

REAL LIFE CONTEXT

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



LJUDSKA
UNIVERZA
ROGAŠKA
SLATINA





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PART 1 – THEORETICAL

1. Introduction

English has undoubtedly become one of the major languages across the entire world. The use of this language has become widespread in various fields, computer science and economics being the most important areas. However, nowadays, due to a great availability of broadly understood entertainment in English, this language is not only widely used but also easily accessible via the Internet, in particular by means of social media and film sharing sites, which only adds to the popularity of the English language. Therefore, a growing interest in this language is understandable among learners of various professions and age groups. However, this manual concentrates on older adults as a group which so far has not been given much attention in the context of their role and characteristics as language learners.

1.1. Older adults

In order to discuss the nature of the group of older adults as language learners, the term has to be clearly defined. This task is not easy as the terminology used in this context varies to a great extent. Older adults are also frequently referred to as seniors, senior citizens, or, in a more educational context, third-age learners. The definition, however, is more complex as the group usually comprises people being at the statutory retirement age (about 60-70 years of age) although some research indicates that older adults might be even 55+ or younger (Findsen and Formosa, 2011: 10). The difficulty in establishing the right scope only proves that the group is varied and includes people with different needs, which further adds to the complexity of the approach to older adults.

Due to the problems with defining the scope of the issue, the definition provided by Findsen and Formosa (2011: 11) seems to be the most adequate and exhaustive: “people, whatever their chronological age, who are post-work and post-family, in the sense that they are less or no longer involved in an occupational career or with the major responsibilities for

raising a family.” This definition emphasises the fact that third-age learners are usually no longer seriously engaged in their work or family matters so they have time to explore other interests or hobbies.

For this reason, older adults have become a significant group for the global market nowadays as their number is constantly increasing. According to the OECD data (<https://data.oecd.org/pop/elderly-population.htm>) for 2021, the elderly amounted to 20.91% of the population in Slovenia, 18.8% in Poland and 18.83% in the UK, which means that older adults represent about 1/5 of the population in European countries. Moreover, since the data refer to people over 65 years of age, taking into account older adults 50+ may only increase the figures, which, to a greater extent, would emphasise the significance of seniors as a target group in the market.

Two factors have greatly contributed to a growing significance of older adults in society. Longer life expectancy is one of them – according to Eurostat (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220427-1>), the life expectancy at birth for 2020 was 80.4 years in the EU and was generally growing compared with the previous years, which shows the process of population ageing. Another factor is an emphasis on active ageing which, as involving a longer activity time for seniors, leads to an increased interest and engagement of older adults in various fields.

According to WHO, one of the major elements of active ageing is lifelong learning (Findsen and Formosa, 2011: 160), which focuses on the development of skills and competences through the whole lifetime. Thus, seniors are encouraged to continue acquiring new knowledge, language learning being one of the most significant areas in this respect. That is why there has been a growing need to develop curricula designed especially for older adults in order to reflect these people’s unique needs and preferences as well as bring real benefits to them. What seems to be problematic, however, is the lack of appropriate teaching materials and, what follows, lack of competences among English teachers to teach seniors in an efficient and interesting way.

1.2. The project

The project called “Real Life Context – English for Seniors” implemented under Erasmus+ programme is an answer to these issues and concerns. The project was developed in 2021-2022 by three organisations from Poland, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, specialising in English teaching, namely Euro-Forum sp. j. from Lublin, Poland (the leader of the project), Eurospeak Language Schools Ltd. from Reading, UK, and Ljudska Univerza from Rogaška Slatina, Slovenia. The three institutions have vast experience in teaching English to various age groups, older adults being one of them.

Therefore, the teachers from these organisations felt the need to develop materials which would be designed solely for seniors and would meet their needs and preferences. That is why the topics included in the curriculum for the course implemented within the project refer to seniors’ interests or the potential situations which older adults might have to face in their real life. This assumption results from the fact that the material in language courses for seniors should be useful and filled with numerous examples provided to render the lesson more interesting for the learner (Weinstein, 2004: 7). The course “Real Life Context” is designed according to these principles so as to reflect seniors’ experience and is therefore “life-centred” – focused on the improvement of people’s daily life and everyday existence (Słowik-Krogulec, 2019: 192). That is why what specifies the whole course is its practicality which involves the other two features of the whole project: focus on modern technologies and innovativeness.

1.2.1. Practical approach

These premises led to the emphasis of the project “Real Life Context – English for Seniors” on its most important and prominent feature which is, as the name of the project suggests, a practical approach to the learning of the language in order to present real-life everyday situations in which the language might be used. Such an approach is of particular significance in the context of older adult teaching as seniors do not focus so much on the

particular subjects but more on the everyday situations which they want to handle and thus be able to function more effectively in their daily life.

That is why, the eight spheres of life which are shared by most older adults have become central to the project. Each sphere is reflected in one of the eight modules of the project, which include the most typical everyday situations encountered by older adults in the context of shopping, banking, transport, travelling, health service and food ordering, but also the modules devoted to the problems related to online devices or other technological tools – the language of instructions which might appear while using electronic devices and Internet tools as well as the module on filling in online forms. Each module is divided into three 90-minute lessons so, altogether, twenty-four lessons are provided which refer to the situations most important and typical of an older adult's existence.

The practical dimension of the course translates into a growing motivation of the learners who feel the need to study the language and thus to handle linguistically difficult situations from everyday life. Therefore, their behaviour is motivated by intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation as the primary reason for studying the language is for seniors their own satisfaction. Knowles who introduced the concept of andragogy – a science studying adult learning as distinct from children's manner of learning – found internal motivation to be typical of seniors' approach to learning, which therefore should be related to the usefulness of the material studied during the course (Merriam, 2011: 30). Seniors want to learn a language for the reasons such as the need to contact their family, to travel or to solve their everyday problems with technology, whereas, unlike younger learners, they do not feel the need to study to gain a degree or a certificate proving their skills or competencies.

1.2.2. Modern technologies

Another significant aspect of the project is the emphasis on the use of modern technologies, starting with audio-visual material which reinforces the message of the lessons. However, the development of digital skills like operating mobile devices or the use of Internet applications is a necessary requirement in today's world so it seemed indispensable to include such aspects in the course. At the same time, such skills appear to be highly problematic for older adults – non-natives to the digital world who are often afraid

to use ICT technologies but are often forced to use them, e.g., to communicate with their grandchildren or perform everyday activities.

Older adults may encounter problems not only with the use of online tools and applications related to booking flights or hotels, or administering their bank accounts, but also with such modern devices as ticket machines or parking meters. Therefore, mock-ups of such devices and tools have been included in the lessons developed in the project so that seniors could practise how to use these devices and, thus, how to get accustomed to them in real life, not only in English but also using their mother tongue as frequently the use of these mock-ups in the course may be the senior's first encounter with such devices. Thus, learners "acquire considerable non-linguistic knowledge through using a foreign language" (Kaceti and Klimova, 310), which is an additional asset of the course "Real Life Context" as this fact renders the learning process more important and valuable for the older adult students.

What is more, to strengthen the digital dimension of the course, the material is available not only in the paper version but also, or above all, in the version online at www.reallifecontext.eu. Apart from more detailed information about the partners in the project, the website contains the components of the course – the modules with worksheets and supplementary materials as well as this e-book.

1.2.3. Innovativeness

The two characteristic features of "Real Life Context" – its practical approach and the focus on modern technologies – facilitate the implementation of the main aim of the project which is to develop innovative materials which might be of great assistance for seniors in the development of both their digital and language learning competences. That is why the lessons in the project focus on the communicative approach so that the skills gained during the course could be of real use for seniors. However, the inclusion of digital materials, mock-ups in particular, renders the course unique and innovative as compared with all the other available courses for older adults.

1.3. Description of the course

The course is designed for students at A1+/A2 level of difficulty in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>). Therefore, the course is designed for those seniors who already know the basics of English either because they are currently attending a General English course or because they studied English in the past. Thus, they understand and use familiar everyday phrases and expressions; they can also interact in a very basic way by asking and answering simple questions concerning their personal details, e.g., they can introduce themselves and say where they live or what their hobby is. They might also be able to talk about routine activities like shopping or employment. However, this knowledge has to be revised and further extended as such learners still do not have enough self-confidence in their language performance and need to practice even the simplest grammatical or lexical constructions.

The lessons are structured following a certain pattern. The learner's experience and reflection on it is the starting point for each topic. This is particularly important in the case of seniors as by sharing their frequently vast experience and knowledge of the topic they gain confidence and actively take part in the lesson and the process of learning itself from the very beginning of the course. The next step in the lesson is the presentation of the vocabulary and phrases related to the topic in the form of multimedia exercises which frequently involve a lot of drills and repetitions, necessary for seniors to efficiently remember and use the introduced vocabulary. The lesson also includes numerous practical exercises which help the learner to revise the vocabulary and to practise situations potentially taking place in real life. As the whole project is focused on the use of modern technologies, the exercises and presentations are to a large extent interactive. The course, however, does not focus on grammatical rules and exercises as, in the opinion of the creators of the project, seniors do not need the detailed knowledge of grammar to be able to effectively use the language. Any grammatical structures have been included only as part of whole phrases or expressions needed in real-life situations presented in the course.

What is a strong asset of the course is the fact that learners may follow the lessons both on their computers or mobile phones and in a non-digital way. The materials for the

lessons are available online but also in the form of a paper booklet. Additionally, the structure of the course gives a lot of freedom as to the way of handling the material – the lessons may be conducted by the teacher online or in a traditional classroom but it is also possible for learners to learn on their own, without the presence of the teacher, in the self-directed learning process. This latter aspect is of particular importance because, as Kern (2014: 81) notes, in the future, seniors will focus more on “self-directed learning” and will acquire the skills to render them “autonomous learners” (cf. Weinstein, 2004: 7). What is more, the lessons may be conducted as an autonomous separate course but they may also function as supplementary material, also as single teaching units because the lessons on particular topics may be used independently of the whole course. The free approach to the materials in the course seems to be a crucial advantage of the lessons in the project.

1.4. The role of the teacher

What is worth emphasising in the description of the course is the role of the teacher. The attempt was made to escape from the traditional role of the teacher as the ultimate provider of information but rather as a facilitator. This approach goes in line with Brookfield’s observation that “facilitators of learning see themselves as resources for learning, rather than as didactic instructors who have all the answers” and therefore enter a “helping relationship” with their students (Brookfield, 1986: 63). Such an approach allows learners to have an impact on the creation of their own knowledge as the teacher becomes more of a partner than a central figure in the learning process, which is particularly significant when learners are often the same age as the teacher or even older. Thus, no unnecessary tension or awkwardness arises during the lesson. The teacher becomes a learner’s guide who shows the general direction rather than providing strict instructions.

What follows from the fact that the teacher guides rather than provides the students with ready-made answers is another advantage, namely the creation of a more friendly atmosphere and a safer environment for the learning process. Since the teacher only shows the general direction and allows for a lot of freedom on the side of the learners, they feel they can trust the teacher and share their experiences with the others in a more self-

confident way. This interaction leads to the synergy between the teacher and the learners which only boosts the performance during the lesson.

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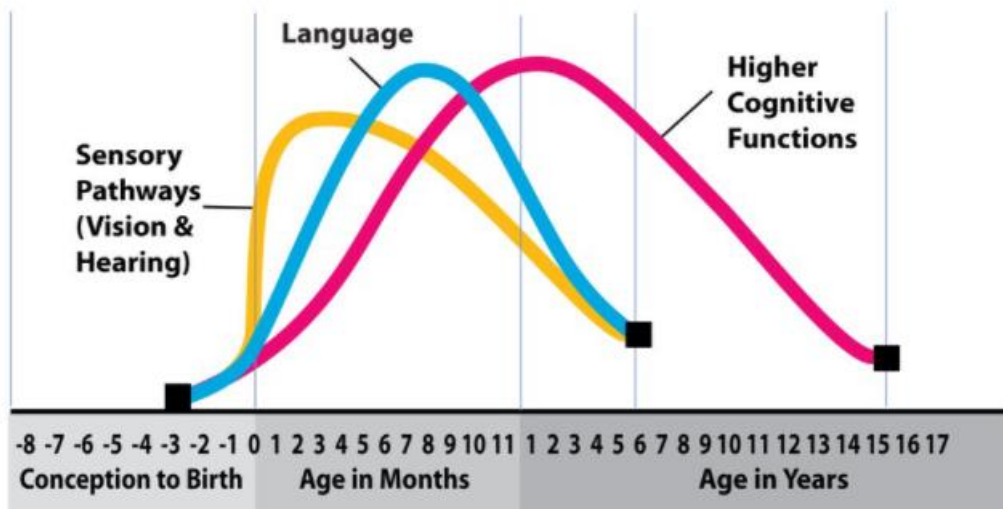
2. Problems and benefits of teaching English to seniors: The most frequently emerging issues related to teaching English to older people with low competences and skills.

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember – Involve me and I learn.

As children, our ability to learn is unmatched with any other time within our lives. Between the ages of 2 and 7 a child's brain is developing in spurts. From the age of 2, synapses (the connections between the brain cells) double in number – and as a result a 2 year old has twice as many of these connections compared to an adult; the more synapses the greater the ability to learn, and so as these synapses decrease with the ageing process, the ability to learn becomes more challenging.

