# TEACHING ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS



YOURE

Education & Training Centre

International University of Sarajevo



I started my foreign language teaching career as a tutor to a senior Turkish college professor in Istanbul. I was a junior undergraduate student, and he was an established scholar and businessman. The reason why he hired me was his trip to a conference in Australia. The professor learned English when he was young but did not actively use it. He felt that a few weeks with an English teacher would help him refresh his speaking skills. At that point I had a few ideas about what our lessons should be like, but my planning was falsely based on the premise that I could lead the instructional process. The professor did not need me to be in charge. He had a few strong expectations that he gently conveyed. Basically he wanted our two weekly lessons delivered in the headquarters of his company to revolve around graded readers adapted from literary classics.



No matter how hard I tried to introduce alternative resources, the professor always found a way to have us both disregard them. The lessons took place in his office during working hours, so we were often interrupted or had to cancel our meetings. It took me some time to accept our teaching and learning conditions and respond adequately to the professor's need to have an English speaking friend who can explain lexical or grammatical rules when necessary. I cannot recall precisely how effective the collaboration was. He enjoyed the process, and I made some money and gained a valuable experience which significantly helped me later in a noncompulsory language school for adults.

When I started teaching adult groups, I embraced a methodology resting on context-based teaching solutions. However, I often felt insecure when I ignored the prescribed curricula and textbooks.



It also seemed that I was not flexible enough to respond to all the heterogeneity of adult profiles who attended my classes. The students would occasionally drop out. Many of them who could keep up with the tempo would stay in my classes and continue with the upper levels of instruction. It seemed to me that I made many right and wrong decisions, and I held myself accountable for both good and bad outcomes. The experience motivated me to write an MA thesis about foreign language instructors' teaching styles in noncompulsory adult settings. I felt that such a project could help other adult educators make effective teaching decisions. Unfortunately, only one portion of the study was published in conference proceedings and did not attract any significant attention. What I learned during those teaching and researching experiences I integrated in my personal teaching methodology and kept utilizing with adolescent and adult learners.



A few years ago I had a chance to participate in developing under- and postgraduate English language programs at the International University of Sarajevo. I used the opportunity to introduce the course titled Lifelong Learning and English Language Teaching. I have taught the course for three semesters using my MA project, notes, and recently published articles. In the meantime, I looked for a textbook that could fully reflect my positions about teaching adults but I never found one. So I decided to accept the challenge of writing a textbook for this particular course. It is supposed to help novice foreign language instructors embrace the challenges of uncertainty and heterogeneity characterizing adult education settings.

I would like to thank everyone who assisted me in writing this textbook.



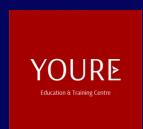
My sincere gratitude goes to Sally Heier and Professor Kenan Zekić who saw its early drafts and suggested areas for improvement. I am extremely grateful to the reviewers Professor Radmila Bodrič and Professor Tatjana Glušac who provided such valuable feedback. I would like to thank my Rector Ahmet Yıldırım and Vice Dean Muhammed Yasir Göz who encouraged me to work on the textbook regularly and spared me some administrative responsibilities. I am thankful to all of my colleagues, friends and family members who were very supportive over the past year. And of course, it would not be possible to meet the deadlines and commit to this book if my wife Vildana and my son Emir were not there for me. I thank them both for giving me strength and will to write.

Ervin Kovačević



#### Chapter 1:

- 1. Seven Dominant Perspectives on the Learning Process
- 2. Behaviorist Perspectives
- 3. Cognitivist Perspectives
  - Attention
  - Short-term Memory
  - Long-term Memory
  - Controlled Cognitive Information Coding
  - Reactivation of Available Cognitive Codes
  - Long-term Memory Organization
- 4. Constructivist Perspectives
- 5. Social Constructivist Perspectives
- 6. Humanistic Perspectives
- 7. Experientialist Perspectives
- 8. Neuronalist Perspectives
- 9. Epilogue to Chapter One



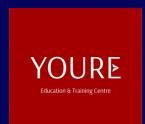
#### **Chapter 2**:

- 1. Six Theoretical Models of Adult Learning
- 2. **Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory**
- 3. Jarvis' Learning Process
- 4. Cross' CAL (Characteristics of Adults as Learners) Model
- 5. McClusky's Theory of Margin
- 6. Knox's Proficiency Theory
- 7. Knowles' Andragogical Model
- 8. Epilogue to Chapter Two



#### **Chapter 3**:

- 1. The Adult Across the Stages of Adulthood
- 2. The Stages of Adulthood
- 3. Young Adulthood
- 4. Midlife
- 5. Late life/Old age
- 6. Epilogue to Chapter Three



#### **Chapter 4**:

- 1. Adult Learners' Physiological and Psychosocial Characteristics
- 2. Physiological Variables
  - Health
  - Vision
  - Hearing
  - Energy
- 3. Psychosocial Variables
  - Cognition
  - Personality
  - Experience across Sociodemographic Trends
  - Competing interests, goals, and social roles
  - Learning Styles
- 4. Epilogue to Chapter Four



#### **Chapter 5**:

- 1. Personal Philosophies, Styles, and Perspectives in Adult Education
- 2. Personal Philosophies in Adult Education
  - Liberal (Arts) Adult Education
  - Behavioral Adult Education
  - Progressive Adult Education
  - Humanistic Adult Education
  - Radical Adult Education
  - Conclusion on Personal Philosophies about Adult Education
- 3. Teaching Styles in Adult Education
  - Teacher-centered (Anti-collaborative)
     Style
  - Learner-centered (Collaborative) Style
  - Teaching Styles in Action



#### **Chapter 5**:

### 4. Personal Perspectives in Adult Education

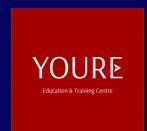
- Transmission Perspective
- Developmental Perspective
- Apprenticeship Perspective
- Nurturing Perspective
- Social Reform Perspective
- Conclusion about the Five Perspectives

#### 5. Epilogue to Chapter Five



#### **Chapter 6**:

- 1. Teaching Adult Learner Groups and Principles of Foreign Language Education Design
- 2. Teaching Adult Learner Groups
  - Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning in Groups
  - Building and Maintaining Group Cohesiveness
  - The Roles of Teachers of Adult Groups
- 3. Classical EFL Models as Sources of Teaching Principles
  - Short descriptions of the Approaches and Methods documented in Richards and Rodgers (2001)
  - Crossing the Method Boundaries
- 4. Recent Studies of Adult Language Learning and Teaching Patterns as Sources of FLE Principles
  - Anticipate and respond to various emerging learners' needs

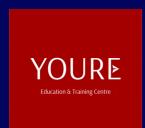


#### **Chapter 6**:

- Adult learners' self-directing capacities and autonomous behaviors need to be enhanced
- Adult L2 learners' varying motivational patterns require an appropriated set of teacher's strategic behaviors
- Adult learners' foreign language speaking anxieties need to be met with appropriate teaching actions
- The foreign language teacher cannot always rely on the language textbook solutions

## 5. The Teaching Climate, 21st Century Classroom, and Foreign Language Instruction

- Minimum Conditions in the Traditional Foreign Language Learning Classroom
- Visions of the 21st Century Classroom
- Traditional and 21st Century
   Classroom Principles in Virtual
   Learning Environments
- 6. Epilogue to Chapter Six



#### **Chapter 7**:

- 1. Developing a Personal Model for Teaching Adults a Foreign Language
- 2. Building Teaching Repertoires
- 3. The Interconnected Model of Professional Growth
- 4. The Multi-Dynamic Model of Teacher Training and Development
  - A novel principle encountered
  - Experience
  - Reflection
  - Experimentation
  - Collective Input
  - Emotion Dynamics
  - Teaching Results
  - The Outcome and Other Principles
- 5. Epilogue to Chapter Seven
- 6. Some Final Remarks
- 7. References



#### THANK YOU FOR READING!

Ervin Kovačević