

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Justen Ricketts

Coordinator: Gisela Granena

Table of contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Course description and learning outcomes | 4 |
| 1. Theories of language learning..... | 5 |
| 1.1. Theoretical approaches to explaining first language learning | 5 |
| 1.1.1. Behaviorism | 6 |
| 1.1.2. Innatism | 9 |
| 1.1.3. Interactionism..... | 12 |
| 1.2. Theoretical approaches to explaining second language learning | 13 |
| 1.2.1. Behaviorism | 16 |
| 1.2.2. Innatism | 16 |
| 1.2.3. Interactionism..... | 17 |
| Summary | 19 |
| Quiz..... | 20 |
| 2. Teaching methods, methodological principles and pedagogic procedures..... | 21 |
| 2.1. Introduction | 21 |
| 2.2. History and Scope of Language Teaching Approaches | 22 |
| 2.2.1. Pre-twentieth century | 22 |
| 2.2.2. Early and mid-twentieth century..... | 23 |
| 2.2.3. Late twentieth-century..... | 26 |
| 2.2.4. The post-methods era..... | 28 |
| Summary | 29 |
| Quiz..... | 30 |
| 3. Individual differences in second language learning | 32 |
| 3.1. Individual differences in second language learning | 32 |
| 3.2. Biological individual differences | 34 |
| 3.2.1. Age..... | 34 |
| 3.3. Cognitive individual differences..... | 36 |
| 3.3.1. Intelligence..... | 36 |
| 3.3.2. Language aptitude | 37 |
| 3.3.3. Learning styles..... | 42 |
| 3.4. Affective individual differences | 45 |
| 3.4.1. Motivation..... | 45 |
| 3.4.2. Personality | 46 |
| Summary | 49 |
| Quiz..... | 50 |
| 4. Assessment and Evaluation..... | 51 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 4.1. Introduction | 51 |
| 4.2. Assessment and Testing | 52 |
| 4.2.1. Types of testing..... | 52 |
| 4.2.2. Traditional versus current approaches to language testing | 53 |
| 4.3. Assessment and Learning..... | 54 |
| 4.3.1. Summative versus Formative purposes for assessment | 54 |
| 4.3.2. Types of language assessments | 54 |
| 4.3.3. Feedback | 55 |
| 4.3.4. Portfolios and Self-Assessment..... | 57 |
| 4.3.5. Course and Instructor Feedback for the Teacher | 58 |
| Summary | 59 |
| Quiz..... | 60 |
| 5. The lesson plan..... | 61 |
| 5.1. Introduction | 61 |
| 5.2. What does planning do for the instructor? | 62 |
| 5.3. Student needs | 63 |
| 5.4. Student learning outcomes versus lesson aims/objectives | 64 |
| 5.5. Formal Planning | 66 |
| 5.5.1. Before class | 67 |
| 5.5.2. During class | 68 |
| 5.5.3. After class | 69 |
| Summary | 70 |
| Quiz..... | 71 |
| Bibliography | 72 |

Course description and learning outcomes

Aims of this course

The goal of this course is to provide students with the skills to effectively teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Our focus will be on practical applications of second language teaching in the classroom, although we will also examine how theory and research in second language acquisition has shaped methodological and pedagogic principles from past to present.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Differentiate between the main theories of language learning.
2. Draw from a scope of teaching methods to guide your approach towards a diverse range of language courses.
3. Choose, evaluate, adapt, and create materials for EFL teaching.
4. Design and implement activities, lessons, and evaluation tools based on established principles of language teaching to achieve course and student learning outcomes.
5. Assess student language ability using the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).
6. Develop an approach to deal with individual differences amongst learners and intercultural issues in the classroom.

The course is organized into five units:

1. Theories of language learning
2. Teaching methods, methodological principles and pedagogic procedures
3. Individual differences in second language learning
4. Assessment and evaluation
5. The lesson plan

1. Theories of language learning

Aims of this unit

1. Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:
2. Differentiate between the main theories of language learning.
3. Identify the main differences between first and second language learning.
4. Understand how language learning theories can be applied to language teaching practice.

1.1. Theoretical approaches to explaining first language learning

The question of how first language acquisition takes place is a controversial topic. Over the past 70 years, there have been three main theoretical approaches to explaining it: behaviorist, innatist, and interactionist approaches.

Early research into language learning was heavily dependent on the dominant linguistic and psychological paradigms. One of the earliest scientific explanations of language acquisition was provided by the psychologist Skinner (1957), the pioneer of behaviorism.

But Skinner's approach was soon heavily criticized by the linguist Noam Chomsky, who argued that behaviorism was not able to explain the logical problem of language acquisition or 'poverty of the stimulus' (i.e., the fact that a child can never be exposed to the infinite number of sentences they are able to produce). Language came to be seen not as a set of automatic habits, but as a set of structured rules based on innate principles.

More recent approaches include interactionism, which is primarily concerned with the environment in which second language learning takes place and on how learners use their linguistic environment to build their knowledge of the second language. Interactionism is neutral as to the role of innate linguistic knowledge (Universal Grammar). In other words, it is compatible with a view of second language acquisition that posits an innate learning mechanism and it is also compatible with a model of learning that posits no such mechanism.

Although interactionism is neutral as to innateness, interactionists believe that there are biological and cognitive factors that contribute to language learning (a human capacity for language learning) in addition to the environment.

1.1.1. Behaviorism

Psychological theory of learning which was very influential in the 1950's. It is based on the idea that language learning is the result of imitation, practice, reward, and habit formation. Children imitate the sounds and patterns around them and receive positive reinforcement for doing so. They continue to imitate until they form habits of correct language use.

Behaviorism believes that success in language learning depends on the quality and quantity of language, as well as on the consistency of the reinforcement. By imitation, behaviorism understands word-for-word repetition of all or part of someone else's utterance.



© WrightStudio - Fotolia

For example

Mother: Would you like some bread and butter?

Child: Some bread and butter.

By practice, behaviorism understands repetitive manipulation of form.

For example:

Child: I can fix it. Peter can fix it. We can fix it.

Behaviorism can offer a partial explanation of some aspects of children's early language learning. However, it cannot explain the development of more complex aspects of language.



Activity

Examine the following transcripts of children playing with an adult and look for examples of imitation and practice.

Peter (24 months)

Peter: Get more.

Mother: You're gonna put more wheels in the dump truck?

Peter: Dump truck. Wheels. Dump truck.

...

(later)

Mother: What happened to the truck?

Peter: Lose it. Dump truck! Dump truck! Fall! Fall!

Mother: Yes, the dump truck fell down.

Peter: Dump truck fell down. Dump truck.

Peter (25 months)

Peter: (indicating he wants daddy to draw) Mommy. Mommy too. Daddy. Mommy too!

Father: Oh, you want mommy to have some paper?

Peter: Mommy have some paper?

...

(later)

Father: Let's see if I can draw what you draw. Draw something!

Peter: Draw something!

Cindy (24 months)

Cindy: Kawo? Kawo? Kawo? Kawo? Kawo?

Mother: What are the rabbits eating?

Cindy: They eating... kando?

Mother: No, that's carrot.

Cindy: Carrot. (pointing to each carrot on the page) The other...carrot. The other carrot. The other carrot.

Mother: What does this rabbit like to eat?

Cindy: eat the carrots. He eat carrots. The other one eat carrots. They both eat carrots.

Cindy (25 months)

Cindy: Doll go to sleep.

Mother: Does the doll want to go to sleep?

Cindy: Come on doll. Go to sleep with the tiger. Go to sleep. Doll wants to go to sleep.

Mother: Does the tiger want to go to sleep?

Cindy: Tiger wants to go to sleep. The doll wants to go to sleep. He go to sleep.

Adapted from Lightbown & Spada (1999:10)

These samples seem to support the behaviorist explanation of language acquisition. Peter imitates a great deal and Cindy practices new structures all the time. However, not all children imitate or practice this much. Peter's transcripts consist of up to 40% imitations, whereas other children may imitate less than 10%. Also, children do not imitate at random. They imitate new words and structures until they incorporate them. They are selective, unlike parrots. Even when the child imitates, what they imitate is based on what they have already begun to understand. Also Cindy chooses what she will practice.

Although children do imitate and practice, this cannot account for how they learn all aspects of their native language. We also need to be able to explain language development in those children who rarely imitate or practice.

Activity



The next examples show how imitation and practice cannot explain some of the forms created by children. Think about how they arrive at the forms they produce.

Example 1

Kyo: I'm hungry.

Father: We'll have some poppy seed bread in a little while.

Kyo: No. I want it now.

Father: We have to wait til it's defrosted.

Kyo: But I like it frossed.

Example 2

Michel: Mummy, I'm hiccing up and I can't stop.

Example 3

Mother: I love you to pieces.

David: I love you three pieces.

These examples show how the children are learning the rules of word formation and overgeneralizing them to new contexts and how they are in the process of discovering the full meaning of words. These are not sentences that they heard from adults. They create new forms and uses of words until they finally figure them out.