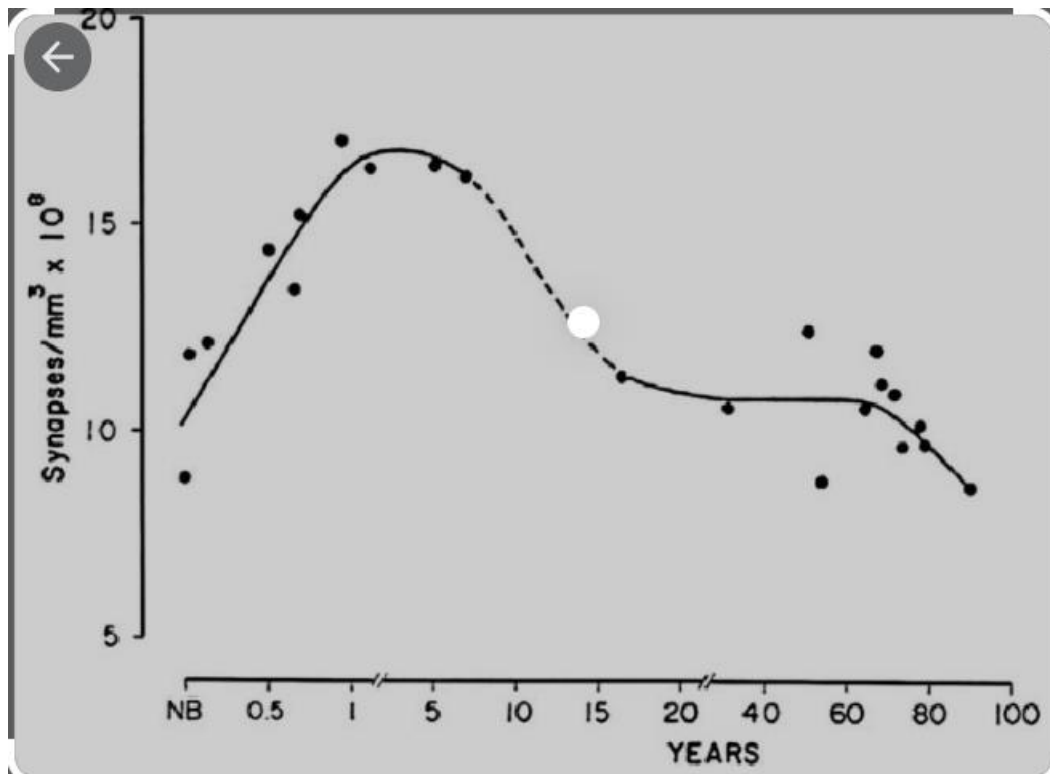
Diagram 1 below demonstrates synapse formation in children and teens.

Synapse formation is dependent on early experiences



Synapse formation begins declining before Age 3

Diagram 2 demonstrates synapse from birth to 100 years – the difference is stark



With regards to learning a second language, linguists and psychologists seem to agree that the optimum time to learn a language is around 7 or 8 years old, any later than this and it starts to become more exigent – the older a person becomes the more difficult learning an additional language becomes. In a study conducted by The Massachusetts University of Technology, data gathered from 670,000 participants revealed that the best age to start learning a new language and enjoy a ‘near native’ proficiency was before 10 years old. In addition, it also found that children up to 18 were highly skilled at understanding the grammar of a language. After this age the ability to master (near perfectly) the new language begins to tail off. However, that does not mean to say that it is impossible to learn a new language to a high level. Another argument that challenges this is that ‘younger students may be better when it comes to acquiring pronunciation, but otherwise adults are perfectly able to reach high levels of proficiency in a foreign language’ (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 73). There is also a multitude of research that indicates learning a second language could prove highly beneficial in the fight against diseases such as Alzheimer’s and it is believed learning an additional language could delay the onset of diseases such as this.

One of the key benefits of teaching seniors is the fact that the likelihood is they are more motivated to learn. Often children who learn in school learn because they have to and not

because they want to; as a result it can be difficult to keep children motivated. It also goes without saying that discipline can also pose a huge problem within the school setting. In the context of a senior learning environment, these significant issues for the most part do not need to be contended with. As Harmer (2007) expresses, 'many adults are able to sustain a level of motivation by holding onto a distant goal in a way that teenagers find more difficult' (p 84). That said, of course there are still a great number of challenges that need to be faced and taken into consideration – particularly when grouping together more mature people from different backgrounds.

It should be remembered when considering discipline in these types of settings that naturally with age 'life experience' occurs; as a result older people can be opinionated and hold strong opinions and beliefs, lesson plans should be mindful of this. While some debate in a classroom can prove productive and should be openly encouraged, 'serious' or offensive arguments could prove destructive. To combat or minimise this, ground rules need to be set from the very first lesson. Often it is a good idea to keep subjects such as religion and politics away from the classroom as much as possible, but also it should be agreed early on that all learners should respect each other's backgrounds and should not intentionally set out to upset other members of the group.

Firstly, and perhaps arguably most importantly, seniors need to feel comfortable and relaxed in their language learning setting. For this, approachable, confident and patient teachers are a must – whether online or classroom based, teachers must be able to quickly establish rapport with learners and make them feel at ease. Most senior learners are not as confident as their younger counterparts and the fear of making a mistake can and will hold them back if they do not feel comfortable in the setting. It is always beneficial to reduce error correction for mature students as it helps build confidence. Teachers who constantly correct every mistake can leave senior learners afraid to speak for fear of making mistakes – it is better to focus on the students' strengths and build them up. Error correction has a place of course – it is a necessity – but perhaps throughout the course of the lesson the teacher should make a note of any serious errors, including an error correction section at the end of the lesson referring to it as 'common errors. Individual students' names should not be mentioned instead of 'Abdul kept making mistakes with past perfect today'. An example

would be 'let's work together on some common mistakes that often occur with past perfect', as a more constructive alternative to save any embarrassment.

Mature language learners will probably be used to a certain style of learning depending on their culture and country of origin. This can prove challenging with these types of learners because they must adapt to a different style, of which they are unused to. At first this 'new style' of teaching and learning could prove difficult and leave the learners hesitant. Teachers should endeavour to explain their methodology and be able to receive questions and give answers.

When setting up classrooms for the purpose of teaching senior citizens it is important that the physical comfort of these learners is taken into consideration. Older people may suffer from conditions such as arthritis or reduced mobility. Chairs that are hard may be suitable for younger learners but they could pose a problem for the older learner. Being uncomfortable would prove a hindrance to an older person's ability to learn effectively. In addition to this older people may experience decreased vision or hearing loss, so rooms should be well lit and any imagery/writing should be clear and easy to read. Extra time should be allocated for activities which require movement such as mingling activities.

As we age our cognitive development, recall and problem-solving abilities may decline. This provides us with an extra challenge when trying to teach older people English. In order to alleviate some of these problems it is a good idea to incorporate some extra techniques which would not usually be employed in a younger oriented learning environment. These include: not interrupting students when they are speaking – this allows their ideas and confidence to flow – it also helps to build respect; repetition and recycling of grammar is a key factor in supporting older learners, signs on the walls showing grammatical structures and useful vocabulary expressions may also prove beneficial; any writing whether on signs or on the board should be in a large font, this should also include where possible text from books or photocopies.

Older students tend to both enjoy and benefit from learning in context. A senior citizen may have difficulty recalling such information as the surname 'Baker' but he or she will almost always remember the story of 'A Baker'. Morandi (2005, p.45) says 'that people in this specific age tend to remember old memories rather than recent facts', adding that people

who maintain an intellectual activity (such as learning a new language) enhance their memory capacity. People with active life style, physical activities, and a healthy diet maintain this capacity for a longer period of time.

If the content of the lessons make sense to the learner, then the learner is able to receive the best possible learning outcome. When planning lessons for younger students there is typically a heavy focus on grammar rules and pronunciation. Whilst they do have a place in every language classroom, not so much emphasis needs to be placed here. If teachers are able to equip learners with enough language and vocabulary to be able to construct basic sentences then that will serve the purpose in being understood. Senior learners are unlikely to be participating in EFL learning with a view to passing IELTS or FCE; therefore what is more important to senior learners is being understood and being able to understand 'every day English'. Senior citizens need the skills to be able to communicate in a variety of settings including doctor's surgeries, clinics, hospitals, pharmacies, supermarkets and in social settings. Giving senior learners the ability to carry out these tasks both confidently and independently goes further than constantly drilling the difference between present perfect and past simple that will ultimately result in not only needless but also avoidable confusion.

If a non-native speaker mistakenly states 'I have porridge for my breakfast this morning', it is not difficult to understand that what he or she meant was 'had' and that the speaker ate porridge that morning – the mistake will not have any serious repercussions in society. Equally if the non-native speaker pronounces the phoneme 'th' with a z sound it is quite clear that the speaker means 'this' even though he or she has said 'zis'. If a speaker forgets to use an article 'I went to cinema last night' instead of 'I went to the cinema last night', again the same is true. We have no real difficulty understand what the speaker meant – the message is still effectively communicated.

In the classroom an effective way of learning functional English is through role plays. There is a vast selection of different role plays available in books and online, or alternatively teachers can either create their own or teachers and students can work together to create them using scenarios such as visiting the doctor, the dentist, the supermarket or a social scenario such as at a restaurant, coffee shop or party. As an extension of this, senior learners may enjoy and benefit greatly from outside activities away from the classroom; for example various trips could be planned such as visiting a coffee shop or a café, after

students have participated in a few roleplays. This will help the students feel at ease in these kinds of environments. Without activities such as these learners could lack the confidence or feel anxious about doing these things on their own, and thus be missing a valuable opportunity to socialise with others and practice speaking the English that they have begun to acquire in the classroom. At home, if the senior learner is married then he or she may not be practising because their husband/wife or partner speaks the same language, and so it naturally goes that couples will revert back to their native language.

Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is time. It is usually true that adults have less free time available than children or young people. Whilst it is certainly true that some senior citizens may be retired and no longer have the constraints of the working day to contend with, they may have other family commitments to keep to; such as caring for grandchildren, or perhaps they may have to care for their spouse. When planning and scheduling lessons it is a good idea to take this into consideration – most people tend to learn better earlier in the day than they do later in the day. Keeping lessons shorter allows senior students to keep their study/life balance. In addition to this, older people are less likely to be able to study for long periods. In a language school it is not unusual for learners to attend a 3 hour general English lesson followed by additional lessons in the afternoon, such as conversation skills, listening, speaking or writing skills, for anything up to 2 additional hours. Studying for extended periods such as this would not prove beneficial to senior learners – in fact it could prove detrimental, with learners suffering an overload. Here blended learning could be considered also, if students were to attend both classroom based and online lessons then it might allow a greater flexibility.

Instead of mixing older and younger learners, where possible steps should be taken to segregate these learners. Having senior only lessons or lessons above a certain age means that older people are able to learn and socialise with others from the same point in life. Many older students say they 'feel embarrassed in front of adolescents and younger people because they commonly have problems with pronunciation or slow reasoning ability.

They can notice that younger classmates feel impatient when they intend to elaborate a more complex answer, and become the target of mocking' (Morandi, op. cit., 23).

Segregating these students means they will all be on equal footing and they won't have to manage the prejudices that could potentially occur in mixed aged classes. Some of these prejudices include younger learners laughing or becoming impatient because the older learner requires more time to be able to digest a point, or that the older listener requires a second or third listening in order to complete a listening task. These prejudices would most likely reduce the older learner's self-esteem and decrease their confidence. In a class made up completely of senior learners the opposite would be true because older people tend to be naturally more patient and they all would be sharing a common goal and so they all have something in common. In the book 'Oxford's 1990 Taxonomy for language learning strategies' it is stated that since languages are a part of human behaviour, to socialize with other people who share the same interest in the learning process is very important to language development, because of mutual support and empathy (Oxford, op. cit., p. 144).

Ever more increasingly classrooms are beginning to incorporate technology into their environment. With the use of smartboards and QR codes, mobile phones and tablets, technology is undoubtedly an incredible tool which can enhance language learning. There are numerous apps and websites that support language learning, particularly when it comes to self-study. The use of technology should be encouraged for all learners, and teachers should hold sessions to aid understanding and navigation of these invaluable tools. Students should also be encouraged to watch English television, films or series and listen to English music alongside their classroom learning – there is an abundance available on sites like YouTube and students should be shown how to access this.

When it comes to reading and writing it depends entirely upon what the learner's goals are. Being able to read is important when being able to understand signs, road names, buildings and ingredients. Writing is also important because learners will most likely be required to complete paperwork at certain points. If the learner's first language is a Roman language, then the ability to read and write will come easier to them than it will for someone whose first language is not from Roman, such as Slavic languages or Arabic languages. Both Slavic

and Arabic languages use an alphabet of symbols which is comparatively very different to the Roman alphabet, especially the Arabic alphabet which provides learners an additional complication of being written from right to left instead of left to right. Should the learner have had no exposure to Latin based languages then learning to read and write can prove very challenging. It is often the case that learners can often speak relatively well but are unable to read and write completely, or have only very basic reading and writing skills. It may be necessary to teach learners the alphabet from the very beginning as well as the phonetic sounds as you would a child. Encouraging reading with graded readers both inside and outside the classroom will assist in improvements in reading. As with speaking and listening, reading and writing should be functional and relevant to the learners. It will probably never be necessary for them to be able to identify which paraphrased quotation came from which study in a large text about finance, but it will prove useful to be able to read and write on some level.

Teaching seniors to speak English effectively is by no means an easy task, however it is certainly not impossible. There are problems, but with each problem there is a solution. This kind of learning experience can be both rewarding and enjoyable.

[The Challenge of Teaching English to Adult Learner.pdf](#)

[Learning English in the elderly an analysis of mot.pdf](#)

3. Cognitive abilities of seniors

Human brain is in charge of everything from our thoughts, emotions, memory and all the way to breathing and motor skills. As we age, our cognitive abilities start declining which has a huge impact on our memory, speed of information processing, dealing with distractions and the ability to stay independent (Carleton University, n. d.).

