

# Speech is Golden: Developing Oral Fluency among Adult Learners

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# Adult Learner

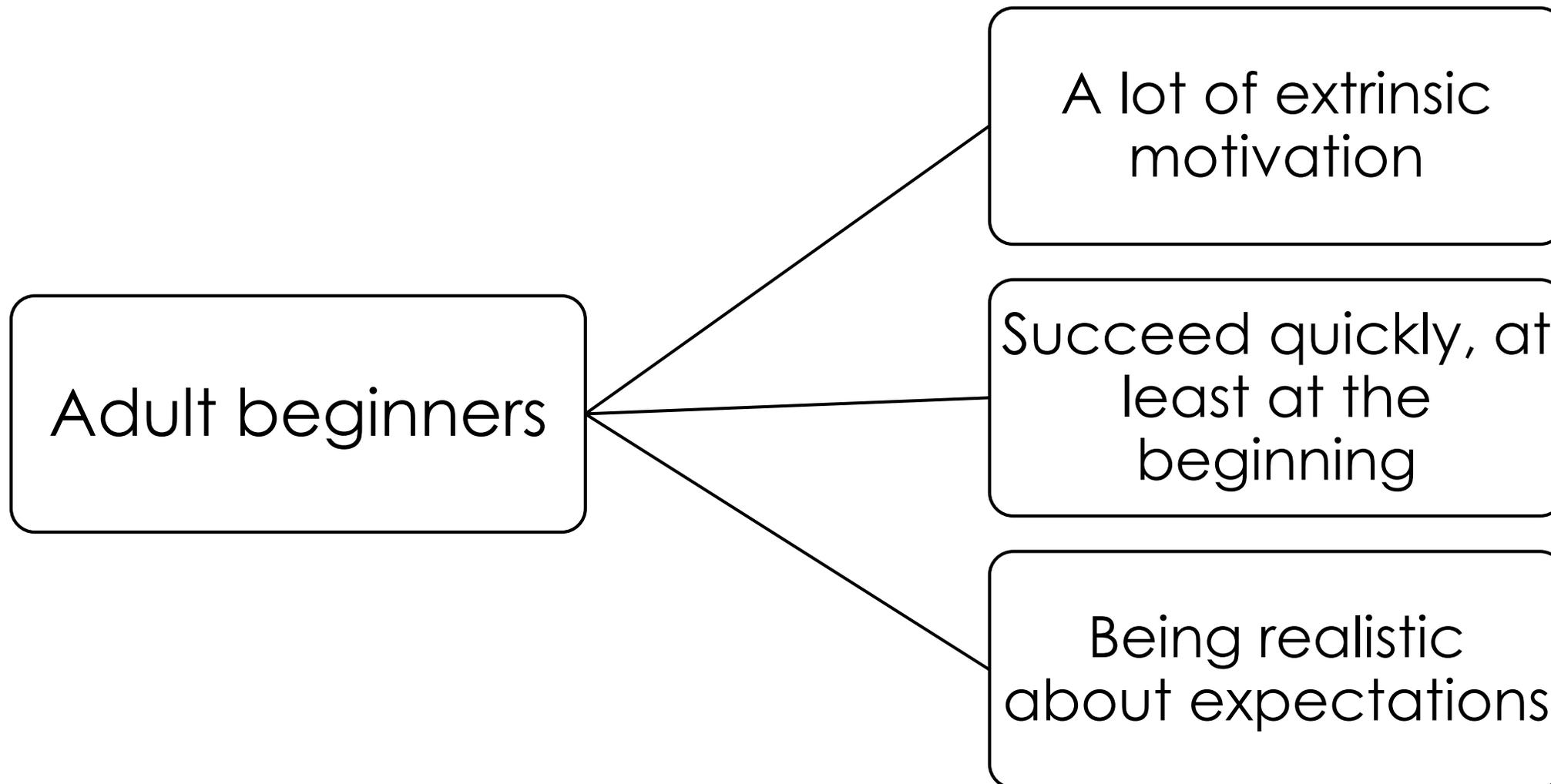
- Characteristics
- Motivational differences
- Fluency vs. Accuracy
- Communicative competence
- Speaking difficulties
- Communication strategies
- General model of developing speaking skills
- Speaking activities