So behaviorism can offer an explanation of how children learn some of the routine aspects of language but it cannot explain the acquisition of more complex structures.

1.1.2. Innatism

This approach is based on Noam Chomsky's claims that children are biologically endowed or programmed for language learning.

Learning to talk is not different from learning to walk. There is no need for teaching. Most children learn to walk about the same age. Walking is essentially the same in all human beings. The same applies to learning a language. The environment makes a contribution by having people speak to the child, but the child's biological endowment does the rest. That is why it is called the "innatist position".

Chomsky proposed this theory in the 1950s in response to the weaknesses of the behaviorist theory of learning, according to which learning is based on imitation and habit formation. Chomsky argued that the behaviorist theory could not account for the 'logical problem of language acquisition'. This refers to the fact that children come to know more about language than they could be expected to learn on the basis of the language they are exposed to. The language they are exposed to (oral language) is full of confusing information (false starts, incomplete sentences, etc.) and does not provide all the information the child needs. Also, children are not corrected systematically or instructed on language. When parents correct, they tend to focus on meaning and not on form, usually simply reformulating what the child said in a complete grammatical form. Children often ignore corrections. Finally, children can produce language they have never heard before and be playful and creative with language, so not everything they say was learned through imitation.

According to Chomsky, children are not blank slates but they are born with a special ability to discover the underlying rules of language for themselves.

Chomsky initially called this special ability as the 'language acquisition device' (LAD) and described it as an imaginary black box in the brain. This black box would contain all the principles that are universal to all human languages and would guide the child in trying to learning his/her language. The LAD would get activated with samples of a language and then the child would match the innate language knowledge to the particular language in the environment.

The term LAD was later replaced with the term Universal Grammar (UG), the set of principles which are common to all languages. The child's task is to learn which of these principles are used by their language and how they are used (Chomsky 1981, Cook, 1988, White, 1989). Evidence for this can be the fact that children develop language in similar ways and on a similar schedule, even though there are differences in speed (or rate) of acquisition. Some children are faster than others but all of them reach a similar outcome: linguistic competence in their language (the knowledge of how their language works).



© ikonacolor – Fotolia

Show what you know

Decide which of the following statements are true according to Chomsky's innatist position.

1. Animals, even primates receiving training from humans, cannot learn to manipulate a system as complicated as the language a three- or four-year-old child can speak.
2. Children cannot accomplish the complex task of language acquisition without someone pointing out to them which sentences are correct and incorrect.
3. Virtually all children successfully learn their native language at a time in life when they would not be expected to learn anything else so complicated.
4. Children can only successfully master the basic structure of their native language in specific conditions that enhance language development (caring, attentive parents, etc.)
5. The language children are exposed to does not contain examples of all the linguistic rules and patterns which they eventually know.

See the answers below.

1. Animals, even primates receiving training from humans, cannot learn to manipulate a system as complicated as the language a three- or four-year-old child can speak. **TRUE.**

There has never been an example anywhere of a nonhuman expressing an opinion, or asking a question. Animal communication systems may share some properties of human language, but none is as complex as human language.

2. Children cannot accomplish the complex task of language acquisition without someone pointing out to them which sentences are correct and incorrect. **FALSE.**

Parents and caregivers do not usually correct children (especially at the grammatical level) unless there is a communicative breakdown that interferes with communication. In spite of this, all children learn their language.

3. Virtually all children successfully learn their native language at a time in life when they would not be expected to learn anything else so complicated. **TRUE.**

Learning a language is the most cognitively complex thing a human being learns and this is accomplished by age 3 when children are still developing cognitively.

4. Children can only successfully master the basic structure of their native language in specific conditions that enhance language development (caring, attentive parents, etc.). **FALSE.**

Even children who do not receive proper care learn their language. Lack of care could have an impact on areas of language such as breadth of vocabulary, but not on learning the language itself.

5. The language children are exposed to does not contain examples of all the linguistic rules and patterns which they eventually know. **TRUE**.

This is what Chomsky called “the poverty of the stimulus”. Children are not exposed to rich enough data to acquire every feature of their language. It is used as an argument against the fact that language cannot be learned solely through experience.

1.1.3. Interactionism

This view focuses on the role of the linguistic environment in interaction with the unique human capacity of the child to acquire language.

Interactionists attribute considerably more importance to the environment in which the child develops. Interactionists attribute considerably more importance to the environment than the innatists do. Unlike the innatists, interactionists claim that language which is modified to suit the capability of the child (i.e., child-directed speech) is a crucial element in the language acquisition process. Child-directed speech is adjusted in ways to make it easier for children to understand. In English, child-directed speech involves a slower rate of delivery, higher pitch, more varied intonation, shorter and simpler sentence patterns, topics about the ‘here and now,’ repetition, and paraphrase. For example, if the child says ‘Dump truck! Dump truck! Fall! Fall!’, the adult may respond: ‘Yes, the dump truck fell down’.



© Zarya Maxim - Fotolia

It is important to point out, however, that child-directed speech is not universal. In some societies, adults do not provide modified interaction to very young children and, despite that, these children are able to achieve full competence. This shows that opportunities for conversation rather than simplification is what is necessary for language development. Evidence for this can be found in the case of children born to deaf parents and who have little contact with speaking adults up to a certain age (e.g., age 3). If their parents do not use sign language, these children do not develop language normally. Exposure to impersonal sources of language such as television or radio alone is not sufficient to learn a language.

Among interactionist positions we can include those articulated by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. Piaget observed children in their play and interaction with adults. Piaget did not see language as based on a separate module of the mind. Language was one of the symbol systems developed in childhood used to represent knowledge acquired through physical interaction with the environment.

A strong interactionist view was the sociocultural theory by Lev Vygotsky. He concluded that language develops completely from social interaction. Children need a supportive interactive environment to advance to a higher level of knowledge. Vygotsky called 'zone of proximal development' what the child can do through interaction. While for Piaget language developed as a symbol system to express knowledge acquired through interaction, for Vygotsky children internalized speech and speech emerged in social interaction.

Supporters of usage-based learning are also interactionists. They hypothesize that language acquisition does not require a separate module of the mind. They contend that language learning can be explained in terms of learning in general and it happens thanks to children's general cognitive capacities. What children need is already available in the language they are exposed to. Frequency of exposure is important. By being exposed to language, children can generalize, learn rules, and be creative without any need for a universal grammar. This learning is based on associations. For example, children speaking French learn to associate the appropriate article and adjective forms with nouns. They learn that 'la' and 'une' go with 'chaise' (chair) and 'le' and 'un' go with 'livre' (book). Learning takes place gradually, as the number of links among language forms and meanings are built up.

1.2. Theoretical approaches to explaining second language learning

Theories to explain second language acquisition are closely related to those discussed for first language acquisition. Some theories give importance to innate characteristics; others emphasize the role of the environment; and others integrate learner characteristics and environmental factors.

Reflection Activity* 1



It is clear that a child or adult learning a second language is different from a child acquiring a first language in terms of personal characteristics and conditions for learning. Fill in the following chart and indicate the presence (+) or absence (–) of the learner characteristics and learning conditions under first language or second language acquisition. A child learning the second language informally means a child living in the second-language environment or in an environment with second language native speakers. An adolescent learning a second language in a formal language learning setting means that the adolescent is studying the second language at school. Finally, an adult learning a second language informally means in the workplace, among friends, or in the second-language environment.

| | First language | Second language | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Learner characteristics | <i>Child</i> | <i>Child (informal)</i> | <i>Adolescent (formal)</i> | <i>Adult (informal)</i> |
| Knowledge of another language | | | | |
| Cognitive maturity | | | | |
| Metalinguistic awareness | | | | |
| Knowledge of the world | | | | |
| Anxiety about speaking | | | | |
| Learning conditions | | | | |
| Freedom to be silent | | | | |
| Ample time | | | | |
| Corrective feedback on grammar and pronunciation | | | | |
| Corrective feedback on word choice, meaning, politeness | | | | |
| Modified input | | | | |

* Adapted from Lightbown and Spada (1999)

All second language learners have already acquired at least one language. This may be an advantage since they have an idea of how languages work. However, knowledge of other languages can lead learners to make incorrect guesses resulting in errors that first language learners would not make.

Very young learners begin the task of first language acquisition without the cognitive maturity or metalinguistic awareness the older second language learners have. They have begun to develop these characteristics, but they still have far to go in these areas and in the area of world knowledge in order to reach the level attained by adults and adolescents. Cognitive maturity and linguistic awareness allow older learners to solve problems and engage in discussions about language. The use of these cognitive skills can actually interfere with language acquisition.

In addition to cognitive differences, there are also attitudinal and cultural differences between children and adults. Most child learners are willing to try to use the language, but adults and adolescents may find it stressful when they are unable to express what they want correctly. In all the cases there are individual differences. Some learners happily chatter away, while others prefer to listen and observe.


