

## DIFFICULTIES AND SOLUTIONS OF TEACHING ADULT STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### **Annotation**

*Teaching adults can be a challenging task for educators. Unlike teaching children, adult learners come with their own set of experiences, beliefs, and attitudes that can impact their learning process. Adult students are those who have already attained the age of 18 years or above and have decided to pursue higher education. They have different needs, motivations, and expectations than traditional students, and therefore, they require a different approach to teaching. This article explores the difficulties of teaching adult students and provides evidence-based solutions to overcome these challenges.*

### **Key words**

*adult students, difficulties, solutions, motivation, prior knowledge, theoretical, learning styles, technology.*

### **Аннотация**

*Обучение взрослых может быть сложной задачей для педагогов. В отличие от обучения детей, взрослые учащиеся приходят со своим собственным набором опыта, убеждений и взглядов, которые могут повлиять на их учебный процесс. Взрослые студенты – это те, кто уже достиг возраста 18 лет и старше и решил получить высшее образование. У них другие потребности, мотивы и ожидания, чем у традиционных студентов, и, следовательно, они требуют другого подхода к обучению. В этой статье рассматриваются трудности обучения взрослых студентов и предлагаются основанные на фактических данных решения для преодоления этих проблем.*

### **Ключевые слова**

*взрослые студенты, трудности, решения, мотивация, предварительные знания, теоретические, стили обучения, технология.*

### **Annotatsiya**

*Yoshi katta o'quvchilarni o'qitish o'qituvchilar uchun qiyin vazifalardan biridir. Bolalarga ta'lim berishdan farqli o'laroq, kattalar o'quvchilari ta'lim jarayoniga ta'sir qilishi mumkin bo'lgan ayrim narsalar ya'ni ular o'zlaring tajribalari, e'tiqodlari va munosabatlari bilan birga ilm olishga keladi. Yoshi katta talabalar bu albatta, 18 yoshga to'lgan va oliy ma'lumot olishga qaror qilganlardir. Ular an'anaviy talabalarga qaraganda*

*turli xil ehtiyojlar, motivatsiyalar va umidlarga ega va shuning uchun ular o'qitishga boshqacha yondashuvni talab qiladi. Ushbu maqola katta yoshdagi o'quvchilarni o'qitishdagi qiyinchiliklarni o'rganadi va bu qiyinchiliklarni bartaraf etish uchun dalillarga asoslangan yechimlarni taqdim etadi.*

### **Kalit so'zlar**

*yoshi kattalar o'quvchilari, qiyinchiliklar, yechimlar, motivatsiya, oldingi bilimlar, nazariy, o'quv uslubi, texnologiya.*

Teaching is a challenging and dynamic profession that requires educators to be knowledgeable, skilled, and adaptable to various learners' needs. One of the most challenging groups to teach is adult learners. Adult learners are a diverse group of individuals who come from diverse atmosphere. Adult learners are a unique segment of the student population; as they possess rich, diverse, and complex backgrounds that challenge traditional teaching and learning methods (Bastick,2018). Teaching adults has been a topic of interest among educators for a long time. Adult learners are individuals who have already completed their formal education and are seeking to enhance their skills, knowledge, or career prospects. Teaching adult learners can be a daunting task, particularly when they have been out of school for a long time. It is a common misconception that teaching adults is easier than teaching children because adults are more motivated to learn and have more life experience.

### Motivation

Motivating adult students is one of the most significant challenges that teachers face while teaching them. Unlike traditional students, adult students have various responsibilities such as work, family, and other commitments. These responsibilities can make it hard for them to stay motivated, especially if they are pursuing their degree on a part-time basis. According to Brookfield (2015), "Adult students tend to be more motivated by practical concerns such as career advancement and salary increases than by intellectual curiosity." Therefore, teachers need to understand the motivations of their adult students and align their teaching strategies accordingly. Adult learners often have competing priorities such as family, work, and social commitments, which can make it difficult for them to prioritize their education (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2014). Furthermore, some adult learners may not see the immediate benefits of education, leading to a lack of motivation to learn (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000). As a solution, to address the lack of motivation among adult learners, educators should focus on creating relevant and meaningful learning experiences that align with their learners' goals

and interests (Brookfield, 2015). Additionally, educators can use motivational strategies such as goal setting, feedback, and positive reinforcement to increase learners' motivation (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

