Article Review: 
The Impact of Fun and Enjoyment on Adult Learning

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Abstract
The article review of ‘The Impact of Fun and Enjoyment on Adult Learning’ (Lucardie, 2014) opens doors to the kaleidoscope of fun and enjoyment amongst adult learners. The essence of this review is an informative snapshot on the critical issues of how fun and joy have impacted adult learning through a qualitative research drawing upon traditions of phenomenology. It aims to explore the affective experiences of fun and enjoyment. This article review attempts to highlight an insightful assessment of the ideas and the arguments that are being discussed by the author. The different interpretation of this concept draws out contrasting elements between learners and teachers’ beliefs. A twist to this review is a reflective stance procured to address central issues emerging in the article related to the Malaysian context. It is through the lens of the reader, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)-4R is proposed. This refers to the process of continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning of an educational programme. This review concludes with the framing of CQI-4R to illustrate reflect, revisit, realign and reconstruct processes that could possibly navigate the architectural landscape of the Malaysian Teacher Education.

Keywords
impact, adult learners, fun, enjoyment, affective experiences

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1 INTRODUCTION
The parameters of the review focus on central issues and can be recapitulated graphically as in Figure 1.

The review consists of a summary and a reflection. The summary highlights salient points in the Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Discussions and Conclusion. On the contrary, the reflection is based on the central issues from the article pertinent to the reader: understanding content, content significance, bridging experiences, applicability and the possibility of implementation in the Malaysian context.

Figure 1. The Impact of Fun and Enjoyment on Adult Learning.
2 SUMMARY

This summary focused on central issues from the article highlighting the author’s claims and assertions.

2.1 Introduction

Within the perspective of fun and enjoyment, this article, The Impact of Fun and Enjoyment on Adult Learning by Dorothy Lucardie from the Journal Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, volume 142, 439-446 intensely raised the central theme evolving the exploration of learning experiences of 40 adult learners in the Certificate of General Education for Adults in Australia. This included nine teachers that focused on what they truly believe these concepts represented. When learners readily expressed their viewpoints, they extended their appreciation about fun and enjoyment by stating how meaningful it was to have enjoyment in their classes. The research suggestively infiltrated an authentic, rich learning experiences where adult learners acknowledged what fun or enjoyment was and how they described them through an affective domain.

2.2 Literature Review

Cutting across adverse yet significant literature, the author was able to intensify how fun and enjoyment were fundamental with the learning of children and older adults. Highlighted as equally important was the research gap of how humour among adults was less explored. No research was cited on these in the light of new pedagogies nor 21st century competencies.

2.3 Methodology

Advocating a qualitative phenomenological approach (Creswell,2013) exploring the affective experiences of fun and enjoyment was a modest attempt to enrich the lived experiences by exploring its meanings. The instrument adopted was through verbal interviews. It pivoted on communicative processes to reflect upon experiences and perspectives. The author clearly specified that the research was qualitative therefore, it was an interpretive, theory building and descriptive in nature.

2.4 Findings and Discussions

What emerged as significant findings were the experiences of fun and enjoyment for adult learners and teachers in the course, the fun and enjoyment elements and its impact. Their positive outlook towards their beliefs exemplified the elements of this concept as an exemplar of engaging activities, their learning process, their interaction with others, humour, achievement, their emotions and well-being. Sharing the same denominator of fun and joy, this concept acted as a motivator that provided learning opportunities for adult learners and teachers alike to acquire knowledge and skills. In this light, the concept was seen as a tool to develop a focus on learning. The discussion of the relevance of fun and enjoyment brought about a prominent aspect which pointed to its function to develop a social network community.

Surfacing as thought-provoking and stimulating was the discussion of the study that amplified the importance of learning experiences of fun and enjoyment for adult learners. The author and their teachers were focusing on some differing views. The author claimed that the adult learners emphasised on fun and enjoyment; whereas their teachers spoke of engagement as being a fun and enjoyable thing. Additionally, the teachers’ perception of enjoyment focused on safety, social relationship, and a relaxing environment. Inculcating the culture and conducive ambience would be a source of motivation in creating a social connectivity among adult learners. Thus, what was amplified as a critical aspect revolved around the intensification elements of fun and enjoyment during adult learners’ classes. The author claimed that the findings revealed: 85% adult learners embraced fun, 50% talked about enjoyment, while a significant few 2%, favoured enjoyment and no fun. The author seemed to contradict his assertion earlier by stating that both parties like fun and enjoyment, but the data revealed otherwise, with 2% not wanting any fun.

