own knowledge. They should also build on this over time.

Domains of learning

Bloom (1956), an American education psychologist, stated that learning often goes through five stages, which should lead to a change in behaviour.

These stages are:

- attention
- perception
- understanding
- short-/long-term memory
- change in behaviour.

Starting with gaining your learners' attention and progressing through the stages should ensure that learning takes place, therefore leading to a change in behaviour. The stages relate to your learners' *thinking*, *emotions*, and *actions*, which Bloom called *domains of learning*. These domains are known as *cognitive*, *affective*, and *psycho-motor* (Figure 3.7). Think of cognitive as the head (thinking i.e. knowledge and understanding), affective as the heart (emotions i.e. attitudes) and psycho-motor as the hands (actions i.e. skills).



Figure 3.7 Domains of learning

When teaching your subject, you could consider which domain you want to reach, and how you can progress your learners through Bloom's five stages. It's also useful to know which domain you want to reach when planning your lesson's aim (in Chapter 5).

Example 3.6

Cognitive domain (subject – geography) learners will state the reasons for coastal erosion.

Affective domain (subject – the environment) learners will discuss their ideas for recycling and reusing items.

Psycho-motor domain (subject – bricklaying) learners will build a two-foot high wall.

Humanism theory

Rogers (1983) and others developed the theory of facilitative learning based on a belief that people have a natural human eagerness to learn, and that learning involves changing your own concept of yourself. This theory suggests that learning will take place if the person teaching it acts as a facilitator. The facilitator should establish an atmosphere in which their learners feel comfortable, are able to discuss new ideas, and learn by their mistakes (if safe to do so), as long as they are not threatened by external factors.

Learning preferences

It's important to note that not everyone advocates the use of learning preferences. This is due to a lack of credible research or conclusive evidence. Learning preferences (also referred to as learning styles) are about using the results of a test to determine the best way that a person will learn something, based on a series of questions or activities. People therefore have a preference to help them to acquire new skills and knowledge, and to remember things. Adults might have developed their preference from childhood learning patterns, or their experiences of growing up and of working. What suits one learner might not suit others. For example, if a group of people are learning yoga, some might like to firstly watch a demonstration and listen to the teacher explain the pose. Others might want to practise the movements at the same time as watching the teacher perform them.

Activity 3.4

Think back to when you got something new, for example, a mobile device. Did you get straight in and start using it, did you read the instructions first, or did you ask someone to show you what to do (or perhaps you watched a video)? That's an indicator of how you learn best.

Fleming (2001) stated that people can be grouped into four styles of learning: visual, aural, read/write, and kinaesthetic, known by the acronym VARK. However, not all learners fall into just one style as they may be *multi-modal*, i.e. a mixture of two or more styles.

Honey and Mumford (1992) suggested learners are a mixture of four styles: activist, pragmatist, theorist, and reflector. This could be interpreted as:

Activist learners like to deal with new problems and experiences, often learning by trial and error. They like lots of activities to keep them busy, and enjoy a hands-on approach. They love challenges and are enthusiastic.

Pragmatist learners like to apply what they have learnt to practical situations. They like logical reasons for doing something. They prefer someone to demonstrate a skill first before trying it for themselves.

Theorist learners need time to take in information, they prefer to read lots of material first. They like things that have been tried and tested, and prefer reassurance that something will work.

Reflector learners think deeply about what they are learning and the activities that they could do to apply this learning. They like to be told about things so that they can think it through. They will also try something, think again about it, and then try it again.

There are many different ways of ascertaining preferences, some might contradict others or even be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Some people are in favour of them, whereas others aren't. The current thinking is that there is no valid research to justify their use. However, you will need to make your own decision, and carry out your own research. You will also need to check whether the organisation you work for advocates their use or not.

