

## Adult Student Considerations Regarding a Learning Environment Conditions

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**Abstract** *In our society, in our environment and right in front of us are occurring different social, cultural and economical movements, which, considered from professional and scientific point of view, impose a real commitment. In these conditions adults are facing a lot of challenges and they return to school to confront these challenges. They want to learn and get the best of this process. But what is the learning environment condition that is created in classrooms, for adult students? What are the physical conditions in which all the learning activities take place? The main aim of this paper is to present some of the opinions of the adult students in Korça and Elbasan Universities that are pursuing their part-time studies, regarding learning environment conditions, where their learning activities take place. To analyze the data for this paper are used only the quantitative methods. The sample is adult students that are frequenting part time study in Korça and Elbasan University. To select the sample from the whole population is used the stage sampling. For gathering data are used interviews. The analysis of data has been carried out according to normal statistical methods. In summary, the adult students want to learn, but the level of the learning environment condition, which is created in the classrooms, is under the average level. From adult learners' reports, they emphasise that the institutions should guarantee better accommodation conditions for teaching and learning activities. Furthermore, lecturers should use more often techniques and methodology that ensure not only engendering the cognitive competences, but also motivate adult students toward learning.*

**Keywords:** *Level of the learning environment condition, teaching and learning activities*

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### Introduction

For a long time several adult learning theories that have served as the framework for training adults have existed. Today does predominate a very spread idea that adult as learners require different educational strategies than children, and they also need very organized learning environments. But, what is a learning environment? According to Brent G. Wilson, a learning environment is a place where people can draw upon resources to make sense out of things and construct meaningful solutions to problems. Adult students who are given generous access to information resources, books, printed and video materials, and tools such as word processing programs, e-mail, search tools, etc, are ready to learn something if they are also given proper support and guidance. Under this conception, a learning environment is a place where learning is fostered and supported.

A second definition of a constructivist learning environment would be: a place where learners may work together and support others as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem solving activities (Perkins, D. 1996).

In this point of view, furthermore, the physical environment in which instructions take place and the structure of the activities in the course can influence learning. People react differently to such factors as room temperature, arrangement of the room, and time of day in which learning activities take place, such as some people prefer early morning versus late in the day. People, also react differently to brightness of the lighting, and sound such as sound distractions from nearby construction or talking among participant. In addition, adults differ with regard to whether they prefer to work alone or in groups. Fisher (1989) has combined all these factor to depict various types of preferences that adult may have when they enter in the learning environment.

First of all, adult learners are very sensitive regarding physical factors such as, the noise level, lighting, and the temperature, the structure of the classroom and time of the day.

Second, the adult learners are perceptible about the emotional factors such as the social needs regarding learning, when the adult students can learn alone or with others or about their motivation regarding learning than can be extrinsic or intrinsic.

The last, but not the list, adults are also sensitive about style of learning that trainer use in classroom, which can be auditory, visual and kinesthetic.

The main aim of this paper is to present some of the opinions of the adult students in Korça and Elbasan Universities, that are pursuing their part-time studies, regarding the learning environment conditions, where their learning activities

takes place. This paper is part of my PhD project and all the work that is presented here is in process.

## Methodology

### Procedures and sample.

For my study, I have chosen a probability sample, as it draws randomly from the wider population. This is very useful, because when the study will be finished, the opportunity and possibility to make generalizations is opened. Positively, it is used stage sampling (Cohen, L, Manion, L & Morrison, K, 2005). It involves selection of the sample in stages, that is, taking samples from samples. From Korça and Elbasan University, it is chosen a number of faculties at random, and from within each of these faculties, is selected a number of courses at random, and from within these courses is selected a number of adult students. The sample is composed from adult students from these Universities that are pursuing part time formal education.

### The interview

The part of the information, that it is used on the focus of this paper is obtained using a mixed interview. The major themes in the interview were (a) general issue, (b) reasons for participating, (c) evaluating the learning environment conditions for their teaching and learning, (d) self-perception in general. All the questions that I have used are open and closed question and I have done their codification after. In this paper is taken into consideration only the adult student evaluation for the learning environment conditions where learning activities take place. Also, the respondents were given a detailed explanation as an introduction to the interview.

### Sources of error

In common with many other studies in the area of adult education, the part of the study that is presented in this paper is based on self-reporting. The results therefore depend on how respondents understood the explanations given by the interviewer and their readiness to fulfil the instrument. Some of question allowed for interpretation by the respondents.

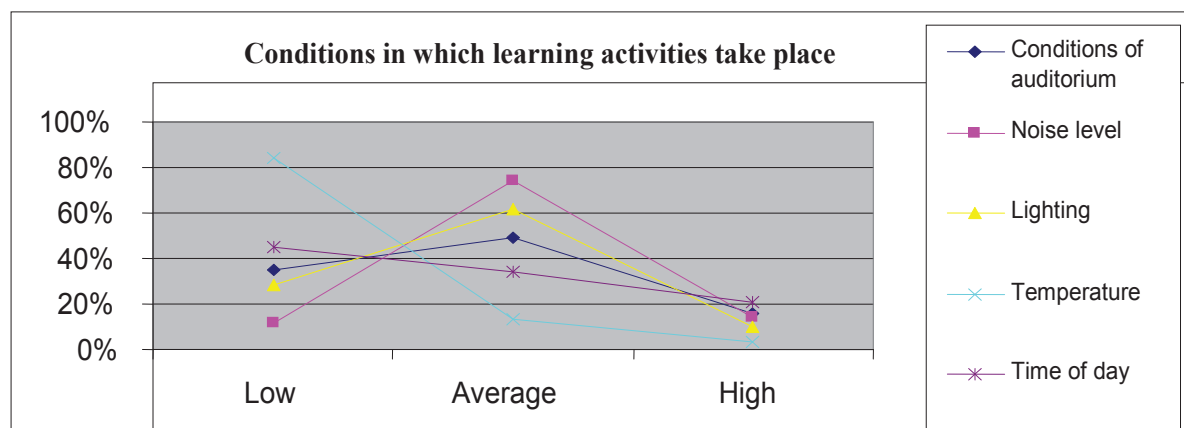
### Analysis

The structure of this paper is quantitative. Below is discussed only for quantitative data, therefore analysis has been carried out according to statistical methods and the results are represented in tabular form with relevant comments.

