



ADULT EDUCATORS' PACK



**Improve the foreign language
learning and intercultural
competences of adults
through e-learning**

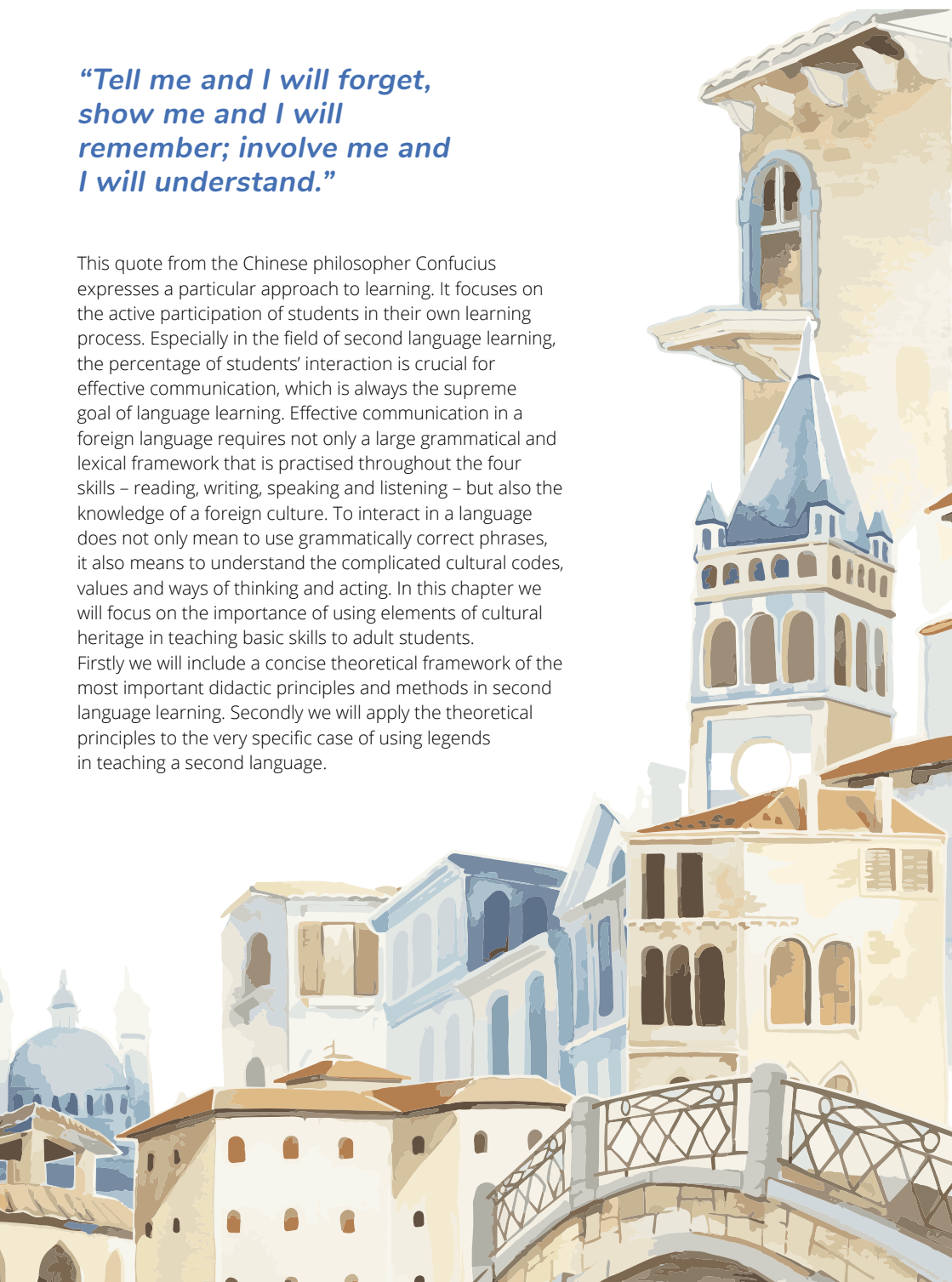


1

METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADULT EDUCATORS USING ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR TEACHING BASIC SKILLS

