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Newsletter Contents

Word of the week: Realia

Realia are real things that are brought to the class and used as a resource.

Example

The learners are learning to describe clothes. In turn, they describe someone in the class for others to identify.

In the classroom

Realia can include the learners themselves, the classroom, furniture, the school, published material such as advertisements and menus, the contents of learners' pockets and bags, and the view outside the window.

[retrieved from http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk]

Video: Shaping the Way We Teach English: Module 11, Individual Learner Differences

Learners in one classroom are both similar and, at the same time, different. A learner-centered approach to teaching requires teachers to understand this duality, and to be aware of the different ways in which students learn. Some differences are easy to see or discover, such as age/gender/socioeconomic conditions/and level of education.

Other differences may be more difficult to identify, including: * Overall cognitive ability, or "intelligence," and Cognitive development in younger learners. Learners' language proficiency levels, and their Motivation for language study. Learners'personality traits, along with their Learning strengths, styles and preferences.

An innovative offering from the Office of English Language Programs, Shaping the Way We Teach English, is a 14-module teacher training video series developed and produced in cooperation with the University of Oregon.

Watch the video at **http://www.eltweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2011/01/81-video-shaping-the-way-we-teach-english-module-11-individual-learner-differences/**

Susan Ryan's Tip: 'Linking in English Pronunciation'

English speakers use linking to join words toegether so that they flow together smoothly. It often sounds like people are saying one long word since they are no stops between words.

Here are two of the most common types of linking-

Consonant to vowel linking

When words that end in a consonant sound are adjacent to words that begin with a vowel sound the consonant sound becomes part of the second word. Hold the consonant sound of the first word until you say the vowel sound of the second word in order to link these words together.

Here are some examples:

1. likes it = likes-sit

2. laughed at = laught-tat

3. explain it = explain-nit

4. wake up = wak-kup

Vowel to vowel linking

When words that end in a vowel sound are adjacent to words that begin with a vowel sound English speakers add a slight /y/ or /w/ sound to link them together.

Here are some examples:

1. too + early = toowearly

2. who + is + it = whowizit

3. I + am = Iyam

4. do + it =dowit

Many non-native English speakers tend to stop between words and instead of linking or blending the sounds together. This creates speech that sounds very choppy. If you can use linking when you are speaking English your accent will improve and people will understand you more easily!

Linking can make it difficult for non native English speakers to understand what native speakers are saying. That is because linked words in a sentence do not sound the same as they do when they are said individually. If you can recognize linking when you are listening to native English speakers you will understand other people more easily.

Eva Easton has some nice lessons on linking on her American Pronunciation website

http://eleaston.com/pr/linking-pattern.html

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Susan Ryan is an American English pronunciation teacher and accent reduction coach. She currently lives in South Florida. Read more articles by Susan at http://www.confidentvoice.com/blog/

Research Paper: 'Teaching English Language to Engineering Students and The Problems Faced by The Language Teachers: Solutions Through Computers' by Dr.S.Mercy Gnana Gandhi

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Abstract:

This research paper highlights the methodology of teaching English language to the Engineering students and the problems faced by the language teachers. The present day engineering students are not giving enough importance to English language and they give prior preference to their specialized subjects. So they lack basic language skills, in particular, vocabulary, spoken skills and usage of grammar. As a result, they are unable to satisfy the interviewers in job interviews. So, there is a need to develop their language through the most scientific methods of teaching especially through the newly advanced methods of using the multimedia and the Web.

The English teachers of technical institutions face different and difficult problems either academically or non- academically. First of all, the time duration for the completion of the given tasks is not sufficient .The researcher finds few students completing the given task, before the time set, while the slow learners find it difficult to complete it and so expect the teacher to provide answers. The slower students spend three times as much time as the faster students. This is not conducive to learning. Secondly each class has a variety of levels of English proficiency, a variety of interests and a variety of paces of studying. So, it is impossible to lead the students through varied levels of learning, which make the students passive. For these reasons, we need to individualize the study of English in order to get more effective results.