Cognitive change is a normal process of aging and while some cognitive abilities, such as vocabulary, are not affected by brain aging and can even improve with age, some abilities, such as conceptual reasoning, memory, and processing speed, usually decline as we get older (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

As we get older, our cognitive abilities decline, impacting our memory, the speed at which we process information, how we handle distractions and our capacity to remain independent. Therefore, many researches are being made with the goal to try optimizing the cognitive performance of seniors, some of them researching the impact of active life-style factors such as social interactions or bilingualism on cognitive abilities of ageing population.

Researchers claim there are many ways to enhance our cognitive abilities, such as doing aerobic exercise, which enlarges the brain volume, avoiding red meat, which is connected to brain shrinkage, while special emphasis, together with gaining higher education or having a challenging job, is given to the importance of speaking a second language, which has a huge impact on maintaining our cognitive abilities. John Anderson, cognitive science researcher Carleton University conducted a research with magnetic resonance imaging scans which showed that older bilingual adults had more efficient brains than monolingual seniors. The findings showed that bilingual seniors needed to put in less effort than monolingual ones to achieve the same output (Carleton University, n. d.).

Other researches for example focused on comparison of writing tasks where participants were asked to substitute symbols for numbers. The results showed that on average 20-year-old participants carried out the assignment almost 75 percent faster than 75-year old participants. There are also other comparisons being made, such as trying to remember a telephone number or the rate of car accidents being caused by elderly people per miles driven. Aging also affects our attention, especially multitasking, where seniors have more

difficulties from switching from one task to another. Several studies have shown that by the age of 70 we can remember just 75 percent of a certain story in comparison to 18-year-olds. It is also interesting how we recall the name of a person we know after the age of 70. Usually, seniors have difficulties in accessing the word, which we usually refer to as a tip of the tongue' experience when we are very close to remembering the word or even remember the first letter of the word. There is also a decline in visual perceptual abilities after the year of 80, for example in recognizing the distance of a curb and similar, as well as in executive functioning, such as conceptualizing problems, decision making, planning and execution of actions.

While researches show that seniors can on average deal with fewer bits of information and are less effective in decision-making in unfamiliar situation in comparison to young people, studies of social cognition have also proven that fast and accurate processing of information is usually counterbalanced by higher social expertise from previously gained knowledge and experience. This means that middle aged and people and senior make more accurate interpretations of other people's behaviour in comparison to younger people due to their lifetime experience in social situations. This is what we usually refer to as wisdom.

At the same time cognitive health can be enhanced and preserved by social engagement. Enjoying social activities, hanging out with friends, large social network and frequency of contacts can even reduce the risk of dementia (Howieson, 2015).

3.1. Crystallized and Fluid Intelligence

Expressions crystallized and fluid intelligence are used to describe cognitive change patterns during our lifetime. We use the term crystallized intelligence for ability, skills and overlearned, familiar and well-trained knowledge, such as for example vocabulary and general knowledge the are usually stable or even improve through time. Seniors usually perform better at tasks that require this kind of intelligence in comparison to young people because they have more life experience.

On the other hand, fluid intelligence refers to problem solving skills and reasoning about less familiar things, such as processing and learning new information, problem solving, attending

and manipulating one's environment, executive functions, speed of processing, memory and psychomotor ability. Most of the fluid cognitive abilities decline as we age (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

3.2. Cognitive domains

We can divide cognitive ability into the following cognitive domains: processing speed, attention, memory, language, visuospatial abilities, and executive functioning/reasoning.

Processing speed

This term refers to the speed of motor responses and the speed of the execution of cognitive activities. It is a fluid ability which begins to decline in the third decade. The most of the cognitive changes in seniors are caused by the slowed processing speed which can have a negative influence on neuropsychological tests measuring other cognitive domains, such as verbal fluency (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

Attention

Attention is the ability of focusing and concentrating on specific stimuli. Usually simple auditory attention span, the so called immediate memory, is not effected with ageing, contrary to the more complex tasks, such as selective and divided attention, which decline with ageing. Selective ability is the capacity of focusing on specific information from the environment while ignoring irrelevant information. This is really important when we are making conversations in a noisy environment or driving. On the other hand, the divided attention is the ability of focusing on multiple tasks at the same time, such as talking on the phone while cooking dinner. Apart from the selective and divided attention seniors also tend to perform worse than younger people on tasks that involve working memory, such as calculating a tip for the waiter at the restaurant (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

Memory

This is one of the most common problems reported by the seniors. There are two major categories of memory, declarative and non-declarative.

Declarative of explicit memory involves conscious recollection of events and facts and is divided into semantic memory and episodic memory. Semantic memory includes fund of data, language use and practical knowledge, such as meaning of the words, while episodic or autobiographical memory involves personally experienced events at a specific time and place and we can measure it by memory of world lists, figures and stories. Declines in both of these memory categories occur with the process of ageing, but at different time; episodic memory declines throughout the lifetime, while semantic memory starts declining in our late life.

Non-declarative (implicit) memory is outside of individual’s awareness. An example of this kind of memory is singing a familiar song. One of the non-declarative type of memory is procedural memory which we use for example when we are remembering how to tie a shoe or a tie or ride a bike. Non-declarative memory remains unchanged throughout our lives (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

Table 1 presents a description of the effect of aging on several examples of different types of memory.

Declines with age	Remains stable with age
<p>Delayed free recall: spontaneous retrieval of information from memory without a cue^{24,25}</p> <p>Example: Recalling a list of items to purchase at the grocery store without a cue</p>	<p>Recognition memory: ability to retrieve information when given a cue</p> <p>Example: Correctly giving the details of a story when given yes/no questions</p>
<p>Source memory: knowing the source of the learned information</p> <p>Example: Remembering if you learned a fact because you saw it on television, read it in the newspaper, or</p>	<p>Temporal order memory: memory for the correct time or sequence of past events</p> <p>Example: Remembering that last Saturday you went to the grocery store after you ate lunch</p>

Declines with age	Remains stable with age
heard it from a friend	with your friends
Prospective memory: remembering to perform intended actions in the future ²⁶ Example: Remembering to take medicine before going to bed	Procedural memory: memory of how to do things Example: Remembering how to ride a bike

Table 1: Memory and aging (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

There are different stages of memory, such as acquisition, the ability to encode new data into memory which declines across the lifespan, while the successfully learned retention of information is preserved in cognitively healthy seniors. Declines also occur in memory retrieval also declines in memory retrieval, the ability to access newly learned information (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

Language

Language is a complex cognitive domain. It includes crystallized and fluid cognitive abilities and the overall language ability remains intact throughout lifetime, with vocabulary remaining stable or even improving. But there are a few exceptions, such as visual confrontation naming or the ability to see a common object and name it which remain more or less the same until age 70, when it starts declining. The same goes for verbal fluency, the ability to perform a word search and generate words for a certain category in a certain amount of time (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

Visuospatial Abilities/Construction

This group includes the ability of understanding space in two or three dimensions, such as visual constructions skills for putting together separate parts to create a whole. While this

group declines over time, the visuospatial abilities, such object perception, the ability to recognize familiar objects or faces stay intact (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

Executive Functioning

This term refers to the capacity that enables people to successfully engage in appropriate, purposive, independent and self-serving behaviour, including the ability to plan, organize, reason, self-monitor, solve problems and be mentally flexible. Mental flexibility, abstraction and concept formation decline as we age because older people think more concretely than young people. Aging also have a negative effect on response inhibition and executive abilities that require a speeded motor component, as well as inductive reasoning in verbal and mathematic reasoning tasks (Harada, Natelson Love, Triebel, 2014).

3.3. Most common causes of cognitive decline in seniors

Usually there are more than one cause for cognitive decline and some of the most common ones are:

- Medication
- Blood chemistry
- Problems with hormones
- Vitamin deficiency
- Delirium
- Psychiatric conditions
- Substance abuse
- Injury
- Neurodegenerative conditions
- Toxins
- other medical conditions and lifestyle decisions, such as smoking, high blood pressure and cholesterol, obesity, depression, lack of physical exercise, low education

level, lack of mental engagement or socially stimulating activities and similar (Compass by WebMd, 2021).

3.3.1. Improving Cognitive Abilities of Seniors

It is of course inevitable that we will be somehow affected by the decline in cognitive abilities but there are some ways to slow down this decline and improve our cognitive abilities as we get older. Let's take a look at some ideas.

Social Activities and Brain Training

Social engagement with other people through various groups and associations can help seniors maintain and improve their cognitive and mental wellbeing. Since being socially active enhances motivation and requires moderate physical activity it has many beneficial outcomes for cognitive health in seniors.

Since some cognitively challenging leisure activities or games require the use of working memory and an executive reasoning skills, seniors who regularly play games, like bridge or chess or do crosswords or Sudoku, usually have better working memories and reasoning skills,

Memory training can also improve seniors' attention and concentration, personal insight, relaxation and motivation which can not only effect cognitive ability but also behavioural outcomes (Shabir, 2020).

Physical Activity

Carrying out physical activities increases the flow of our blood and levels of oxygen to the brain. Researches have shown that people who walk more will less likely suffer from declines in cognition in the later years. And individuals who are involved in higher levels of physical activities are proven to have 20% less risk of reduction of their cognitive decline and dementia. Even very light activities, such as slow walking, dancing or gardening can do a lot in this area.

Even spending less time sitting can offset some of the effects of a sedentary lifestyle e.g. light activity such as brisk walking, gardening, or dancing.

The findings of a study published in the International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity claim that carrying out physical activity in combination with cognitively demanding tasks at the same time helps in improving cognition more than doing it separately (Shabir, 2020).

Nutrition/Diet

Having a proper nutrition and diet when we are younger has a big effect on our cognitive ability in senior years. Eating fresh fruit, vegetables, fish and cutting down red meat and refined carbohydrates/grains and sugar supplies the body with nutrients, vitamins, and minerals which confer neuroprotective effects.

Several studies have also shown that antioxidant/vitamin supplements taken by patients with hypertension and diabetes have a very beneficial effect on the overall cognitive health. Vitamins B6 and B12 can help in reducing the levels of homocysteine, a vascular disease marker connected to cognitive decline and dementia, while vitamins C and E can reduce the levels of vascular inflammation and can reduce cognitive decline, especially in intermediate memory (Shabir, 2020).

3.3.2. Symptoms of Cognitive Decline in Seniors

It is natural that we suffer from increasing forgetfulness as we age and taking longer time to think of a word or to recall a person's name is not really alarming. But if you notice a consistent or increasing decline in your mental performance this might be a sign of cognitive impairment.

Some of the most common signs are:

- forgetting things often
- constant forgetting of important appointments or engagements
- losing the red line during a conversation, reading books or watching movies

- difficulties or pressure during making decisions, planning steps to carry out a task or understanding instructions
- difficulties in orienting and finding the right way in familiar environments
- constantly becoming more and more impulsive and having poor judgement your family and friends start noticing changes (Compass by WebMd, 2021).

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Part 2 – PRACTICAL – How to work with a senior?

Foreign language learning for seniors is often considered as complicated. However, the latter is often viewed as complicated in the case of the ‘third-age’ adults trying to master another language since such learners often come across a range of certain barriers. Among them the fact that they are subject to numerous age self-stereotypes which prevent them from successful acquisition of foreign languages.

1. Stereotypes and barriers

Learning a foreign language when you are a senior can be accompanied by several stereotypes which are mostly unjustified and prejudicial. One of the typical stereotypes is that senior learners have a declined ability to learn, which has been dismissed by several researchers. Of course there can be some limitations accompanying senior learners, but mostly these limitations are such as hearing and vision loss, while the age does not affect learning a foreign language. Furthermore, researches show that it is not the age that influences the abilities of senior learners, but rather the context in which they learn, confirming the fact that seniors can be very good at learning a new language if certain adjustments in the learning environment, teaching methods and affective factors (Schlepperegell, 1987),

Although it is a general opinion that the younger a person is the better learner of a foreign language he or she is, this has been proven as a misconception by several studies. They have shown that although children might possess better ability in achieving native-like fluency in the long run, adults, including seniors, can actually learn faster than children in early stages, proving that the ability to communicate in a foreign language can actually be easier and faster for adults in comparison to children. It has been proven that the intellectual abilities of seniors do not decline if they remain healthy and although adults learn in a different manner than children, there are no evident differences in learning abilities between children and adults, including seniors (Schlepperegell, 1987). Furthermore, Cimermanová claims after considering psychological knowledge about the relation between abilities and age adults

even have more advantages in learning foreign languages as children. The main emphasis is actually on senior's experience with learning at a higher age; if an adult intentionally did not develop his/her cognitive processes during his/her productive years, it will be more problematic and demanding for this senior to learn a foreign language (Hatar and Grofčíková, 2016).

One of the roots of these misbeliefs can be found in the hypothesis from the 1960s which claimed that the brain loses cerebral plasticity after puberty which would make language learning more difficult for adults than for children. More recent studies, however, show that learning a foreign language is indeed different for children and adults due to developmental differences in the brain, but also that adults have superior capabilities for learning foreign languages. This lies in the advantage of the development of higher-order linguistic processes as people age, which enables a better understanding of semantic relations and grammar, which makes adults better language learners than children, especially in the area of vocabulary and language structure. Due to a highly developed cognitive systems, seniors have the ability to create higher order associations and generalizations and at the same time are able to connect the new information with their already existent learning experience, while relying on long-term memory more than the short-term memory, which is the case with children and young students (Schleppegrell, 1987).