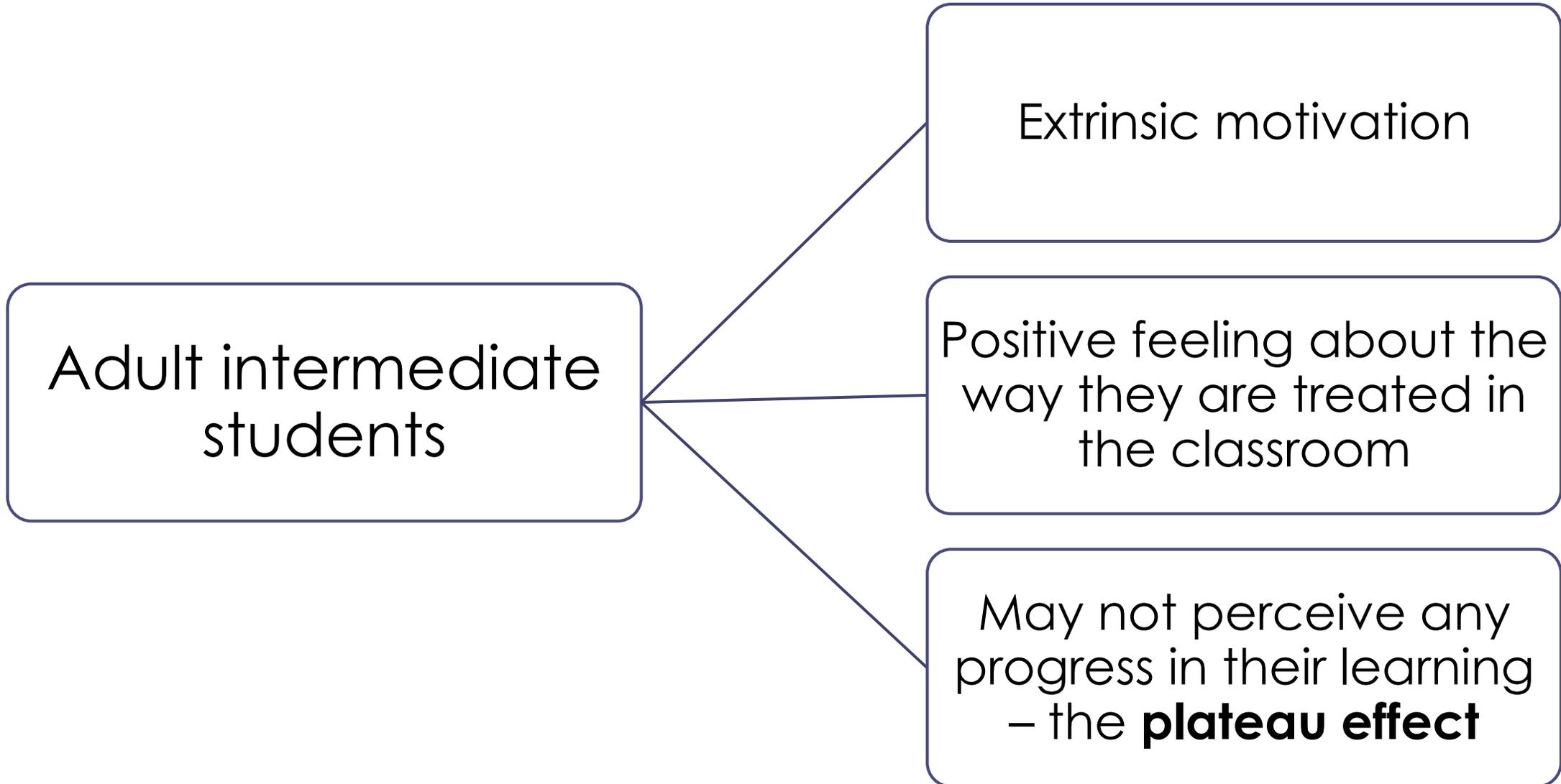
# Characteristics

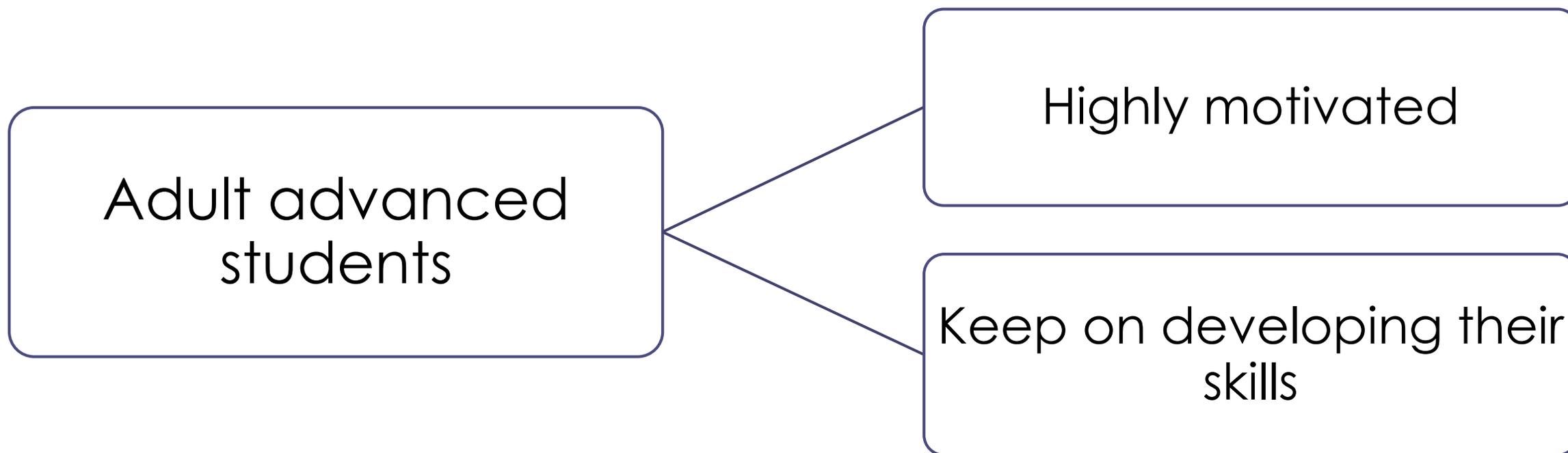
- Not forced to learn languages – voluntary learners
- Learning for vocational reasons
- Abstract and logical thinking
- Disciplined learners?
- Longer attention span
- Gap in learning
- Their learning experience is varied
- A great deal of life experience and cognitive maturity (age)
- Enormous variability in their goals and reasons for tackling L2

# Motivational differences

- Adult beginners
- Adult intermediate students
- Adult advanced students







# Accuracy vs. Fluency (acc. to C.J. Fillmore)

- **ACCURACY** - the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences
- **FLUENCY**
  - the ability to talk without long pauses for an extended period of time;
  - the ability to talk in a coherent way so that it does not cause comprehension difficulties;
  - the ability to have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts so that one does not become at a loss for words when an unexpected situation arises;
  - the ability to be creative and imaginative... in language use.

# Communicative competence

Knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the language

Knowledge of rules of speaking:

- how to begin and end conversations,
- what topics may be talked,
- which address forms to use

Knowing how to use and respond to different types of speech acts (requests, apologies, thanks, and invitations)

Knowing how to use language appropriately

# Speaking difficulties

- time pressure
- fear of being asked in public
- speaking speed
- lack of vocabulary
- students' characteristics
- having nothing to say
- lack of confidence