Introduction

No change can be brought without a change in the teaching methodology. Presently, our teachers seem to have exhausted with the methods and techniques of teaching. Today our teachers and students want a totally novel methodology. They want a methodology that is modern and effective. Considering these demands, the only way out seems to be the computer. Already, attempts have been made to teach language and literature through the computer. This new field is called Computer Assisted Language Learning and Computer Assisted Literature Learning. The researcher herself went through many articles in these areas. And at this point, she feels that language ought to be taught with the help of the computer. Already a variety of ideas and pictures are represented through the computer for those who use them. The internet is an effective source of ideas and picture display. Thus the hypothesis that language can be taught through the computers is put forwards here.

This study discusses the nature of interaction and the definition of CALL and its applications. The researcher highlights the method of promoting qualitative interaction amongst students, teachers and computer software. This project evidences the fact that computer pair work enhances interaction.

"The complexity of teaching and learning – is a systematic research .The technical details of the mouse are simple but the teaching principles are complicated; for that reason we need to consider the effectiveness of learning through multimedia" - D.Healy

(An extract from: Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)–www. Monografias.com)

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL):

It is a relatively new and rapidly evolving academic field that explores the role of information and communication technologies in language learning and teaching. It provides fertile ground for leading edge, innovative and highly creative thinking and scholarly work. Because of the multiplicities and changeability of the field

which include the emergence of new theoretical, methodological and learning paradigms, special understanding and expertise is required to assess the quality and the depth of such scholarly activities.

Today, CALL activities exploit improved technology to produce highly interactive learning environments, providing effective support for the acquisition of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. High- speed networks allow access to authentic cultural materials and link learners to speakers around the world. When integrated into pedagogical plan, these new technologies enhance learning opportunities beyond anything previously possible.The number of variables associated with language learning and the difficulty in controlling those variables, in a second language learning setting is not so tedious, but it is to be designed according to the students attitude.

Individualization

Individualization is not a method or technique, but a philosophy of education. Here, learning is student-centered and the teacher assists the students in pursuing their goals. As a result, students feel secure and get satisfaction in learning. In a class with one teacher, it is impossible for the teacher to respond to each student, to give feedback immediately and to be aware of each student's progress, problems and weaknesses. Here the computer plays a vital role in giving information and teaching the students. It is reasonable to say that it is difficult to concentrate on each student in all the three activities in the writing session. So using e-mail is more advantageous in a writing class. Teachers often find it difficult to correct files, assignments, answer sheets either in the class, college or at home. This is totally eliminated. Just with the click of a mouse, the teacher monitors and analyses everything effectively and logically and grading efficiently.

Language laboratory:

It can be used in the class session, if there are adequate work stations and rooms. Since students rarely use the capacity of media, they feel uneasy about the recorded answers on a cassette and they are forced to listen to these, unaware of the usage of recording head to delete previous user's voices. The stability of students' tape recorders might be affected by signal fluctuation. Finally certain

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mistakes from improper   operation of high speed duplicators are inevitable. Usually these language labs separate the student and teacher and thus encourage teachers and less motivated students to day-dream in the class time.

So, multimedia computers have to be adopted as a better option, which are configured   with the right software, permitting the students to view websites, to listen to T.V. or Radio programmes, to read the world's great literature to facilitate person to person communication through e-mail, chat, moos, internet phone, low-end video conferencing and many more. Voice recognition software allows the students to choose and to practise better idea of their accuracy. If an institution has electronic classrooms, the instructor with a laptop, demonstrates the orientation features and a good instruction sheet will take care of the rest. If the students have not finished at the class time, they can continue their work at home.

Role of the teacher:

A language teacher may not know the definitions and descriptions of technical terms and the processes related to Technology. She is expected to be familiar with those matters, before she enters into the class. As the blooming generation is efficient in gathering new ideas on science and facts, they try to cross- check the teacher, whether she/he knows about the latest technology. So, the language teacher in   technical institution needs to be efficient and confident while responding to the students. At this point, the researcher concludes that students tend to enjoy using computers and the teachers need much more work, to identify the factors involved in using software efficiently, for language teaching. Teachers will continue to refine their techniques with CALL over time and, it is hoped, continue to contribute to research being done in this area.