***“Tell me and I will forget,
show me and I will
remember; involve me and
I will understand.”***

This quote from the Chinese philosopher Confucius expresses a particular approach to learning. It focuses on the active participation of students in their own learning process. Especially in the field of second language learning, the percentage of students' interaction is crucial for effective communication, which is always the supreme goal of language learning. Effective communication in a foreign language requires not only a large grammatical and lexical framework that is practised throughout the four skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening – but also the knowledge of a foreign culture. To interact in a language does not only mean to use grammatically correct phrases, it also means to understand the complicated cultural codes, values and ways of thinking and acting. In this chapter we will focus on the importance of using elements of cultural heritage in teaching basic skills to adult students. Firstly we will include a concise theoretical framework of the most important didactic principles and methods in second language learning. Secondly we will apply the theoretical principles to the very specific case of using legends in teaching a second language.



General introduction of most important didactic principles and methods in second language learning

Through time we have seen an evolution from knowledge-focused learning to competency-based education. In their paper Introduction to Competency-Based Language Teaching, Griffith and Lim (2014) provide a brief introduction to competency-based education in general and competency-based language teaching in particular. Competency-based education expressly focuses on what learners can do rather than on what they know. Therefore materials must be authentic and task-related. Teachers evolve from information-givers into facilitators. Teachers provide the materials, the activities and the practice opportunities for their students. The quality and authenticity of these materials are central to the success of the class. According to Griffith and Lim, the role of the student must also change:

Students will no longer be able to rely only on the teacher and the classroom to be the primary resources of information. Instead, students become apprentices. Their role will be to integrate, produce and extend knowledge. Students take an active part in their own learning and work toward being autonomous learners.

Competency-based language teaching demands that language is connected to a social and cultural context rather than taught in isolation. Learners need to demonstrate that they can use the language to communicate effectively. The focus moves from what learners know about language to what they can do with it. In the field of language learning, studying a new tense for instance is always in relation to a specific and contextualized use of it.

Authentic situations, likely to be encountered outside the classroom, stimulate students enormously. To effectively learn a new language, students need to be as engaged as possible even when outside the classroom. Give your students the tools to practise beyond textbook homework by assigning exercises that require interacting with real people. For example, if you're teaching Italian, encourage your students to visit the local Italian restaurant or cafe to order something in Italian. The idea is to expose your students to the usage of language in real-world situations, while giving them examples of practical application.

In her paper *Cultural Heritage as a Resource for English as an Additional Language Learner: An Out-of Class Approach* (2018), Marta García-Sampedro presents a promising method of



teaching English in non-formal places such as museums, art galleries, parks or historical buildings. The main objectives of this project, led by the Education Sciences Department at the University of Oviedo, have been to improve students' oral communication level in the English language, to get to know the school's surroundings and learn about the cultural heritage in the area, to develop a taste and an appreciation for art and heritage and to improve students' and teachers' motivation. The results of the observation have shown an increase in students' and teachers' motivation levels due to the use of non-formal spaces and heritage elements as resources. García-Sampedro mentions that:

The use of heritage as a resource or a context implies significant and memorable experiences for the students in which art and heritage become an excuse to produce oracy. Students' spontaneity and their desire to speak can be observed in every visit.

As a result, it was found that students were more motivated when doing hands-on activities outside of the classroom than listening to lectures. Some previous experiences (Colegio San Fernando de Avilés) used heritage as a resource in a project where secondary students acted as tour guides in the city of Avilés, Asturias, as the main objective of the project was the promotion of communicative skills in English as an additional language.

As said, competency-based language teaching is based on contextualized language learning. Contextualization is the meaningful use of language for real communicative purposes. Therefore teachers should ensure that their students receive ample input that is comprehensible and interesting. Extensive reading of literary texts is a great way to provide great amounts of input, which can have positive effects on the development of a second language. Legend or folklore is one kind of literary text. Legends can be used as teaching materials in language classrooms. Using this

Competency-based education expressly focuses on what learners can do rather than on what they know.

kind of literature in teaching second languages has two benefits. The first benefit is the authenticity of the teaching materials. Experts say that authentic materials have a positive impact on the success of second language learning because it can show learners how language is used naturally. The second benefit is that legends can be used to induce cultural values.

