

Exploring the Effective Learning Strategies for the Adult Learners in India: An Exploratory Study of Malcolm Knowles Principles and Their Use in the Education Policies of India with a Special Focus on the New India Literacy Programme

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Abstract : It has been widely accepted that the learning style of adults and children is different, the learning motivation among adults vary, and even their learning preferences cannot be predetermined. In India, where the population is widely diverse and socio-economic and cultural disparities are there, the learning strategies should also be according to their needs and preferences. The present study explores the concept of adult learners in India in order to understand their needs and styles better. The adult learning principles of Malcolm Knowles have been analyzed, and its presence in the different policies and programs has been traced. To what extent these principles and other such concepts would be beneficial for the Indian population and for effective learning strategies, and what contextual understanding is needed, has been argued in the study. Descriptive research methodology, along with content and thematic analyses, has been used for the paper. It has been argued that there are four areas that play crucial roles in making learning effective. These are the learner, the facilitator, the resources and the policy. The prior experiences of the learners, their motivation, the group to which they belong (i.e., the learning styles and the strategies can be varied for the group of farmers and migrant laborers), and their expected outcome play an important role in making any adult education program successful but along with this, the role of facilitator or the educator is also very important as it is not easy to deal with the adult learners, the understanding that the task is not to teach the adult learners but to make them learn and to use their prior knowledge is a task in itself, proper training is needed for that matter. Many times, it has been seen that adult education programs are poorly funded, or even if they are funded, the fund is not utilized well; the unavailability of the resources is one of the reasons for the failure of adult education programs, and if we see these four points as a triangle, at the bottom, there is a policy document. A well-stated and described doable policy document is also equally important.

Keywords : adult education, Indian adult learner, effective learning styles, Malcolm Knowles learning principles, adult education policies and program

Conference Title : ICAELL 2024 : International Conference on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : September 12-13, 2024