All of the above of course depends on the health of an individual, since several chronic diseases can affect an individual's ability to learn. One of these problems is hearing loss which affects one's ability to understand speech, especially if there is a background noise present, and the other is the decrease in visual acuity. Therefore, it is very important that audio output is well combined with visual presentation of the material, in addition to the good lighting in the learning environment and elimination of outside noise (Schleppegrell, 1987).

2. Self-stereotyping

Since the aging population has been increasing in the last few decades, it has become very important for most of the countries to encourage elderly people to become active members

of the society. Therefore, many countries are doing their best to give their elderly citizens as many opportunities for a full-fledged life as possible, usually by offering their seniors various activities, such as healthy lifestyle activities and foreign language learning. Unfortunately, one of the biggest barriers that stands in the way of seniors learning a new foreign language comes from self- stereotyping. The study carried out by the Moscow State Institute of International Relations shows that self-stereotyping of seniors about themselves has a huge effect on the performance of seniors during learning a foreign language, as well as their physical and cognitive functioning. The study included 27 seniors with medium age 72. All of them attended a 4-month English course, consisting of two 90-minute classes per week. When the course ended, seniors took a specially designed test to check how the material used during the course was acquired. The test was followed by individual interviews and all the information was used to collect the participants 'thoughts and feelings about the course, how they performed and similar. The results showed that the experiment participants expressed a large amount of self-stereotypes which was, in their opinion, the main cause for their improper performance. At the same time, the results showed that participants with self-stereotypes about themselves who considered themselves as less academic or forgetful, showed lower scores in the tests, while participants who had a more positive opinion about themselves showed higher scores (Polskaya and Parshutina, 2021).

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3. How to eliminate or reduce barriers

There are several things mentors/teachers of foreign languages for seniors can do to eliminate or reduce the barriers that seniors are facing when learning a foreign language. These approaches can help in making the materials motivating and relevant for seniors, as well as in encouraging the use of adult learning strategies.



Mentors/teachers should try to:

- reduce anxiety and build self-confidence in learners: motivation and self-confidence are very important in language learning and senior learners fear failure more than young people, especially when they are faced with stressful, fast-paced learning situations;
- foster group work and give focus on understanding rather than producing language;
- reduce the error correction;
- emphasize the positive and focus on the progress learners are making;
- use the materials and activities that incorporate real life experiences and are designed to present
- structures and vocabulary that will be of immediate use to them;
- avoid boring and irrelevant teaching/learning content;

- allow different approaches to the learning tasks so that seniors can choose their own method for completing various tasks;
- introduce strategies for organizing information to seniors with little formal education (Schleppegrell, 1987).

3.1. Methods used by teaching staff

Mentors/teachers should be really careful about choosing proper language teaching methods, since some may be inappropriate for senior students. Such teaching methods can be various oral drills and memorization or exercises that demand good hearing from the learners. Senior learners should not be learning by drilling new materials, but rather by integrating new materials and concepts into previously existing cognitive structures. At the same time, although fast-paced drills and competitive exercises might be fun and useful for younger learners, they should be avoided when teaching a foreign language to seniors (Schleppegrell, 1987).

Not all organizations that offer language classes for seniors are well prepared regarding their teaching staff. In many cases, the courses are led by elementary and secondary school teachers who use the same teaching methods for children and seniors which tends to be counterproductive. Organizations that offer language courses for seniors should consider that the literature and educational practice usually ignore the need for differentiation between teaching foreign languages to children on one side and adults and seniors on the other side. There are big differences, with emphasis on motivation, methodology as well as with the content.



Children usually get the motivation for learning a foreign language from the outside, while adults and seniors have inner motivation for learning a foreign language. This motivation can come from the desire to meet peers in language courses or to not depend on others when communicating in a foreign language or even to prove to their family members that they can still learn and progress.

At the same time, the content of education, especially the thematic orientation of the used teaching materials, is different for learners of different ages. Therefore, the materials used for seniors should not be the same as the ones used for children.

The methodology used when teaching a foreign language to seniors should respect individuals, with great emphasis on the age of the participants. According to the Berlin study carried out in 2012 by Mitterlechner that when teaching a foreign language to seniors the following factors should be considered:

- Seniors tend to need more time for learning

- They are more sensitive to disturbances coming from the external environment
- They emphasise the meaning of education
- The content of the course has to be relevant, meaningful and beneficial to senior learners
- The success of learning depends on their motivation
- Connection to knowledge acquired earlier has a beneficial effect
- Learning depends on social factors
- Seniors also have unused learning capacities (Hatar and Grofčíková, 2016).

While there are various approaches considering foreign language education of adults and seniors, there is still no elaborated methodology of teaching apart from universal methods and approaches used for all. They all have their pros and cons.

3.2. So what usually works when teaching seniors a foreign language?

Tkáčiková claims that adults can learn vocabulary and grammar structures easily, while they usually have problems with the sound system and pronunciation of a foreign language. Some experts claim that drilling pronunciation, rhythm, intonation and sound production are compulsory for adult beginners, especially to overcome fear and frustration from speaking, some other experts, such as Schleppegrell (1987), claim that drilling and remembering on the basis of short term memory is discriminating and not recommended for seniors.

The selection of methods depends on several factors: the mentor has to know his/her learners, their aims, motivation, age, needs; only then he/she can decide which method could be the most efficient one. Naturally, there is not just one suitable method, a good mentor should make methodological shifts and combine different methodologies to achieve as much success as possible (Hatar and Grofčíková, 2016).



Here are some theories/methods that have proven to have a good effect on adults and seniors learning a foreign language:

- Reading and listening comprehension can partly be acquired outside a foreign language environment. Since adults have habits, experience and the need to understand the essence of a fact as well as to see the logic in something, they prefer **deductive procedures** for grammar explanations.
- The use of native language for communication works well with beginners because they have a minimum experience with a foreign language.
For this purpose, the **grammar-translation method** is very common in adults and senior language learning.
- **Audiolingual method** depends on the needs, expectations and health handicaps of the learners group and it could be more efficient in combination with other procedures, since the emphasis on pronunciation, listening and speaking by revision and drilling help in fluency and overcoming fear. Of course, the videos and recordings should be clear and interesting for the senior generation.
- **Communicative method** is recommendable for seniors that have better linguistic skills; it is good for fostering the ability to communicate in a foreign language, during which the mentor/teacher corrects only serious mistakes, while the tempo of speaking is adjusted to senior's need and the materials are based on inductive procedures. Several techniques, such as picture stories and role-plays are allowed here, which allows seniors to integrate new content to the already present cognitive

structures, while pair or group work fosters seniors' self-confidence and supports language learning.

- **Direct method** is also suitable for seniors with the advanced level of knowledge and is based mostly on inductive procedures. The mentor/teacher uses a foreign language during the lessons and uses pictures and examples to explain the grammar, while new vocabulary is directly applied during the lesson and learned in context.
- **Natural method, total physical response, silent way and suggestopedia** are some other methods in foreign language teaching but they are not much appropriate for seniors learning foreign languages. At the same time it should be noted that **new, less conformal techniques and methods** are usually **not well accepted** by seniors. (Hatar and Grofčíková, 2016.)

3.3. Learning styles

Seniors learning a foreign language can face various barriers which can slow the learning:

- Subjective: fear of decrease of cognitive and sensory abilities, low self-esteem, stage-fright, fear from unknown situations, low vitality, etc.
- Objective: low level of information about possibilities of education for seniors, unsuitable time of courses, transport problems, financial problems, etc.

Therefore, teachers of foreign languages for seniors should bear in mind those barriers, as well as selected learning styles of seniors and the age specifications. Furthermore, they should be aware that a group of senior learners is composed of different personalities who are very different and therefore need to be approached on an individual basis as well as a group.



The study done at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra in 2016 focused on learning styles of participants, taking into the consideration three aspects when identifying and classifying learning styles:

- How participants accept information as simply as possible through senses and how they learn about the surrounding world;
- How participants organize and process the information to the process of remembering and thinking, as well as what preference they have to the manner they capture the information;
- What conditions are needed to organize information and present new knowledge to other people.

Seniors have their own learning strategies and procedures that can also be used for learning foreign languages, therefore the mentor of English courses for seniors should be very flexible and allow different approaches to the tasks during the English course.

Each individual connects various senses while acquiring information and understanding in general learning which can be affected by different health issues, such as various deficits and chronic diseases. For example, loss or weakening of hearing affects the ability to understand speech, especially if some other external noise is present. In addition, problems with

worsening of motion, loss of teeth and other defects will affect the choice of the certain sensual channel an individual will choose.

Neuro-linguistic programming is an approach in foreign language teaching. Its acronym is VAKOG: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory type. It includes four methods of learning based on the perception and reaction to learning style. For example, if a participant receives positive results in listening and dialogue, he or she should continue with this type of learning, therefore a lecturer should absolutely take under consideration specific features of individual learning styles. The mentor can choose authorized questionnaires, observation and reflexive diaries for determining the suitable learning style of an individual (Hatar and Grofčíková, 2016).

In different literature we can find the term »special speech register« or »elderspeak«. It refers to a tendency of people to adapt to language abilities of seniors and their speech which is usually characterized by slow speaking, straightforward syntax, exaggerated prosody and avoidance of using complicated words. The same thing appears when seniors are learning a foreign language despite the fact that seniors can be good foreign language learners (Hatar and Grofčíková, 2016).

3.4. Studies about teaching/learning methods/strategies

There have been six interesting studies carried out about teaching/learning methods/strategies in Europe and South America, the first one dating back in 1996 and the newest in 2020. The samples included from 8 to 40 participants and the main teaching/learning methods/strategies were based on a communicative principle.

The beneficial part about these studies was that the authors were aware of the fact that they need to meet their students' needs when designing foreign language courses, bearing in mind also the age and issues connected with age, such as hearing and vision deficits, anxiety, problems with attention and similar.



- The disadvantages of the studies were small sample sizes, different outcome measures for evaluation of research findings and different methodological study design (Klimova, 2021).

The following research questions were used during the studies:

- What are the most appropriate pedagogical approaches, teaching strategies and methods for teaching a foreign language to seniors?
- Can any evidence about beneficial effects of foreign language learning in the third life period be found in the literature?

There is no clear outcome concerning the first question. Some authors claim the best method is self-study, practicing and repeating, while other authors emphasise the use of various teaching methods, such as group discussions, playing games, or watching videos on the Internet. Another suggestion is the use of the communicative method, especially talking about familiar topics and individual counselling. Some authors emphasise the importance of creating a suitable and pleasant learning environment and adjusting teaching materials, as well as using the keyword method

Concerning the second question, the found studies claim that learning a foreign language in the third period of life can be beneficial, not only for travelling, but also for fostering social inclusiveness, improvement of their cognitive skills and working memory, which helps in improving general well-being of seniors.

Most of the studies have shown that most of the teachers/mentors use a variety of methods for teaching foreign languages to seniors, which is appropriate since each learner has different learning needs. At the same time, the studies show that teaching a foreign language to seniors should be student-centred, while the communicative method should focus on familiar topics, such as talking about familiar topics and listening comprehension.

The existent studies show that there are three major areas that have a significant effect on foreign language education of seniors

1. Intangible and palpable learning environments should be adjusted to senior learners, including considering the classroom atmosphere. At the same time, the teacher has to be able to form and maintain teacher-student rapport. Applying entirely new approaches to seniors can be risky since they usually prefer different approaches than younger generations. At the same time, the classroom physical environment should respond to the needs of seniors and their age-related barriers, taking into consideration sense impairment and lower cognitive abilities.



2. Teaching methods should be adjusted to the needs of seniors and teachers should consider characteristics of each senior as an individual, minding his/her needs and cognitive abilities. They should try out different activities to find out which ones suit seniors the most and then apply them during foreign language classes.

They should try to include drilling exercises, scaffolding strategies and provide written learning materials in a visible font. Seniors prefer the methods they are familiar with from the past learning activities. Since teachers of English to seniors usually are not under pressure to follow the syllabus, they can adapt the speed of teaching as well as the length of exposure and the quality of input. This also enables teachers to utilise learners' real-life experiences which ensures a meaningful learning and enables learners to acquire non-linguistic knowledge while using a foreign language.

3. The third major area includes the fact that the motivation for seniors learning a foreign language comes from an inner motivation which means that the activity of learning a foreign language makes them feel good and they like the feeling of learning for its own sake. Seniors are usually highly motivated but their goal is usually not only to learn but also to socialize with other people, therefore teachers can use this opportunity to make foreign language classes enjoyable and beneficial. Matsumoto even claims that learning a foreign language can contribute to the sense of meaning in their life, while Viktorova claims that their positive motivation that comes from inner desire plays an important role in foreign language learning by seniors (Klimova, 2021).

To sum up, several authors agree that the factors that influence language learning are the learning environment, motivation and teaching methods. They emphasise that the learning environment should compensate for the possible impairment of seniors' senses, while the teaching methods should incorporate real life experience and ensure relevant content. The development of listening, reading, speaking and writing is very important, as well as slower speed of learning, avoidance of competitive activities and an enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

At the same time, many studies reveal that learning a foreign language has a beneficial effect on the well-being of seniors since it brings them feelings of happiness, positive motivation and satisfaction.

Therefore, teachers of a foreign language to seniors should:

- Create a pleasant and friendly learning environment;
- Adjust teaching methods to individual needs of seniors and consider their vision and hearing impairments, as well as a slower learning pace;
- Use a mixture of productive and receptive teaching methods;
- Implement topics on the basis of the interests of seniors.

The lack of relevant studies on this topic shows a need for more research in this area, especially because of the ageing of population in general, as well as the rise of aging diseases, such as dementia, since studies show that non-pharmacological approaches, such as language learning, help in the delay of dementia (Klimova, 2021).

