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TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO OLDER ADULT LEARNERS

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Abstract. *The article deals with the challenges, main principles and modern approaches to teaching adults foreign languages. As well as, motivation plays important role in structuring and conducting lessons, how to engage and interest learners via tasks, materials and how to provide learners with effective lessons. Combining various approaches and using different methods of teaching develops students' linguistic competence and their communicative abilities.*

Key words: *foreign language, teaching adults, self-study, learning autonomy.*

Teaching adults is very different from teaching children and young people. Adults are much more demanding learners; they want to get the most out of their classes. While adult learners possess valuable attributes like independence, experience, and motivation (Mei, 2023), they also face a unique set of challenges due to their multiple roles and responsibilities (Brookfield, 1986) and the influence of age-related factors (Zhu, 2017).

These challenges can often impede their progress and hinder their success in learning English.

For adults, the need to learn English is usually related to the desire to get a better job, emigrate or find a partner in an English-speaking country.

Teachers need to analyse the reasons of learning language of the adult learners. The reasons can be intrinsic that learners can learn language for themselves due to their interest and be extrinsic that there can be external reasons for studying such as applying for a job, to pass an international exam or to study abroad. Determining learners' motivation helps teachers to discover how to structure and conduct their lessons, how to engage and interest learners via tasks, materials and how to provide learners with effective lessons. There are several factors to help create and sustain motivation in adult learners:

- Create a safe-learning environment;

- Assist students in developing their self-esteem, see their progress;

- Provide meaningful feedback on the classes with recognition of good work as well as specific suggestions for improvement;

- Help learners to reflect on their learning experience and progress areas to work on;

- Use real life-based activities and tasks in order to provide real communication;

- Motivate learners to undertake responsibility for independent learning;

- Share your enthusiasm and energy. Techers' energy and enthusiasm can be great way to motivate your students.

We have main principles of teaching adult learners English as a foreign language.

1. Select materials carefully

While teaching adult learners, we should know their needs analyses. With the help of learners' needs analysis the teacher can know how to structure and deliver their lessons, analyse the styles of learners and their interests. Selecting materials is vital principles of productive lesson. The topics should be interesting, informative, updated themes and they can be used in their future careers and daily life experiences. It is a bit

difficult to involve all learners' input topics and information that will be suitable for the majority of your class. As well as, the case of language tasks is the same important as selecting materials. The teacher needs to use variety types of language tasks for the students who have different requirements.

2. Use a variety of teaching methods.

Teachers need to provide lessons to students with different teaching methods. A wide range of teaching methods, teaching techniques are the main factor of engaging and keeping them interesting. Teachers should use different teaching techniques, work with authentic materials or the teacher can organize some games which it requires from learners to get them to stand up, mingling around the room and talk, communicate each other to do activities.

3. Adapt different materials to meet adult learners' needs.

Adapting materials is one the essential principles of teaching adult learners. Teacher needs to select and adapt materials according to the learners' needs, preferences, backgrounds and motivation. But it is difficult to adapt materials taking into consideration of all tips for group teaching. The teacher can try to input topics and information that will be suitable for majority of your class. English coursebooks can be a good resource for learners. While selecting and adapting coursebooks, you need to consider the following tips:

-In order to meet your learners needs and preferences, you need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your chosen materials;

-What language areas, skills you have to focus on in class. Besides, you need to integrate your skill-based teaching lesson to pronunciation, grammar structure and vocabulary lessons;

-You should pay attention of the topics that they are relevant to learners' interest, cultural expectations. Or the teacher can change some materials to about learners' own country. Moreover, you can change some reading or listening materials to authentic materials that are relevant to learners' lives and promote real communication;

- Teachers should use more natural, real language examples, activities and can elicit information from students asking questions depending on their real-life experiences. It helps students provide a meaningful learning and the language point can be used in daily life situations or in work experiences. For example, if the aim of the lesson is to teach comparison form of the adjectives, the teacher needs to use examples for comparison among students' qualities, examples from classroom information which is exist in the classroom.

Sam is taller than John.

Math is more difficult than English.

Self studying and directing learning autonomy provide success in learning English language.

Self-study is the independent learning where students learn outside of the classroom without direct supervision. Students consider that the self-study is valuable because it gives them an opportunity to take learning into their own hands. Besides, they search for information independently and learn to work with references. There are some benefits of self-study for adult learners:

- It encourages students to learn effectively;

- Students can learn at their own pace;

- It gives an opportunity student to strengthen problem-solving skills;

- You learn how to manage your time and priorities;

- Students can take control over their own learning;

- It gives learners a chance to learn more about that topic rather than just what they are taught in class;

- Independently learning becomes learners more confident learners.

Teachers need to analyse the reasons of learning language of the adult learners. The reasons can be intrinsic that learners can learn language for themselves due to their interest and be extrinsic that there can be external reasons for studying such as applying for a job, to pass an international exam or to study abroad. Determining learners' motivation helps teachers to discover how to structure and conduct their lessons, how to

engage and interest learners via tasks, materials and how to provide learners with effective lessons. There are several factors to help create and sustain motivation in adult learners:

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- Motivate learners to undertake responsibility for independent learning;

- Share your enthusiasm and energy. Techers' energy and enthusiasm can be great way to motivate your students.

Learning autonomy refers to self-directed learning. An autonomous learner will be able to take control of his/her own learning. Establishing learners' independence is important for students as they understand to seek out knowledge for themselves instead of relying on the teacher. Classroom practices impact students' autonomy such as a teacher's support, feedback and instructional style can help learners take control of their own language learning. There are some strategies that teachers can affect adult learners to become more autonomous:

- To explain learners some options to learn new vocabulary with pictures, example sentences and associating word groups;

- Teachers help learners to get acquainted with reading techniques such as predicting the topic from the title; predicting unfamiliar words within the context;

- Teachers should always remind adult learners the aims of the lesson, the objectives of the tasks and encourage learners to self-assess;

Teachers can explain some ways that students can work on and use the English outside the classroom. For example, they can listen podcasts, BBC News, watch and read authentic materials, use online dictionaries.

It seems that, in spite of the difficulties that might occur, the process of teaching English to adult learners can prove to be very interesting and, at the same time, rewarding. These learners' motivation, determination and life experience can bring a wide range of benefits to the context of instruction. However, it is obvious that instructors must be more flexible and more responsive in adult educational contexts. It is only in this way that teachers can really contribute to the success of their students' learning by creating a positive climate which makes adults feel emotionally safe, and which offers them the type of instruction that they expect.

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