Solution- Computers:

The researcher believes that computers should be used to make classes more effective. There are two ways to use them. One way is for the teacher to present pictures, videos and written text with or without sound. The presentation can be programmed in advance or handled manually. The other way to use computers is to have students use the computers themselves. The researchers find the second method of using computers which lead the students a better understanding of

computers as well as language learning. In this method, the students work individually on their own interest. The computer provides materials to study and students can interact with the computer as if they are doing with a tutor or a library. The students here are encouraged to do the work either in groups or in pairs, so that they can get a spirit of cooperation and confidence in finding the answers. Interaction among the students is as important as that with a computer in learning. The researcher suggests that students work at a computer during the class, can do assignments drills, tutorials, games, simulations and even reviewing and preparing for the class. Using computers give way to their knowledge and promotes the nature of independence. The researcher is of the view that the computer education is a beneficial one for both the slow workers and the advanced students, as it encourages to work at their own pace. Slower workers can catch up, and advanced students can do extra assignments.

Conclusion:

Presently, many students are tired of traditional English classes and are interested in a new style of learning. The researcher rightly accepts the suggestions of Kitao (1993)

" Students think materials are new and fresh, if they are presented on computers, and they are often interested even in routine tasks such as learning to type. They seem to be willing to spend more hours and do more exerciseson a computer than by hand". (An extract from: Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)– www. Monografias.com)

Learning can be individualized using computers .Students can study materials related to their individual goals and interests, with the appropriate difficulty level and at their own pace.

"Computers can analyze the problems of each student and the teacher can help individual students with their problems based on the analysis" concludes the researcher.

Web References

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3. Computer Assisted Language Learning P.O.Box 825 2160 SZ Lisse The Netherlands K.C.CAMERON@EXETER.AC.UK http://www.swets.nl/sps/journals/call.html

4. Internet TESL Journal http://www.aitech.ac.jp/-iteslj

5. Language Learning and Technology http://polyglot.cal.msu.edu.llt

Research Paper: Reading Disability - A specific blockage in Language Learning: An Overview of the problem and Suggestions for the Follow-up studies by Vaishali Shivkumar

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"A learning disability refers to retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, writing, arithmetic, or other school subject resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible cerebral dysfunction and / or behavioral disturbances. It is not the result of mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural and instructional factors."
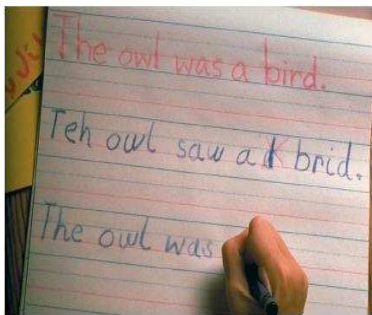
In the 1962 edition of his introductory text on exceptional children, Kirk defined learning disability as above. Five elements in this definition have appeared which helped many of the definitions followed it:

1. Sub-average achievement (reading, writing, arithmetic) or achievement-related behavior (speech or language);

2. intra-individual differences – the possibility that the sub-average achievement or achievement-related behavior occurs in only one or some areas, with average or above-average achievement in the other areas;

3. reference to psychological processing problems as casual factors or at least as co-related factors;

4. suggestion of cerebral dysfunction as a possible casual factor;

5. exclusion of other disabling conditions (e.g., mental retardation) and environmental conditions as casual factors.

