



THEORETICAL STRATEGIES TO TEACHING ENGLISH TO DEAF STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article highlights the theoretical principle and strategies to teaching English to students with disabilities. Moreover, in this article was given problems and its solutions of learning English to students with disabilities.

Keywords: Student with disabilities, sign language alphabet, deaf, blind, method, strategy.

Introduction

English is a language of international communication, essential for all fields of learning and useful in all aspects of life. Students with disabilities have the same right to learn English in school as does the general school population. With the appropriate professional support and teaching methods, students with disabilities are indeed capable of learning English. This assumption led to the adaptation of the English Curriculum for the benefit of students with disabilities who require adaptive teaching, whether in a special education framework or within the regular school system.

Students with learning disabilities are not aware of how their minds work and fail to use strategies that represent the dynamic process underlying effective learning and academic performance[1]. In support of this, many neuropsychologists and psychiatrists associations agree that individuals with learning disabilities have neurologically-based processing disorders manifest themselves in students' failure to independently apply effective learning processes and to monitor their own learning. More specifically, these information processing disorders manifest themselves in students' failure to: a) apply learning strategies, b) orchestrate among various strategies, and c) change strategies when they don't



work, or make adaptations to them when necessary. These failures in turn interfere with acquisition and use of one or more of the following language skills: 1) oral communication, 2) reading comprehension, and 3) written expression [2]. To help students with language learning disabilities overcome their own learning difficulties, instruction should take as its aim the improvement of the underlying processes. In support of learning strategies these students depend upon to learn language skills, many studies have shown that learners' awareness of their own learning process plays a significant role in improving language performance; Greater strategy use is related to better language learning and good language learners' apply multiple strategies more frequently and more effectively than poor language learners and struggling language learners have difficulty in using learning strategies [3]. Therefore, this article focuses on learning strategies in general and language learning strategies in particular to help teachers become more aware of the various strategies that they can use to enable students to learn independently and effectively.

The program is adapted to a varied population of students with disabilities. It includes students with [4]:

- learning disabilities
- visual impairments
- auditory impairments
- physical disabilities (cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy etc.)
- behavioral disabilities
- social/emotional disabilities
- communicative disorders (PDD spectrum)
- slight or moderate development delay.

All of the categories mentioned in the above have their own strategies to learning foreign language. There are many taxonomies of language learning strategies. However, most of these taxonomies reflect more or less the same categories of language learning strategies. In an attempt to bring many of the categorizations of learning strategies together, Dornyei proposes a taxonomy which consists of four categories: Cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies and effective strategies [5].



Cognitive strategies - cognitive psychologists generally agree that cognitive strategies are behaviors, techniques, or actions used by learners to operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning[6]. These strategies closely linked to language skills. For example, the reading comprehension strategies that have consistently been advocated as playing an important part in the reading comprehension include: making predictions about the likely content of text, clarifying, guessing, questioning, and summarizing. The choice from these cognitive strategies depends on the demands of the reading task, among many other factors. Over and above, the learner should employ a variety of strategies to comprehend what s/he reads on condition that these strategies should support and complete each other. In support of this, research suggests that teaching a repertoire of strategies enhance the performance of academic tasks and is more effective than individual strategy instruction[7]. Cognitive strategies are very important for all students. In general, these strategies enable students to learn better because they help them process (organize, understand, retain and retrieve) the information they are actually learning. In addition to the use of these strategies enable students to perform efficiently on learning tasks as they help them "develop necessary skills to be self regulated learners, to facilitate comprehension, to act directly on incoming information, and Ultimately improve academic performance". Metzger and Krishnan also assert that "effective cognitive strategies help students bridge the gap between their weak executive function skills and the academic demands they face". Moreover, cognitive strategies instruction is one of the most effective ways of improving the academic performance of the students with learning disabilities. Many scholars and researchers agree that teaching those students should be the key focus of their interventions. In essence, cognitive strategies can help students with and without learning difficulties learn better and enable them to become independent learners.