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4. Conducting an e-learning lesson with the elderly

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, technology has emerged as an indispensable tool, transforming every aspect of the learning process. Its integration into the classroom is not only a contemporary trend but a fundamental shift that has revolutionized traditional teaching methodologies. From interactive multimedia presentations to online resources and communication platforms, technology offers a diverse range of tools that cater to the unique needs of learners. This paradigm shift is particularly crucial in classrooms with elderly learners, where embracing technology not only enhances the teaching process but also opens up new avenues for engaging and empowering individuals who may not have been exposed to these advancements in their earlier educational journeys. The integration of technology fosters a dynamic and inclusive learning environment, equipping elderly learners with the skills and confidence needed to navigate the digital landscape and remain active participants in the modern educational discourse. In order to successfully conduct an e-learning lesson with the elderly, the following aspects of language teaching and learning should be emphasized:

4.1. The importance of comprehensive training towards using the platform

It is absolutely essential to remember that any e-learning platform for any learner may pose a challenge of some sort. Even the younger learners, more familiar with technology, may need a varied amount of time in order to adjust to any new learning platform. However, it seems that comprehensive training on the use of e-learning platforms emerges as a starting point in ensuring the successful integration of technology in English language learning for adults and elderly students alike. Upon recognizing that elderly individuals may have varying levels of familiarity with digital tools, it becomes imperative to offer training sessions that thoroughly demonstrate the functionalities of e-learning platforms. This training not only facilitates educators to proficiently utilize these tools in their teaching methodologies but also equips learners with the necessary skills to navigate the virtual learning environment independently. For elderly learners, many of whom might be venturing into the digital world for the first time, this training serves as a vital bridge, filling the gap between apprehension and confidence. The necessity of constant demonstration of how to utilize the platform as

well as the need to remind learners of the options available to them on the platform remains constantly present.

4.2. Technical support

Along with comprehensive training towards using the platform, technical support from either an instructor or an IT technician should be provided. Given the diverse levels of familiarity with digital technologies among elderly learners, technical challenges can arise, potentially impeding the learning process. Providing technical support becomes a crucial element in ensuring a smooth and frustration-free educational experience. Also, promptly addressing issues related to software navigation, connectivity, or device functionality not only resolves immediate concerns but also cultivates a sense of confidence and empowerment in the face of technological hurdles. By prioritizing technical support in e-learning environments, educators contribute to a more inclusive and accessible learning experience, allowing elderly individuals to focus on their language learning journey without unnecessary barriers or distractions.

4.3. User friendly interface

In the context of technical support, providing a user -friendly interface can't be overstated. In this respect both the accessibility of the platform, as well as the ease of use of technological tools seem to be vital for any e-learning experience. The accessibility and the ease primarily revolve around the presence of large, clear fonts, well-defined buttons, and extremely straightforward menu structures. These features allow the learner to navigate through digital resources with confidence, resulting in a positive learning experience. After all, the e-learning experience for any individual should solely focus on language development rather than the intricacies of technology or the necessity of having to deal with technical mysteries of the platform. It is after all the technology that should accompany and facilitate the learning process seamlessly, not the other way around.

4.4. Personalized support

In conducting e-learning lessons for the elderly, personalized support stands out as an essential feature of fostering a meaningful and effective learning experience. Recognizing the diverse backgrounds and varying comfort levels with technology among elderly learners, educators should adopt a tailored approach that accommodates individual needs. Providing one-on-one assistance, troubleshooting technical issues, and offering patient guidance become crucial components in ensuring that elderly students feel supported and empowered throughout their digital learning journey. Personalized attention allows educators to address specific challenges that may arise, whether related to navigating the online platform, accessing resources, or grasping new language concepts. This bespoke approach not only instills a sense of confidence in the learners but also reinforces a positive and encouraging learning environment.

4.5. Real -World Relevance

Emphasizing real-world relevance in the learning process of any learner, let alone the elderly, becomes a key element in both the e-learning context as well as the classroom one. Connecting language learning to practical, everyday scenarios not only enhances the engagement of elderly learners but also highlights the immediate applicability of acquired skills. Integrating real-world examples and scenarios allows elderly students to see the direct correlation between language proficiency and their daily lives, fostering a sense of purpose and motivation. Whether through conversational exercises that simulate common interactions, or by incorporating materials that reflect real-life situations, educators can bridge the gap between theoretical language concepts and their practical utility. This approach not only makes the learning experience more relatable for elderly individuals but also reinforces the idea that language acquisition is a valuable tool for communication in their immediate environment.

4.6. Structured lessons

The implementation of structured lessons plays a fundamental role in delivering effective and purposeful instruction. A well-organized curriculum provides elderly learners with a clear and systematic path, offering a sense of order and coherence that can be particularly reassuring for those who may appreciate a more traditional approach to learning. Structured lessons allow educators to break down the language acquisition process into manageable steps, ensuring a gradual and logical progression through essential language skills. This approach covers grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, and reading comprehension in a balanced manner, addressing the diverse needs of elderly learners comprehensively. By offering a roadmap for learning, structured lessons contribute not only to efficiency but also to the development of a strong foundation, fostering a sense of achievement and confidence. These elements are crucial in sustaining the motivation of elderly individuals as they engage in English language training within the digital learning environment.

4.7. Interactive activities

Another aspect which seems of essential importance in conducting a successful e-learning lesson with any learner, and the elderly one as well, is the incorporation of interactive activities. These activities serve as dynamic tools to engage elderly learners actively, enabling a participatory and immersive educational experience. Interactive exercises, such as virtual discussions, language games, and collaborative projects, not only break the monotony of traditional teaching methods but also cater to diverse learning styles. For the elderly, who may have varying degrees of familiarity with technology, interactive activities provide a hands-on approach that builds confidence and digital literacy simultaneously. These activities create opportunities for social interaction, promoting a sense of community among learners, even in a virtual space. By intertwining technology with engaging interactive elements, educators can enhance the effectiveness of e-learning English lessons for the elderly, making the language acquisition journey not only informative but also enjoyable and socially enriching.

4.8. Clear and simple instructions

Clear instructions play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of e-learning experiences for all English language learners, especially the senior ones. Clarity in guidance ensures that elderly learners can navigate online platforms confidently, access learning materials seamlessly, and participate in interactive activities without unnecessary hurdles. Furthermore, clear instructions contribute to a sense of structure and predictability, which is particularly reassuring for individuals who may be less accustomed to digital environments. Instructors should prioritize straightforward communication, offer step-by-step guidance, and be readily available for any clarification, fostering a supportive atmosphere that empowers senior learners to fully embrace and benefit from the digital English language learning experience.

4.9. Patience and Understanding

Patience and understanding are integral virtues when conducting e-learning lessons for the elderly, particularly in the realm of English language instruction. Elderly learners may encounter unique challenges, ranging from adapting to new technologies to navigating unfamiliar digital interfaces. Patience on the part of educators is essential as it allows them to offer steady guidance, repeat instructions when necessary, and address individual concerns at a pace that aligns with the varied learning speeds of elderly individuals. Understanding the potential apprehensions or hesitations that may arise due to limited prior exposure to digital tools is equally crucial. Educators who approach the process with empathy and understanding create an environment where elderly learners feel supported, valued, and more willing to engage in the learning experience. Recognizing and appreciating the diverse life experiences and learning styles of elderly individuals fosters a positive atmosphere conducive to effective language acquisition within the digital realm. In this context, patience and understanding not only contribute to the success of e-learning lessons but also enrich the overall educational journey for elderly English language learners.

4.10. Frequent Recap and Review

By recognizing the value of reinforcing previously covered material, educators can enhance the understanding and retention of English language concepts among elderly individuals. Regular recaps not only serve as a reminder of key information but also provide an opportunity for learners to consolidate their knowledge and address any lingering questions. Given that elderly learners may face challenges related to memory retention, periodic reviews act as valuable reinforcement, contributing to a more sustainable learning experience. Moreover, these recap sessions offer a moment for educators to measure comprehension levels and make necessary adjustments to cater to the specific needs of each individual. By prioritizing frequent recap and review in e-learning lessons, educators create a supportive and adaptive environment that ensures a more thorough and lasting grasp of English language skills among elderly learners.

4.11. Flexible Pace

In the context of e-learning lessons with the elderly, acknowledging the importance of a flexible pace becomes paramount. Each individual progresses through the learning journey at their own rhythm, and the elderly, in particular, may require a more adaptable approach. A flexible pace accommodates the diverse learning speeds, allowing elderly learners the time they need to absorb and internalize new English language concepts. It also considers potential challenges, such as technological unfamiliarity or varying levels of prior language proficiency. This flexibility empowers educators to adjust the pace of instruction, ensuring that elderly learners do not feel rushed or overwhelmed. It allows for extra clarification, repetition, or reinforcement when necessary. By embracing a flexible pace in e-learning lessons, educators can tailor their approach to the individual, promoting a more effective language learning experience for elderly students.

4.12. The importance of regular feedback

Offering constructive and timely feedback serves as a vital compass, guiding elderly learners on their language acquisition journey. Regular assessments allow educators to assess the effectiveness of teaching methods, identify areas where additional support may be needed, and celebrate the achievements of each individual. For elderly learners, feedback becomes a source of encouragement and validation, reinforcing their efforts and fostering a sense of accomplishment. This ongoing dialogue ensures that both educators and students remain on the same page, addressing any concerns or misconceptions promptly. Additionally, personalized feedback provides valuable insights into the learning preferences and challenges of elderly individuals, allowing educators to tailor their approach for a more impactful and customized e-learning experience.

4.13. Encouraging questions

Encouraging questions is yet another key aspect of a successful educational process. Elderly learners, who may bring a wealth of life experiences to the virtual classroom, benefit greatly from the opportunity to seek clarification and deepen their understanding. Creating a culture that welcomes questions not only promotes active engagement but also demonstrates a commitment to the individual learning needs of elderly students. Acknowledging and addressing queries promptly provides valuable insights into the specific challenges or curiosities of each learner, allowing educators to tailor their instruction accordingly. In an e-learning setting, where face-to-face interactions may be limited, the encouragement of questions serves as a bridge to open communication, ensuring that elderly individuals feel empowered and supported on their journey of English language acquisition.

4.14. Conclusion

In conclusion, the successful implementation of e-learning lessons with the elderly demands a holistic approach that prioritizes personalized support, robust technical assistance,

comprehensive training on the chosen platform, consistent feedback mechanisms, frequent recapitulation of key concepts, and a focus on real-life relevance. Recognizing the unique needs and challenges faced by elderly learners in the digital realm, educators and institutions must strive to create an inclusive and supportive online learning environment. By tailoring instructional methods to individual needs, addressing technical concerns promptly, ensuring platform proficiency through thorough training, reinforcing learning through regular recaps, and integrating real-life relevance into lessons, we can provide an enriching and empowering e-learning experience for the elderly. Through these measures, not only do we bridge the digital divide but also contribute to the lifelong learning and well-being of our senior learners.

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5. How to use the materials developed under the project in practice

"Real Life Context - English for seniors"

Addressing the emerging demographic of senior citizens, the initiative "Real Life Context - English for Seniors" has been designed to meet the unique needs of this growing population. Historically overlooked in foreign language education, seniors are now at the forefront of our project, offering an inclusive platform. Tailored not only for senior learners but also for instructors dealing with senior groups, the project provides a diverse range of materials. It caters to both novice learners and those seniors seeking to refresh their English proficiency for travel or reacquainting themselves with previously acquired language skills. The following section outlines practical tips for effectively utilizing the materials developed within the project, ensuring a holistic and beneficial learning experience for seniors and instructors alike.

5.1. Use the materials in the order you find most convenient

Our newly developed online platform for elderly learners seeking to enhance their English proficiency offers a versatile and practical approach to language acquisition. With eight modules encompassing various real-life scenarios such as shopping, traveling, giving instructions, using transportation, and communicating at the doctor's office, our platform caters to the diverse needs of learners at the B1 level. The beauty of this resource lies in its **flexibility**, allowing both teachers and learners to navigate through the modules in an order

that best suits their preferences and requirements. Whether utilized in a classroom setting or for self-study, each module smoothly integrates listening, vocabulary, and speaking activities to provide a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. This adaptability ensures that individuals can tailor their English learning journey to match their specific interests and practical language needs. Therefore, whether you are a learner or an instructor, go through the modules and decide which of them suits your needs and expectations best.

5.2. Make listening activities central to each lesson

At the heart of each module within our innovative platform you will find a diverse array of listening activities, recognizing the fundamental role that listening plays in language training. These activities are meticulously designed to enhance auditory comprehension, expose learners to authentic spoken English, and improve their ability to understand various accents and contexts. By placing **listening skills at the forefront**, we aim to cultivate a strong foundation for effective communication, as it serves as the bridge between acquiring vocabulary and expressing oneself confidently. Whether it's deciphering conversational nuances during a shopping experience or understanding critical instructions in a medical setting, the emphasis put on listening activities ensures that learners develop a better understanding of the language as it is naturally spoken in real-life situations. As an instructor, you will find your teaching experience more effective by offering your senior learners a comprehensive and immersive learning experience through a variety of listening activities.

5.3. Allow ample time for the listening activities

With an extensive array of listening activities, one must not forget about the unique needs of senior learners, which may require spending more time on particular activities, especially those involving listening comprehension. Repeated exposure to English recordings is crucial for optimal language learning outcomes. Allowing students to listen to the English recordings

on the platform multiple times enhances their comprehension, pronunciation, and overall language proficiency. Repetition aids in the internalization of vocabulary, intonation, and linguistic patterns, fostering a deeper understanding of the language. By allowing your students to listen to the same content repeatedly, students become more attuned to nuances, accents, and contextual cues, which are essential for effective communication. This multisensory approach will not only solidify their grasp of the language but will also build confidence, as familiarity breeds a sense of comfort and fluency. In essence, it is important to encourage students to listen to the English recordings on the platform multiple times as an important strategy in their language development.

