

**Empowering Adult Immigrant Learners Through Systematic Motivation Work
in the Classroom**

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Abstract

This is an action research study investigating how one can work systematically in adult learning centres to support adult immigrant learners to increase their intrinsic motivation and develop strategies to take responsibility for their own development and learning. We have applied what we call a five-step motivation method, where the adult students define and write down what is important to them, their success factors and their obstacles, and choose focus areas and strategies to apply to achieve what is important to them. As part of the process, the students also reflect on these elements in class discussions led by the teacher, which means that the students support each other to find solutions to their obstacles and to find strategies to work towards their goals. The student reflections from the sessions are part of the data collected in this study, and these are complemented by students' self-reports on the usefulness of the approach. The project was carried out in several groups at three adult learning centres, and the findings show that the majority of the participants were satisfied with the approach. They report that they became better at planning and more motivated to work towards their goals. An element that was emphasised by the teachers was the importance of letting the students use their native language when needed. We conclude that the method we present here may be a useful tool to assist adult immigrant learners to experience intrinsic motivation and develop strategies for mastering learning and life.

Keywords: adult learning, learning strategies, motivation, self-determination theory, self-regulated learning

The year is 1987, and the place is Northern Iraq. I'm stationed at a military hospital because of my health care educational background. One day I was commanded to go to the war arena, and I was assigned the task to check on medical equipment. Every day I had to stay in my refuge, which was a small hole in the ground; 1 meter deep, 1 meter long and 50 centimeter in breadth. I had to stay in the hole the whole day not to be shot by the enemy. I could only leave it during night to work and to collect food and drink. In this hole, I experienced both mental and physical obstacles, but if I wanted to come home and see my family again, I had to focus on my own goal and my own plan, and manage to keep myself alive and fight death. I survived this horrible situation using the same type of strategy that the motivation method presents; I asked myself what my goal is, what the obstacles are, and what type of effort I have to make to survive. (Quote from an immigrant)

This story illustrates the essence of the five-step motivation method presented in this article, a method that challenges people to identify their own goals, strengths and weaknesses in order to find solutions to possible obstacles. Many immigrants who come to a new culture with a foreign language, perhaps without official documentation on education and work experience, have difficulties succeeding in their new lives as the obstacles may be overwhelming. This study, carried out in three adult learning centres in Norway, presents an approach that may facilitate motivating and empowering immigrants by providing them with a strategy for mastering learning and life in general. The five-step approach applied builds on self-determination theory, stating that in order to be intrinsically motivated the three basic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness must be met (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When applying the five-step motivation method, the teacher facilitates learners to take control of their own development and learning and lets learners choose goals according to their own values and ambitions, in order to meet the needs of competence and autonomy. The learners also discuss possible solutions to obstacles in a community of peers, which facilitates meeting the basic need of relatedness.

One essential element that influences whether immigrants succeed in being integrated in Norwegian society is their ability to learn the Norwegian language. We have an immigration law in Norway stating that people with status as immigrants have the right and duty to attend 600 hours of Norwegian and social science teaching (Introduksjonsloven, 2003, § 17), and if they need more Norwegian teaching, they have the right to receive up to 2400 extra hours (§18). Most immigrants who come as refugees enter into what is called an “introduction programme”, where they get a salary for attending classes for two or three years. Many refugees lack school certificates and they need to take classes to prepare for upper secondary school or higher education. Many do this while they are in the introduction programme, in addition to learning Norwegian. The latest trend in Norway is that more and more immigrants prepare for upper secondary school, regardless of whether they have an education from before or very little educational background, as it is becoming more and more difficult to get a job without documentation of some type of formal education.