# How can learners sound more confident?\*

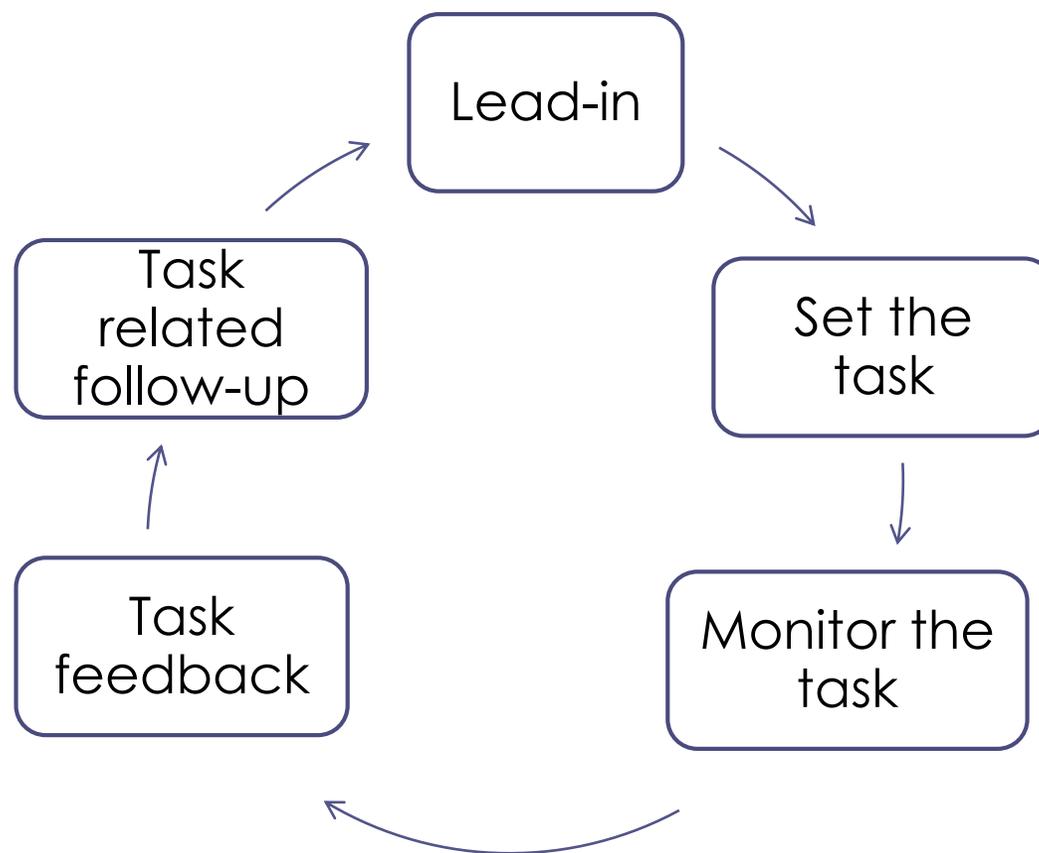
- Practise often
- Relax and think about the message
- Rehearse what you want to say
- Signpost your speech
- Learn language in chunks

\*Source: Better Speaking: A Guide to Improving Your Spoken English (BBC)

# Communication strategies

- Code/language switch
- Overgeneralization
- Foreignizing
- Literal translation
- Coinage of a word
- Paraphrasing
- Reduction strategy
  - Topic/Tricky structure avoidance
- Appeal to authority
- Non-linguistic signals: mime, gesture, facial expression

# General model of developing speaking skills\*





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# Activities

# Warm-ups

- 20-second topics\*
- 1-minute mini-presentations\*
- Famous couples\*
- Keep talking:
  - I always feel good when...
- Good and bad\*
- Proverbs/sayings (depending on the topic)
- Tongue twisters
- Definitions

# Speaking

- Focusing on language functions
  - Expressing your opinion
  - Agreeing and disagreeing
  - Explaining
  - Giving advice
  - Questioning
  - Dealing with questions

# Bibliography

Anderson K., Maclean J. and Lynch T., 2004: *Study Speaking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown H.D., 2007: *Teaching by Principles (3rd ed.)*. New York: Pearson-Longman.

Harmer J., 2015: *The Practice of English Language Teaching (5th ed.)*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Seymour D. and Popova M., 2005: *700 Classroom Activities*. Oxford: Macmillan.

# Internet resources

- <http://iteslj.org/questions/>
  - A useful webpage with hundreds of conversation questions and ideas to be used in a foreign language classroom.