**Attitude and Motivation in On-Line Learning**

Attitude is a learned behavior and, is highly susceptible to change. Krathwohl's Taxonomy theory states that a learning attitude is developed over time, and that past learning experiences affect future learning experiences. This is evident in adult students considering returning to school to further their education. An attitude is your mind's response, to going where your ability and motivation strive to take you. Attitudes usually come from feelings, and feelings can change quickly and easily, you can't always believe your feelings if they are changing often. Attitudes, initiated by quick changes in feelings can lead to negative attitudes, and you can either let them get you down, or you can rise above them.

From a personal perspective my attitude has let me down and fed my fears of failure. I thought about taking the PID Program about 7 or 8 years ago, but my fears held me back from applying. I questioned myself “what if I’m not successful in the program, what will my peers think so I put the program on the back burner until about a year ago when I changed positions at my place of work. The change in jobs has given me the confidence in myself that has changed my attitude towards learning and the workplace. The preferred qualification for my new position was a Provincial Instructor Diploma. The change in my job also changed my feelings and how I thought about future learning. Since the PID program was web based and could be taken via distance I decided it was time to enroll in the program. It has been suggested that a student’s level of technical skills is a predicator of a student’s success in distance learning. (Buchanan, 1999; Noah, 2001). My level of technical skills provided a positive experience in distance learning. With the use of technology distance learning has enabled universities and colleges to extend learning opportunities to many students who would not otherwise be able to participate in the benefits of education due to time and location constraints (Gunawardena & McIsaac, 1996). In distance learning settings, asynchronous online discussions have become widely used to support student interactions. An asynchronous online discussion is a text-based computer-mediated communication that allows human-to-human interaction without time and location constraints (Romiszowski & Mason, 1996). Almost all current web-based course management systems, such as, Blackboard, and Moodle, have a component that supports asynchronous online discussions. Research suggests that asynchronous online discussions have many positive impacts on distance learning. Online discussions enable convenient interactions among learners and instructors. This interaction extends collaborative knowledge construction and information distribution outside of classrooms (Lipponen, 2000; Paavola, Lipponen, & Hakkaraine, 2002; Scardamalia Bereiter; 1994; Xie, DeBacker, Ferguson, 2006) and supports cognitive and metacognitive engagement and complex reasoning and argumentation (Brown, Ellery, & Campione, 1998; Hoadley & Linn, 2000).

Attitude toward the class and confidence in technology skills is related to participation in online discussions. Similarly, motivation and self-regulation have also been identified as important to success in online learning (Artino, 2008). These different findings suggest a possible link between motivation and students’ attitude toward a class and the confidence they have in their technical skills. Understanding students’ motivation aids in identifying issues that influence their motivation and facilitates the exploration of instructional strategies for promoting students’ motivation and consequently the quality of online discussions.

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