In spite of comprehensive programmes, many immigrants experience that learning a new language and succeeding in a new society is a challenge. The purpose of the before-mentioned introduction programme is to “strengthen newly arrived immigrants” opportunities for participation in occupations and society, and gain economic independence” (2003, §1, own translation). Still, statistical numbers reveal that immigrants struggle to achieve this. While the unemployment rate for the total population generally has been low in Norway, (2.7% in 2018;

Statistics Norway, 2018), the unemployment rate among immigrants is normally higher (6.4% in 2018; Statistics Norway, 2018). This makes one ask the question as to whether the integration efforts we make in Norway have the effect that we wish for, or whether there is a need to search for new methods and approaches.

A recent research report on the Norwegian introduction programme for immigrants shows that it is difficult to prove a correlation between single efforts and results for participants in the introduction programme, and the conclusion of the report is that there are too few really qualifying measures in the programme as it is now (FAFO, 2017, p.31). This indicates a need for innovation in this field, something our study presents. The research question of this study is: Can a systematic approach, identifying goals, strengths and obstacles and deciding on focus and action, support adult immigrant learners to achieve increased motivation and strategies that help them take responsibility for their own learning and life? In the following, we present issues being debated currently in research in this field, the research methodology applied, the results and findings, and a discussion of these.

Literature Review

For several decades, the idea of multiculturalism has been prominent in many liberal, Western nations, a concept that refers to the existence of cultural plurality in societies (Mitchell, 2017). However, there has been a significant political backlash to this idea of states that successfully can accommodate a diversity of cultures and religions. There have been several reactions in Europe against multiculturalism, claiming that it has failed as the celebration of cultural difference has been at the expense of community cohesion (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). This criticism has been countered by adult educators emphasising the importance of cultural dialogue and open educative spaces for different cultural groups (Morrice, 2018; Roets et al., 2011; Wildemeersch, 2011). Still, it is a much-debated issue in research on adult education of immigrants whether practices build on the idea of multiculturalism, or rather on an idea that immigrants need an intervention to successfully be included or integrated in society (Morrice et al., 2017).

In their critical work on discourse of adult education in Sweden, Fejes et. al. (2018), point out that the role of adult education is helping citizens adapt to a constantly changing society in line with normative assumptions concerning how citizens should be. They refer to this process as shaping neo-liberal subjectivities. In an earlier publication, the same authors claim that underlying this practice, there is a notion that the adult learners are not yet “full” citizens, and that adult learning is a place for abnormal citizens to be shaped and molded into desirable subjects, or into an employable workforce (Sandberg et al., 2016). In spite of positive notions and ambition to empower, Sandberg et.al claim that the adult learners appear to be failed citizens who need motivation and goals in life. In another study based on interviews with adult learners and teachers of adult education, the same researchers describe the Swedish municipal adult education as a place “for the individual to create a goal-oriented future” (Fejes et al., 2018, p. 471), with a focus on the labour market. This is described as an instrumental and non-relational process with little interaction among peers.

In line with the more recent research studies conducted in a Swedish context, a study conducted more than a decade ago by Morrice (2007), investigating lifelong learning and social integration of refugees in the UK, concluded that the discourse of inclusion leads to narrow learning opportunities for immigrants. She argues that there is a need to recognise the significance of the social capital the immigrants hold, and more informal and social learning

opportunities (2007). Also in German and Austrian contexts, research presents the same criticism (Heinemann, 2017), that the adult learning programmes for immigrants focus on economy and submission, making the learners employable and polite, as many of them later will hold badly paid positions with little independence.

A recent study from England and Scotland also shows efforts to create alternatives to the economy-driven programmes focused on labour markets (Duckworth & Tett, 2019). The alternative approach presented in this study facilitates learners to reclaim identities of success by giving them opportunities to recognise the discourses that shape them and how these discourses impact their lives. The learners were given space to explain their own life and learning narratives, and through this understand events that had held them back. By doing so, negativity was removed, and academic progress and personal fulfilment was achieved. An important element mentioned in this study is that the results were especially positive when the tutors engaged with the learners in an egalitarian way.