In his paper *Local legends: EFL materials development for Indonesian teenage learners*, Jonner Simarmata mentions another benefit of using legends: "literature qualities can contribute to language teaching by revealing creative and expressive potential of language and giving learners access to new sociocultural meanings."¹ Literature can be defined as the art of language and may contain short stories, poems, novels, fables, legends or song lyrics. According to Collie and Slater² there are four reasons why a language teacher should use literary works in classes. First, literature is authentic material because literature was not fashioned for the specific purpose of teaching a language. Second, literature can be culturally enriching. Third, literature is also language enriching because of its contextual nature. Fourth, literary work is personally involving. The development of the story, for instance in the telling of a legend, can be exciting and enjoyable for adult students.

1 • In Proceedings of the Fourth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching, 2016, p. 436.

2 • Collie, Joanne and Slater, Stephen (1987), *Literature in Language Classroom: A Resource book of ideas and activities*, Cambridge University Press, New York.



Legends as intercultural common places

Folktales include fairy tales, fables, and legends. They have been traditionally passed down by word of mouth. Folktales are great windows into the culture and values of the group of people telling them. Fables have a lesson that the reader is meant to learn. Fairy tales and legends have more subtle lessons about good and evil. Cultures around the world often have their own versions of a common folktale.

In this project we focus on Belgian, Estonian, French, Greek, Italian, Slovenian and Spanish legends containing references to the four universal elements: water, fire, earth and air.

Many of the characters, animals, places and phenomena described in these legends seem to be omnipresent, however, in cultures across the world and seem to be cultural “shareware”. Legends fascinate people because of the presence of mysterious and often unexplainable elements. Every student knows Merlin the sorcerer or has Icarus’ wings on the cover of his history book. Travellers all over the world are fascinated by the northern lights.

And even if some myths seem to be quite local at first sight, they often have similar stories in other countries: for instance the Belgian legend

of the moon extinguishers had a prehistory twenty years earlier in London. Dragons do not only appear in Slovenian myths or are defeated by the knight Saint George in the Spanish oral and written literature, but they also have a leading part in Chinese culture and even make frequent appearances in Belgian comic books. Dragons are everywhere and constitute a common place for people all over the world. The reason why legends and myths are ideal for teaching basic skills in second language learning is that they create a learning environment in which a learner feels immediately familiarized. Who would not want to know the appealing legend behind the famous wind the Mistral in France? Eager to discover why this particular wind is that central to the imagination of southern France, by reading or listening to an authentic text, the language learner will assimilate words and grammatical structures in a contextual situation. Knowledge acquired in a contextual situation will be remembered longer than lists of words devoid of any concrete context. Imagine a student who is studying Italian at a beginner's level: if he reads in his textbook that 'fuori' means 'out(side)', he will remember for the duration of the lesson in the best case scenario. To incorporate the word in his personal vocabulary, however, the student must repeat at home and use the word at least seven times in changing contexts. The best way to remember the word in the long term is to have used it in an authentic and real-time situation: if the student played tennis in Italy, hearing several times 'fuori' whenever the ball was out, he would remember the word even long after finishing his vacation.

In 1885 the German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus published his groundbreaking *Über das Gedächtnis* (later translated into English as *Memory. A Contribution to Experimental Psychology*) in which he describes the processes of learning and forgetting. Two central concepts in his work are the forgetting curve and the learning curve, which both are exponential. Ebbinghaus demonstrated that you learn simple facts in an area you are familiar with

To acquire new language, considered as unstructured data, you may need seven repetitions.

even without spaced repetition. If you offer information in many forms (audio, visual or associative), you may need few repetitions. To acquire new language, considered as unstructured data, you may need seven repetitions. With this theoretical background in mind we can argue that legends as intercultural common spaces are of great help when teaching a second language. First of all, using legends in teaching basic linguistic skills will offer the adult language learner a familiar context he had already discovered at an early age and in an emotionally positive environment and therefore his personal interest will be piqued immediately. This interest is often captured in legends and also with inviting pictures. To teach second languages, pictures are perfect for introducing subjects, breaking the ice, allowing lexical brainstorming, stimulating people's creativity and letting them talk.