Young second language learners are often allowed to be silent until they are ready to speak. They may also participate in songs and games that allow them to blend their voices with those of other children. Older second language learners are often forced to speak from the beginning.

Another way in which younger and older learners may differ is in the amount of time they can actually spend learning a second language. First language learners spend thousands of hours in contact with the language. Young second language learners may also be exposed to the language for many hours a day. Older learners, however, especially those in a classroom receive far less exposure, perhaps only a few hours a week. A typical foreign language student will have no more than a few hundred hours of exposure (around 700 or 800), spread out over a number of years. Classroom learners also tend to be exposed to a smaller range of discourse types. For example, they are taught more formal language in comparison to the language that is used in most social settings. In many classrooms, teachers may even switch to their students' first language.

Parents tend to respond to the meaning of children's language rather than to their grammatical accuracy. In second language learning outside the classroom, errors that do not interfere with meaning are also overlooked. Most people would feel they are being impolite if they interrupted to correct someone. But they may react to an error if they cannot understand what the speaker is trying to say. Therefore, errors of grammar and pronunciation may not be corrected, but the wrong word choice may receive comment from an interlocutor. In a situation where the second language speaker uses inappropriate language, interlocutors may feel uncomfortable, but it is unlikely that they will comment on that. The only place where corrective feedback is present with high frequency is the language classroom.

One condition that seems to be common to all learners is exposure to modified/adapted input. This adjusted style is called child-directed speech in first language acquisition and foreigner talk or teacher talk in second language acquisition.

Activity

Think about how you would adjust the interlocutor's speech so that the second language learner could understand.

Foreigner:

Excuse me, where toilet, please?

Flight arrivals information desk:

Unfortunately, the entire plumbing system is currently under repair. It may be possible to use the public conveniences which are situated about five blocks from here.

© luckybusiness - Fotolia

1.2.1. Behaviorism

Behaviorism accounts for learning in terms of imitation, practice, reinforcement, and habit formation. According to behaviorism, all learning takes place through the same underlying process. Learners receive rewards for their correct imitations, and corrective feedback on their errors. It is assumed that learners start off with the habits formed in their first language and that these habits interfere with the new ones needed for the second language. Where there are similarities between the first language and the second language, the learner will learn with ease; where there are differences, the learner will have difficulty (i.e., *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis*).

There is agreement that a learner's first language influences the acquisition of a second language. However, research has shown that not all errors predicted by the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis are actually made, plus there are errors that the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is not able to predict. For example, adult beginners use simple structures in the target language just as children do: 'No understand' or 'Yesterday I meet my teacher.' These sentences resemble a child's first language sentences rather than translations from the learner's first language.

Many of the initial sentences a second language learner makes would actually be ungrammatical in their first language so this contradicts the claim that they are translating. In fact, many second language learners are reluctant to translate from their first language because they feel that the translation will be incorrect. Also, some characteristics of these initial sentences are very similar across all second language learners, regardless of their first language.

The conclusion is that behaviorism has been an incomplete, simplistic explanation of both first language acquisition and second language acquisition.

1.2.2. Innatism

According to Innatism, the innate knowledge of the principles of Universal Grammar allows all children to acquire language during a critical period in their development.

Chomsky did not make specific claims about second language acquisition.

Some supporters of this theory believe that it is the best theory to understand second language acquisition because learners eventually know more about the language that could have learned if they only depended on the input they receive. Others argue that it cannot explain second language acquisition for adult learners who have passed the critical period for language acquisition.

1.2.3. Interactionism

Evelyn Hatch (1992), Teresa Pica (1994), and Michael Long (1983) have argued that much second language acquisition takes place through conversational interaction. This is similar to the first language theory that gives importance to child-directed speech. They believe that comprehensible input is necessary for language acquisition. This is based on Stephen Krashen's 1982 Input Hypothesis, according to which learners acquire language in only one way, by exposure to comprehensible input: input that contains forms and structures just beyond the learner's current level of competence (what Krashen calls 'i+1').

The key question for interactionists is how to make input comprehensible. What learners need is not simplification of the linguistic forms but an opportunity to interact with other speakers in ways which lead them to adapt what they are saying. Modified interaction does not involve simplification. It includes elaboration, slower speech rate, gesture, additional contextual cues, etc.

Examples of modifications are the following:

The same activity of interacting with a speaker remotely can be accomplished via text-based chat or video chat.

Comprehension checks

Efforts by the interlocutor to ensure that the learner has understood.

For example:

'The bus leaves at 6:30. Do you understand?'

Clarification requests

Efforts by the learner to get the interlocutor to clarify something.

For example:

'Could you repeat please?'

Self-repetition or paraphrase

The interlocutor repeats his or her sentence partially or entirely.

For example:

'She got lost on her way home from school. She was walking home from school. She got lost.'

Conversational interaction forms the basis for the development of language rather than being only a forum for practice of specific language features.



As Long (1996) said in his *Interaction Hypothesis*:

“Negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the native speaker or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways.”

Long, 1996, pp. 451-452

Through negotiation work, the learner’s attentional resources may be oriented to:

- a. a particular discrepancy between what he or she knows about the second language and what is the reality or
- b. an area of the language the learner does not know.

Learning may take place during the interaction, or this may be an initial step in learning that will take place later serving as a catalyst.

Summary

A theory of language acquisition is intended to account for the ability of human learners to acquire language within a variety of social and instructional environments. They try to account for something that cannot be observed directly. We can observe the outcome of the ability to acquire language but not the process itself.

The innatist perspective is defended by linguists who try to explain the complexities of language competence. Cognitive psychologists place more attention on the environment and the input. Interactionists emphasize the role of conversation and negotiation of meaning. Support from interlocutors is key.



© Photographee.eu – Fotolia

Teachers and educators are often frustrated because they hope that language acquisition theories will help with their language teaching practice. The lack of agreement among experts and the variety of language acquisition perspectives make theory confusing. Research that has theory as its goal has important long-term significance for language teaching and learning, but agreement on a complete theory of language acquisition is a long way off. Teachers must still continue to teach and plan lessons in the absence of a single theory of second language learning.

Quiz

Show what you know

Identify the following statements as True or False:

1. There are no major differences between young and adult second language learners.
2. Innatism was proposed as a reaction to Behaviorism in the 1950's.
3. Interaction facilitates acquisition by helping the learner make connections between input and output.
4. Evelyn Hatch, Teresa Pica, and Michael Long are names associated with the interactionist perspective.
5. Michael H. Long proposed the interaction hypothesis in 1996.
6. Noam Chomsky supported Behaviorism.

See the answers below.

1. There are no major differences between young and adult second language learners. **FALSE.**

Language learning in children and adults is qualitatively different. Young children only rely on implicit learning mechanisms, while adults can also rely on explicit learning mechanisms that help them reflect on and analyze language.

2. Innatism was proposed as a reaction to Behaviorism in the 1950's. **TRUE.**

Chomsky proposed innatism in 1959 as a reaction to B. F. Skinner and his behaviorist theory in 1957.

3. Interaction facilitates acquisition by helping the learner make connections between input and output. **TRUE.**

Interaction helps the learner make connections between language form, meaning and function. For example, a learner can adjust output after receiving input asking for clarification.

4. Evelyn Hatch, Teresa Pica, and Michael Long are names associated with the interactionist perspective. **TRUE.**

Michael H. Long proposed the interaction hypothesis in 1996.

5. Noam Chomsky supported Behaviorism. **FALSE.**

Chomsky was completely against behaviorism.

2. Teaching methods, methodological principles and pedagogic procedures

Aims of this unit

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Compare the principles behind the gamut of foreign language teaching methods and approaches used in the past
2. Explain the current trends in second language pedagogy
3. Predict where the field of teaching methodology is heading in the future
4. Understand that there is no 'one-method-fits-all' approach and that each course necessitates its own particular requirements according to its aims and its students

2.1. Introduction

Since the beginning of second language teaching, many different approaches and methods have been developed in search of the most effective way to instruct and facilitate second language learning. New approaches have often arisen in response to perceived inadequacies in the popular methods or theories of the time.

In this unit, we will explore the progression of second language teaching throughout history, focusing on the methodological principles followed by each major approach or method in hopes of informing ourselves what can be learned and later applied in the classroom thanks to our predecessors' trials and tribulations, their successes and failures, and research done by second language acquisition academics.

While teachers in training may find studying language acquisition theory and methodological history burdensome, it cannot be denied that a teacher who is well-informed in these areas will more easily understand what goes on in a L2 learner's interlanguage. Thus, our goal is to bridge the gap between theory and practice as we strive to effectively adapt the appropriate approaches towards teaching a particular course based on learner and institutional needs and aims.

2.2. History and Scope of Language Teaching Approaches

2.2.1. Pre-twentieth century

Grammar-translation

Largely influenced by German scholar, Karl Ploetz (1819-1881).

