Utilizing the ARCS motivational model to shape a PLA program

Sara Leiste, MS
Senior Academic Associate, PLA
Capella University at a glance

- Capella University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), [www.ncahlc.org](http://www.ncahlc.org).

- Completely online institution serving adult learners

- Degree programs focus on learning outcomes that are based on professional standards and employer recommendations
Capella University

- Course match PLA model
- Prior learning assessments are based on the course competencies
- PLA is offered in all undergrad (upper division and general education) and select master’s level programs
Motivation defined

“Motivation refers broadly to what people desire, what they choose to do, and what they commit to do. In other words, investigations of motivation attempt to explain the deeply held concern among people as to why we do the things we do.”

Keller (2010, p.3)
Motivation defined...

That which explains:

• Direction of behavior (goals)
• Magnitude of behavior (intensity)
Who is responsible for motivation?

- Students make their own choices, but we influence them.
- Your influence is not neutral.
Motivation design

• Clinical/applied discipline
• Application of theories of motivation
Trade offs

- Nothing is 100% motivational
- Trade offs within ARCS model
- Trade offs between ARCS model, resources, institutional policy, etc.
How much motivation?

Relationship between Motivation and Performance

Motivation

Performance

Low

High

Low

High

© 2012 Capella University
How much motivation?

Relationship between Motivation and Performance

- High Motivation
- Low Motivation
- High Performance
- Low Performance

© 2012 Capella University
ARCS Categories: Attention

- Definition: Capturing interest.
- Questions:
  - How can this experience be more stimulating?
  - What will make it interesting?
PLA Examples: Attention

• Perceptual arousal
  – Cost/time savings
  – Personal connections with students
• Inquiry arousal
  – Explicit connections of student expertise and PLA content
  – Challenge students to deeper thinking
PLA Examples: Attention

• Variability
  – Setting short-term deadlines
  – Don’t let students get stuck in the process
  – Check in regularly
  – Encourage students to demonstrate learning in a variety of ways
ARCS Categories: Relevance

• Definition: Addressing personal needs of the learner

• Questions:
  – What is the value to my students?
  – How does this relate to their lives?
PLA Examples: Relevance

• Goal Orientation
  – Cost/time savings
  – What are your goals after graduation?
  – Helping them discuss their learning and background
  – Explain what reviewers are looking for

• Motive matching
  – Allow learners to approach tasks in their own way
  – Opportunities for collaboration between students who want it
PLA Examples: Relevance

• Familiarity
  – Clear steps
  – Stories about successful learners
  – Analogies (PLA is a like a test, a job application, a memoir, etc.)
ARCS Categories: Confidence

• Definition: Learner believes that success if possible and under their own control

• Questions:
  – How can I help them succeed?
  – How can I help them control their own success?
PLA Examples: Confidence

• Learning requirements
  – Clear expectations and criteria for success
  – Examples of completed PLAs

• Success opportunities
  – Preliminary exercises/assignments that build up to the portfolio
  – Resources as needed for writing tutoring, resumes, technical assistance, etc.
PLA Examples: Confidence

• Personal Control
  – Feedback early in the process
  – Feedback includes specific strengths attributed to personal effort
  – Feedback includes concrete strategies for improvement
ARCS Categories: Satisfaction

- **Definition:** Internal and external rewards of the accomplishment.
- **Questions:**
  - How can students feel positive about this experience?
  - What will help them desire more?
PLA Examples: Satisfaction

- **Intrinsic reinforcement**
  - Personal congratulations
  - Asking them to give advice for future learners
- **Extrinsic rewards**
  - Credit
  - Closer to graduation
  - Saving money
PLA Examples: Satisfaction

• Equity
  – Set expectations and deliver on those expectations
  – Consistent standards between students
  – Clear rationale for decision to approve or deny
Reference/Resources

- Introduction to the ARCS Model: http://www.arcsmodel.com/#!motivational-design/cyrv
- Additional resources from Keller and others: http://www.arcsmodel.com/#!references/ckbw
For more information, please contact:

Sara.Leiste@capella.edu
612-977-5663

Sara Leiste, MS
Senior Academic Associate, PLA