Metacognitive strategies - Metacognition includes awareness of one's own cognitive processes and one's own effective processes. As Williams and Burden put it: Metacognition includes not only knowledge of mental process, as they are necessarily linked to and effected by emotions and feelings. It must also encompass a knowledge of factors relating to the self, and the way in which these affect the use of cognitive processes. Thus, an awareness of one's personality,



feelings, motivation, attitudes and learning style at any particular moment would be included within such a concept of metacognitive awareness. Moreover Metacognition includes not only the conscious awareness of one's own cognitive and effective processes but also the management of one's own learning through the use of metacognitive strategies. These strategies involve "planning for learning, self-monitoring during learning and evolution of how successful learning has been after working on language in some way" while these strategies planning, self-monitoring, and self-assessment, are distinct, they are also independent because planning informs and promotes self-monitoring helps students attain learning goals; and self-assessment enhances students' motivation to set new goals. Metacognitive strategies are very important for language learners because they help them select, monitor, and regulate cognitive strategies. This in turn assists them in becoming more responsible for their own learning and enables them to change or modify their own cognitive processes. In support of this, there is rich body of literature showing that higher proficiency students use metacognitive strategies more than lower proficiency ones and that the former tend to use them more flexibly and effectively[8]. Moreover, metacognitive strategies can positively impact students with learning disabilities by helping them become independent learners.

Social strategies are actions that involve other people. These strategies include, but are not limited to, asking other help, speaking together in the target language, working with fellow-students, and reviewing others' work. According to Oxford social learning strategies include for main strategies. The first is asking questions. The second is cooperating with others: for example, cooperating with peers and proficient users of the new language. The third is emphasizing with other like developing cultural understanding and becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings. The fourth is seeking opportunities: for example, reading, writing and speaking with natives, teacher and proficient peers.

Affective strategies are learning strategies concerned with managing one's own emotions, motivations, and attitudes. These strategies include, but are not limited to, activating supportive emotions, beliefs and attitudes; generating and maintaining motivation; positive self-talk; anxiety reduction; self-reward; taking



wise risks; self-encouragement; relaxation; sharing worries with tutor and other students; ticking of completed tasks; joining self-help group, and engaging in leisure activities such as gardening; encouraging one's self, and taking one's own emotional temperature [9]. The importance of affective strategies is widely recognized in all areas of learning. The literature indicates that positive affect can play a key role in stimulating critical and creative thinking[10]. Also improving achievement and boosting language learning. In contrast negative affect states such as anxiety and depression leads to deficits in attentional and cognitive control mechanisms, closing off, withdrawal, and low language achievement.

There are some stages of teaching and learning English for disabilities student who are deaf:

First stage, Learning Sign language alphabets

Second stage, learning new vocabulary and grammar by using sign language alphabets

Third stage, to practice in a real life.

Methods of teaching English sign language alphabets to student who are deaf. First of all, they should learn language alphabets.

After learning this sign language, they should make practice new words by using sign language alphabets. The last, they should do practice in real life situation.

But students with disabilities have a learning problems:

- may have trouble learning the alphabet, rhyming words, or connecting letters to their sounds;
- may make many mistakes when reading aloud, and repeat and pause often;
- may not understand what s/he reads;
- may have real trouble with spelling;
- may have very messy handwriting or hold a pencil awkwardly;
- may learn language late and have a limited vocabulary;
- may struggle to express ideas in writing ;
- may have trouble remembering the sounds that letters make or hearing slight difference between words;
- may not follow the social rules of conversation such as taking turns, and may stand too close to the listener;



Solve the problem which was mentioned above:

- Teacher should give motivation everytime;
- teacher keep in touch their students' parents and their psychologists;
- Classroom should be furniture comfortable for students. Students can see teacher very easily, so desks are placed as a round shape;
- teacher should have been a good relationship with their student;
- teacher, parents should show people who are could learn English eventhough they were deaf, blind and so on.

Every students with disabilities can learn foreign language, If we create right atmosphere for them, if teacher use right, efficient methods and strategies, if parents support their children.

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