The legend thus is a starting point for opening up the student's cultural and linguistic horizon.

Secondly, legends, whether they are offered to the language learner as reading texts or listening exercises, constitute an authentic learning context. At a later stage and for the purpose of enhancing oral proficiency, you could even involve students in role plays inspired by the legend they are studying. Making students write their own legends could stimulate not only their written proficiency but, if they were allowed to work together, would also stimulate the social aspect of language learning in adult classrooms. Learners learn better if they have an inspiring learning environment. One of the lesson plans provides the following question: "Could you draw a dragon and let your neighbour describe it physically and psychologically?" This student-involving activity creates simultaneously a linguistic and social interactivity. Teachers should be enthusiastic and try to create low-anxiety, supportive classrooms and allow learners choices about as many aspects of the learning process as possible.

Thirdly, even situated in places far away and eras long ago, legends often contain messages that are still current nowadays or explain to learners the origin of the world around them. Reading the Belgian legend about Charles V's pot in Olen makes students also aware of the current passion for beer in Belgium and why some many Belgian beers are named after Charles V (for instance the brand Carolus beer). A brewery in Mechelen named one of its beers after the Maneblussers, another Belgian legend. Touching these contemporary aspects, the language learner is involved by nourishing his personal interests. In addition it opens up a lot of possibilities for speaking activities based on questions like: "Does your region have a special food or drink? Are there any special

stories about it?" The legend thus is a starting point for opening up the student's cultural and linguistic horizon.

The current legends and lesson plans also enable a student-centred education by offering extra resources and links for language learners who want to deepen their knowledge of certain aspects of the subject matter. Every current lesson plan ends with a self-reflection grid in which the learner can indicate for instance if he thinks the story is engaging and interesting or whether he has learned about the cultural background and history of the legend. We also notice that grammar and vocabulary are offered to the learner in function of the context of the legend. This enables the learner to be aware of why he needs a certain tense or grammatical structure.





Reference to CEFR in partner languages

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. The Threshold level (B1) refers to an intermediate level for an independent user. This user can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc., and can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. He can also produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest and can describe experiences

and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. The Threshold level (B1) seems to be a perfect level for introducing authentic materials such as stories, fairy tales and legends since the independent language user has acquired a solid linguistic basis to read, listen to and discuss them. The current legends offer standard input on matters encountered in leisure (for instance the French legend on the Mistral wind) and offer language learners the possibility to explain the world around them as described in the CEFR.

CONCLUSION

Legends seem to be great educational tools for language learning at Threshold level B1 because they help to contextualize language. In addition they are authentic, inspiring and universal, and constitute an ideal starting point for oral and written proficiency in a social and cultural context. Finally, legends stimulate adult learners to take part actively in their own learning process. After all, Einstein was right when he claimed that “the only source of knowledge is experience.”

2

APPROACHING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADULT EDUCATORS

Slow learners

◆ Introduction and definition of slow learners

A Hare was one day making fun of a Tortoise for being so slow upon his feet. "Wait a bit," said the Tortoise; "I'll run a race with you, and I'll wager that I win." "Oh, well," replied the Hare, who was much amused at the idea, "let's try and see"; and it was soon agreed that the Fox should set a course for them, and be the judge. When the time came both started off together, but the Hare was soon so far ahead that he thought he might as well have a rest: so down he lay and fell fast asleep. Meanwhile the Tortoise kept plodding on, and in time reached the goal. At last the Hare woke up with a start, and dashed on at his fastest, but only to find that the Tortoise had already won the race. Slow and steady wins the race. (The Hare and the Tortoise, Aesop)

This Aesop's fable illustrates quite well how slow beings can reach their goals in spite of their 'slower' nature. What made the Tortoise gain the finish was his perseverance and zeal in the first place. If the metaphor of the Tortoise is valid here for the slow adult learner, we could ask ourselves how the role of an inspiring teacher on the side-lines could have motivated the Tortoise to reach the goal of acquired knowledge even a little faster.