- Based on the systematic study of grammar as used in the analysis of classical texts (i.e. Greek and Latin).
- Instruction is given in students' native language, with target language rarely, if ever, used for classroom communication. In fact, the instructor may not even be competent in speaking the target language.
- Students study grammatical forms, and core course exercise is translating foreign texts to native language and vice versa.

Question for thought

What do you think is the biggest linguistic weakness that exists amongst students who undergo the grammar-translation approach?



The direct method

First work published by French educator Francois Gouin (1880), who was influenced by German philosopher-scientist Alexander von Humboldt in his assertion that languages cannot be taught, rather, the instructor can only provide the necessary conditions for language learning to take place.

- Target language is used in the classroom exclusively. Use of students' first language is not permitted.
- Examples of classroom techniques are: instruction using pictures and actions, dialogues, roleplays, anecdotes, leisure reading.
- Rather than focusing on grammatical forms and explicit instruction, both grammar and culture are taught inductively by repeated exposure to language in context.

Question for thought

What do you think is the biggest linguistic weakness that exists amongst students who undergo the grammar-translation approach?



The reform movement

Established in 1886 by the International Phonetic Association, who made some of the first scientific contributions to language pedagogy, focusing on pronunciation and oral articulation.

- Speaking should be at the forefront of language learning, and it should be instructed using findings from studies on phonetics

Mini-task



Search the internet for an image of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA Chart). For the purposes of this task, it may be helpful to find one with sample words associated with each phonemic symbol. Write the following words in IPA: sit, sheet, very, berry, pull, pool, is.

2.2.2. Early and mid-twentieth century

The reading approach

Endorsed by the Modern Language Association of America in the 1930s and 1940s with the perspective that reading is the only language skill that can be mastered by students being taught by a non-native teacher.

- Class materials include great literary and philosophical works with vocabulary and grammar topics selected based on appearance and frequency in texts
- Instruction is given in the teacher's first language with reading comprehension and translation being the core skills emphasized

Question for thought



If you were to teach a course using the reading approach, cite one text you would select for your students to read. Why? How does the particular language of this text influence your decision?

Auto-lingual approach

Developed by behaviorism-influenced, structurally-focused linguists during and post-World War II (1940s, 50s, 60s) in reaction to the US military's rapidly increasing demand for language competent personnel.

- Influenced by the direct method, lessons present model dialogues as a means of contextualizing specific target language episodes.
- A structural 'building block' approach focuses on correct audio recognition and verbal production of basic language units (phonemes, morphemes, etc.) and expands into full phrases and sentences via 'listen and repeat,' repetition-based memorization.

- Instruction is controlled via an inductive approach in which grammar exposure is carefully sequenced, skill production progresses from listening > speaking > reading > writing, vocabulary range is intentionally limited, and pronunciation errors are prudently addressed.
- Practice often isolates language, disregarding situational context.

Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP)

Stemming from the Audio-Lingual approach, PPP lessons consists of three stages.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>1st stage – Presentation</p> | <p>A grammar point is selected as the focus of the lesson. The teacher presents a contextualized situation to students in which the selected grammar point frequently appears. Upon observing the communicative interaction (in the form of a dialogue, roleplay script, picture story, slide presentation, animation, video, etc.), the teacher then gives a linguistic explanation of the function and use of the grammar point.</p> |
| <p>2nd stage – Practice</p> | <p>Students then get the opportunity to practice the grammar point in the form of controlled activities such as choral repetition, cue-response drills, fill-the-gap exercises, etc.</p> |
| <p>3th stage – Production</p> | <p>Grammar practice is carried out, initially in pairs or small groups and then possibly performing for the whole class, by engaging in communicative activities in which students must actively produce the language on their own.</p> |

Oral-situation approach

Britain's parallel to the audio-lingual approach, the oral-situational approach slightly differs in its instructional content and organization in which lexical and grammatical items are directly drawn from contextualized situations such as at the doctor, at the market, etc.

- Primarily taught in the target language with controlled oral pattern production, choral repetition, and memorization of roleplay dialogues employed as teaching techniques.

Question for thought



Imagine that you're planning a lesson for a Business English class. Identify three (3) specific interactional situations that business students might find useful to analyze and practice in the form of dialogue roleplays. Cite some vocabulary and grammar items that might arise from each of these contexts.



© mangpor2004 - Fotolia

The reading approach

Two asian girls studying and reading a book in their classroom, kid education concept



© anyaberkut - Fotolia

Audio-lingual approach

Adult education, student in headphones working on comp



© auremar - Fotolia

Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP)

Education high school teamwork and people concept

2.2.3. Late twentieth-century

Cognitive approach

Unlike the previous two methods which depended on habit-forming behaviorist principles, the cognitive approach sees language as a complex rule-governed cognitive behavior that requires hypothesizing of rules, and testing of these hypotheses, by the learner while en route to language acquisition. This system of patterns and rules can then be extended to generate language for an indefinite array of contexts in the pursuit of meaningful communication. Noam Chomsky's work in linguistics in the 1950s and 60s largely influenced this approach.

- Language analysis and error correction feedback utilized to reinforce language rules.
- Reading, writing, and vocabulary take a major role in learning, along with an emphasis on individualized learning.
- Pronunciation is largely ignored as native-level speech is thought to be unattainable after a critical period of language acquisition in childhood.

Affective-humanistic approach

Learning a new language is seen as a self-realization process within the constraints of a dynamic social atmosphere. Personally meaningful content is emphasized for individuals to expound upon, and materials and methods are adapted accordingly to students' interests.

- A positive, interactional class atmosphere in which the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a lecturer is considered more important than employing specific methods or providing a certain type of language material.
- Pairwork, groupwork, and supportive peer interaction are seen as necessary for the learning process.

Comprehension-based approach

Founded on first language (L1) acquisition research under the belief that second language (L2) acquisition undergoes the same processes. Stephen Krashen's work on Monitor Theory and the Natural Approach in the 1980s suggested that comprehensible input is the essential component to language acquisition.

- The learner will only learn if provided with meaningful, comprehensible input that is one step above their current proficiency. Thus, listening skills are the key building block for understanding, which will then in turn give rise to the development of the other language skills (reading, writing, speaking).
- Beginners should be initiated with a silent period, in which they solely focus on comprehending spoken language. Pronunciation practice should not be implemented until later once the learner has been thoroughly exposed to the phonetics of native speakers (i.e. a native teacher or audiovisual materials in the target language) and can, thus, more likely reproduce native-like speech.
- Language use arises spontaneously under certain contexts and conditions that provide comprehensible input, so grammar rules should be taught merely as a way to check, or monitor, one's own language production.

Communicative approach

An overarching term that includes some of today's most popular teaching methods. The viewpoint is that meaningful communication is the ultimate goal of language and that instruction must facilitate learners' end goal communicative contexts in the target language.

- Rather than solely emphasizing the learning of linguistic structures, course design considers social context and professional goals.
- Course content (academic or professional in nature) can become equal to, or even more important than, linguistic goals.
- Classroom activities are largely based on pair work or group work in which students must negotiate meaning to complete information gap tasks. Also, roleplays are used to simulate the actual situations in which the students will have to perform in the target language outside of class.
- More than one, if not all, language skills are often integrated into the same task, and materials may be authentic in nature rather than being pedagogically designed for language learning.
- Examples of integrated communicative approaches are Content-Based Language Instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

Designer methods

Term coined by Nunan (1989b) to describe pedagogic trends in the 1970s and 1980s. Four of the most popular ones are:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Silent way | The learner receives visual and comprehensible linguistic input in the target language but hardly speaks if at all. |
| Community language learning | Students meet to discuss (in the L1) what they want to learn to say. The instructor, who must be proficient in both the L1 and L2, then translates the desired language for the students who then practice while being recorded. |
| Total physical response | Only using the L1, the teacher gives commands to the students, who then must respond appropriately by physically carrying out the command given by the instructor. Once students learn the target structures, they can give the commands to their students to follow. |
| Suggestopedia | Students meet in a living room atmosphere rather than a classroom, and they receive scripts accompanied by music from the teacher. Teachers drill the material in the form of songs, games, and choral repetition, and then students are given the opportunity to perform theatrical performances or skits with the newly learned language. |

Question for thought



Can we really consider the designer methods to be methods? In other words, can you imagine teaching an entire academic course via these 'methods' or are they simply 'techniques' that can be implemented occasionally throughout the span of a course? If this is this case, in what contexts (language levels, age groups, type of class, language topic whether it be grammatical/lexical/pragmatic/cultural etc.) would you implement these techniques? Give concrete examples of how you could use each one.



Man teacher and kid students learning and looking on tablet device with self book in the background
© ultramansk4 - Fotolia

2.2.4. The post-methods era

By the end of the twentieth century, language pedagogists came to a general consensus that there is no single ideal teaching method. A one-method-fits-all perspective must be rejected considering that:

- Method efficacy is context-dependent. While one method may be appropriate for one context, another method may be more appropriate for another. Thus, choosing an appropriate method must take into account the students' needs and the educational institution and its pedagogic goals.
- All methods have some valid principles, each one carrying with it its own advantages and disadvantages for different classroom contexts.
- While many methods may seem distinct initially, the human behaviors of communication and interaction ultimately lead to similar classroom dynamics across contexts, regardless of method.
- It is impossible to empirically prove that one method is superior to another.