5.4. Choose from a variety of activities to make the best learning experience

Moreover, our platform goes beyond traditional language learning methods by incorporating a rich variety of materials specifically tailored for senior learners. We recognise the diverse preferences and learning styles of our audience, and in each module we integrate a myriad of speaking and vocabulary practice exercises. These activities will hopefully cater to your different modes of learning, ensuring that every senior learner can engage with the language material in a manner that resonates with their individual strengths. From interactive speaking prompts that simulate real-world conversations to vocabulary practices that encompass everyday scenarios, the platform provides a multifaceted approach to language acquisition. By presenting English in various contexts and formats, we aim to help you create a dynamic and enjoyable learning experience that addresses the unique needs of elderly learners, making the acquisition of language skills not only effective but also enjoyable and accessible to all.

5.5. Use holistic approach to provide a valid language experience

Structured with a mindful pedagogical approach, each module on our platform follows a well-crafted pattern, beginning with a warm-up to ease learners into the lesson. The

subsequent incorporation of listening and speaking exercises ensures a balanced language acquisition experience. The thoughtful sequencing allows elderly learners to build upon their skills progressively. These exercises are not mere linguistic drills; they are thoughtfully crafted to resonate with real-life contexts encountered by seniors. Whether it's engaging in conversational scenarios related to shopping or practicing travel-related vocabulary, the lessons empower elderly learners with ample opportunities to apply their newfound language skills. This real-world context approach fosters a deeper understanding of the language, making it more practical and immediately applicable in their day-to-day lives. "English for the Elderly" is not just a curriculum; it's a holistic language learning experience designed to empower and enrich the lives of our senior learners.

5.6. The significance of warm-up as a real life context introduction

The significance of the warm-up in our "English for the Elderly" platform cannot be forgotten, as it serves as the foundational step that immerses learners in real-life contexts right from the start. The warm-up activities are carefully curated to create an environment mirroring the daily situations seniors might encounter, fostering familiarity and comfort. By integrating language exercises with practical, relatable scenarios, the warm-up not only leads learners into the lesson but also establishes a strong connection between language acquisition and the contexts they navigate in their everyday lives. This intentional introduction to real-life situations sets the tone for the entire module, reinforcing the platform's commitment to making language learning for seniors not just educational but also a genuinely enriching experience embedded in the fabric of their lived experiences.

5.7. Make speaking activities a priority

Central to the effectiveness of each module in our "English for the Elderly" platform is the emphasis on extensive speaking practice. We recognize that language learning goes beyond comprehension and extends to the ability to articulate thoughts and ideas. The speaking exercises within each module are crafted to provide seniors with a supportive environment

where they can practice expressing themselves confidently. Whether engaged in simulated conversations related to shopping, travel, or medical situations, these exercises empower elderly learners to apply their language skills actively. By incorporating diverse speaking activities, we not only aim to enhance your students' conversational proficiency but also to instill a sense of linguistic empowerment, ensuring that they feel well-prepared to engage in English communication in various real-life scenarios. This deliberate focus on speaking practice reinforces the platform's commitment to making language acquisition for seniors not just informative but also highly applicable and empowering.

5.8. Be flexible

In recognizing the diverse needs and progress levels among senior learners, our "English for the Elderly" platform is designed with flexibility in mind. Each module encompasses a range of activities, including both easier and more challenging tasks, providing language instructors with a versatile toolkit. This flexibility enables educators to tailor their teaching approach to the unique dynamics of their class, ensuring that learners are appropriately challenged and supported. You, as an instructor, can selectively choose activities that align with the proficiency levels of your students, whether conducting in-class activities or assigning tasks for home practice. This adaptability not only accommodates the varied pace at which seniors may acquire language skills but also allows instructors to create a customized learning experience that best meets the needs of their specific group of learners. The platform's commitment to providing a spectrum of activities underscores its dedication to inclusivity and individualized language instruction for elderly learners.

Our "English for Seniors" platform places a strong emphasis on incorporating real-life scenarios into each module, recognizing that relevance is key to effective language instruction. Again, it is essential for an instructor to try to immerse senior learners in situations they encounter in their daily lives to make language learning more engaging but also immediately applicable. Real-life context serves as a bridge, connecting language skills to practical experiences and fostering a deeper understanding of the language. For elderly learners, who may have distinct communication needs, this approach provides a sense of

familiarity and purpose, making the language acquisition process more meaningful and empowering.

5.9. Repeat, repeat, repeat ...

Repetition and revision play a crucial role in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons for elderly learners, contributing significantly to their language acquisition journey. For elderly learners, the process of learning a new language can be more intricate, and the importance of reinforcing previously introduced material cannot be overstated. Repeated exposure to lesson content serves as a cognitive reinforcement, aiding memory retention and comprehension. This practice allows elderly learners to familiarize themselves with the nuances of the English language gradually. Regular revision provides the necessary scaffolding for building a solid foundation in language skills, helping them feel more secure and confident in their ability to communicate effectively. Moreover, revisiting material offers opportunities to address any uncertainties or challenges, fostering a more personalized and tailored learning experience for elderly individuals navigating the intricacies of English as a foreign language.

5.10. Pair work and group work activities vital in the process

In designing effective English language lessons for elderly students, it is imperative for instructors to incorporate purposeful pair and group activities. During pair work sessions, guide seniors to engage in one-on-one interactions, ensuring a supportive environment for individualized language skill practice. Similarly, integrate group work exercises to encourage collaborative problem-solving and teamwork, fostering a sense of shared linguistic goals among the senior learners. These activities not only enhance language proficiency but also play a vital role in building a supportive classroom community. As a teacher, consider the unique needs of elderly students and strategically employ these interactive approaches to create an engaging and enjoyable learning environment.

5.11. Be a guide

Within the framework of the "Real Life Context - English for the Elderly" platform, being a positive guide is paramount for instructors conducting lessons for senior students. As a teacher, it is essential to cultivate a positive and encouraging atmosphere, recognizing the unique learning journey of elderly individuals. Acknowledge and celebrate their achievements, no matter how small, to boost confidence and motivation. Providing constructive feedback in a supportive manner helps seniors feel valued and fosters a positive attitude towards language learning. Additionally, weave real-life contexts into the lessons, emphasizing the practical applications of language skills in everyday situations. This approach not only enhances the relevance of the lessons but also reinforces the belief that language acquisition is a meaningful and achievable endeavor. By being a positive guide, instructors contribute significantly to the overall success and enjoyment of English language lessons for seniors within the "Real Life Context" platform.

5.12. Conclusion

In conclusion, these guidelines serve as a roadmap for educators venturing into the realm of teaching English to the elderly using our dedicated platform. By placing emphasis on listening and speaking activities, carefully guiding learners through the intricacies of the platform, promoting repetition, maintaining flexibility, and embedding a real-life context into the learning process, we pave the way for a transformative language learning experience. As instructors navigate this innovative tool, you will not only witness the enhancement of English proficiency in your senior learners but also witness the joy that comes with mastering a new language within the context of real-life scenarios. The guidelines will hopefully ensure that our platform becomes a catalyst for meaningful connections, practical language use, and the flourishing of linguistic skills in the vibrant environment of the elderly learners' lives.

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SUPPLEMENT

This supplement represents the compilation of several practical ideas gleaned from teachers of seniors in the field. The research has been compiled by interviews and surveys and a focus group of such teachers. Rather than academic theory, it is a storehouse of tangible tips based on the real teaching experiences of English teachers of senior learners.

Section 1: Understanding Senior Learners

Senior learners often have diverse educational backgrounds and varying levels of exposure to technology. When working with older adults, it's crucial to recognize these differences and adapt your teaching methods accordingly. Tailoring your approach to accommodate various learning styles and comfort levels is essential for a successful teaching experience.

In addition to cognitive considerations, it's important to acknowledge the impact of age-related cognitive changes on learning. For instance, working memory tends to decline with age, so it's beneficial to break down complex concepts into smaller, more manageable chunks to aid understanding. Seniors also possess a unique ability for pattern recognition, making it valuable to design language learning activities that leverage this skill.

Pattern recognition is a cognitive skill that remains strong in many senior learners. This skill involves the ability to identify and understand regularities or patterns in information, data, or stimuli. In the context of language learning, pattern recognition plays a significant role, especially when learning grammar and syntax. Here's more about pattern recognition in senior learners:

1. Beneficial for Language Learning:

Senior learners often have a wealth of life experience, which can aid them in recognizing patterns in language. They may have encountered similar sentence structures, phrases, or

grammatical rules in their native language or during their previous language learning experiences. Recognizing these patterns can make the language learning process more intuitive.

2. Grammar and Syntax:

When studying a new language, grammar and syntax can initially appear complex. However, senior learners' pattern recognition abilities can help them discern common grammatical structures and sentence patterns. For example, they might notice recurring word order, verb conjugations, or article usage.

3. Vocabulary Acquisition:

Pattern recognition is not limited to grammar. Senior learners can also apply it to vocabulary acquisition. They may notice similarities between words in their native language and the target language, helping them build connections and expand their vocabulary more efficiently.

4. Contextual Understanding:

Pattern recognition aids in understanding the context of conversations and texts. Senior learners can infer meaning from the patterns of words and phrases used, even if they are not familiar with every word. This ability helps them grasp the overall message of a conversation or text.

5. Confidence Boost:

Recognizing patterns in language can boost the confidence of senior learners. When they see that they can identify and apply language patterns, they become more comfortable using the language in practical situations. This confidence is essential for effective language communication.

6. Adaptation to Learning Styles:

Language instructors can leverage seniors' pattern recognition skills by tailoring their teaching methods. For example, they can use comparisons between the native language and

the target language to highlight similarities and differences, making it easier for seniors to grasp new concepts.

7. Encouraging Active Participation:

Encouraging senior learners to actively participate in class discussions, activities, and language games can further enhance their pattern recognition abilities. When they practice identifying and using patterns in real-life conversations, their language skills improve.

In summary, pattern recognition is a valuable cognitive skill that senior learners can harness to facilitate language learning. Recognizing patterns in grammar, syntax, and vocabulary helps them make sense of the new language more effectively. By understanding and appreciating this skill, instructors can tailor their teaching methods to maximize its benefits for senior learners.

Section 2: Pedagogical Approaches

Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) can be highly effective when teaching English to senior learners. This approach focuses on real-world relevance, encouraging tasks that mimic everyday situations, like making restaurant reservations or asking for directions. Additionally, TBLT promotes collaboration among learners, fostering social interaction and collaborative learning, which is particularly valuable for seniors looking to connect with others through language proficiency.

Lesson Title: Planning a Trip

Level: Intermediate

Duration: 90 minutes

Objective: By the end of the lesson, senior learners will be able to plan a hypothetical trip in English, including choosing a destination, booking accommodations, and creating an itinerary.

Materials:

A world map or globe (physical or digital).

Travel brochures or access to travel websites.

A whiteboard or flip chart.

Paper and writing materials.

Laptops or tablets for online research (optional).

Procedure:

1. Warm-Up (10 minutes):

Begin with a brief discussion about travel experiences. Ask learners if they have traveled recently or if they have any dream travel destinations. Share a few personal travel experiences as well.

2. Introduction to Task (10 minutes):

Introduce the main task: planning a trip. Explain that they will work in pairs or small groups to plan a hypothetical trip to a destination of their choice. This activity will include choosing a destination, finding accommodations, and creating an itinerary.

3. Destination Selection (15 minutes):

Distribute world maps or show a digital globe. Ask each group to choose a destination for their trip and mark it on the map. Encourage them to consider factors like weather, cultural attractions, and personal interests.

4. Accommodation Research (20 minutes):

Provide travel brochures or access to travel websites. In their groups, ask learners to research and choose accommodations for their trip. They should consider factors like cost, location, and amenities.

5. Itinerary Planning (20 minutes):

Have each group create a daily itinerary for their trip. They should include activities, places to visit, and mealtimes. Encourage them to use English to describe their plans.

6. Group Presentations (15 minutes):

Each group presents their trip plan to the class. They should explain why they chose the destination, describe their chosen accommodations, and share their daily itinerary. This part of the activity encourages speaking and presentation skills.

7. Feedback and Discussion (10 minutes):

After each group presentation, facilitate a discussion. Encourage the class to ask questions about the trips and provide constructive feedback on language usage.

8. Homework (Optional, 5 minutes):

Assign a small homework task for the next class. For example, ask learners to write a short essay about their dream travel destination and why they want to visit it.

Benefits:

This task-based lesson plan encourages active participation and practical use of English.

Learners are engaged in real-world activities, fostering language acquisition in context.

It promotes collaboration, presentation skills, and critical thinking as learners plan and justify their choices.

Seniors have the opportunity to share their travel interests and experiences, making the lesson personally meaningful.

This lesson plan not only enhances language skills but also provides an opportunity for senior learners to share their travel aspirations and experiences, making the learning experience both practical and enjoyable.

The contextualization principle is another essential pedagogical approach. Linking language learning to meaningful contexts enhances engagement and retention. By using cultural references and familiar contexts, you can bridge understanding and facilitate language

acquisition. For seniors, vocabulary expansion can be particularly beneficial when introduced within contexts they encounter daily, such as shopping, hobbies, or health.

Section 3: Digital Literacy for Seniors

When integrating technology into language teaching for seniors, it's essential to consider their comfort levels and provide gradual exposure to digital tools. Recommending user-friendly language learning apps with larger fonts and clear interfaces can help seniors become more comfortable with technology. Additionally, offering step-by-step video tutorials can assist seniors in navigating digital platforms independently.