Slow learners can be defined as learners who have difficulty progressing in their learning in compared to other co-learners. Every language teacher has to deal with slow learners at one point or another. Statistical data show that two out of every ten students in a class are slow learners. The most important thing for



slow learners to have is an educator with great talents in identifying the slow learners in the first place and consequently in showing special attention to them. In his book *Role performance of adult education teachers, problems and prospects*, G.L Reddy emphasizes that slow learners need to receive study material that is close to their personal world and that is potentially of interest to them to keep them motivated and prevent them from frustration: For example, if the adult learner is a farmer, he will be interested in reading literature relating to better farming. If the learner is an industrial worker, he may be interested in reading literature that gives an idea about the rights and duties that are provided for an industrial worker (p. 75)

In any discourse on didactic principles of teaching in general, motivation seems to be indeed one of the major keywords. The present chapter aims to show how motivation and other elements can play a decisive role in the specific field of second language learning, including teaching slow learners.

SUMMARY OF SOME TIPS IN ORDER TO WORK AND DEAL WITH SLOW LEARNERS

IN THEIR PAPER *DEALING WITH SLOW LEARNERS IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS* (2017), GAYANE SHMAVONYAN AND LILI KARAPETYAN PRESENT SOME BASIC STRATEGIES THAT COULD BE EMPLOYED BY EDUCATORS IN TEACHING SECOND LANGUAGE TO SLOW LEARNERS:

1

Use simple language while speaking and try to speak more slowly.

2

Avoid implicit instructions since slow learners often are not able to understand things that aren't explicit.

3

Do not ask open ended-questions, but questions requiring definite answers.

4

Use concrete and simple teaching materials.

5

Tables, charts, graphs and pictures are helpful tools for presenting new material. A slow learner will acquire knowledge mainly by visualizing and repeating.

6

When dividing the class into groups, pair the slow learner with a strong learner to guide him/her.

7

Summarize the key points of your lesson at the end.

HOWEVER THIS LIST COULD BE COMPLETED, IN OUR OPINION, WITH THE FOLLOWING IDEAS:

8

Repeat instructions to slow learners more than once. Reformulate them, to enhance the chances that the message will be clear in the end.

9

Differentiate, taking into consideration what educational philosopher John Dewey suggested long ago: that we begin where the students are, not where we would like them to be.

10

Guided tasks make slow learners feel more comfortable than free assignments.

11

Congratulate slow learners, even though the progress made may be small. They are always breaking through a personal limit. The positive encouragement helps these students to enhance their self-esteem, which is often low and unsteady.

12

Emphasize the talents slow learners already have, other than the linguistic ones they should acquire. Make them feel self-confident.

13

Develop your own worksheets and exercises. Textbooks and workbooks, when written for the average student, often exceed the function level of the slow learner. Sometimes only some changes in worksheets and exercises are needed to adapt the vocabulary or difficulty level to the ability of your slow learners.

14

Refresh learning skills. Stimulate slow learners to make little lists of vocabulary and grammatical surveys that they can stick on places they encounter regularly, like a refrigerator or a pin board.

15

Even though the use of the second language as the instrumental language should be encouraged as much as possible, don't hesitate to fall back on the native language of the slow learners. Especially when explaining complicated grammatical items, this seems to be extremely important.

BY UNDERSTANDING THEIR STUDENTS' STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, INCORPORATING A VARIETY OF TEACHING STYLES AND MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO LEARN, TEACHERS ARE BEST ABLE TO HELP THEM REACH THEIR GOAL OF BECOMING COMPETENT AND PRODUCTIVE COMMUNICATORS IN A SECOND LANGUAGE.

◆ Can legends help slow learners to acquire a second language?