Boy Shows His Presentation on Interactive Whiteboard © Gorodenkoff – Fotolia

Mini-Task



Reflecting on Kumaravadivelu's (1994) 10 macrostrategies for a post-methods framework (Celce-Murcia 2014, pp. 10-11), choose one and describe how you could incorporate it into an activity or task for one of your classes.

Summary

Having covered this overarching survey of second language teaching approaches, methods, and techniques, it can be concluded that the notion of an ideal, all-encompassing teaching method does not exist. Rather than adopting a particular pedagogic dogma, a teacher must have the ability to adapt to the educational circumstances at hand and develop the course curriculum, syllabus, method, materials, and pedagogic procedures to fit the particular goals of the students and educational institution. By being aware of past approaches and the knowledge gained from second language acquisition research, a competent EFL teacher will be able to effectively identify and implement which approaches, methods and techniques will best suit his/her classroom.

English as a lingua franca at local and international levels seems to be a linguistic reality for the foreseeable future. As the demand and standard for proficient English users continues to rise, so does that of those who teach it. Some scholars suggest that the field is transitioning from a post-methods era towards a new juncture between traditional methods and technological advances in computational and applied linguistics, which puts in question the importance of the role of the teacher in language learning. While the language teacher is far from being replaced by technology, new channels for language learning in the form of computer-mediated learning platforms, online translators and language learning applications, to name a few, are constantly providing learners with a larger variety of resources from which to acquire knowledge and skills, and so, it is up to teachers to play the ever important role of mediator and facilitator to help learners reach their language goals.

Quiz

Show what you know

Identify the following statements as True or False:

1. Flipped classrooms, in which students take a more active and didactic role as opposed to the traditionally teacher-centered classroom, is currently the best approach to language teaching.
2. The grammar-translation approach requires the teacher to be proficient in the target language, although he/she does not need to be able to speak it fluently.
3. The designer methods that proliferated in the late twentieth century were generally individual attempts to find the ideal method for teaching and learning a language, but their rigidity resulted in techniques that may be occasionally utilized in the classroom rather than full-fledged methods.
4. The cognitive approach views language learning as a habit-forming behavior in which grammatical structures should be learned through oral drilling and situational practice.
5. The communicative approach follows a Chomskyan, rule-governed perspective of language learning in which grammar must be taught deductively.

See the answers below.

1. Flipped classrooms, in which students take a more active and didactic role as opposed to the traditionally teacher-centered classroom, is currently the best approach to language teaching. **FALSE.**

While flipped classrooms can be tried occasionally, they should not be the default teaching approach. A traditional teacher-centered classroom is not ideal either. Learner-centered approaches such as Task-Based Language Teaching are the best and most effective.

2. The grammar-translation approach requires the teacher to be proficient in the target language, although he/she does not need to be able to speak it fluently. **TRUE.**

This is precisely part of the problem of the grammar-translation approach. A useful approach to learn Latin but not to learn a modern language like English.

3. The designer methods that proliferated in the late twentieth century were generally individual attempts to find the ideal method for teaching and learning a language, but their rigidity resulted in techniques that may be occasionally utilized in the classroom rather than full-fledged methods. **TRUE.**

Designer methods cannot become default teaching methods. They became fashionable in the 70's but they were limited approaches that were difficult to implement.

4. The cognitive approach views language learning as a habit-forming behavior in which grammatical structures should be learned through oral drilling and situational practice.

FALSE.

Habit formation is associated with behaviorism and Pavlov's principles (stimulus-response). The cognitive approach focuses on the mental processes involved in learning, on the "black box" that allows language learning to happen.

5. The communicative approach follows a Chomskyan, rule-governed perspective of language learning in which grammar must be taught deductively. **FALSE.**

The communicative approach is more inductive than deductive. The learner uses language actively in meaning-based tasks and learns grammar inductively through usage.

3. Individual differences in second language learning

Aims of this unit

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Identify the main types of learner differences affecting language learning success
2. Analyze how to measure individual differences
3. Understand how theory on individual differences can be applied to language teaching practice

3.1. Individual differences in second language learning

We are all successful in acquiring our mother tongue (or first language). Children are almost always successful in acquiring a second language in early childhood (between ages 3 and 6), provided that they have adequate opportunities to use the language over time. Variations or individual differences in success become more evident in late childhood (after age 7), and clearly in teenagehood and adulthood (after age 12).

Both educators and researchers have an interest in understanding how the characteristics of learners are related to their ability to succeed in learning a second language. Individual differences can be divided into three main types: biological (starting age of language learning), cognitive (such as aptitude or memory), and affective (such as motivation or personality).



© MichaelJBerlin - Fotolia

Reflection Activity*



Reflect on your own experience as a language learner:

- What language do you speak best? Do you speak more than one language equally well?
- Which second language have you learned with the most success?
- Which second language have you learned with the least success?

For questions 2 and/or 3 answer the following questions in the appropriate columns:

| | Languages learned successfully | Languages not learned successfully |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| How old were you when you first tried to learn the language? | | |
| Did you have a choice about learning this language or were you required to learn it? | | |
| Do you currently speak this language regularly? | | |
| Do you regularly read this language for information or enjoyment? | | |
| How much of your learning experience with this language was in a foreign language classroom? | | |
| Can you estimate how many years you spent learning or using it? | | |
| How much time have you spent living in a place where the language is spoken? | | |

* Adapted from Lightbown and Spada (1999)

3.2. Biological individual differences

3.2.1. Age

The age at which second language learning begins is considered the most important factor affecting success in language learning. It is frequently observed that most children from immigrant families eventually speak the language of their new community with native-like fluency, while their parents do not.

The explanation given for such differences is called the Critical Period Hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, humans are genetically programmed to acquire certain kinds of knowledge at specific times in life.

Evidence for the Critical Period Hypothesis

Evidence for the Critical Period Hypothesis in first language acquisition is found in cases of children who have been deprived of contact with language from birth. Two of the most famous cases are those of 'Victor' and 'Genie.'

Victor

In 1799, a boy who became known as Victor was found wandering naked in the woods in France. His story was dramatized in a 1970 movie called *L'enfant sauvage* (The Wild Child). When Victor was found, he was about 12 years old. He had not had any contact with humans. Doctors worked on socializing Victor and teaching him language. Although they succeeded to some extent in developing Victor's sociability, there was little progress in his language ability.

Genie

Around 200 years later, a 13-year-old girl was discovered in California. She had been isolated, neglected, and abused. She was called Genie. Genie had spent more than 11 years tied to a chair in a small, dark room. She was beaten when she made any kind of noise, and she had resorted to complete silence. Genie was undeveloped physically, emotionally, and intellectually. She had no language. After she was discovered, she went into rehabilitation. Genie made remarkable progress in becoming socialized. However, after five years of exposure to language, Genie's language was not like that of a typical five-year old. There was a larger than normal gap between comprehension and production. She used grammatical forms inconsistently and overused formulaic and routine speech.

Victor and Genie are unusual cases. It is not possible to know whether they suffered from brain damage or specific impairments before they were found.

Better evidence is provided by children who come from homes where they receive love and care, but who do not have access to language at the usual time. For example, deaf children who have hearing parents. Hearing parents may not realize that their child cannot hear. These children's later experience in learning sign language has been the subject of research. Studies show that there are significant differences in knowledge of grammatical markers between native sign language users (exposed to sign language from birth), early signers (exposed to sign language between ages four and six), and late signers (exposed to sign language after age 12).

International adoptees also provide evidence in support of the Critical Period Hypothesis. These are children who were adopted at an early age by families who did not speak the child's language. Although they are adopted as early as 13.5 months age, they score lower than their native speaker peers on some language abilities when tested years later. In addition, there is evidence that they remember the first language they were exposed to at birth. For example, Korean adoptees in the Netherlands (even those adopted before 6 months age) are more sensitive to Korean language and are to re-learn Korean faster than Dutch children who have never been exposed to Korean before.



© majivecka - Fotolia.com

It has been hypothesized that there is a critical period for second language acquisition just as there is for first language acquisition.

Developmental changes in the brain affect the nature of second language acquisition. Older learners may depend on more general learning abilities, the same ones they are using to acquire other kinds of knowledge. These general abilities are not as effective as the implicit capacities available to the young child.

In addition to age, in second language learning there are other differences between younger and older learners. Younger learners usually have more time to devote to learning language. They have more opportunities to use the language in stress-free environments. Their early imperfect efforts are accepted and praised. Older learners are more likely to find themselves in situations that require more complex language and more complicated ideas. Adults get often embarrassed by their lack of mastery. They get frustrated in trying to say exactly what they mean. This may have negative consequences on their motivation and willingness to speak the language.