2.5 Conclusion

The author emphasised the magnitude of the whole learning opportunities offered to adult learners taking into account: their interests and their emotional stability. Coining motivation as an element for learning was apt but enjoying the experience could have led to better enthusiasm for learning and concentration. Within the realm of the discussion, the beliefs that adult learners and teachers held close to their hearts sent a breakthrough moment relating to the impact of fun and enjoyment on their learning. The research findings showed that fun and enjoyment were significant in adult learning programme. The author asserted that adult learners and teachers alike, specified fun and enjoyment as emitting positive emotions which were interconnected to successful learning and self-perception of a balanced well-being. The ‘missing link’ here would probably be the reasons for the differences based on the data to create a ‘research gap’ for the aspect less explored and pave the way for future research.

3 REFLECTION: THE READER’S LENS

The crux of the reflection emphasised on the ‘light bulbs moments’ that the reader deemed cognitively challenging and has its significance in teacher education in the Malaysian context.

3.1 Understanding Content: What did the reader understand from the content of the article?

Adult learners and teachers have a common strand in holding on to their beliefs and appreciation about fun and enjoyment. By analogy, they are like mirrors reflecting the same image, looking at the same things in learning and teaching. But sometimes when we have a concave mirror, it manifests different images. This is the time when they differ in priorities. What fun was to adult learners might not be what it meant to teachers. In real-life context, the ‘needs’ may not match the ‘wants’. In this case, what do adult learners do? To meet at crossroads, would be making a compromise on teaching and learning. Not in terms of quality but in terms of tolerance and understanding. The reader believes that the key to successful training in teacher education is to address the learner’s needs.

Despite the differences in perceptions between adult learners and teachers, the aspects that glued them together
were still fun and enjoyment. Hence, interest became a common core in promoting learning. Thus, by the same token, the three elements of successful learning, fun, enjoyment and also self-perception have led to a list of competence, independence, motivation and goal achievement. The reader concurs with the author that there were activities that adult learners were interested in. Cited as favourites were activities that made them happy with fun-filled hands-on oriented activities and humour in a non-threatening environment. This was the catalyst that accelerated adult learners to be motivated. How will they stay motivated?

The adult learners expressed contradictions on different grounds. Adult learners have their own philosophy to learning and values of what made them ticked when it came to fun and enjoyment. What we need to realise is to what extent do we have the drive to sustain the interest of adult learners with only fun and enjoyment in their learning? What are our roles to create other learning opportunities for adult learners to develop motivation to learn and grow?

3.2 Content significance: How is the content discussed in the article significant to the reader?

What resonated with the reader was the fun element in learning and teaching. The exploration of repertoire of teaching methods provided shade for learning, a form of scaffolding functioned in an organised manner to the adult learners. It was an interesting idea that the experience of fun and enjoyment, its impact, its elements and the beliefs we embraced so dearly, will influence our teaching. At any one point in time, adult learners know what they want and it can be the opposite of what teachers have to offer.

This would probably be a crucial aspect that must be considered in teacher training programmes; whether the curriculum for each programme is designed to meet that needs. Linking what adult learners need to which teaching method adopted would also be a challenging task. The thought of adults as being very focused on their learning and they inclination to learn, inspired the reader to move on in her own trajectory of learning. ‘Wow’ words like motivation, light hearted approach, significant goal and state enduring traits or dispositions were perhaps the most likeable words in this content that amplified volume of what one should be aiming for. The social aspect is also equally important as adult learners are social being with a sense of belonging and connection; a must to stay happy in learning.

What experiences the reader had with the students, reflected what was discussed in this article. Powerful words like active participation, not boring, social connection, humour and new exciting ideas were familiar utterances in their communicative acts. It was ‘in the moment’ instances to hear their voiceless voices. How then could the reader make the difference?