The learning disabilities are not very common but they are found commonly in the children who have suffered mal-nutrition in their pre or post natal stage. Mother's mal-nutrition also works as a problematic factor, here, as fetus gets nourishment from her mother's blood. The slow or disturbed development of the neurons in the pre or post natal stage also happens to be a major cause behind the learning disabled children. Actually, they are the children with learning difficulties or they are differently able in the matter of learning but the world of neurology and society has given the tag of "Learning Disabilities" to the conditions which are seen in such kids. Specific among Learning Disabilities are conditions like Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia and Dyspraxia. *No specific difficulty occurs in isolation. A child with a learning difficulty has a cluster of symptoms that hamper learning.*

Reading is a tool skill. We use tool skills as a means of accomplishing other things, for example, we read novels of romance, cartoons about politics, signs advertising products, different books instructing us how to prepare some particular kind of things. In addition to that, we get employment if we know how to read, write, speak and listen appropriately and fluently. Reading with the other three skills is very essential to be successful in life in one or another way. The students who have problems with reading skill may have some other difficulties with it too. By the second standard, such a child is left behind in the skills' performance in the classroom and recognized by the teacher as a poor student in studies. Sometimes, such kids gradually develop a kind of trick which helps them to leave behind the

reading problems very easily but this task needs confidence and patience on both the parts – student and teacher.
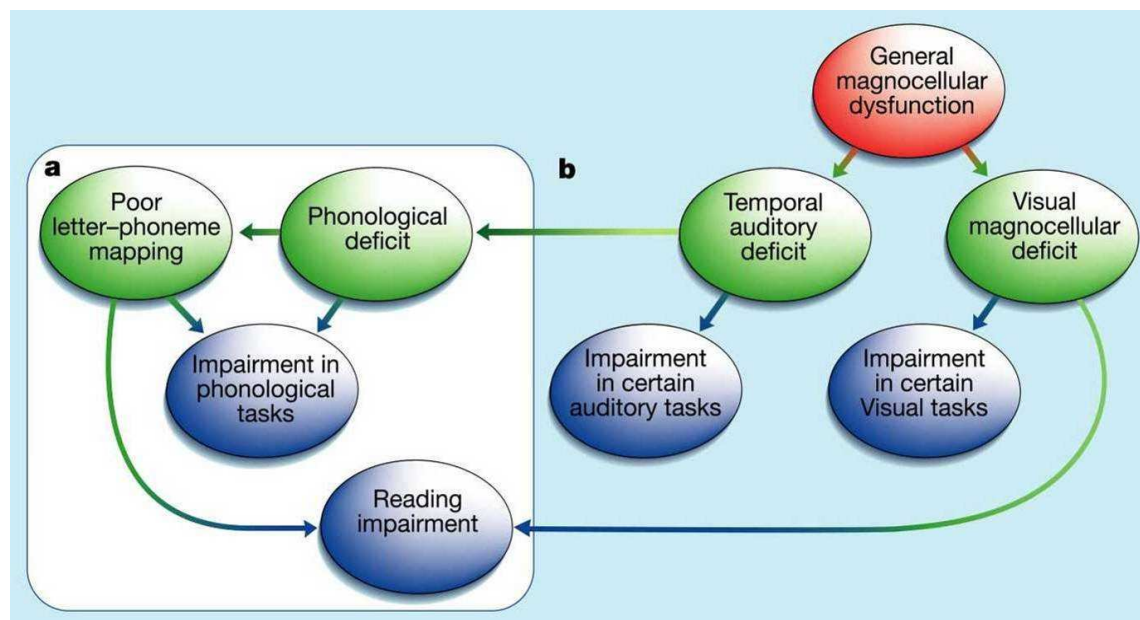
[http://www.google.com/imagessearch/phonemicstructure_diagram.jpg]

"***Reading is the ability to decode written symbols into spoken sounds***." This statement shows a complex system of deriving meaning from printed material which requires: the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print; the ability to decode unfamiliar words; the ability to read fluently; adequate background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension; the advance of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print; the progress and maintenance of a motivation to read. Gough and Tunmer give a simple formula for this whole process of reading: R = D * C. (R stands for reading skill; D for decoding and C for comprehension).

How might you recognise a learner with dyslexia in your group?

Previous evidence

You may know that the learner has in the past had a Statement of Special Educational Need or remedial tuition. Or a learner may have had support with literacy while on other programmes.