Research on the Critical Period Hypothesis has led education policy makers to conclude that second language learning will be more successful if it begins at a young age. However, the evidence is not clear.

Some studies show that older learners are more efficient than younger learners by using their metalinguistic knowledge, memory, strategies, and problem-solving abilities. In educational settings, learners who begin learning a second language at primary school level do not always achieve greater proficiency in the long run than those who begin in adolescence. The problem in this context is that the years of second language instruction are limited and typically end by the time the learner is 17.

We know that older learners can be faster at the beginning of the learning process by using their metalinguistic knowledge, memory strategies, etc. As a result, it is not possible to know whether starting early gives us a real advantage in the long-run, unless learners go on learning the second language beyond age 17 on a regular basis. Also, even if older learners may be more successful in the short-run in general, there are specific areas where younger learners show better results (e.g., especially in the area of phonology: pronunciation and sound discrimination).

Having a foreign accent is the most frequently cited consequence of a late start in second language learning. Phonological development seems to be the most dependent area on age of acquisition, but vocabulary and grammar (both syntax or word order, and morphology or word endings) are also affected. Phonology seems to be first, followed by vocabulary (collocations) and grammar.

Decisions about when to start second language instruction in schools should be based on realistic estimates of how long it takes to achieve them. Two or three hours a week will not produce advanced second language speakers, no matter how early they start learning the language. Older learners may be able to make better use of the limited time they have. The knowledge they will acquire may be enough if the goal is to use the language for everyday communication, to take exams, or read academic texts. If the objective is to reach advanced proficiency or have native-like pronunciation, then an early start is necessary, but not sufficient. We need more appropriate conditions for learning. For example, more hours of instruction per week, more years of instruction, better input, qualified and proficient language instructors, opportunities to learn outside the classroom.

3.3. Cognitive individual differences

3.3.1. Intelligence

Some research has shown that intelligence quotient (IQ) scores were a good predictor of success in second language learning. Learners with a higher IQ were more successful language learners than learners with a lower IQ.

The explanation for this pattern can be the way second language success is measured. Learners with high IQ tend to be more analytical and may do better on metalinguistic tests or reading tests. However, there is no evidence that high IQ helps with oral skills such as conversational fluency. Therefore, the kind of ability measured by traditional IQ tests is only a good predictor of second language learning when this learning involves language analysis and rule learning. It is not a good predictor when instruction focuses more on communication and interaction.

It should be noted that intelligence is not a unitary concept. In the 1930s, Thurstone distinguished seven primary mental abilities: verbal comprehension, word fluency, number facility, spatial visualization, associative memory, perceptual speed, and reasoning. In the 1960s, Guilford proposed a model that included as many as 180 intelligence factors. Also in the 1960s, Cattell divided intelligence into fluid intelligence and crystallized intelligence. Fluid intelligence is the ability to adapt to novel situations, as measured by tests of reasoning ability about sequences of abstract shapes. Crystallized intelligence consists of knowledge and skills acquired by experience and education, and it is specific to certain domains, such as math or knowledge of history. In the 1990s, Gardner proposed that individuals have 'multiple intelligences' including abilities in music, interpersonal relations, and athletics, as well as the verbal intelligence that is often associated with success at school.

Since there is no universally accepted theory of intelligence, it is difficult to investigate whether it influences second language learning. Also, measures of intelligence are mostly traditional tests largely biased toward analytical abilities.

3.3.2. Language aptitude

Language aptitude is defined as a combination of cognitive and perceptual abilities thought to predict success in language learning, both in the short-run (rate of acquisition) and in the long-run (ultimate level of attainment).

Traditional measures of aptitude have focused on abilities that predict rate of acquisition in the short-run, provided that motivation, opportunity to learn, and quality of instruction are optimal. They include:

- the ability to identify and memorize new sounds,
- the ability to understand the function of particular words in sentences,
- the ability to figure out grammatical rules from language samples, and
- the ability remember new words.



According to Carroll and Sapon, the creators of the first aptitude test:

"Knowing the individual's level of ability, we may infer the level of effort and motivation he must expend to learn successfully. A student with a somewhat low aptitude score will need to work harder in an academic language course than a student with a high aptitude test score. If the score is very low, the student may not succeed in any event."

Carroll and Sapon, p. 14

Show what you know

Are you curious to know your own language aptitude abilities?

Try to memorize the following pairs of words in 3 minutes. Then complete the test:

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| <i>leka</i> | jugar |
| <i>tinga</i> | encargar |
| <i>gredelin</i> | lila |
| <i>gnola</i> | canturrear |
| <i>köping</i> | pueblo |
| <i>tillgjord</i> | amanerado |
| <i>käcka</i> | romper |
| <i>löpa</i> | correr |
| <i>dolsk</i> | insidioso |
| <i>tjocklek</i> | gordura |
| <i>fattigdom</i> | pobreza |
| <i>körsbär</i> | cereza |

Adapted from Muñoz, 2002, p. 19

1. Tjocklek

- a. Jugar
- b. Gordura
- c. Pueblo
- d. Pobreza

2. Käcka

- a. Romper
- b. Correr
- c. Amanerado
- d. Canturrear

3. Gredelin
 - a. Insidioso
 - b. Amanerado
 - c. Lila
 - d. Cereza

4. Gnola
 - a. Canturrear
 - b. Romper
 - c. Cereza
 - d. Encargar

5. Löpa
 - a. Cereza
 - b. Lila
 - c. Jugar
 - d. Correr

6. Leka
 - a. Jugar
 - b. Amanerado
 - c. Pueblo
 - d. Insidioso

The words used in the activity are Swedish. However, in the original test Kurdish words were used. In the original test, there are more words to memorize, 24 in total. This test is called 'paired associates' and it is still used to measure explicit or rote memory ability.

The correct answers are: 1. b; 2. a; 3. c; 4. a; 5. d; 6. A

Show what you know

Identify which of the four words that appear in italics in sentence B has the same grammatical function as the word that appears in italics in sentence A.*

1.

- a. El ejemplo ilustra la *idea* de convertir la escuela y sus actividades en un contexto significativo.
- b. *Al final*, *aprendizaje* lingüístico e integración social constituyen una *unidad* que se opone a la *asimilación*.

2.

- a. Ello nos obliga a todos a pensar de nuevo en las *prioridades* de los ciudadanos
- b. El *aspecto* topológico remite a las *propiedades* del *espacio* físico de la *interacción*.

3.

- a. El duque fue enviado ante Su Majestad para *disculpar* a su señor por aquel hecho de grandes consecuencias.
- b. Nunca *perdonaron* al joven ejecutivo que les abandonara para *trabajar* con la *competencia*.

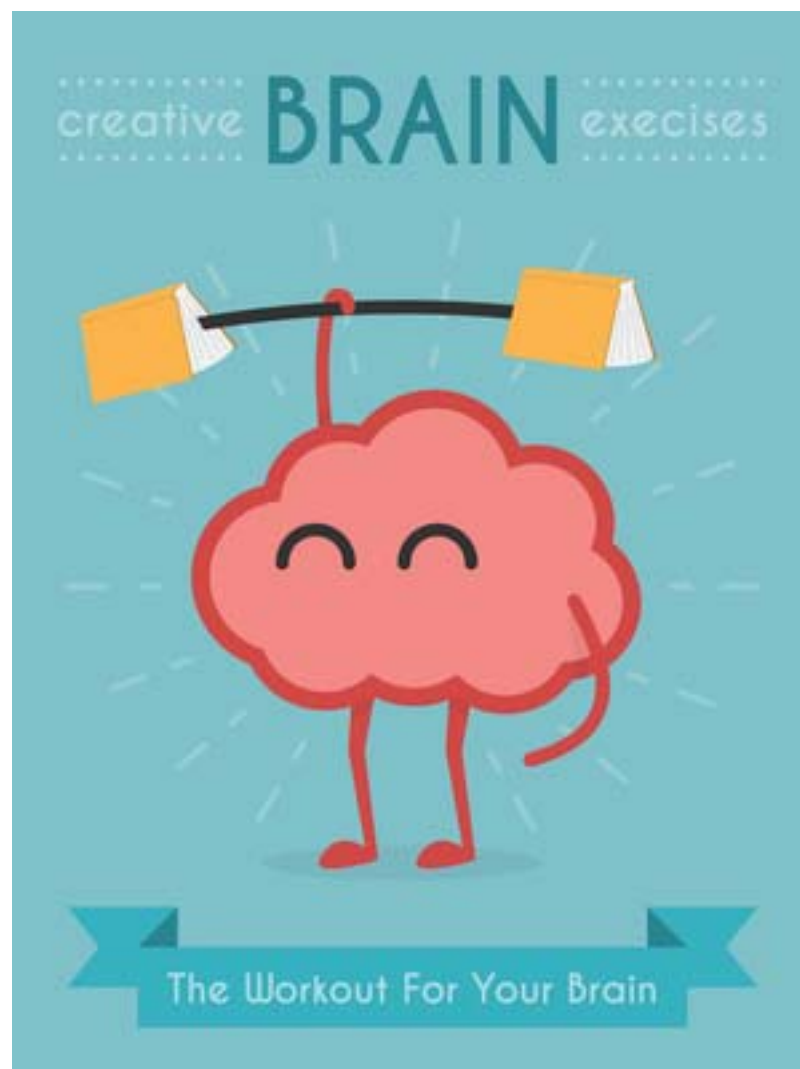
See the answers below.

