

To the question of disabilities of foreign language mastering

The question of disabilities of foreign language mastering has been studied since the late 1960s and early 1970s. One of the researcher of this problem was Kenneth Dinklage who pointed out in his study that the foreign language problem was as much a pedagogy problem as a learning difficulty. He also touched the surface of this topic. Current experts in the field of learning disabilities such as Leonore Ganschow and Richard Sparks have also alluded to alternative pedagogical approaches specific to foreign language teaching. The problem remains, however, that learning disability experts do not teach foreign languages and foreign language instructors who are not trained to detect problems that are associated with learning disabilities. As a result, foreign language instructors often have difficulty identifying the learning disabled students in the classroom.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, when brain research was at the forefront of scientific publications concerning dyslexia, much attention was given to the impact of dyslexia and its implications on foreign language instruction. From that body of research literature information was disseminated regarding strategies to help learning disabled students succeed in the L2 classroom (Sparks, Ganschow, Artzer, & Patton, 1997; Sparks, Ganschow, Fluharty, Little, 1996). Recently, many other scholars have contributed to the research addressing the second language problem for learning-challenged students at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

In this connection many state organizations which were engaged in the problem of supporting and assessment the problem of second language learners was established. They are, for example, The Interstate New Teacher Assessment & Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) which have created standards for training and preparing secondary school foreign language teachers to handle various kinds of learners and learning styles.

As it was determined that the root of the problem is starting at the university level. Firstly, not every institutions are assigned the full responsibility of teaching under the direction of a supervisor. If the teaching assistants are not properly trained under the direction of an expert language program coordinator or teaching assistant supervisor, and are not in a second language methods course in which they would have the opportunity to study diverse learning styles, they will have no awareness of learner difficulties or the ability to identify a learning disabled student in the second language classroom.

Secondly, second language instructors can inform themselves about learning differences and disabilities by contacting their university's office of student services and, in larger schools, the office of learning disabilities. These suggestions and resources can help second language instructors make pedagogical efforts to enhance language learning.

Thirdly, the instructors should make pedagogical efforts to enhance language learning: it is possible to assist students with learning disabilities directly by adopting approaches that meet their need for multisensory input. Methodological approaches seem to be helpful to learners with a learning disability because they emphasize the importance of teaching through more than one modality.

Such researches as Gillingham, Stillman, Orton, Wilson offered to use an auditory-visual-kinesthetic (AVK) methodology for teaching reading and spelling. In 1964 Orton and Gillingham proposed a new structured, sequential, and multisensory technique designed to capitalize on the advantages of teaching written language by showing students how to make connections between the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic channels. The success of this approach is due largely to its systematic instructional techniques for teaching sound and letter pattern correspondences. In classes in which instructors employ multisensory techniques, students are engaged in kinesthetic activities that are highly interactive and are more student-centered than instructor-centered. Instructors demonstrate grammar rather than explaining it, and they provide numerous examples that enable students to deduct rules, making learning more meaningful and lasting.

In the conclusions it is necessary to say that students with a disability that affects their foreign language learning are placed at an enormous disadvantage at the university level. Many colleges and universities do not recognize the number of students who, despite their own and their instructors' efforts, simply cannot fulfill the foreign language requirement. Studies to date have not produced adequate methods for predicting difficulties with foreign language learning. Methods or assessment procedures designed for this purpose would be enormously useful to help identify students who need modified instructional strategies or a waiver of the foreign language requirement. In order to address the difficulties experienced by students, especially those with a history of foreign language failure, a variety of methods must be applied. Teaching techniques that employ many modalities (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) hold much promise for allowing learning disabled students to access the world of foreign language learning.

Literature

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