Discrepancies

You may find puzzling discrepancies between the quality of the learner's ideas, understanding and ability when speaking, and the quality of the written work they produce.

Avoidance strategies

You may notice that the learner is absent or very stressed when reading is required, or always does the minimum amount of writing. S/he might rely on peers when reading or writing is unavoidable, or may never volunteer for roles that involve reading or writing.

Persistent errors

You cannot find a way of improving the learner's persistent errors, even when you use a range of appropriate teaching methods.

The learner

Family history

You may be aware that other people in the learner's family share the same difficulties.

Spelling

The learner has difficulties with learning the spelling of new words and may make persistent mistakes even in common words. The learner has difficulty sounding out words when reading.

Jerky progress

The learner makes slow progress or no progress – or makes progress and then falls back. They seem to be 'quick forgetters'. They may be frustrated and confused by their lack of progress.

Disorganisation

The learner may have irregular handwriting, general disorganisation (such as folders in a mess) and poor timekeeping, despite being generally bright and motivated.

This students have problems which are simply can be called *Reversals* (for example, *saw* for *was*) of all kinds, even in numerical matters and words. These students have problems with phonology (like segmenting and blending the phonemes and sounds); problems with decoding the letters and words' printed anywhere; they also have the problems with fluency and naturally with comprehension since comprehension is one of the biggest problems for reading disabled students to mend up. The other problems are of syntax, semantics (meaning of language), etc. Thus, the most important reading or learning disabilities come into the focus are: developmental dyslexia (reading disability) and non-verbal learning disability.

A teacher has to put the student in the assessment process to finalize her doubts about the reading disability the student has. The screening and eligibility assessments use comprehensive measures of reading performance. These kinds of tests or assessments provide the teacher with the detailed result about the student's awareness, weakness, strength and stage of development in other areas of language study. Once the students are identified with the reading difficulties, the teachers

start preparing special remedial classes for such needy students. Many more treatments are applied to the student to improve the level of her/his ability in reading problems. This kind of identification of the problem is called diagnosis and after that when the improvement is checked very often, this is called progress monitoring which helps the teacher to understand if her special educational plan is working with the student or not as in such cases, a teacher has to make different educational plans for different reading disabled students. This happens to be one of the very tough tasks because not a single child having reading disability has the same symptoms; even if many of the symptoms are common but many more are more complex and unusual in dissimilar cases.

In such cases, a system which is called *screening* can be developed by some school system to develop explicit practices for assessing student's reading competence and then examining closely those whose reading skills fall below a certain level. To identify such students, schools use screening tests which are often general achievement batteries. Some specific among these tests are devoted to diagnosing reading problems, probably are the instruments most commonly used to identify students with reading disabilities. Even then, a teacher can contact a special education person to get the perfect result of this kind of assessment. The more strong matter is that teachers probably do not base their evaluations on reading performance alone as it can be a false leads but it is one of the important clues in identifying the problems.

Diagnostic Testing is one of the many ways to start the process of analyzing and diagnosing the child's problems. When this stage comes, many teachers use different kinds of tests to identify some more specific deficits. These tests provide more clear result than the screening tests in the reading performances since they

can include the subtests like letter recognition, word recognition, reading rate, and comprehension. This helps a teacher to understand the problems in the particular areas of learning reading. For example, *Roswell-Chall Diagnostic Test of Word Analysis Skills* is designed to understand the young children's level in reading, specifically encoding and decoding process in them.

An *Informal Reading Inventory* is a series of reading passages of word lists graded in order of difficulty. A student reads from the series of lists or passages, beginning with one the teacher thinks is likely to be easy for her particularly. The student continuously makes progress and increasingly tries to understand the difficult passages or word lists on her own. As a student reads, a teacher monitors performance and the kinds of errors being made by the student like omitted words, mispronunciation or hesitation. A teacher can also ask questions if the Informal Reading Inventory is made of passages and note down, for later records, the errors in the student's answers.