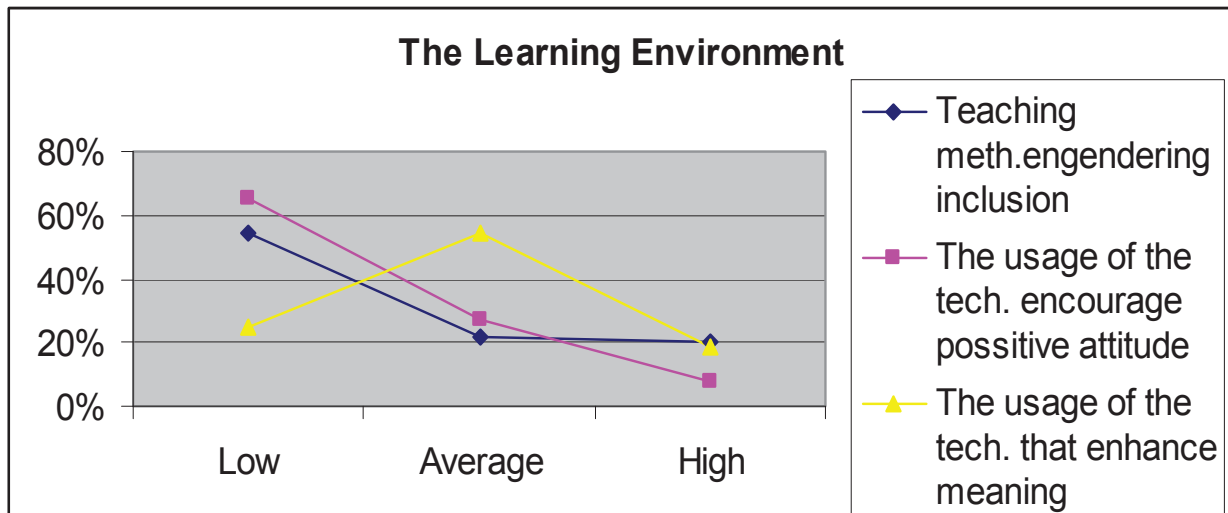
## Preliminary results and discussion

To study learning environment conditions in Elbasan and Korça University, the adult students were asked about the physical conditions of the auditorium in which learning activities take place and the usage from the lecturer of teaching methodologies that motivate adult students to learn.

After answers' codifications the result were divided into three levels; low level, average level and high level.



From the above graphic we can see that the adult students have a very strong problem with the level of the temperature in the auditorium. 84 % of them report that in the winter season the temperature in the auditoriums are very low and they do not have heating equipments. According to them is very hard to attend the learning activities in low temperature. As well, 49% of them report that the auditoriums have the desks, but they need the projectors, flip charter and other visual equipments, because these increase the ability to observe and process visual stimuli and visualise visual images and facilitate the learning process. Furthermore, they are satisfied with the time in which the lessons take place, respectively Saturday and Sunday, because in this time they are free and disposable to attend the classes.



In the second chart is shown the respective graphics of the other three variables that compose learning environment, that are, the usage of teaching methodologies that engendering participant inclusion, the usage of the techniques that enhance positive attitude toward learning and the usage of techniques that enhance meaning.

About the usage of teaching methodologies that engendering participant inclusion, 54 % of them report that these methodologies are used few times, 22 % report that these methodologies are used several times in continuity and 20% think that these methodologies are used more than half of the time of the course. Four percent of the respondents did not answer this question. Also, adult learners think that course agreement should be negotiable, the trainers and the lecturer should interact more respectfully with learners and the lecturer should allow learners to help each other in the learning process in classroom.

About the usage of techniques that encourage positive attitude toward learning 65 % of them report that these techniques are used few times, 27 % of them report that these techniques are used several times and 8 % think that this techniques are used more than half of the time of the courses. In this point of view, the lecturer should work with learners to personalize the relevance of course content. He or she should use the learners' experiences, concerns, and interests to develop course content. Also, the lecturer should use during the course content learners' prior knowledge and should encourage learners to understand, develop, and express different points of view to encourage more positive attitude toward learning.

About the usage of techniques that enhance meaning 25 % of adult students report that these techniques are used several times, 54 % reports that these technique are used more than half of the time and 19 % reports that these techniques are used during all the time of the course. Two percent did not answer this question. In this aspect, adults in general, report that the lecturers provide opportunities for learners to participate actively in challenging ways, and ask higher order questions of all learners throughout instruction. The lecturer also tries to elicit quality responses from the learners, provides opportunities for continual feedback for individual learning. They should do more to help learners to identify accomplishments and should offer more options for assessment.

## Conclusion

Learning environment in the classroom is a very important factor during the learning process. From the data gathered from the interviews from adult learners, they report that institutions should improve the conditions in which teaching and learning activities take place. Also, the lecturers and the trainers should use, during their teaching process, methodology

that all learners are equitably and actively participating and interacting with each-other, where learners are encouraged to understand, develop and express different points of view, where the lecturer in concert with the learners create opportunities for the inquiry, investigation and group projects. Thereby, the learning environment would be richer and more appropriate helping the learning activities take place.

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