Research on adult learning for immigrants is limited in a Norwegian context (Monsen, 2015). However, one interesting finding from research on basic reading and writing training is that, very often, this type of instruction is seen as little relevant or useful, and it does not consider the adult learners' previous knowledge and experience (Alver & Dregelid, 2001; Monsen, 2015). A recent qualitative study shows that identity, self-feeling and motivation may be affected if one is not allowed to show who one is and what one is able to do (Alver & Dregelid, 2016). Research has shown that for students with less education, it is particularly important that their life- and language-experiences are not excluded (Auerbach, 1993, p. 18). Collier & Thomas' (2002) research on bilingual models concludes that it is important that cognitive, emotional and social needs are met in a developing language learning situation.

In Nortons's investigation of diverse aspects in relation to identity and language learning, she problematizes that learners can be defined as either motivated or unmotivated (2000). She also problemizes the dichotomous distinctions between the language learner and the language learning context and the learner's identity related to the world and the future. The learner's investment in English must be understood in the context of their changing identity across time and space, and the opportunities they have, meaning what situations they have access to participate in. Important aspects in second language learning which must be understood are learners' desire for friendship and social integrity (Spolsky, 1989), for feeling worthy and comfortable, for the possibilities for work – preferably in their professions – (Norton, 2000), and for the understanding of possibilities for the future (West, 1992). These aspects are taken into consideration in the approach applied in the current study on how to empower immigrants. The approach applied here, which will be more thoroughly described below, does not only focus on individuals' possibilities for the future, but also on individuals' past, their dreams and qualities, and how the social capital they hold can help them learn in the present, as well as shape their future.

Methodology

This study is part of a larger action research study (cf. Postholm, 2007), where we have developed and adjusted a five-step motivation method for different contexts in order to meet the need for increased motivation for learning in school in general. The current study is a qualitative case-study (Creswell, 2013, p. 99), where we examine how the five-step method we have developed may support adult students with immigrant background to become more motivated and take control of their own lives and learning. The analysis is based on students'

reflections from the implementation of the method, as well as students' and teachers' evaluations of the method.

The five-Step Approach

The five-step motivation method applied in this study consisted of the following steps (figure 1):

- 1) What is important to succeed with in life? What is important in the near future?
- 2) What skills do you have? What are you satisfied with in your present situation?
- 3) Is there something in yourself or in your situation that stops you from reaching your goals? 4) What do you choose to work on the next month to reach the goals you have?
- 4) What will you do to manage to carry this out?

These questions were repeated several times throughout the school year, partly focused on general issues in life, and partly focused on language learning and other subjects in school. Some groups participated only one semester, and in these groups the method was applied only once.