Clinical Teaching is another such option which helps the Informal Reading Inventories the most. In such tests, a student is provided with a small lesson and checked whether they succeed or not. It needs a lot of careful effort as a teacher has to give an appropriate sequence of lessons so each successive lesson is more difficult than the last and easier than the next. If a student has problems dealing with one particular lesson, a teacher knows where the inundated point for the student is and she can focus on that point afterwards in her instructions. This kind of testing needs a lot of care and planning, too. In the matter of comprehension, clinical teaching should focus on the extent to which students remember information from what they have read; comprehension can be assessed clinically by having students verbally retell the content of a passage they have just read.

Reading Remediation is one of the treatments which support a lot when a teacher tries to put up with such students. Reading Remediation includes several reading and achievement tests like WISC (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children); WRAT (Wide-Range Achievement Test – an oral word-recognition test); The Gray Oral Reading Test (an oral paragraph-reading test); Stanford Achievement Test (a silent reading test); The Daniels and Diack Test (a reading test with phonetic content only) and Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability. Reading Remediation helps the students to tackle almost all the problems regarding the reading skill.

Perpetual Training (Perpetual Motor Training) is another such help for the teacher to shape the student's mind and behavior to cope up with studies easily. The impetus for altering perceptual function – visual, auditory, or tactile – rests on the assumption that proper sensory perception, intersensory integration, sensory-motor organization, and perceptual or perceptual-motor competence are the necessary foundations for the development of reading. Furthermore, it is assumed that improvement in these functions automatically leads to increased reading ability.

Enhancement of Attention: Effects of Stimulant Medication is one of the strong crucial treatments as attention has been claimed to be critical to the development of reading, and children with reading disorders are said by some to suffer from dysfunctional attentional processes. This view has linked reading disorders to other childhood conditions also purported to be due to poor attention, leading to the overall diagnostic rubric of "minimal brain dysfunction" or learning disabilities. Stimulant treatment can vary, not only in time, but also in dosage.

Enhancement of Motivation: Effects of Reinforcement is related to motivation. The importance of motivation for the development of reading skills has been emphasized by many writers who view task interest as a factor affecting reading

proficiency. The development of reading is conceptualized as following the traditional stimulus-response paradigm. If the response is not reinforced, it will be extinguished. In this model, cognitive development and motivational systems follow learning principles, and traditional behavioral principles are applicable to language development. Following an S-R model, printed words elicit verbal responses. If appropriate responses are reinforced, they are acquired and reading occurs; if not, they drop out of a child's repertoire.

In fact, the reading difficulties do not come alone but they come with other specific problems like problems in oral expression (saying what you mean accurately); problems regarding listening comprehension (understanding what you hear); written expression (writing what you mean accurately); basic reading skills (reading words accurately and efficiently, whether or not you understand them); reading comprehension (understanding what you read); math calculation (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division – computing with the numbers); math reasoning (the more complicated parts of math, such as word problems and algebra). As we have talked above, solutions are there but they are always open for the improvement as each and every child has different kind of wants and needs from the field of special education. Technology can be more helpful as that is the only way out to get the student interested in the study as well as in the understanding what she is studying.

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

1.   Papers / Articles: All articles should be computerized using double-spacing, including tables, references and footnotes. Submission of manuscripts should be done in electronic more only. Electronic version of the article/research paper should be e-mailed to the Editor, ELTWeekly at info@eltweekly.com.

2.   Abstracts: An abstract in approximately 200 words should assist the article.

3.   Abbreviations: No stops are needed between capitals e.g. ELT, IELTS.

4.   Figures and Tables: Tables should be numbered sequentially with Arabic numerals.

5.   Notes: Notes should be consecutively numbered and presented at the foot of the page.

6.   References: References in the text should follow the author-date system. The complete reference list should be given at the end of the article. They should be in alphabetical order.

7.   Book Reviews: Book reviews must contain the name of the author and title / subtitle of the book reviewed, place of publication and publisher and date of publication.

8.   For Event Submissions: Please submit your event details at least 30 days prior to the event.

9.   For a **more detailed stylesheet**, please write to The Editor, ELTWeekly at info@eltweekly.com.