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Some devices to activate second language learners

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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 [1].

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.

Generally, encouraging students to feel comfortable about their performance in the classroom is very important. It is acceptable and expected that students will make mistakes, especially in introductory courses. According to Krashen's "affective filter" hypothesis, If the pressure for perfection becomes too great, students will mentally freeze, their affective filters will rise, and they will not be able to learn effectively [2]. However, if the second language instructor utilizes the techniques and methodologies described herein, many learning disabled students will have success mastering an second language, and conquer the foreign language requirement. As a result, very few students will actually need the foreign language requirement waiver.

The first interesting and useful device is to use songs and role-playing as well as games, creating dialogues and acting them out theatrically. Activities that involve group and pair work in class as well as projects assigned outside of the classroom can help boost student confidence in the target language as they build on their language skills collaboratively with their peers. Strategies in the classroom that are also effective are choral repetitions of vocabulary, phrases, and verb conjugations. Students who are shy or have difficulty with pronunciation will be able to blend with the whole group as they practice mastering the pronunciation of difficult words and sounds. For students in a foreign language class with auditory discrimination and memory deficits, the instructor must keep in mind that these students will do much better when visual material is presented simultaneously with the auditory task. Students with specific auditory memory deficits will perform better in an auditory task that involves contextual material. Difficulties with the recall of auditory information will continually recur if the student is confronted with pure auditory tasks that have no contextual clues and that demand verbatim accuracy. Students' overall performances will improve when additional cues (contextual and visual, in cases where dialogues are introduced) are provided and when student responses require paraphrasing, answering questions, or giving indications of comprehension and then repetition, rather than rote repetition of material. Foreign language instructors in particular should use overhead transparencies that are written in clear and contrasting colors and are accompanied by readily available handouts allowing students to focus on listening and learning and not copying the transparencies, rather than exclusively presenting written material on the board. Realia in the form of authentic materials, (e.g., train schedules, menus, foreign currency, posters announcing concerts or lectures, receipts from grocery stores) can also be incorporated into classroom instruction. When presenting dialogues to students, instructors can act out and gesture when and where appropriate. Instructors can also engage the students to act out the dialogues with one another in class. For oral activities, instructors should always hand out printed material, such as the accompanying lyrics to a song played in class, or written activities to be assigned after a video or DVD is shown. Additionally, if instructors hand out a daily

assignment sheet at the beginning of each chapter, in which the expectations and goals of each lesson are outlined, students will know how to plan their time outside of class more efficiently. If second language instructors sense that the pace is too rapid, then the pace should be slowed down to ensure that the students are grasping the tasks at hand. Testing more frequently on less material can prove more effective and be generally more helpful to students, than more traditional manners of testing with emphasis placed on comprehensive midterm and final exams. Nontraditional testing might include allowing students to create and videotape their own skits or dialogues as a major project for a midterm or final exam. Digitally created skits can then be put on the instructor's Web page for other students to view. Furthermore, instructors can also employ the World Wide Web as a tool for reinforcing cultural and linguistic lessons. The Internet provides a virtual reality that might appeal to visual learners as they are able to visit a French village, German museum, or travel by the Inter City Express from Amsterdam to Bern [3].

LITERATURE

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