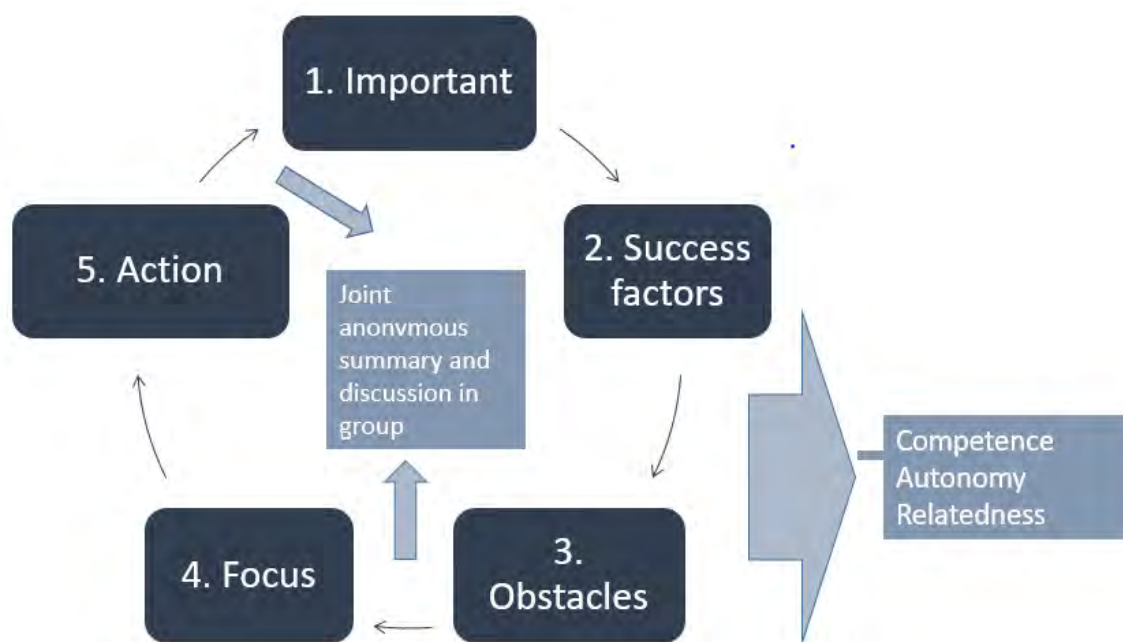


Figure 1: A five-step motivation method (previously published in Horverak, Langeland & Fagerhaug, 2018; Horverak & Aanensen, 2019; Horverak, 2020)

The students discussed the questions in class and then wrote individual answers in books with allocated random numbers. Only the students knew their own numbers, so they could retrieve their own books the next session. The teachers collected the books after each session and started every following session with a summary of what the students in the group had written. Then, the class discussed what could be done to reach the different goals and to overcome the obstacles mentioned. In most of the sessions, the students were allowed to discuss using their native language, and interpreters were used for some of the students with very little Norwegian language competence. Students who had very weak Norwegian skills were also allowed to write in their native language, and the text was translated into Norwegian.

Some of the groups had a “focus week”, where the motivation method was applied in different contexts. In two of the groups preparing for upper secondary school, the method was applied in the disciplines Norwegian, mathematics, English, religion and social sciences. In two of the groups learning Norwegian, the method was applied in a student business project carried out as part of the Norwegian teaching. A tool we use in the project called “the Focus Model” was also applied in these groups, where the students defined together what they found important. Following this, they sorted out what was urgent, what was distracting and what was wasted.

Data Collection and Analysis

The reflections the students wrote during the motivation sessions are part of the material in this study, as well as observations from the sessions in classes. An inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) of the students’ reflections was carried out. At the end of the first semester, the students also filled in evaluations with questions concerning how they had experienced the motivation sessions and whether they experienced increased motivation to learn. The evaluation form used after the first semester was translated to Arabic and Tigrinja, the dominant native languages in the groups. The students were allowed to choose what language to use in their evaluations.

At the end of the second semester, a new evaluation was carried out. As most of the students had improved their language skills at this point, the evaluation form was not translated to other languages, and the students were encouraged to write in Norwegian. The groups who participated only one semester also filled in this evaluation form. The teachers also evaluated how the motivation method worked, what was positive and what was challenging, and some of the teachers’ reflections are included at the end of the analysis.

The following questions were included in the student evaluation given the second semester:

- 1) Give examples of something you have managed to focus on as a result of the motivation sessions.
- 2) How have you worked with the obstacles you have in yourself or in your life?
- 3) How will you consider your own efforts to follow your plans?
- 4) Do you feel that the work with the motivation method has affected the learning environment or how you view your fellow students? How?
- 5) Has the motivation method given you increased motivation to work towards your own goals? (Options: yes, no, I don’t know).
- 6) Have you become better at planning and focusing on what is important to you (Options: yes, no, I don’t know).
- 7) How satisfied have you been with the motivation method? (Options: Not satisfied, somewhat satisfied, very satisfied, I don’t know).

The students’ answers are partly presented qualitatively through examples of themes in the material and partly quantitatively through percentages of different answers.

