

TET Task 4: Special Populations

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The topic of this paper is identifying possible technology resources to support special populations of adult learners.

Instructional Setting

The instruction for this will be completed online due to the distance and availability of the learners. The content area of focus is building a virtual classroom community. Learners will access the coursework through the internet using their computer. They will interact with each other through online discussions and be able to interact with the instructor through the board, reflections or by email.

Learners in the Instructional Setting

The learners are public school teachers in the United States who want to improve their virtual classroom community. The learners teach a variety of subjects but the common theme between them is that they are all teaching virtually currently. They all have previous experience teaching; ranging from 2 years to 30 years. The learners were identified from a Virtual Teaching Facebook group and expressed interest in the training after completing a needs identification survey.

Technology resources available for adult learners with disabilities

Although IDEA does not directly address my adult learners, the purpose behind the law show why we should still support our adult learning population in the same way. Through the law, Congress states:

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring

equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities (IDEA 2019).

One resource to support adult learners with hearing impairment is YouTube Caption Editor. I plan on uploading all of my videos to YouTube to take advantage of their automatic captioning. From there I can check the captions using the YouTube Studio to make any corrections to the automatic captions. Making corrected captions available on all of my videos will help my learners with hearing impairment receive the same level of instruction as their peers (“Edit or remove captions”, nd).

A second resources to support adult learner with ADHD/ADD is Zoom, specifically the spotlight and breakout room features. When we meet in a group setting on zoom to discuss specific topics, I can use the spotlight option so that the current speaker is always enlarged and in focus. This will help adult learners with ADHD and ADD to be less distracted by the other learners on the zoom call with them. Learners also have the choice to self-select speaker view over gallery view as their default. When learners are completing their own assignments, I as the host can send them into their own, individual breakout rooms. This gives learners a quiet place to focus on their task while still having the ability to message me for help. At that point, I can join their breakout room to discuss their questions with them (Happy Meetings for Everyone”, nd).

A third resource to support adult learners with visual impairment, including blindness is the chrome extension, ChromeVox Extension. With this extension added to a learner’s chrome browser it is able to read the contents of a webpage and provide directional support for learners with visual impairment. This free extension makes it possible for visually impaired learners to fully understand the information presented to them virtually (“Installing ChromeVox”, nd).

Technology resources available for adult advanced learners

My learner population of adult teachers are comfortable with their content areas but in addition to this, some are advanced, in terms of their use of technology. For this reason, I need to support their learning with extension activities that challenge them as well.

The first resource is Canva, a web based graphic design platform. Canva is free to educators. It provides them with templates and graphics to help create more engaging Powerpoints, flyers, assignments, etc. to use with their students. For advanced learners who move quickly through the material, they can use their extra time on Canva to improve their resources. This will leave the learner feeling accomplished and that their time was respected because they were not just completing busy work (“Canva.com”, nd).

The second resource is Google for Education training. Advanced learners can use their extra time and knowledge to gain a certification, while still learning valuable information that will support their students learning in a virtual setting. The Educator Level 2 Certification specifically focuses on strategies for integrating Google into their classroom. The training is free and if they chose to take the Level 1 exam it costs \$10 and the Level 2 exam costs \$25. As with the first resources this provides learners the opportunity to extend their learning while gaining valuable new skills and potentially a new certification (“Educator Level 1”, nd).

The third resource is TedEd, specifically the teacher resources. My learners can go explore topics that interest them or that relate to their content material. It is free to create an educators account. Once they select a topic, they can watch a TedEd video on the topic, respond to questions and participate in user created discussions. The best part is they can then customize the lesson to the needs of their own students. This resource is a great way to provide additional

learning for my advanced learners and help model another strategy for how to engage their students in a virtual setting (“Bring TED-Ed Student”, nd).

Technology resources available for adult bilingual learners

Although my learners all speak English due to the nature of their position that does not mean that some of them are not bilingual or English as a second language learners. They may have a general grasp of the English language but can still get tripped up by new and unfamiliar vocabulary.

The first resource to support adult bilingual learners is Google Translate. The web based version is free and provides learners the option to type in their translations. The app version is also free and provides a variety of ways to support learners. They still have the ability to type in their text but has additional resources that are highly useful. Learners can take a picture of the information they want to translate, and the app will automatically translate it. It can translate handwritten text. The aspect I find most exciting is the conversation and voice portion of the mobile app. Learners can speak directly into the app and it will speak out the translated version. This gives learners the opportunity to have real time discussion with their fellow learners by breaking down the language barrier (“Google Translate”, nd).

The second resource to support adult bilingual learners is Speech to Text (Voice Recognition) chrome extension. This Chrome extension provides learners the opportunity to verbal respond to prompts. The extension will convert it into text, which the learner can then past into their assignments. Most bilingual and EL learners tend to gain verbal understanding of a language before written language. This extension makes it possible for them to still demonstrate their understanding of the topic without being frustrated by the act of writing (“Speech to Text”, nd).

The third resource to support adult bilingual learners is Flipgrid. The website and app are free to use with an account. With Flipgrid, learners can respond to a prompt with a video response. This gives bilingual learners the opportunity to express their views on a topic without the stress of writing. When creating a prompt, the instructor can decide to make responses visible to all or just the instructor. This provides a low stress way to assess students understanding because they are not worried about what their peers will think of their response (“Flipgrid”, nd).

Process for choosing technology resources

My process for choosing technology resources for my instructional setting was quite simple. I first identified the potential special populations I might have in my learning group. From there I thought about the type of instruction I had planned and researched resources that would help my different learners be successful. I evaluated each resource focusing on its cost, ease of use for the learner and how it could support their learning.

Importance of choosing appropriate technologies

Selecting appropriate technologies for my learners is of extreme importance. When working with adult learners, all with at least a bachelor’s degree and experience in education, I needed to carefully select technologies that fit their needs. If I were to select resources that are too juvenile in appearance my learners may feel that I am not respecting their time and efforts. The resources I selected to offer my learners need to be easy for the learner to understand and begin using on their own due to the virtual aspect of our training.

References

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