1. "Idea" and "unidad" are both direct objects.
2. "Prioridades" and "propiedades" are both prepositional objects.
3. "Disculpar" and "trabajar" are both adverbials of purpose.

* Adapted from Muñoz, 2002, p. 19

The original test is also longer. The goal is to measure analytical ability. However, as you probably noticed, test-takers who have a better grammatical knowledge, because they have studied grammar before, have an advantage on this test.

Early aptitude measures such as the activities you have just completed are good measures of learning under certain language teaching methods such as grammar translation or audiolingualism. These are the methods that were being used at the time the first aptitude measures were created. With the adoption of more communicative approaches to teaching, research has shown a need to re-conceptualize language aptitude so that it includes abilities for implicit learning (i.e., learning by picking up patterns from input). This type of learning is associated with intuitive or experiential learning and it can, therefore, be more relevant to predict individual differences in learning under communicative or task-based teaching approaches.



© Dooder - Fotolia

Appropriate classroom activities for particular students

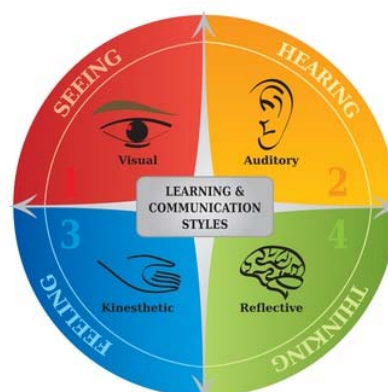
In a Canadian language program for adult learners of French, students were placed in an instructional program that was compatible with their aptitude profile. Students who were high on analytical ability were assigned to teaching that focused on grammatical structures, while learners strong in memory were placed in a class where the teaching was organized around the functional use of the second language in specific situations. The result was a high level of student and teacher satisfaction when students were matched with compatible teaching environments. In addition, some evidence indicated that matched students were able to attain significantly higher levels of achievement than those who were unmatched.

Few schools may be able to offer choices to their students depending on their aptitude profile. Even when a school cannot offer that choice, teachers may find that knowing their students' aptitude profile helps them in selecting appropriate classroom activities for particular students.

3.3.3. Learning styles

Learning style is an individual's natural and habitual, preferred way of learning, processing, retaining information. There are people who say that they cannot learn something until they have seen it. They are 'visual' learners. Others are 'auditory' and learn best 'by ear.' For others, 'kinaesthetic' learners, physical action such as miming or role-play seems to help. There are other types of learning styles. Individuals have been described as field dependent or field independent, according to whether they separate details from the general background or whether they see things more holistically.

It is difficult to determine whether learning styles reflect immutable differences or whether they develop through experience and, therefore, can change. There is also a diversity of taxonomies and classifications. A persistent criticism of this field has actually been the number of different models proposed. The term style has become so vague and imprecise that it is difficult to know what it refers to. However, the concept of learning style remains appealing for educationalists because they do not label students as good or bad; they just refer to personal preferences.



© artellia - Fotolia

The important message here is that we should be skeptical that a single teaching method or textbook will suit the needs of all the learners.

Activity*



There many different learning styles. These are items measuring different learning styles taxonomies. Decide whether you are more like the statement on the left or the statement on the right (from 1 to 9) and try to guess the type of learning style measured in each case.

a. When I work with new material in context, in stories or articles or at least sentences, I often pick up new words, ideas, etc. that way, without planning in advance. You could say I make a lot of use of a floodlight to learn.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

b. When working with new material with additional subject matter around it, I comfortably find and use what is most important. I also like out-of-context material like grammar rules. You could say I make a lot of use of a spotlight to learn.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

c. I like to reduce differences and look for similarities. I notice mostly how things are similar, and I level out differences.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

d. I tend to be most aware of and interested in the big picture; I notice the forest before the trees; I start with the main points and work down to the details.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

e. I react quickly, often acting or speaking without thinking about it.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

f. I understand best by assembling what I'm learning into a whole, synthesizing information.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

a. I don't usually get much from the context unless I pay close attention to what I'm doing. I certainly wouldn't describe myself as someone who learns by osmosis. It usually has to be out there in black and white.

b. When there is a lot of information that comes with what I need to learn, it's hard to tell what's most important. It all seems to fall together sometimes, and it's hard work to sort things out.

c. I like to explore differences and disparities among things and tend to notice them quickly.

d. I notice specifics and details quickly; I tend to be aware of the trees before the forest. I begin with the details to work up to the main points.

e. I tend to think about things before I do or say them.

f. I understand best by disassembly of learning into its component parts, analyzing information.

g. I tend to learn things through metaphors and associations with other things. I often learn through stories or example cases.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

h. To learn, I like to interact with the world and learn through application of knowledge, especially when I can touch, see, or hear it.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

i. I learn best when I can work out for myself the best sequence to use, even if it's different from the one in the book or lesson.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

j. When I learn, I mostly start with examples or my experience and make generalizations or rules.

Most like this 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Most like this

g. I like things that can be counted and that say what they mean directly. I take things at face value.

h. I like to learn through concepts and ideas and from formal renditions of knowledge like theories and models.

i. I learn best when there is a sequence of steps provided, so I can do things in order. Textbooks and lesson plans really help me.

j. When I learn, I mostly start with rules and generalizations and apply them to my experience to learn.

Answer key:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>a. Field sensitivity – Field insensitivity</p> | <p>Field sensitivity-insensitivity refers to the preference to consider materials in a situated manner. Field-sensitive learners prefer to address material as part of the context in contrast to their field-insensitive counterparts, who make little or no use of the context.</p> |
| <p>b. Field independence – Field dependence</p> | <p>Field dependence-independence refers to the preference for selection and details (field-independent) vs. treating the whole context as the same, more wholist (field-dependent).</p> |
| <p>c. Leveling – Sharpening</p> | <p>A tendency to assimilate detail rapidly and lose detail (levelers) or emphasize detail and small differences (sharpeners).</p> |
| <p>d. Eled. Global – Particular</p> | <p>A preference to process top-down (globally) or bottom-up (starting from the particular details).</p> |
| <p>e. Impulsive – Reflective</p> | <p>Impulsive learners tend to respond rapidly, often acting on gut, whereas reflective learners prefer to think things through before they respond.</p> |
| <p>f. Synthetic – Analytic</p> | <p>Synthetic learners like to use pieces to build new wholes, whereas analytic students like to disassemble wholes into parts to understand their componential structure.</p> |
| <p>g. Analogue – Digital</p> | <p>Analogue learners prefer to use metaphors, analogies, and conceptual links, whereas digital learners take a more surface approach, more literal and logical.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>h. Concrete – Abstract</p> | <p>Concrete learners prefer a relationship with direct experience to the extent of sensory contact, whereas abstract learners may have more interest in the system underlying language than in the actual language of communication.</p> |
| <p>i. Random – Sequential</p> | <p>Random learners are non-linear, they follow their own, idiosyncratic order of processing, whereas sequential learners prefer a step-by-step, externally provided order (such as the units in a syllabus).</p> |
| <p>j. Inductive – Deductive</p> | <p>Inductive learners start with the details and facts, then form hypotheses, and test them; deductive learners start out with rules and then apply them to examples.</p> |

* Adapted from Dornyei, 2015, p.132

3.4. Affective individual differences

3.4.1. Motivation

Motivation is a complex phenomenon. It has been defined in terms of a) learners' communicative needs, and b) learners' attitudes toward the second language community.

If learners need to speak the second language in social situations or fulfil professional ambitions, they will perceive the communicative value of the second language and will be more motivated to learn it. Also, if learners have positive attitudes toward the speakers of the language, they will want more contact with them.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) coined the terms 'instrumental motivation' and 'integrative motivation.' **Instrumental motivation** is language learning for immediate or practical goals. **Integrative motivation** is language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment. Both types of motivation have been found to be related to success in second language learning. However, it is not easy to determine whether positive attitudes produce successful learning or successful learning engenders positive attitudes.

We can at least say that positive attitudes are associated with a willingness to keep learning. It initiates and sustains the learning process.

In a teacher's mind, motivated students are those who participate actively in class, express interest, and study. Teachers can have an influence on students' motivation by providing content that is interesting and relevant to their age and ability, having learning goals that are challenging yet manageable and clear, and by creating a supportive atmosphere. There is research showing positive correlations between teachers' motivational practices (e.g., arousing curiosity and attention, promoting autonomy, group and pair work, tangible task products, effective praise, etc.) and learners' level of engagement (Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008).