Participants

Most immigrant student groups at two adult learning centres participated in the school year 2018/2019. This included five student groups who attended a preparatory programme for upper secondary school, following the curricula for lower secondary school, and four student groups who learnt Norwegian according to the curriculum for Norwegian and social sciences obligatory to immigrants in Norway. In addition, two groups from a third adult learning centre

participated in the autumn semester 2019. These two groups were attending the final year of the preparatory programme for upper secondary school.

Student groups at adult learning centres are dynamic and change during the year, so it is difficult to find exact numbers on how many students were exposed to the intervention. We therefore count as participants all students who filled in evaluation forms and accepted that their reflections could be used for research and calculate a response rate based on the total number of students in the group at the end of the semesters. In the total school year 2018-2019, 46 of 89 students participated in the first semester (response rate: 52%), and 45 students participated in the second semester out of 61 students (response rate: 74%). In autumn 2019, 23 students participated out of a total number of 34 students (response rate: 68%) The majority of the students had Arabic as their first language, and the second most common native language was Tigrinya. Details about the participants are not included as this may compromise anonymity.

Reliability and Validity

There are different challenges with the reliability and validity of the findings in this study – whether we can trust the findings and whether we can generalise (Jacobsen, 2005, p. 345). One challenge with an intervention study in an adult learning context is that people from other cultures may have norms that interfere with how they respond to the type of evaluation applied here. For example, not all cultures accept criticism of authorities, and perhaps the students respond positively out of respect for the teachers. Another challenge is that they may give a positive response at one point, because they feel optimistic when working with the method in class, but at another later point, they may feel more negative as they do not feel things have changed. The obstacles are still there, but they felt perhaps more optimistic at the time they evaluated the method. Some students may also have had problems understanding the questions in the evaluation form due to limited competence in Norwegian. These are all threats to the reliability of the findings in this study.

To respond to some of these challenges, we analyse the students' reflections from the motivation sessions, to see how the method actually works. We have also included open questions in the evaluation and asked the students to give some reflections on how they perceive the method, which may yield more accurate answers than choosing either “yes” or “no”. We also let the students use their native language when needed and supported them in the process with translations.

Another challenge with this study is that the sample is limited, and it may be difficult to generalise based on the findings. This is a threat to the validity of the study. Still, we argue that the experiences and examples we present may be transferrable to other, similar contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, more long-term studies with more extensive measuring instruments are needed in order to investigate possible effects of the five-step method in adult learning contexts.

Results and Findings

This study investigates whether a five-step motivation method may facilitate increased intrinsic motivation and development of strategies for learning and developing in life. The analysis presents tendencies in the students' reflections on what is important in life, what success factors and obstacles they experience they have, what they need to focus on and how they are to carry

this out. The results also include summaries of students' evaluations of how they perceive the method and their own development. Finally, teachers' reflections are presented.

Students' Reflections

Most of the students consider education and work to be important in life, and that they need to learn Norwegian in order to succeed with getting a job. Several of the students also emphasise that they want to become independent and contribute in society. One of the students writes "*If there is something I am interested in and want in life, it is to take care of myself through working like everyone else do*". Another student writes "*I want to pay taxes and be an active participant in the Norwegian society*". The aspect of wanting to contribute is repeated by several of the students: "*Through work, I want to give as much as possible to the Norwegian society*". More of the students' report that they want to start a business, for example as a tailor or a hairdresser, or they want to open a shop or a restaurant. Many of the students are also concerned with having good health, and this is related to working and contributing to society: "*I want to achieve mental calmness, wellness and safety in my life, and to achieve this, I must work and make an effort to contribute*".

