

Title: The role of motivational teaching techniques in adult distance learning programmes

Abstract: This qualitative research study explored motivational teaching techniques used by instructors of distance learning programmes (DLPs) to assist adult learners in achieving learning outcomes that meet their educational goals. The authors investigated how 11 instructors in a DLP at a large university in Ghana, Africa, applied the techniques, as well as the challenges they faced. The instructors were purposively selected for face-to-face individual interviews and classroom observations. Data were analysed using content, constant comparison and thematic approaches. The findings revealed that in their teaching of adults, the instructors used different motivational techniques, described in this research as *patching*, *resting*, *piecemealing*, *shared learning* and *opportunity to try*. Although the choice of techniques overlapped among the instructors in the sample, they each applied them differently to help their adult learners to learn effectively. The instructors also encountered challenges (teaching frustrations), such as learner absenteeism, unwillingness to accept change, disrespect and the lack of preparedness. These findings led to the conclusion that indisciplined learner behaviour can cause underperformance. Given that the instructors faced diverse challenges, the authors recommend that open and distance learning (ODL) instructors in Ghana take advantage of professional development opportunities to keep up to date with techniques for managing complex adult learning environments and issues. Internationally, the findings of this study highlight the need for ODL providers around the world to regularly review their services to ensure that the challenges instructors and learners are facing are addressed in a timely manner. This will ensure that ODL remains a viable alternative mode of education, especially during exceptional circumstances like COVID-19 lockdowns.