Lesson Title: Exploring English through Online News

Level: Intermediate

Duration: 90 minutes

Objective: By the end of the lesson, senior learners will be able to read, comprehend, and discuss current news articles in English using online news sources.

Materials:

Laptops, tablets, or smartphones for each learner (if available).

A projector or screen for the whole class to view.

A selection of online news articles (prepare in advance).

Whiteboard or flip chart.

Paper and writing materials.

Procedure:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

Start by discussing the importance of staying informed about current events and how the internet and technology make accessing news easier. Ask learners if they use the internet for news and what sources they prefer.

2. Tech Orientation (10 minutes):

If needed, provide a brief tutorial on how to access online news sources using laptops, tablets, or smartphones. Ensure all learners can navigate to a news website.

3. Selecting Articles (15 minutes):

Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Provide a list of news topics (e.g., health, technology, environment). Ask each group to select an article from an online news source related to their chosen topic.

4. Reading and Comprehension (20 minutes):

In their groups, learners read the selected articles. Encourage them to underline unfamiliar words and phrases and discuss any difficulties in understanding the content.

5. Group Discussions (20 minutes):

Each group presents a summary of the article they read, discussing the main points, key details, and their opinions about the topic. Encourage class participation and discussion.

6. Vocabulary and Language Focus (10 minutes):

Use the whiteboard or flip chart to highlight new vocabulary and discuss language elements present in the articles, such as idiomatic expressions or complex sentence structures.

7. Whole-Class Reflection (5 minutes):

Engage the whole class in a discussion about the experience of reading and discussing news articles in English. Ask for feedback on the usefulness of using technology in language learning.

8. Homework (Optional, 10 minutes):

Assign homework for the next class. For example, learners can be asked to find another online news article of interest and write a short summary of it.

Leveraging virtual communities can create a sense of community and interaction. Online discussion forums and virtual conversation circles can encourage seniors to participate in online language forums, fostering practice and camaraderie.

Section 4: Case Studies

Case studies can provide valuable insights into successful language programmes for senior learners. For instance, a community centre language programme may take a holistic approach by blending language instruction with cultural workshops and field trips. This approach enhances engagement and provides a rich learning experience for seniors. Regular storytelling sessions within this programme allow learners to share experiences and practice language in a natural setting.

Case Study: A Lifelong Learning Journey

Background:

Meet John, a retired senior who decided to embark on a lifelong learning journey to improve his English language skills. John retired from a successful career in engineering and found himself with ample free time. He had always been fascinated by the idea of becoming more proficient in English, and retirement provided him with the opportunity to pursue this goal.

Challenges:

John faced several challenges in his journey to learn English:

Lack of formal education in English.

Initial self-doubt about his ability to learn a new language at an older age.

A busy retirement schedule, including family commitments and hobbies.

Limited access to traditional language learning resources.

Strategies:

To overcome these challenges, John implemented several strategies:

Online Language Courses: John enrolled in online language courses that catered to senior learners. These courses offered flexible schedules, allowing him to learn at his own pace.

Engagement with Language Apps: John used language learning apps designed for seniors. These apps incorporated audio, visual, and interactive elements to make learning more engaging.

Regular Practice: He dedicated a specific time each day to practice speaking, listening, and writing in English. He made it a part of his daily routine.

Cultural Immersion: John watched English-language movies, listened to English songs, and explored English literature to immerse himself in the language and culture.

Community Engagement: John joined an online community of senior language learners. This community provided a platform for him to interact with fellow learners, seek advice, and share his progress.

Outcomes:

John's commitment to lifelong learning paid off. Over time, he noticed significant improvements in his English language skills. He was able to:

Engage in conversations with English-speaking friends and family.

Read English books and newspapers with ease.

Travel confidently to English-speaking countries and communicate effectively.

Join local English conversation groups, where he shared his experiences and inspired others.

Inspirational Message:

John's journey serves as an inspiration to senior learners that it's never too late to learn and improve one's language skills. His dedication, use of technology, and active engagement with

the language community demonstrate that with determination and the right resources, seniors can achieve their language learning goals.

Discussion Points:

How did John's background in engineering and his retirement influence his decision to learn English?

What strategies did John use to overcome challenges and maintain consistent language practice?

How can John's experience inspire other seniors to pursue language learning and stay engaged in lifelong education?

How does technology play a crucial role in enabling seniors to access language learning resources and connect with communities of learners?

Section 5: Communication Strategies

Encouraging meaningful conversations is crucial for senior learners. To enhance language proficiency, prepare open-ended questions that encourage sharing personal experiences and opinions. Pairing learners to discuss topics ensures that everyone has a chance to speak, promoting active participation and language practice.

Pair Work Activity: "Travel Planning Conversation"

Objective: To practice conversational English, improve communication skills, and develop vocabulary related to travel.

Materials:

A list of travel-related questions (prepared in advance).

Whiteboard or flip chart (optional).

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes):

Start by discussing the importance of travel and its role in language learning. Share some of your own travel experiences to engage the class.

Instructions (5 minutes):

Explain that the pair work activity will involve planning a trip. Each pair will take turns being a traveller and a travel agent. The traveller will have specific preferences and requirements, and the travel agent will provide suggestions and recommendations.

Pair Formation (5 minutes):

Divide the class into pairs. If possible, mix different language levels to promote peer support and learning.

Role Assignment (5 minutes):

In each pair, one learner takes on the role of the "traveller," and the other becomes the "travel agent." You can use cards or simply ask learners to decide among themselves.

Conversation Practice (20 minutes):

Provide the list of travel-related questions. For example:

"Where would you like to travel?"

"What type of accommodation do you prefer?"

"Do you have any dietary restrictions?"

"What activities or attractions are you interested in?"

The traveller and travel agent should take turns asking and answering these questions. The travel agent should also make suggestions based on the traveller's preferences.

Feedback and Switch Roles (10 minutes):

After the conversation, each pair should discuss how their travel planning went. Encourage them to provide feedback on language usage and the effectiveness of their communication.

Then, have the pairs switch roles, so the traveller becomes the travel agent, and vice versa.

Whole-Class Discussion (10 minutes):

Lead a whole-class discussion. Ask a few pairs to share their travel plans and recommendations. Encourage the class to ask questions about each plan, fostering more interaction.

Reflection and Feedback (5 minutes):

Conclude the activity by asking the class about their experiences. Did they enjoy the role-playing? What new vocabulary or expressions did they learn during the activity?

Incorporating storytelling and narratives into language teaching can foster language learning and connection. Encourage learners to share their life stories, enabling vocabulary expansion and cultural understanding. Choose short stories or excerpts for group reading sessions, encouraging discussion afterward, creating a rich language learning experience.

Section 6: Addressing Challenges

Addressing memory techniques can be particularly important for seniors. Memory aids like acronyms or visual associations can help seniors remember new words. Regular review sessions are also beneficial to reinforce learning and combat forgetfulness.

Lesson Title: Vocabulary Building with Memory Techniques

Level: Beginner to Intermediate

Duration: 90 minutes

Objective: By the end of the lesson, senior learners will be able to use memory techniques to remember and recall new English vocabulary effectively.

Materials:

A list of 10-15 new English vocabulary words (prepared in advance).

Whiteboard or flip chart.

Flashcards (prepared in advance).

Procedure:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

Begin by discussing the importance of vocabulary in language learning. Explain that memory techniques can make vocabulary acquisition more efficient, even for seniors.

2. Vocabulary Introduction (15 minutes):

Present the list of new vocabulary words on the whiteboard or flip chart. Read each word aloud, provide its meaning, and use it in a sentence.

3. Memory Techniques (15 minutes):

Introduce the memory techniques to be used in the lesson:

Acronyms: Create acronyms to remember lists of words. For example, use the acronym "FAMILY" to remember the words family, aunt, mother, father, etc.

Visualization: Encourage learners to create mental images or associations for each word to make them memorable.

Storytelling: Construct a short story or narrative using the vocabulary words to connect and remember them.

Word Associations: Find similar-sounding words or rhymes for new words to aid recall.

4. Memory Technique Practice (25 minutes):

Divide the class into pairs or small groups.

Distribute flashcards with the new vocabulary words.

In their groups, learners should work together to apply the memory techniques to remember the words. They can create acronyms, visualizations, stories, or word associations

for each word.

Encourage creativity and cooperation among learners.

5. Presentation (10 minutes):

Each group presents their memory techniques to the class. They share their acronyms, visualizations, stories, or word associations and explain how they used these techniques to remember the vocabulary.

6. Vocabulary Quiz (10 minutes):

Conduct a short quiz to test learners' vocabulary recall. Call out the vocabulary words, and each learner should provide the associated memory technique to remember the word.

7. Feedback and Discussion (5 minutes):

Discuss how the memory techniques helped improve vocabulary retention. Ask learners to share their experiences and which techniques worked best for them.

8. Homework (Optional, 5 minutes):

Assign a simple homework task where learners need to create their own memory techniques for a few additional vocabulary words.

Pronunciation challenges can be tackled through patience and targeted practice. Incorporating phonetic exercises and role-play activities, where learners practice pronunciation in context, can be helpful for seniors looking to improve their pronunciation skills.

Lesson Title: Pronunciation Enhancement

Level: Beginner to Intermediate

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: By the end of the lesson, senior learners will be able to pronounce English sounds and words more accurately and with better clarity.

Materials:

A list of English words with challenging sounds (prepared in advance).

Audio recordings of native speakers pronouncing target words.

Whiteboard or flip chart.

Online pronunciation resources (optional).

Procedure:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

Start by discussing the importance of clear pronunciation for effective communication.

Explain that this lesson will focus on improving pronunciation.

2. Target Sounds Introduction (10 minutes):

Present a list of English words with challenging sounds, such as "th," "r," "l," and "v." Write them on the whiteboard and provide examples.

3. Sound Practice (15 minutes):

Play audio recordings of native speakers pronouncing the challenging sounds. Ask the learners to listen carefully and repeat the sounds after the recordings.

Encourage them to pay attention to mouth and tongue positions.

4. Word Pronunciation (15 minutes):

Divide the class into pairs or small groups.

Provide each group with a list of words containing the challenging sounds. Ask them to take turns practicing the pronunciation of these words.

Monitor and provide feedback to each group.

5. Role-Play (10 minutes):

Create role-play scenarios where learners use words with challenging sounds in conversations. For example, simulate a restaurant scene where they practice ordering food and drinks with specific words.

Encourage active participation and pronunciation practice.

6. Feedback and Correction (10 minutes):

After the role-play activity, discuss and correct pronunciation errors. Use the whiteboard to highlight the correct pronunciation of challenging words.

Provide individual feedback to help learners address their specific pronunciation difficulties.

7. Homework (Optional, 5 minutes):

Assign a simple homework task where learners need to record themselves pronouncing a list of words with challenging sounds. They can compare their recordings to native speakers' pronunciations.

Section 7: Cultural Sensitivity

Promoting cultural awareness and understanding among senior learners is essential. Organizing sessions where learners share customs, traditions, and stories from their backgrounds can create a rich cultural exchange. Introducing diverse reading materials exposes learners to different cultural perspectives, enhancing their cultural sensitivity and language learning experience.

Lesson Title: Exploring Cultural Traditions

Level: Intermediate

Duration: 90 minutes

Objective: By the end of the lesson, senior learners will be able to explore and discuss cultural traditions from different English-speaking countries, fostering cultural awareness and language proficiency.

Materials:

Images, videos, or descriptions of cultural traditions from various English-speaking countries.

Whiteboard or flip chart.

Paper and writing materials.

Procedure:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

Start by discussing the importance of cultural awareness in language learning. Explain that understanding cultural traditions can improve communication and connection with people from different backgrounds.

2. Country Selection (10 minutes):

Introduce the class to a list of English-speaking countries, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Show images or brief descriptions of their cultural traditions.

Ask each learner to choose a country they find interesting.

3. Cultural Tradition Exploration (20 minutes):

In their chosen country groups, learners should explore and discuss a specific cultural tradition from that country. This could be a celebration, holiday, or custom.

Provide resources (images, videos, articles) for each group to research their chosen tradition.

4. Group Presentation (20 minutes):

Each group presents their findings about the cultural tradition from their chosen country. They should explain the history, significance, and how it is celebrated or practiced.

5. Whole-Class Discussion (15 minutes):

After all groups have presented, lead a whole-class discussion. Ask learners what they found interesting or surprising about the traditions from other countries.

Encourage the class to compare and contrast these traditions with their own culture.

6. Reflection and Sharing (5 minutes):

Discuss the importance of cultural awareness and how it can enhance communication and relationships. Ask learners if they would like to share any aspects of their own culture with the class.

7. Homework (Optional, 5 minutes):

Assign a simple homework task where learners need to write a short essay about their experience exploring a cultural tradition from another country.

Section 8: Empowering Independence

Encouraging seniors to take charge of their learning journey can lead to greater independence and motivation. Help them set personal learning goals and develop plans for independent language practice. Guide them to online language resources, podcasts, and news articles suited to their interests, enabling them to explore and learn autonomously.

Online Language Resources:

Duolingo for Seniors: Duolingo offers a dedicated program for senior learners, which provides a user-friendly and interactive platform for learning English at a comfortable pace.

BBC Learning English: BBC Learning English offers a wide range of free lessons, videos, and quizzes suitable for senior learners. They cover various aspects of the language, from grammar to pronunciation.

EnglishClub: EnglishClub provides a variety of video lessons and exercises for different language levels. It's a comprehensive resource for improving English skills.

