

Methods Chart

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Method: Grammar Translation.

This method is also known as the Classical Method, so named because it was used to teach classic languages like Greek and Latin. It is recognized that students will likely not become fluent via this method. The primary purpose in language learning under this model is intellectual growth, primarily by enabling the study of the art and literature in the classic language and to read and write in a student's own language.

Advantages: 1) Good mental exercise; 2) Strong emphasis on grammar and vocabulary.

Disadvantages: The student will not become communicative in the language under study.

Historical Context: This method has been the most popular language learning method since the 18th century.

Example: Students are tasked with translation of the text of a book from its original language into the target language.

Role of teacher: Authority

Method: Audio Lingual

This is also known as the Army Method, so named because it was widely used by military personnel deployed overseas. The primary objective is verbal communication. Learning is an oral approach, primarily through teacher-led drills and visual cues. The learning process is taught as habit formation. This method has a strong theoretical base in linguistics and behavioral psychology.

Advantages: 1) Students practice useful languages from the very first class; 2) Better pronunciation and increased participation as a result of drilling exercises; 3) the visual cues help develop vocabulary.

Disadvantages: 1) Too much emphasis placed on the teacher; 2) Limited to only the mechanical aspects of the language.

Historical Context: The audio-lingual method was developed in the 1950s and 1960s and is based on the Army Specialized Training Program developed in 1942 to teach foreign languages to U.S. personnel during World War II.

Example: The teacher introduces dialogue and asks students to repeat it. The teacher conducts backwards drills to break down the dialogue into small parts to help student understanding.

Role of teacher: Model the target language. The teacher is a central and active participant.

Method: Desuggestopedia.

This method is deeply rooted in psychology. It recognizes the fact that students can bring certain psychological barriers with them that can impede their ability to learn. This method is based on the theory that people use very little of their mental reserve and formulated ways stimulate that reserve through fine art and peripheral learning. Peripheral learning is based on the theory that a student can learn from information present in the environment even if his attention is not specifically directed to it. Desuggestopedia language learning also requires a bright and visually stimulating physical environment.

Advantages: 1) Speeds up the learning acquisition process; 2) Boosts the self-esteem of learners.

Disadvantages: 1) Requires specific teacher training; 2) Requires specific classroom set-up.

Historical Context: Developed in the 1970s by Georgo Lonove, a Bulgarian psychologist and educator.

Example: Students take on different names in the class. This frees them from some of the constraints or learning blocks they may have carried over from pre-class identity.

Role of teacher: Authority. Teachers need to be aware of the psychological barriers and desuggest them.

Method: The Natural Approach

The class is conducted entirely in the target language. Students speak when they are ready, much in the way one does as a child in one's native tongue. The natural approach focuses on input, comprehension and meaningful communication. There is less emphasis on grammar, teaching monologues, repetition and accuracy. Visual aids are used to build vocabulary. The primary objective is basic communication in everyday language.

Advantages: 1) Students are not pressured to produce language until they are ready; 2) Emphasis on the importance of input for language learners; 3) Focus on vocabulary for everyday language.

Disadvantages: 1) Best for beginners - not as effective for advanced learners; 2) Students produce language when they are ready. This makes moving forward difficult for some.

Historical Context: Based on the work of Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen's 1983 book "The Natural Approach"

Example: The teacher asks the student to touch their nose and they touch their nose.

Role of teacher: Teacher focused