Another theme in the students' reflections on what is important is relations, both within the family and in society in general. Many of them are concerned about whether their family is okay, for example, one of the students wrote "*That my child is healthy*". Others are concerned about getting news from relatives that are not in Norway. A wish to understanding Norwegian culture and becoming integrated is another central theme in the students' reflections, and this also concerns building relations. As one of the students expresses: "*I wish to find Norwegian friends*". Again, the issue of learning Norwegian is reported as important to become integrated. Also getting a driver's license is mentioned as important for being integrated, and for succeeding with getting a job.

When it comes to success factors, many of the students mention previous work experience. Others write that they are good at handling children or people in general. Another success factor revealed in the students' reflections is hope - they have a hope and a wish to become integrated and to learn Norwegian. Others write that they have motivation, and some write that they are fast learners. Having children is also mentioned as a success factor, as this may help them learn Norwegian and become integrated in a new society.

When reflecting on obstacles, most of the students point out the challenge of learning Norwegian and becoming integrated in Norwegian society. One student writes "*Nothing without language*". More of them write that they easily forget because they do not have anybody to practice with during their spare time, as they find it difficult to get in touch with Norwegians and get Norwegian friends. One example of a specific challenge mentioned is arranging children's birthdays, as misunderstandings easily appear: "*Therefore, there are almost always conflicts after birthdays, as I cannot understand what Norwegians like*". Other challenges mentioned are uncertainty concerning their financial situation and their status in Norway, for example whether they will receive citizenship.

One theme that is clear when it comes to obstacles is time. The fact that immigrants have a limited period to finish what is called "the introduction programme" is a challenge. They need to learn Norwegian and become prepared for upper secondary school in two or three years, and this is a rather short period of time to many. This is what is often referred to when they write that time is a challenge. Others emphasise the problem of finding time to schoolwork and learning Norwegian in a hectic life with family obligations and other challenges: "*I cannot do*

more than I do now. I am exhausted because I do not have any Norwegian friends [...] I am tired in my heart because the whole family depends on me as my husband is sick". More of the students mention health issues - both physical pains and mental problems as depression and stress. Others have problems studying enough because of children's illnesses or because they think about family members in other countries. One student reflects:

I am mostly lonely and have no one that can motivate me, and this has to a certain degree removed me from my goals, and I am not satisfied with my situation currently, but I hope I can take some steps to improve my life.

The most recurring themes in the reflections on what the students are to focus on are language learning and schoolwork. The students write that they want to improve their Norwegian by talking to friends and contact neighbours. Some specify that they will talk Norwegian to fellow students during the breaks, others that they will walk in parks and talk to other parents. They write that they will practice reading different texts, and many of them write that they will learn new words by watching Norwegian television: *"I will watch television and write down some difficult words"*. More of them express that they will work on grammar, and some of them are more specific, as this example shows: *"Do grammar exercises from Norsk Start every Friday from 21.00 to 22.00"*. More of them express that they will do homework, for example *"Do homework 1½ hour a day"*, and others write that they will learn a certain number of words each day. Others write that they will go to the library and borrow books. In the different subjects in school, the students report that they need to focus on learning Norwegian terms specific for each subject.

In the material from the student business, different goals are listed: to experience and carry out a project, to learn about business and finances, to learn Norwegian and get to know Norwegians, to contribute with making food, to contribute with sewing and to work together as a group. Some mention skills such as being able to sew, to paint, to clean, to do carpentry, to sell, to bake and make food and to use social media. Others mention more personal skills such as being systematic, being social and liking to help others. Of obstacles, language is mentioned, and some write that they are not good with numbers or finances. In the reflections on what they need to focus on, several of them mention that they need to practice Norwegian, both by reading and by meeting with others in the afternoons and in breaks. Some of the students report that they will focus on learning words they need when working with sewing. In material from the second round, the students are more specific about their role in the business: one will lead the sewing team, one will lead the party committee, which is to organise a multicultural buffet for the local community, some of them will focus on planning and making food for the planned party, some will focus on making advertisement and advertise on Facebook, and other relevant webpages, and some will focus on sewing.