British Council - Learn English: The British Council's Learn English platform offers free resources for learners of all levels. It includes grammar lessons, vocabulary exercises, and listening activities.

Voice of America (VOA) Learning English: VOA Learning English provides news articles and audio recordings with transcripts, which are ideal for improving listening and reading skills.

Podcasts for English Learners:

ESL Pod: ESL Pod offers podcasts specifically designed for English learners. They cover various topics and are accompanied by transcripts and explanations to aid comprehension.

BBC 6 Minute English: This podcast offers short, engaging episodes on a wide range of topics. Each episode comes with a transcript, vocabulary explanations, and quizzes.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Podcast: ESL Podcast provides conversations and dialogues on everyday topics, with explanations for difficult vocabulary and expressions.

Learn English Through Story: This podcast tells stories with clear pronunciation and explanations of key vocabulary, making it an enjoyable way to learn English.

The English We Speak (BBC): This podcast focuses on common English expressions and idioms, helping learners understand and use them in everyday conversations.

6 Minute Grammar (BBC): A podcast dedicated to improving English grammar with short, informative episodes and accompanying materials.

TED Talks in English: Many TED Talks are available in English. These talks cover a wide range

of subjects and are a great way to improve listening skills and learn from engaging speakers.

Section 9: Evaluating Progress

Assessing senior learners goes beyond traditional tests. Encourage learners to compile a language portfolio showcasing their language journey, including written assignments and recorded conversations. Conduct peer assessment sessions where learners provide constructive feedback to each other, fostering a supportive learning community.

Session Title: Peer Assessment for Improved Language Skills

Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: By the end of the session, senior learners will be able to provide constructive feedback to their peers on language assignments, promoting a supportive learning environment and enhancing their own language proficiency.

Materials:

Language assignments, such as essays, speeches, or written reports, prepared by the learners in advance.

Evaluation criteria and assessment forms (prepared in advance).

Whiteboard or flip chart.

Writing materials for learners to take notes.

Procedure:

1. Introduction (5 minutes):

Begin by discussing the importance of providing and receiving feedback as a tool for improvement in language learning. Emphasize the supportive nature of peer assessment.

2. Assignment Submission (10 minutes):

Prior to the session, learners should prepare language assignments. These can be essays, speeches, or reports. Assignments should be collected at the beginning of the session.

3. Assessment Criteria (10 minutes):

On the whiteboard or flip chart, display the assessment criteria that will be used to evaluate the assignments. Criteria can include grammar, vocabulary, coherence, organization, and clarity of communication.

4. Peer Assessment (25 minutes):

Divide the class into pairs or small groups.

Distribute the language assignments, making sure each learner receives an assignment from someone else in the class.

In their pairs or groups, learners review and assess the assignments based on the criteria provided. They should take notes during the assessment.

5. Feedback Discussion (10 minutes):

Bring the class back together for a discussion. Ask each pair or group to share their feedback and recommendations for improvement with the class.

Discuss any common issues or strengths that emerged during the assessments.

6. Self-Reflection (5 minutes):

Encourage each learner to reflect on the feedback they received. Ask them to consider how they can apply the feedback to their own language assignments in the future.

Section 10: The Role of Motivation

Sustaining motivation is crucial for senior learners. Acknowledge small milestones with certificates or informal celebrations to celebrate their achievements. Invite guest speakers to discuss topics of interest, showcasing real-world applications of English and providing motivation to continue their language learning journey.

Section 11: Building a Lesson Plan

Creating effective lesson plans is key to teaching English to senior learners. A well-structured lesson plan helps maintain a clear and organized teaching approach. When designing lesson plans, consider these aspects:

11.1 Learning Objectives: Clearly define the objectives of each lesson. These objectives should align with the broader goals of your language teaching program.

11.2 Engagement Strategies: Incorporate engagement strategies like icebreakers or warm-up activities to create a positive and interactive learning environment. This is particularly essential for senior learners to ensure active participation.

Activity: "Two Truths and a Lie"

Objective: To create a relaxed and interactive atmosphere, allowing learners to get to know each other while practicing English.

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes):

Begin the class by explaining that you will play a game called "Two Truths and a Lie" to help everyone get to know each other better. In this game, each learner will share two true statements about themselves and one false statement (the lie).

Example (5 minutes):

Start by demonstrating the activity yourself. Share two true facts about yourself, like "I have travelled to five different countries" and "I enjoy reading mystery novels," along with one false statement, like "I can speak five languages fluently." Encourage the learners to guess which statement is the lie.

Learner Participation (15 minutes):

Ask each learner to take their turn. They should share two true facts and one lie about themselves. Encourage them to use complete sentences and provide a bit of background for each statement.

Guessing Game (15 minutes):

After each learner shares their statements, open the floor for guesses. Other learners can take turns guessing which statement is the lie. This encourages communication and interaction.

Discussion (10 minutes):

Once the group has guessed the lie, encourage a brief discussion about the true statements. This could involve asking follow-up questions or sharing similar experiences or interests.

11.3 Lesson Flow: Organize your lesson into sections with distinct objectives. Include activities, explanations, and interactive elements that cater to different learning styles.

11.4 Materials and Resources: Identify the materials and resources required for each lesson. Ensure that they are accessible and age-appropriate.

11.5 Assessment and Feedback: Plan how you will evaluate the progress of senior learners. Choose assessment methods that align with the learning objectives. Offer constructive feedback to motivate them further.

Section 12: Adapting to Individual Needs

One of the challenges in teaching senior learners is the diverse range of individual needs. It's essential to be adaptable and responsive to these unique requirements. Some key considerations include:

12.1 Individualized Learning Plans: Develop individual learning plans for learners with specific goals or challenges. These plans should address their unique needs, whether it's a focus on conversational English, pronunciation, or other language skills.

Individual Learning Plan for Senior Learners of English

Learner's Name: [Insert Learner's Name]

Date: [Insert Date]

Learning Goals and Objectives:

Language Proficiency Goal:

To improve overall English language proficiency, with a focus on speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

Target: Achieve [Insert Desired Level, e.g., intermediate level proficiency] by [Insert Target Date].

Specific Language Competencies:

[Insert Specific Competency, e.g., improving pronunciation, expanding vocabulary, enhancing grammar skills].

Target: [Insert Specific Target, e.g., reduce pronunciation errors, learn 50 new words, etc.] by

[Insert Target Date].

Functional Language Goals:

To be able to [Insert Functional Goals, e.g., engage in casual conversations, read news articles, write emails].

Target: [Insert Specific Target, e.g., engage in a 10-minute conversation, read a news article with understanding, write a coherent email] by [Insert Target Date].

Assessment and Progress Tracking:

Baseline Assessment:

[Insert Date]

[Insert Initial Assessment Results, e.g., vocabulary level, speaking fluency, pronunciation accuracy].

Regular Progress Assessments:

[Insert Frequency, e.g., monthly, every three months]

[Insert Specific Assessment Methods, e.g., vocabulary quizzes, speaking assessments, writing assignments].

Learning Strategies:

Regular Practice:

[Insert How the Learner Plans to Practice, e.g., daily conversation with a language partner, listening to English podcasts for 30 minutes a day].

Vocabulary Building:

[Insert Vocabulary Building Strategies, e.g., learning five new words every day, using flashcards for review].

Pronunciation Improvement:

[Insert Pronunciation Improvement Strategies, e.g., regular practice of challenging sounds, using pronunciation guides and tutorials].

Resources and Materials:

Textbooks and Online Courses:

[Insert Resources the Learner Will Use, e.g., textbook title, online courses, websites].

Language Learning Apps:

[Insert Language Learning Apps, e.g., Duolingo, Memrise, etc.].

Listening and Reading Materials:

[Insert Materials for Listening and Reading Practice, e.g., podcasts, news websites, novels, etc.].

Support and Assistance:

Tutoring Sessions:

[Insert Frequency and Duration of Tutoring Sessions, e.g., weekly 1-hour sessions with a language tutor].

Peer Support:

[Insert How the Learner Plans to Engage with Fellow Learners for Support, e.g., joining online language forums, attending conversation groups].

Adjustments and Adaptations:

If necessary, adjustments may be made to this plan based on the learner's progress and feedback.

Learner's Signature:

12.2 Support for Different Paces: Recognize that not all senior learners will progress at the same rate. Be prepared to provide additional support and resources for those who need it.

Section 13: Fostering Confidence

Confidence is vital for language learners, particularly senior learners who may feel hesitant about their abilities. Ways to boost their confidence include:

13.1 Positive Reinforcement: Praise their efforts and improvements. Highlight their achievements, no matter how small, to instill confidence and motivation.

13.2 Encouraging Participation: Create a safe and supportive atmosphere where seniors feel comfortable expressing themselves. Encourage them to speak and participate actively in class.

Section 14: Cultural Insights

Teaching English to senior learners often involves addressing cultural differences and nuances. Understanding these aspects can enhance the teaching experience:

14.1 Cultural Sensitivity Training: Consider providing a brief cultural sensitivity training to both learners and instructors. This training can foster mutual understanding and respect, making the learning environment more inclusive.

Session Title: "Cultural Sensitivity Training for Senior Learners"

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Objective: To promote cultural awareness and sensitivity among senior learners, helping them better understand and interact with people from diverse backgrounds.

Materials:

A world map or globe.

Images or brief descriptions of different cultures or countries.

Whiteboard or flip chart.

Paper and writing materials for participants.

Procedure:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

Start by discussing the importance of cultural sensitivity in today's interconnected world. Explain that the goal of the session is to foster understanding and respect for different cultures.

2. Mapping Cultures (10 minutes):

Use the world map or globe to visually represent the diversity of cultures around the world. Point to different countries and regions and briefly mention some unique aspects of their cultures.

3. Cultural Descriptions (20 minutes):

Display images or descriptions of various cultures or countries on the whiteboard. These could include images of people in traditional clothing, famous landmarks, or cultural practices.

Ask the participants to share their thoughts and impressions about these cultures. What do they find interesting or unique?

4. Sharing Personal Stories (20 minutes):

Invite the participants to share their own cultural experiences, stories, or traditions. This can include celebrations, family customs, or personal travel experiences.

Encourage respectful listening and ask participants to take notes on what they find

interesting or meaningful in each story.

5. Cross-Cultural Scenarios (15 minutes):

Present hypothetical cross-cultural scenarios where misunderstandings might occur due to cultural differences. For example, a scenario involving greeting customs or communication styles.

Ask the participants to discuss how they would handle these situations in a culturally sensitive way.

6. Reflection and Commitment (10 minutes):

Conclude the session by asking participants to reflect on what they've learned about cultural sensitivity. Encourage them to commit to being more culturally aware and considerate in their interactions.

14.2 Cultural Activities: Introduce cultural activities into your lessons to expose seniors to the culture of English-speaking countries. Activities like watching films, exploring customs, or celebrating holidays can enhance cultural awareness.

Section 15: Maintaining Motivation

Sustaining motivation is an ongoing challenge. To keep senior learners enthusiastic about their language learning journey:

15.1 Guest Speakers: Invite guest speakers from different English-speaking backgrounds to share their experiences and insights. Hearing from native speakers can be inspiring.

15.2 Language Buddies: Pair senior learners with native or fluent English speakers for conversational practice. Building friendships with native speakers can be highly motivating.

Section 16: Leveraging Life Experience

Seniors come to the classroom with a wealth of life experiences. Capitalize on this background to enhance learning:

16.1 Storytelling: Encourage senior learners to share their life stories, anecdotes, and experiences. This not only enriches the classroom but also broadens vocabulary and cultural knowledge.

Lesson	idea:
Activity: "Life Journey Stories"	
Objective: To encourage senior learners to share their personal life experiences through storytelling, thereby enhancing their speaking and listening skills.	
Materials:	
A whiteboard or flip chart for brainstorming ideas.	
A projector for displaying visual aids (optional).	
Instructions:	
Introduction (10 minutes):	
Begin the session by explaining the purpose of the activity: to share personal life stories and learn from one another.	
Discuss the importance of storytelling and how it can improve language skills, vocabulary, and cultural understanding.	
Brainstorming (15 minutes):	
On the whiteboard or a flip chart, write down several open-ended prompts or questions	

related to life experiences. For example:

"Share a memorable travel experience."

"Tell us about an important life lesson you've learned."

"Share a funny or unusual family story."

Encourage participants to choose a prompt or question that resonates with them.

Storytelling (30 minutes):

Invite each participant to take turns sharing their story. You can go in a circle, or participants can volunteer.

Encourage participants to use English as much as possible but let them know that they can use their native language if they need to, as the focus is on sharing their experiences.

If possible, display relevant images or photos on a projector to aid in visual storytelling.

Listening and Feedback (15 minutes):

After each participant's story, open the floor for questions and comments. Encourage active listening and ask other participants to provide positive feedback and ask follow-up questions.

As the facilitator, you can also share your own insights or ask clarifying questions.

Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes):

After all stories have been shared, lead a group discussion. Ask questions like, "What did you learn from each other's stories?" or "How did this activity make you feel?"

Emphasize the value of sharing experiences and connecting with one another through storytelling.

Benefits:

This activity allows senior learners to use their English language skills in a meaningful context.

It creates a sense of community and bonding among participants as they share personal stories.

It encourages active listening, speaking, and asking questions, which are essential language skills.

Participants gain cultural insights and a better understanding of each other's backgrounds. Remember to create a supportive and respectful environment during the storytelling activity to ensure that all participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences. This kind of activity not only enhances language learning but also enriches the overall learning experience for senior learners.

16.2 Cross-Generational Activities: Arrange activities where seniors can interact with younger learners. This cross-generational exchange benefits both groups and can be an enriching experience.