Your learners might instinctively know what works best for them rather than having it determined for them. For example, they might prefer practical activities, rather than reading or writing. This might have developed from previous courses they have attended. Rather than this being their learning preference, you could think of it as their teaching preference. You could ask your learners which teaching preference they have, and then adapt your lessons accordingly.

Neuroscience theory

This is often referred to as neuroeducation or educational neuroscience. It explores the relationship between neuroscience principles and educational practices. It seeks to understand how the brain learns and processes information, to inform teaching methods and educational strategies. Neuroscience theorists include Fischer and Immordino-Yang (2008).

Pragmatism theory

This is about thought being a tool for problem solving and actions. It's about dealing with a problem in a sensible way, rather than following fixed ideas. It's also about relating behaviour to experiences. Problems can be solved through the application of inquiry and experience, rather than being taught. Pragmatist theorists include Dewey (1938), and James (1907).

Social Learning theory

This is about the role of observation, imitation, and modelling in learning. This theory suggests that people learn not only through direct experience, but also by observing others and the consequences of their actions. This theory highlights the importance of social context, observation, and cognitive processes in learning and behaviour. Social Learning theorists include Bandura (1960).

The Peter Principle

Peter and Hull (1969) devised the principle that people are promoted to their highest level of competence, after which further promotion raises them to a level just beyond this, and they become incompetent. This theory has been interpreted by different people over time. The Peter Principle has four levels.

Unconscious incompetence – you don't know how to do something, but don't know that you don't know this. To reach the next level, you will need to know what it is that you don't know.

Conscious incompetence – you know what you want to do, and start to appreciate the gap in your competence. To reach the next level, you will need to know how to become competent.

Conscious competence – you can do what you set out to do, but you have to give it a lot of attention. Through repeated practice, you can reach the next level.

Unconscious competence – you can perform a skill easily without giving it a great deal of thought. Once you achieve unconscious competence, you are at a level which suits your ability at the time.

If you are promoted, or try something different, you might return to the first level and become unconsciously incompetent again. This is useful to know, as your learners may reach and stay at one of these levels, or reach the highest level and then return to a lower level due to further progression.

Example 3.7

Renuka has just started a Spreadsheets for Beginners course, having previously only used a computer for e-mails and accessing the internet. She doesn't yet know how to use a spreadsheet or the functions it can perform – she is at the unconscious incompetence level. After learning how to set up a spreadsheet, she now wants to perform some calculations; she knows she wants to do this, but doesn't know how. This is the conscious incompetence level. Renuka soon learns how to perform calculations and does this at the conscious competence level. She isn't quite at the unconscious competence level yet, where she could do it without thinking.

Sensory theory

Laird (1985) stated that learning occurs when the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste are stimulated (Figure 3.8). Laird's theory suggests that if multi-senses are stimulated, greater learning takes place. You could therefore adapt your approaches and resources to enable your learners to use as many of their senses as possible. The use of sensory stimulation, perhaps through pictures, videos, sounds, podcasts, objects, smells, and tasting, can provide learners with a heightened sensory learning experience. This might be more engaging and interactive than a single stimulation.

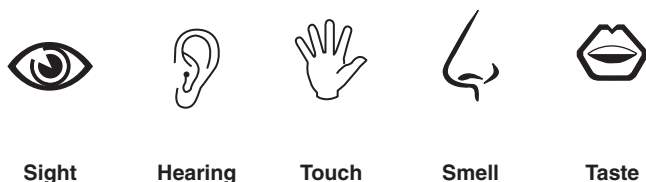


Figure 3.8 The five senses

Knowing a little about the different theories of learning will help you to realise which teaching and learning approaches to use, and why things happen in a certain way.

Theory into practice 3.4

How will these theories affect the way that you teach your subject? Do you agree with them, or do you have your own theory of how learning takes place? Choose two of the theories listed which you feel are relevant, and research them further. Alternatively, find out what other learning theories exist, and compare and contrast them.

This chapter has explored:

- The environment
- The learners
- Motivation and behaviour
- Learning theories