Students' Reflections on the Five-Step Method and Their Own Development

In the evaluation after the first semester, 78%, report that they have increased their motivation to learn and 72% report that they feel the method was good for them (table 1).

Table 1: Students' responses to the evaluation after the first semester (n =46)

Question	Yes	No	I do not know
Increased motivation	78%	11%	11%
Method felt as good for them	72%	11%	17%

One of the students writes that the method is good «*Because I learnt how to motivate myself*». Another student writes “*I organised my time and felt that I had to study and learn as quickly as possible*”. A third student writes “*It gave me energy to learn more*”. More of the students express that the motivation method helped them plan their future.

The results at the end of the second semester confirm the positive responses from the first semester (table 2). 78% report that they experience increased motivation to work towards their own goals, and 80% report that they have become better at planning and keeping focus.

Table 2: Students’ responses to evaluation after second semester (n =45)

Question	Yes	No	I do not know
Increased motivation to work towards goals	78%	13%	9%
Better at planning and keeping focus	80%	7%	13%

When asked about how satisfied they are with the method, 44% report that they are very satisfied and 49% that they are somewhat satisfied, whereas only 7% report that they either do not know or are not satisfied.

The results from the third school, where the students only took part in the project for a short period during the autumn semester, also show that the method helps them (see table 3). 91% report that they experience increased motivation to work towards goals, and 96% report that they have become better at planning and keeping focus.

Table 3: Students’ responses to evaluation in school 3, after one semester (n =23)

Question	Yes	No	I do not know
Increased motivation to work towards goals	91%	0%	9%
Better at planning and keeping focus	96%	0%	4%

22% report that they are very satisfied with the method, 48% are satisfied, and 17% somewhat satisfied, whereas only 13% either do not answer or report that they do not know. In this round, the option “satisfied” was added to the evaluation form.

One of the students write that in order to deal with obstacles “*I try to focus on what is positive. I take care of my health. I use my good mood as a weapon*”. Many of the students write that they make plans and they succeed with following their own plans. Most of the students report that the learning environment has not been influenced, but one student writes that they motivate each other by using the motivation method. Another student writes “*It became easy for us to talk to the students in the group and ask how we can practice on difficult subjects*”. Some of the students also emphasise that the method creates a better dialogue between the teachers and the students, and that they appreciate receiving advice from the group.

Teachers’ Reflections

The participating teachers emphasise that the motivation work gives the students a place to express what they are concerned with, and a place where they can complain and get out frustration without this having any consequences as everything is anonymous. Some teachers also point out that it is a relief to think that it is not only the teachers’ responsibility that students learn, the students also have a responsibility to work with their own learning process. As

pointed out by the students, the teachers also say that they get a better dialogue in the classroom as they get to know each other better and build relations through working with the method.

One topic the teachers reflect on is the use of mother tongue. There is a preference for letting the students use their mother tongue when talking about such personal issues as how to master life, and what is good and what is challenging. One teacher says:

I think it is good that they can use their mother tongue, as this concerns so much that they do not have enough words. The mother tongue is their heart language, and since this is about mastering life, they should be allowed to use it, at least in the beginning.

At the same time, it is mentioned that it could also be a problem if the students just continue writing in their mother tongue when they could manage to write in Norwegian as they need writing practice.

Another aspect the teachers mention is that when they apply the method in all disciplines, they see that the students develop a set of common concepts for talking about their learning process. One teacher describes how a student reminded another student about how they had worked with the same approach in another lecture. Before applying the method across disciplines, the teachers feared that it would perhaps be too much, and that the students would be tired of hearing the same questions in all contexts. However, when reflecting on this afterwards, they agree that it is positive as it supports the students to developing a common framework for talking about learning. They also mention the need to repeat the process so that the students integrate this way of thinking. One of the teachers emphasises the value of developing this type of strategy for learning in all disciplines before moving on to upper secondary school.