When we were young, legends were told by our teachers, our parents, our grandparents, our friends,... Legends explained to us why things were as they happened to be. They made our world sparkle with a touch of magic. As an adult, legends still appeal to us; they cross boundaries and unify us because they provide a cultural heritage people from many backgrounds can recognize. When a teacher wants to fully involve his learners and especially the slower ones, he has everything to gain from selecting those recognizable and appealing parts of the cultures around us. Legends, tales and fables are often already known in learners' native language. When integrated in second language lessons, they create a familiar scene where

“Slow learners aren’t really slow. It’s just that they learn things in a deeper, an unconventional way than others.”

recognizable places and characters enable the adult language learner to focus more on form (second language) and less on content, because the content had often already been acquired in an earlier stage of his life.

To conclude we would like to refer to the quote of professional content-writing artist Steven Chopade: “Slow learners aren't really slow. It's just that they learn things in a deeper, an unconventional way than others.”

Deaf learners

First of all, who are we talking about? When we talk about d/Deaf people, we refer to people that can't hear and that communicate in many different ways, mainly according to the level of deafness they have, the education they have received, the kind of family in which they grew up, when they became deaf and many other factors. Although the popular idea about deaf people is that they can't speak either, it's important to remember that deafness doesn't exclude competences in speaking, in the production of sounds.

Why do we use a capital 'D' and a lower-case 'd'? We use a different case in order to distinguish whether we are referring to Deaf people who consider themselves as belonging to a cultural

identity that speaks in Sign Language, or to deaf people who see the loss of hearing as a disability to be cured (through the use of hearing aids, speech therapy, cochlear implants...). Of course, these two points of view doesn't exclude many different ways to approach deafness, for example finding benefits in the use of hearing aids and speaking sign language.

Whatever may be the position on deafness (social or medical), in general d/Deaf people have huge difficulties in receiving external information both through spoken and written language because they don't acquire it spontaneously. For that reason is important to keep in mind some general suggestions in order to improve communication:

SUMMARY OF SOME TIPS IN ORDER TO WORK AND DEAL WITH D/DEAF LEARNERS

1

Catch the attention of the deaf student before talking: a slight flick on the shoulder or on the arm or a sign in the air in his/her direction to catch the eye.

5

When it is possible, reduce background noises and control the discussion so that only one person is speaking at a time.

6

It is not useful to amplify the lip movements. In fact, this kind of exaggeration actually hinders comprehension instead of helping! Also using a louder voice is not useful while talking with a deaf person because it changes normal lip movements.

2

Put yourself in front of the deaf person while you're talking or be sure to structure the classroom in a way that you can have visual contact with all of your students. Do not put yourself in places where a point of light is at your back, for example in front of a window, or in poorly lighted places. Pay attention that no object is between you and the deaf person during the conversation, so that the view is not obstructed.

7

Use face and body expressions in order to make the message clear. Remember deaf and hard of hearing students pay attention to visual signs such as body language, gesture and expressions, to gather information.

3

Make sure that the deaf student sees clearly the face and the mouth of the person who is talking. Do not chew or keep a hand in front of your face.

8

It is better that all information should be available in adapted easy-written format, too. "Adapted easy-written format" means adapting the content of a text not to make it poorer but to make it clear and immediately comprehensible by all. Provide the same content, but in a different form. For instance, use high-frequency words (everyday words) in your own language and add some pictures to support the text; avoid subordinate clauses or passive forms because they change the basic order of the sentence; avoid long sentences and complex structures.

4

When your student is accompanied by an interpreter, maintain eye contact directly with the person who is deaf, not with the interpreter.

◆ How to adapt written texts and make them accessible.

The most difficult characteristic of a group formed by adults is its heterogeneity.

A heterogeneous class is one that has different kinds of learners in it, and when the learners are d/Deaf, the different kinds of d/Deaf identity also affect the knowledge level of the subject. For example, a d/Deaf person that wears no hearing-aid and uses sign language as the mother language will have different methodological needs compared to a d/Deaf person that uses oral language and has residual hearing. What they ask will also be different: whereas a signer (a d/Deaf person that uses sign language as the mother language) will ask for the deepening of written languages and the comprehension of texts, an oralist (a d/Deaf person that has residual hearing and that lip-reads) will also ask for at least a basic understanding of the pronunciation.

