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TEFL Methodology
(PEN 401)
4 SKS

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Learning difficulty

1. Learning difficulties are problems that affect the brain's ability to receive, process, analyze, or store information. These problems can make it difficult for a student to learn as quickly as someone who isn't affected by learning disabilities.
2. Learning difficulty doesn't have anything to do with a person's intelligence - after all, such successful people as Walt Disney, Alexander Graham Bell, and Winston Churchill all had learning disabilities.

3. Sign: there's a deep gap between how much someone studied for a test and how well he performed.
Factors affecting it

- Genetic influences (However, researchers are still debating whether learning it is, in fact, genetic, or if it shows up in families because kids learn and model what their parents do).
- Brain development (both before and after birth)
- Environmental impacts
Teacher’s claim 1:

“My students are reluctant to do the homework/assignment”.

What are the possible causes?
How to overcome the problem?
Some possible facts:

1. The task is too difficult.
2. Students do not see any advantage.
3. Teachers never return the worksheet.
4. The worksheet is returned with only a tick sign on it.
5. No following actions.
What teachers may try:

1. Always return the homework
2. Give appropriate feedback
3. Discuss their work in the class
4. “Future-oriented homework”, use the homework as the learning materials
Teacher’s claim 2:

“My students always have problems with lessons involving reading comprehension”.

Why?
Difficult reading comprehension tasks:

- Does it involve complicated structure?
- Does it contain too many difficult words?
- Does it involve students’ schemata or previous experience and background knowledge?
Teacher’s claim 3:

“I think my students do not like my subject”.

(Investigate why)
Ways worth trying:

1. Am I a book reader instead of a learning facilitator? (boredom, monotonous ways)

2. Create more interesting activities in addition to conventional lectures (Games? Role play? Group work? Pair work?)

3. How about the teaching resources? Aids? Media?
Should I correct my students’ mistakes? When? How?

**Mistakes versus Errors:**

- Genuine errors are caused by lack of knowledge about L2 or by incorrect hypotheses about it.
- Unfortunate mistakes are caused temporary lapses of memory, confusion, slips of the tongue.
Competence versus Performance

- Competence: knowing what is correct
- Performance: what actually occurs in practice
Causes of errors

- Mother-tongue interference
- Overgeneralization
  - e.g. *She drinked water.*
- Errors encouraged by teaching material or method
  - e.g. “I’m … ing” structure is quite likely to produce “*I am go to Malioboro*.”
Teachers’ attitude to errors

**Behaviorists**: Error is a symptom of ineffective teaching and an evidence of failure. When errors occur, they are to be remedied by a bombardment of correct forms, i.e. intensive drilling.

**Mentalists**: error is inevitable, it is an integral part of the learning process.
Eclectic approach:

- Structural drills can be useful in attempting to eradicate errors, but remember that the learner is doing his best to sort things out for himself.

- Teachers may allow errors to go uncorrected on many occasions.  
  
  e.g. If a new structure is being practiced, the teacher may ignore minor pronunciation errors.
Notes:

- Teachers’ attitude is crucial.
- Nothing will undermine students’ confidence as much as a series of comments and interruptions on his performance.
- Corrections during oral work can be damaging or discouraging.
- Harsh written comments may discourage revisions.
Dealing with a Weak Class

Four types of learners: the very able, the able, the less able, and the unable.

They are afraid of using the language:
Production: not more than a string of L2 items tied together by the grammatical system of their L1.
Recognition: pesters for translation.
Three principles:

1. Limitation of aims and objectives
   *Understanding rather than using* the language
   a. Q and A in L1
   b. Q in L2 and A in L1
   c. Q that does not require production at all

2. Simplification of material

3. Tighter control over learner production
Dealing with a Heterogeneous Class

- Group-work: organize groups that are representative of different ability levels
- Make the fullest possible use of the very able students
- Create activities that enable the more able students to assist the weaker ones.
Case 1

Teacher: “Hey, listen everybody! This topic is very difficult. If you don’t concentrate, I am sure you won’t get it”.

Students: ??

(Please give your view)
Case 2

“C’mon, be realistic. You see, there are many university graduates who are jobless. Why study hard?”
Strategies:

- Periodic analysis and evaluation
- Peer teaching
- Cram schooling with different teachers
- Focus on test taking skills and strategy
Teaching resources:

All the sources of information about language and about teaching that we can refer to for help in lesson preparation
Three important foreign language teaching determinants:

1. Appropriately-trained teachers
2. Favorable public attitudes
3. High quality materials
Authentic materials

i.e. the use in teaching of texts, photos, videos, and other teaching resources that were not specially prepared for pedagogical purposes.