Discussion

This study investigates how teachers of adult immigrant learners can support their students in developing a strategy for mastering life and learning. The main findings show that the five-step method as described here, where students define what is important to them, success factors and obstacles, and make plans on what to focus on and how to do it, may contribute to students experiencing increased motivation and improved planning skills. Applying the method also led to a better dialogue in school between teachers and students, and a common framework for learning. These findings comply with Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory (2000), that if students experience autonomy, competence and relatedness, they will be intrinsically motivated to learn. The students had the opportunity to be autonomous through making their own plans, they felt competent as they set the goals themselves and managed to follow their plans, and they worked with finding solutions to obstacles in a supportive community of peers, and through this they could experience relatedness.

One of the most important contributions of this study is a methodology that allows one to take the students' knowledge and experience as a starting point. This is needed in the field of adult learning, as research shows that teaching in this context is often considered as little relevant or little useful (Alver & Dregelid, 2001). By starting with the students' own lives and their previous experience, it is easier to meet the students on their premises in teaching. This is in line with the approach advocated in Duckworth and Tett's recent study from the UK (2019), where it is reported that adult learners reclaimed their identities through their personal narratives. The most important aspect of the five-step approach applied in the current study is

perhaps that it takes the whole person into account, so that cognitive, emotional and social needs are considered, as pointed out as important needs to be met in a language learning context (Collier & Thomas, 2002). This way of working also contrasts the neo-liberal governance mindset, critiqued in much recent research on adult education for immigrants (Fejes et al., 2018; Heinemann, 2017; Morrice, 2007).

Neoliberalism means that individuals are structured to obtain a certain behaviour and individual freedom is transformed into the instrument through which individuals are directed (Lorenzini, 2018). By applying the five-step method, we aim at focusing more on the learners' narratives and competences, what is called success factors in the method, and not only on what they need to prepare for a future occupation, or to be successfully integrated. There is, however, a danger that the method may become too instrumental, and fall in the category of neoliberalism if there is too much focus on future goals and what is realistic to achieve in the future. To avoid this, it is important to dwell on question two in the approach, what competences, or success factors, do the adult immigrant learners have, what have they experienced before, and what in their situation is positive? Individuals' understanding of the world and possibilities for the future are influenced by what range of resources they have access to (West, 1992), and for immigrants, it may be challenging to identify resources in a new and foreign context, where previous experience is perhaps dismissed due to lack of documentation. It is therefore important to support immigrants to retrieve their narratives, and reidentify their skills and resources.

It is also important to let immigrants identify the obstacles they themselves experience, as asked about in question three of the five-step method, and not let others define their obstacles for them, as there may be different views here. Still, it is a challenging balance to keep focus on adult immigrants' needs and dreams, and at the same time, help them succeed in a society where it is required that they adapt. It is perhaps the society that really needs to change, and not the immigrants. Perhaps the whole concept of integration needs to be reinterpreted and adjusted in the Western world in order to achieve a true multicultural society where different cultures coexist and diversity is appreciated.

Conclusion

Based on the findings presented in this study, we conclude that the five-step motivation method presented here can facilitate adult learners to develop a strategy for mastering life and learning. Both the teachers' and the students' reflections show that the method may be a useful tool that contributes to increased motivation and improved planning skills. Some of the essence of the method is that it takes the students' individual lives, goals and obstacles as a starting point. To get the chance to express oneself about personal issues is something the students appreciated and something that made the teachers have a better understanding of what the students were concerned with and considered important.

Even though this study shows good results, there is a need for more research on the method to see if the findings presented here can be supported by more extensive studies carried out over longer time and with a larger sample. Another aspect that may be further explored is how working with the motivation method could be transferred to making and adjusting individual plans in cooperation with the refugee services, plans that are obligatory for all immigrants in Norway who are part of the introduction programme. This could lead to increased cooperation in addition to supporting the immigrants' role in making plans for their future.

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