#### Prior Knowledge

Adult students come to the classroom with different levels of prior knowledge and experience. Some may have several years of work experience, while others may have been out of school for a long time. It can be challenging to teach a diverse group of adult students with varying levels of prior knowledge. Teachers need to design their curriculum in such a way that it caters to the needs of all students, regardless of their prior knowledge. Adult learners come with preconceived beliefs and attitudes that can influence their learning process (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). For instance, some adult learners may believe that they are too old to learn new things or that they are not smart enough to succeed in education. In addition to this, assessing adult students can be a difficult task, especially if they have different levels of prior knowledge and experience. Traditional assessment methods may not be suitable for adult students, and teachers need to design assessments that cater to their needs. Teachers need to use a variety of assessment methods, such as case studies, projects, and presentations, to evaluate the learning outcomes of their adult students. However, to overcome preconceived beliefs and attitudes, educators should create a supportive learning environment that fosters a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). A growth mindset emphasizes the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through hard work and dedication. Educators can also use positive self-talk and affirmations to help learners overcome negative self-beliefs (Nelson & Low, 2011).

#### Learning Styles and Technology

Adult students have different learning styles, and it can be challenging to cater to all of them in a classroom setting. Some adult students prefer a hands-on approach, while others prefer a more theoretical approach. According to Knowles (1980), "Adults learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process." Therefore, teachers need to incorporate different teaching methods and activities that cater to different learning styles. Technology is an essential aspect of teaching adult students, especially in today's digital age. However, some adult students may not be technologically savvy, which can create a barrier to learning. Teachers need to provide adequate training and support to their students to ensure that they are comfortable using technology for learning purposes.

#### Time Constraints

Adult students have various commitments, such as work and family responsibilities, which can make it hard for them to attend classes regularly. The time constraints of adult students can make it challenging to cover the course material adequately. Teachers need to be flexible with their teaching schedules and provide alternative modes of instruction, such as online classes or recorded lectures. Adult learners often have limited time to devote to their education due to work and family commitments (Knowles et al., 2014). This can make it difficult for them to attend classes or complete assignments on time. To address time constraints, educators should provide flexible learning options such as online courses or self-paced modules (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Additionally, educators can break down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps to help learners balance their workload (Brookfield, 2015).

#### Language problems

Language barriers can be a significant challenge while teaching adult students, especially in a multicultural classroom setting. Some adult students may not be fluent in the language of instruction, which can make it hard for them to understand the course material. Teachers need to be aware of the language barriers and provide additional support to those who require it. Classroom dynamics can be a significant challenge while teaching adult students, especially if they come from different backgrounds and cultures. Teachers need to create an inclusive classroom environment that caters to the needs of all students. They need to promote open communication and encourage students to share their experiences and perspectives. Adult students have different expectations than traditional students, and it can be challenging to meet their expectations. They expect a more practical and relevant curriculum that can help them in their careers. Teachers need to design their curriculum in such a way that it meets the expectations of adult students and prepares them for the real world. As well as, adult students may resist change, especially if they have been out of school for a long time. They may be comfortable with their learning style and may not be open to new teaching methods. Teachers need to be patient and provide adequate support to their students to ensure that they are comfortable with the changes.

In conclusion, teaching adult students comes with its own set of challenges, and teachers need to be aware of these challenges to provide effective instruction. Motivating adult students, catering to their prior knowledge and learning styles, and providing flexible schedules are some of the significant challenges that teachers face while teaching adult students. Teachers need to create an inclusive classroom environment that caters to the needs of all students and promotes open

communication. They need to provide adequate training and support to their students to ensure that they are comfortable using technology for learning purposes. By understanding these challenges, teachers can design effective teaching strategies that cater to the needs of their adult students.

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