They contain authentic language and reflect real-world uses of language.
Authentic vs. Created materials

Authentic materials → pros and cons:

1. **Advantages**: motivation, cultural information, real language exposure, creative approach to teaching

2. **Weaknesses**: may contain difficult language and unneeded items, not systematic
Teaching Media

- **Visual**: pictures, sketches, diagrams, photos, newspapers, dictionaries, cartoons, comics, maps, brochures, timetables, demonstrations
- **Audio**: tapes, records, reports, discussions
- **Audio-visual**: films, TVs, videos, role-playing
- **Tactile**: objects, models, tools, toys
- **Virtual**: internet, website, e-mail, cybernews
Teaching with appropriate media

Related to instructional English:
- reinforcing
- basic questioning
- variability
- explaining
- introductory procedures
- closure
- advanced questioning
Why media?

- to create enjoyable learning → motivating
- to avoid boredom
- to make the TLP more systematic
- to help teachers present the materials
- to help students understand the context

(creative learning, concrete thinking)
Realia and authentic materials

- Realia: the use of real objects in the instructional process
- For teaching new vocabulary, new structures, role play
- Authentic materials → learning will be more meaningful and effective if it is related with real contexts.
Evaluating Materials

Good materials will:

1. arouse students’ interest,
2. remind students of earlier learning,
3. help them get feedback,
4. encourage them to practice.
Commercial Textbooks

Advantages: maintain quality, efficient and effective, visually appealing, built around the syllabus, dependable teaching sequences, offer teachers something to fall back on when they run out of ideas of their own.

Negative effects: may contain inauthentic language, distort content, deskill teachers (teachers as materials presenters).
Two Criteria in Selecting Text Books

- **External (what we have):** learner characteristics, physical environment, resources, class size

- **Internal (what the materials offer):** choice of topics, skill covered, proficiency level, grading exercises
Questions to consider

1. **Price**: How expensive? Who will pay? Can the students afford it?

2. **Availability**: Is it available? Are all its components in the shops now? What about the next level/term/semester? Has it been published?

3. **Layout and design**: Attractive? Feel comfortable? Do the students like it? How user-friendly is the design?
4. **Methodology**: what kind of teaching and learning does the book promote? Is there a good balance between study and activation?

5. **Skills**: Cover 4 skills adequately? Is the language of the reading and listening texts appropriate? Are the speaking and writing tasks likely to engage the students’ interests?

6. **Syllabus and topic**: Is it appropriate? Does it contain a variety of topics? Culturally appropriate?
Reasons for Adapting Materials

- Not enough practice
- Containing too much difficult points
- Too easy, not challenging
- Inappropriate, not culturally acceptable
- Too formal
- Too much or too little variety in the activities

And, because not everything in the textbook is wonderful, and teachers want to bring their own personality to the teaching tasks.
How to adapt?

- Adding (insufficient exercises, too difficult)
- Deleting (inappropriate, irrelevant)
- Modifying (rewriting, restructuring)
- Simplifying (grammar, lexeme, length)
- Reordering (adjusting the sequence)
What to do with these media?

1. Leaflets, e.g. supermarket sale, bus times
2. Signs, e.g. “Keep off the grass”, “No smoking”, “Do not enter”, “Wet paint”, “Sale”
3. Procedures (written), e.g. how to prepare instant noodles, owners’ manuals
4. Announcements (spoken), e.g. in the airport, railway stations, telephone operator, cell reminder
5. Invitations (written): wedding, birthday party
6. City map, globe, bus route, restaurant menu
7. Bills, labels, recipes, messages
Online Resources

- [http://www.esl-lab.com/tel1.htm](http://www.esl-lab.com/tel1.htm)
- [http://www.englishmedialab.com/](http://www.englishmedialab.com/)
- [http://www.englishmedialab.com/listening.html](http://www.englishmedialab.com/listening.html)
- [http://www.eslus.com/LESSONS/LISTEN/listen1.htm](http://www.eslus.com/LESSONS/LISTEN/listen1.htm)

Listen and answer the question in the slide 1. Download audio script 2. Download listening worksheet. 3. Download answers.
References