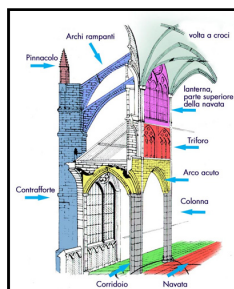
Teaching issues in this kind of class could mainly be connected to materials and successful interest capture. Even if the target is adults, a boring topic will certainly reduce attention and motivation. Designing and personalizing materials is really challenging work: the teacher has to think about the competence level of each person and the capabilities that each student has to improve. The long time teachers need for the adaptation of the materials must be taken into account. The best way to save teachers' time and energies is to create materials that are adapted from the very beginning and to bear in mind that adapting material for a person with more difficulties actually means creating good material for all the students in the class because everyone can take advantage of it!

SOME TIPS AND RECOMMENDATION

- Use a visually attractive and friendly layout (images, photos, symbols, strong color contrasts)
- Pay attention to the color contrast:



- Use images whenever you can:



- Organize the text in a userfriendly and "easy-to-read" format:
- Use basic sentences, coordinated not subordinated. Use high-frequency words (everyday words) in your own language.
- When translating from English into your language, think about the target group that will use the material and adapt it (for instance, easier words, less complex sentences) in order to be sure that the content has become understandable for everyone.
- Use the "didactics of doing": people can truly learn when they combine theory and experience. Take a practical approach combined with theory.
- Give an initial and a final evaluation.



CONCLUSION

To conclude, the importance of making publishing accessible to all is a social and ethical issue, which concerns everyone. European regulations are also involved in this subject:

The Marrakesh Treaty for European member states provides an exception in copyright law; for example, specialized organizations or individual users with disabilities can print and convert a text into an accessible format without asking the owner of the intellectual property for permission.

The European Accessibility Act (EAA) is a directive on the requirements for the accessibility of products and services, and particularly concerns personal computers (both hardware and software), e-commerce, banking services, all self-service terminals (such as ATMs, automatic ticket machines), e-books and reading software.

Learners with specific learning difficulties

◆ Do you understand dyslexia and learners with dyslexia?

If you are an English teacher who also teaches learners with dyslexia, you have to be familiar with what it is and how it manifests itself in quite different ways in different learners. Dyslexia may be congenital or acquired, i.e. during brain surgery. Dyslexia does not disappear with the onset of adulthood for the simple reason that it is not an illness! Once dyslectic, always dyslectic! Learners with dyslexia may not listen attentively, may not understand your instructions and may not remember what you want them to do. Their working memory is poor (i.e. they may remember a sequence of up to two instructions, but they keep forgetting the third one). Be clear and check their understanding of your instructions; give examples! Though learners with dyslexia are sometimes thought of as being confused or even stupid, dyslexia has nothing to do with intelligence.

It is simply a different way of perceiving the world, relationships, processes, etc. It is about having two languages, the natural language and the neurological one, which makes each learner learn in quite different ways. Learners with dyslexia are mostly of above-average intelligence, but they have difficulties which they need your help to cope with.

For a long time dyslexia was understood mostly as a cluster of specific learning difficulties. Learners cannot read and cannot write without spelling mistakes (dyslexia and dysgraphia). They might be disorderly (dyspraxia). They might have difficulties imagining abstract numbers or proportions (dyscalculia), etc. You may ask yourself: "Are learners with dyslexia able to learn at all?" They certainly are, but not in your way. If learners do not learn, you cannot change the learners, you must change your way of teaching. (Ana Krajnc, 2018)

Reading and writing are rather slow and linear activities. Actually, the entire schooling system is based on linear teaching, thinking



and learning, requiring teachers and learners to advance step by step, from what is known to the unknown, from what is easier to what is more difficult, from the beginning of the text to its end, respecting the sequence, while learners with dyslexia learn holistically. They simply jump to the conclusions, results and solutions not knowing how they have got there. They just know what to do, often long before it's time! They think creatively. The neural system in learners with dyslexia is not adapted to linear learning. In dyslectics the thinking process is divergent and they have difficulties changing it into a linear one. In their school days, they might have been blamed and labelled as not being diligent enough, even though they spent their nights learning, trying hard to remember in spite of their poor working memory and diverging thinking processes.

