THE DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO ADULT LEARNERS IN THE MODERN WORLD.

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English to adult learners in today's developing world comes with its own unique set of challenges. This article focuses on the difficulties faced by teachers in instructing English. It also discuss cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural characteristics which are presented by the adult learners.

Key words: Cognitive function, self- directed, educational contexts, frustration, motivation, confidence, language acquisition, individual learning styles, continuous learning, time constraints and motivation

Teaching English to adult learners has become increasingly important due to globalization and the demand for English proficiency in various professional fields, however, educators must navigate several challenges to effectively teach adults in today's world. This article aims to explore the various difficulties in teaching adults and proposes strategies to overcome them. The concept of "adult learners" may be given different definition that depending on their age. In the article, this term refers to people over the normal age traditional education that is over 23- 25years old, who freely choose to get involved in a particular form of instruction. As many scientists are said that in the field of teaching methodology, adult learners are more interested than young people and they can learn somehow differently. According to like these ideas, the American educator, Malcolm Knowless developed the principle of "andragogy" which represented the art and science of adult learning. Knowless (1984) Andragogical model is Based on the following assumptions about the adult learners: since adults tend to be self-directed, they can direct their own learning, they are ready to learn when they assume new social or life roles, they have a task or problem centered orientation to learning, being willing to apply new learning immediately; and adults are generally motivated to learn due to internal rather than external factors (Knowless,1984, p. 12.) I will explain briefly the primary cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural characteristics presented by the adult learners.

1.Cognitive characteristics

Adult students are generally more ineffective as language learners than the traditional students, on the account that the younger people are the more flexible their brains and consequently, the better their cognitive function.

Adult students face specific cognitive hurdles that affect their language acquisition process. These challanges include:

a).Learning strategies

Adults often have pre-concieved learning strategies that may differ from those used in language learning. Adapting to new methods and techniques can be challenging for adult learners.

b).Memory and Retention

In comparison to younger learners, adults may find it more difficult to memorize new vocabulary and grammatical structures. Retention may become a challenge, requiring additional reinforcement and practise.

c).Pronunciation

The influence of native language patterns can hinder adult learners' ability to acquire accurate pronunciation. Breaking old speech habits and adopting new sounds and intonation patterns can be a significant challenge.

2. Attitudinal Challenges:

The attitudes and beliefs of adult learners play a crucial role in their language learning journey. Common attitudinal challenges include:

a).Fear of Making Mistakes:

Adult learners may exhibit a fear of making mistakes, as they are often self-conscious about their language abilities. This fear can inhibit their willingness to practice speaking and engage actively in the learning process.

b).Lack of Confidence:

Some adult learners may lack confidence in their language skills, doubting their ability to acquire a new language. This lack of confidence can hinder their progress and willingness to take linguistic risks.

c).Frustration and Impatience:

Adult learners may experience frustration and impatience when progress is slower than expected. Their high expectations can lead to feelings of discouragement, especially when faced with complex language structures or challenging linguistic tasks.

3.Behavioral Challenges:

Behavioral factors can impact adult learners' language learning experience. Common behavioral challenges are as follows:

a).Limited time and commitments:

Adult learners often have busy schedules and multiple commitments, such as work, family, or other responsibilities. Finding dedicated time for language learning can be a significant challenge.

b).Prioritization:

English learning may not always rank high on the list of priorities for adult learners. Competing commitments and responsibilities can diminish their motivation and commitment to the language learning process.

c).Fixed Language Habits:

Adult learners may have deeply ingrained language habits and patterns from their native language. These habits can be challenging to overcome when acquiring anew language, leading to interference and difficulties in achieving fluency.

Challenges of teaching English to adult learners.

1. Time constraints: Adult learners often have numerous responsibilities, such as work, family, and other commitments. Finding dedicated time for language learning can be a significant challenge, requiring innovative scheduling and flexible learning options.

2. Motivation: While some adult learners may be highly motivated, others may lack the same level of enthusiasm. Maintaining motivation is crucial for language acquisition, and educators need to employ strategies to keep learners engaged and inspired throughout the learning process.

3. Prior language learning experiences: Adult learners may have had previous experiences with language learning, which can either be an advantage or a challenge. Negative experiences or ineffective methods in the past can create psychological barriers that hinder progress. Teachers must be aware of these experiences and address them accordingly

4. Technological Adaptation: Many adult learners may not be as familiar or comfortable with technology as younger generations. Integrating technology into English language instruction and ensuring learners can effectively navigate online platforms can be challenging.

5. Language Anxiety: Adult learners may experience higher levels of language anxiety, feeling self-conscious or intimidated when speaking English in front of others. Creating a supportive and non-judgmental learning environment is crucial to help build their confidence and encourage active participation.

6. Individual Learning Styles and Needs: Adult learners have diverse learning styles, preferences, and needs. Teachers must employ a variety of teaching methods, resources, and approaches to cater to different learning styles and ensure individual needs are met.

7. Cultural and Linguistic Differences: Adult learners come from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which can influence their English language learning journey. Teachers need to be sensitive to these differences and adapt their instruction to accommodate diverse cultural perspectives and language challenges.

8. Continuous Learning: In today's rapidly changing world, where new technologies and language trends emerge regularly, teachers need to stay updated with the latest

teaching methodologies, resources, and tools. Continuous professional development is essential to meet the evolving needs of adult learners.

Conclusion:

Teaching English to adult learners requires educators to be aware of the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral challenges that learners may encounter. By understanding these challenges, teachers can implement strategies to address them effectively. By understanding and addressing these difficulties, such astechnological adaptation, time constraints, motivation, language anxiety, and individual learning needs, teachers can create engaging and effective English language learning experiences.

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