

BE A ~~GOOD~~ GREAT TUTOR!

Module 2, Adult Learners





ADULT LEARNERS

“THE HUMAN MIND IS OUR FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCE.”

JOHN F. KENNEDY

“THE MORE THAT YOU READ, THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL KNOW. THE MORE THAT YOU LEARN, THE MORE PLACES YOU’LL GO.”

DR. SEUSS

“THE BEAUTIFUL THING ABOUT LEARNING IS THAT NO ONE CAN TAKE IT AWAY FROM YOU.”

B.B. KING

“LET THE WISE HEAR AND INCREASE IN LEARNING, AND THE ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS OBTAIN GUIDANCE FOOLS DESPISE WISDOM AND INSTRUCTION.”

PROVERBS 1:5, 7b

ADULT LEARNERS

Have life experiences

- Enjoy having some control
- Can engage in exchanges
- Should be encouraged to share

Have knowledge

- Possess background information
- Are valuable participants
- Deserve respect

Have stressors

- May have economic concerns
- Often go through family stress
- May have job pressures

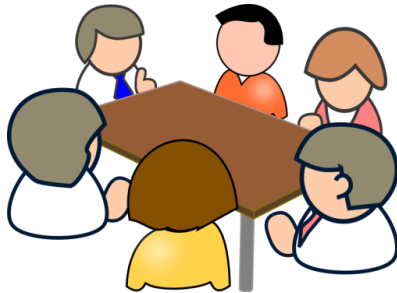
Have self-awareness

- Know their own strengths and weaknesses
- May be reluctant to try new things

LIFE EXPERIENCES

Adult learners have life experiences

- Enjoy having some control
- Can engage in exchanges
- Should be encouraged to share



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By definition, adult learners are not children. They are likely accustomed to having control and may be uncomfortable relinquishing it. Be aware of this.

There must be a balance, of course, and great tutors will control the class environment. But aim for flexibility and accommodation, and share decision-making when possible.

Great tutors incorporate their student's life experiences into lessons. Having a student describe his or her workday, for example, engages the student. It also gives the student opportunities to practice speaking, to learn new vocabulary, and to remember practical application of learned phrases.

Realize that your adult students may be in a work situation where increased English competence will advance his or her career. And if career is not an issue, adult students need to communicate with their children's teachers, doctors, and store clerks.

Encouraging students to speak and share experiences will increase the students' comfort levels. With practice comes confidence; with confidence comes more learning.

You as a tutor can have a direct, immediate, and important impact on your students' daily lives.

KNOWLEDGE

Adult learners have knowledge

- Possess background information
- Are valuable participants
- Deserve respect



Along with their life experiences, adult learners bring specialized knowledge to class. The student has internalized a lifetime of learning, professional, or practical, or both.

This is wonderful news for great tutors. Such knowledge necessarily makes each adult student a valuable participant in his or her own learning and in the classroom setting.

Take full advantage of this circumstance. Discover your students' interests. For example, have them describe their home countries and cities. Find "images" of students' cities on Google, and show home cities on a screen (or a phone) in your class. Ask students to talk about their cities (or jobs, or food preferences).

Topics for discussion are virtually endless. Great tutors ask questions of their students, listen carefully to the answers, and build lessons around subjects about which the students are passionate.

Using the important and valuable tools of student knowledge and input will demonstrate that you care about them, and that you respect what they have to say. After all, they deserve your respect!

STRESSORS

Adult learners have stressors

- May have economic concerns
- Often go through family stress
- May have job pressures



Science has proven stress interferes with learning. (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080311182434.htm>.) Great tutors are aware of this and take specific actions to help alleviate its effects.

Talking about stress sometimes helps, and at the same time it gives students practice speaking. Do not discuss matters that are too personal. Rather, talk about common stressors that may actually be amusing in hindsight. Talk about being stuck in traffic, or being late for an appointment, or burning the toast.

Play games. You might want to end each class with a game that is just plain fun.

Pass around a bag of individually wrapped candy. Or use the candy as prizes for correct answers. A bag of candy makes a great team gift for team game play.

Take a walk outside, perhaps around the building or through the parking lot. Or, if you are lucky enough to be close, take a walk through a park. Nature is a proven stress-reducer.

(<https://www.newswise.com/articles/ucsf-benioff-children%E2%80%99s-hospital-oakland-researchers-find-%E2%80%9Cpark-prescriptions%E2%80%9D-can%C2%A0reduce-stress-among-low-income-patients.>)

Reducing stress before teaching, especially new material, will ensure that a good tutor is a great tutor!

SELF-AWARENESS

Adult learners have self-awareness

- Know their own strengths and weaknesses
- May be reluctant to try new things

Adult learners are usually well aware of their limitations. They also know where their strengths lie. Great tutors partner with their adult learners and use their strengths to full advantage.

For example, if a student is an engineer or artist, she may enjoy becoming a teacher's aide for a particular lesson related to her field. The lesson could be how to create origami or calligraphy. These lessons would be fun and provide many new vocabulary words.

Find out if any of your students can carry a tune. Pass out song sheets and ask your singer student to lead the group.

Try a cooking demonstration or an art display. Ask students to bring in homemade projects or family photographs and talk about them.

The disadvantage of self-awareness is best expressed in the old saying, "Once burned, twice shy." Students who know they cannot sing, or produce pretty crafts, or cook may be reluctant to participate. Be sensitive, be aware, and do not cause anyone discomfort.