Now, it has been generally admitted that good teachers need to find innovative ways to support their learners' reading, writing, spelling, understanding and memorising, as well

as their need to move and learn while moving, their need to be surrounded by music and noises helping them to concentrate. It has been generally admitted that learners with dyslexia have problems concentrating. Remember that each learner has their own cluster of difficulties and advantages. It is up to you to discover them and improve your teaching.

Dyslexia means that the learner's phonological processing of what they hear is not sufficient, leading to a poor understanding of words, poor reading abilities and spelling difficulties.

Due to dyslexia, learners have difficulties understanding written texts, perceiving what is on the computer screen, etc. They have difficulties reading and learning, but also difficulties with social exclusion, lower self-esteem, diminished courage, poorer self-identity.

Teachers need to identify learners' strengths and concentrate on them.



Learners with dyslexia might have one or more of the following advantages:

- ▶ They think creatively. They are real-world thinkers, searching for solutions.
- ▶ They think critically: what, why, how...
- ▶ They tend to go deeper and acquire a wider picture of a problem.
- ▶ They have a good memory for stories.
- ▶ They can think in several ways at the same time.
- ▶ They know people and their characteristics, their emotions, and they can be quite empathetic.
- ▶ They are good abstract thinkers.
- ▶ They easily spot what is most important in the text.

Teachers need to adapt their teaching to their learners with dyslexia:

- ▶ Teachers should adapt to the learners' learning style (visual, auditory...).
- ▶ At the beginning of the lesson teachers should present the structure of the lesson and the problems that will be dealt with during the lesson.
- ▶ At the beginning of the lesson, learners should be given handouts with the outline of the structure of the lesson.
- ▶ The main points of the lesson should be contained in handouts;
- ▶ Teachers should use Arial 12 and majuscule letters.
- ▶ The information on one page should be limited. There should be plenty of blank space, and lines should not contain more than 70 characters.
- ▶ Larger thematic chapters should be broken down into smaller ones.
- ▶ Teachers should pause at times.
- ▶ Teachers should avoid using professional words of foreign origin.
- ▶ Learners should be allowed to record the lessons.

- ▶ Learners should be encouraged to ask questions.
- ▶ If teachers want the learners to read aloud, they should obtain the learners' permission for this in advance. Alternatively, they should ask their students to read together aloud together...
- ▶ Learners with dyslexia need more time for reading; keywords should be listed for them.
- ▶ Teachers should help their learners structure their written texts; they should fix partial goals for them that are attainable in a shorter time and they should tell them when they have to reach them. This is more important than setting the final deadline.
- ▶ Teachers help their learners organize their time.
- ▶ Teachers should offer their learners the opportunity to have their drafts reviewed several times during an assignment.
- ▶ Teachers should recognize the effort the learners put into preparing an assignment.
- ▶ Teachers should not draw their learners' attention to too many corrections.
- ▶ Teachers may ask their students to hand in two copies of their assignment. They correct the first copy in terms of content and the second one in terms of form.
- ▶ Learners should keep a list of their most frequent mistakes.
- ▶ Learners should be allowed to use the spell checker, etc.
- ▶ Teachers should use coloured paper and avoid using highly contrasted white paper with black letters.

NOW, YOUR LEARNERS ARE ADULTS AND BY THE TIME THEY HAD GROWN UP, THEY HAD PROBABLY DISCOVERED THEIR OWN EFFICIENT LEARNING STRATEGIES. THIS WOULD MAKE THE TEACHER'S TASK EASIER.

Slow learners, deaf learners and learners with specific learning difficulties constitute a challenge for every teacher across the world.

The success of their learning process will largely depend on the professionalism, the flexibility and the adaptability of the teachers beside them. We hope that the recommendations presented in the current project can inspire teachers to make those special learners challenge themselves and become the best learners they can be. Moreover, once teachers are able to adapt to specific learners, they can adapt to each of their learners whose learning and learning strategies they are supposed to know.