3.3 Bridging experiences: Can the reader relate it to past experiences?

What the reader intends to express, document the struggles, to reflect on the process of the professional and personal learning. The reader was hoping for fun and enjoyment in the early years of teaching. The reader’s journey has been one but marked specific experiences, full of challenges. It has been significantly important to the reader as a result of the long and winding experiences. What can an adult learner do? Engagement? What was described in the article, teachers preferred engagement rather than fun. A relaxed atmosphere, having fun and enjoyment and taking things on board would be the three most important things the reader wants to do as a teacher educator.

The reader’s journey began with self-awareness and self-reflection as the reader often unpacked the suitcase and drew out the philosophical stance about what teaching and learning was. As the adult learner in the article, the reader would continuously progress along the learning continuum. This was where the reader discovered Knowledge, Skills, Attitude and Other qualities. (KSAO). The reader often engaged in understanding the significance of learning experience, just like what the adult learners and teachers in this article experienced.

Yet there were moments the reader felt vulnerable and seek clarifications on the importance of a programme. It was interesting. What do adult learners do next? Even more disturbing was the reader had to confront the biggest fear of not knowing and realising the importance of careful consideration in planning an Initial Teacher Education Programme.

Experiences as the reader’s backdrop of learning curve, often echoed accelerated tensions between the reader and the community of practice on professional dispositions and what works best in teacher training. It magnified anxiety as discussion continued into debates in any intellectual discourse. Similar to adult learners in the article, the reader has always been motivated to bring about fun and enjoyment in training, but not always agreeable to a significant few. These experiences taught the reader a lesson to align the thinking with the issue of development and change. This was the A-aha Reflective Jolt moment: to embrace the theories of change as a way to improve the professional development.

3.4 Applicability: Is it applicable to the Malaysian context?

With the article being an easy read, it sets new challenges in becoming adult learners who appreciates the teacher and the desire to learn. Considering aspects such as social context, conducive environment, humour, motivation and many others, this would seem applicable for teacher education in the Malaysian context. It illuminates the elements of the concept of fun and enjoyment and sets the tone of becoming a teacher educator that drives the adult learners to willingly learn and to make an impact on their own learning processes. Bearing in mind the beliefs held by both parties about the impact of fun and enjoyment on adults’ learning, in what areas do we want to improve? And by how much? Can we integrate the central issues discussed here with the Education Policy at hand?

The article was a good read as it stimulated the reader’s metacognition; what it has been and what will be the impact of fun and enjoyment. It also highlighted the intention of both parties, adult learners and teachers alike. Their opinions outlined and respected. Their similarities in
To teacher educators or trainers, this article is highly recommended as there are suggestions and instances whereby, as a reflective practitioner, this will be the eye opener for exploring one self and create room for improvement of your own current practice. What transpired in the discussion of the article would be the quintessence of what a classroom practitioner will engage in: designing fun and engaging tasks for adult learners. The relevance and aptness of the issues discussed here, have bearing on adult learners and also teachers. Would it be possible to navigate the direction we are going, if we do not know which direction we are at? A provocative tangent to a metacognitive challenge.

3.5 Possibility: Can the reader implement what has been discussed in teacher training?

It would be helpful if we start by asking ourselves, where do we go from here? We should reflect on what foresights and insights we have gained. In addressing the challenges and the execution of activities through fun and enjoyment, what is our hindsight? But how can we go forward if we do not learn from the past?

Perhaps, the way to implement this idea, would be experimenting these with a critical eye: A self–reflection. Thus, we need to permeate into the lens of the 21st century classroom with 6Cs: communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, character and citizenship. (Fullan & Scott, 2014)

Hypothetically possible is we need to bridge the gap of our present situation adjacent to exploring new pedagogies with the 6Cs for adult learners. We need to engage in an introspective reflection towards Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). The reader proposes a forward-thinking CQI; the 4R: Reflect; Revisit, Realign and Reconstruct as illustrated in Figure 2.

Profoundly pertinent impact of this article is the espousal of 4R and advocacy of new pedagogies; bridging partnership with adult learners This certainly augments a potentially promising ‘state-of-the-art’ for teacher education landscape in Malaysia.

4 REFERENCES