© cacaroot – Fotolia

Teachers must also keep in mind that cultural and age differences will determine the most appropriate ways for them to motivate students.

For example...

In a study with secondary school Japanese learners of English, Tomita (2011) observed that the students were more willing to communicate during activities that combined a focus on grammar and meaning, than in exclusively meaning-based activities. Learners were not willing to invest in English communication unless they were able to establish their identities as 'learners' by discussing language grammar. In meaning-based activities they were reluctant to share their ideas and opinions.

3.4.2. Personality

Personality is one's whole character and nature. A number of personality characteristics have been proposed as affecting second language learning. It is often argued that an extroverted person who is assertive and adventurous is well suited to language learning. However, quiet observant learners can also be successful.

Another aspect of personality is inhibition. Inhibited students are less risk-taking and this may affect language learning, especially in the case of adolescents. In a study, Guiora (1972) showed that participants who drank small amounts of alcohol did better on pronunciation tests than those who did not drink any. Alcohol is known for its ability to reduce inhibition.

Another aspect is anxiety, or feelings of worry, nervousness, and stress. Students are assumed to be 'anxious' if they strongly agree with statements such as 'I become nervous when I have to speak in the second language classroom.' Because nervous students focus on both the task at hand plus their reactions to it and performance, they usually learn less quickly than relaxed students. Teachers have to remember, however, that there is the possibility that anxiety can be temporary and context-specific. It can

also change with age. It has also been argued that not all anxiety is bad and that a certain amount of tension can have a positive effect and facilitate learning. Experiencing the right amount of anxiety before an exam or oral presentation can provide the right combination of motivation and focus to succeed.

Anxiety can have an effect on a learner's willingness to communicate. Learners who are willing to communicate have communicative competence and this depends on how relaxed learners they are and how competent they feel about their second language ability. These factors are directly influenced by previous contacts with native speakers.

Research does not show a clearly-defined relationship between one personality trait and second language acquisition. Personality variables seem to be more consistently related to conversational skills than to the acquisition of grammatical accuracy or academic language.

The most important personality model is the **Big Five**. This model proposes five basic personality dimensions:

Openness

Conscientiousness

High scorers are imaginative, curious, flexible, creative, moved by art, novelty seeking, original, and untraditional; low scorers are conservative, conventional, down-to-earth, unartistic, and practical.

Extraversion-Introversion

High scorers are systematic, meticulous, efficient, organized, reliable, responsible, hard-working, persevering, and self-disciplined; low scorers are unreliable, aimless, careless, disorganized, late, lazy, negligent, and weak-willed.

Agreeableness

High scorers are sociable, gregarious, active, assertive, passionate, and talkative; low scorers are passive, quiet, reserved, withdrawn, sober, aloof, and restrained.

Neuroticism-Emotional

High scorers are friendly, good-natured, likable, kind, forgiving, trusting, cooperative, modest, and generous; low scorers are cold, cynical, rude, unpleasant, critical, antagonistic, suspicious, vengeful, irritable, and uncooperative.

Stability

High scorers are worrying, anxious, insecure, depressed, self-conscious, moody, emotional, and unstable; low scorers are calm, relaxed, unemotional, hardy, comfortable, content, even tempered, and self-satisfied.

Within the Big Five, the two dimensions that are intuitively most closely related to learning are Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness. Especially, conscientiousness has proved to be the most consistent and strongest predictor of academic achievement (Kappe & van der Flier, 2012).

Summary

This unit has described some of the main individual differences that influence second language learning.

Three types of individual differences have been reviewed: Biological (age), Cognitive (intelligence, language aptitude, learning styles) and Affective (motivation and personality). These differences contribute to make language learning such a complex phenomenon with different learners reaching different degrees of success.

Learners differ from each other, but all learners have strengths. In order to enable the most learners possible to learn as much as they can, language teachers should be flexible and able to individualize instruction as much as possible. Language teachers can help learners use differences to their advantage in the process of second language learning.

Quiz

Show what you know

Identify the following statements as True or False:

1. The Critical Period Hypothesis predicts that young second language learners will be more successful than adult second language learners.
2. Some individual differences such as intelligence can influence learning under traditional, grammar-oriented teaching approaches more than under communicative approaches..
3. Instrumentally motivated learners like learning about the second language culture.
4. Anxiety is not always detrimental for performance.
5. The best way to teach kinaesthetic' learners is by means of songs and audio-materials.

See the answers below

1.The Critical Period Hypothesis predicts that young second language learners will be more successful than adult second language learners. **TRUE.**

Young children who start learning a second language typically reach higher levels of attainment in all language domains than adult learners.

2. Some individual differences such as intelligence can influence learning under traditional, grammar-oriented teaching approaches more than under communicative approaches. **TRUE.**

This is because grammar-oriented approaches rely on learners' analytical abilities to reflect on language.

3.Instrumentally motivated learners like learning about the second language culture. **FALSE.**

Integratively motivated learners like learning about the culture, while instrumentally motivated learners like learning the language for an instrumental purpose (e.g., job promotion).

4.Anxiety is not always detrimental for performance. **TRUE.**

Some degree of anxiety can help perform better.

5.The best way to teach kinaesthetic' learners is by means of songs and audio-materials. **FALSE.**

Kinaesthetic learners need action and physical movement

4. Assessment and Evaluation

Aims of this unit

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Differentiate between various approaches to language assessment as well as types of tests utilized in language courses
2. Choose and design appropriate tests that are targeted at assessing your students' language abilities and learning achievements
3. Provide students with accurate and useful feedback based on their performance in activities, exams, and projects
4. Classify learners' language production ability based on descriptors established by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

4.1. Introduction

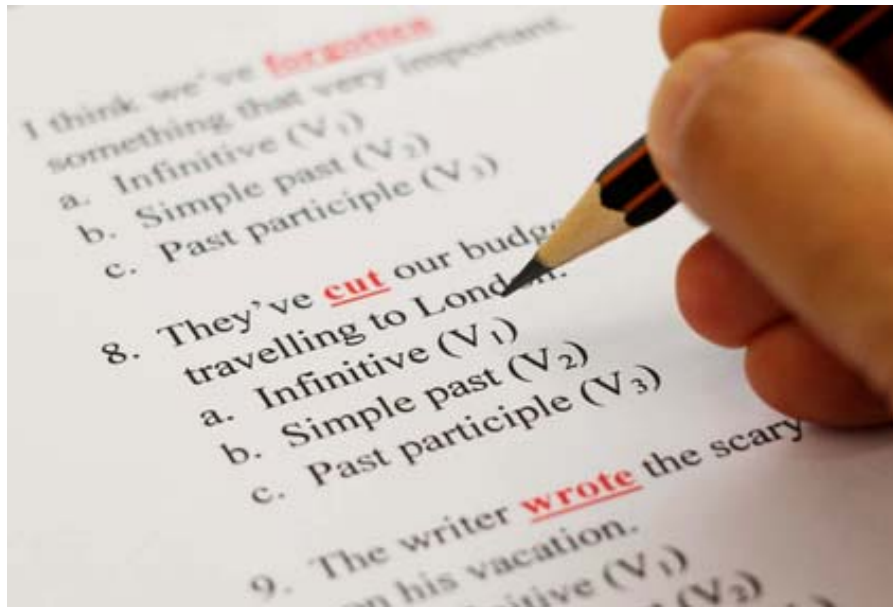
While a great deal of the energy and effort put into a teacher's work manifests in the form of the active teaching process inside the classroom, the foundation of this work lies in prudent planning outside the classroom. The next two units will delve into the teacher's 'behind-the-scenes' work in the form of developing forms of classroom assessment and lesson planning.

Much more than traditional test-taking, assessment can be broadly viewed as the measurement of learners' abilities to collect information on their proficiency level and learning progress in order to make informed decisions on teaching and planning. Not only does assessment give students vital feedback on their learning progress and performance, but also it gives teachers an indication of how effective their teaching has been, which in turn, leads them to make the necessary adjustments to become more competent, well-rounded language instructors.

Assessment can be utilized for various ends such as determining students' needs at the start of a course, monitoring the development of students' skills and diagnosing potential learning issues throughout the duration of the course, and engaging students in their own learning process. Just as teaching methodologies have vacillated throughout the history of second language teaching, as we saw in unit 2, so have approaches to second language assessment and evaluation. However, in this unit, we will focus on the practical applications of language assessment that can be applied in the L2 classroom.

4.2. Assessment and Testing

Language assessment can be defined as the methods and instruments used to measure a student's ability and learning achievement in order to make educational decisions from the classroom level to the curriculum level, while a test is a singular form of assessment.



English exam on table with pencil © lamaip – Fotolia

4.2.1. Types of testing

Placement and diagnostic tests

Placement tests are used as a preliminary determination of a student's appropriate level within an educational program or institution, whereas diagnostic tests gauge a student's strengths and weaknesses in order to inform educators on how to develop the curriculum to meet students' needs. Large-scale, norm-referenced tests give students a quantitative score based on their performance in comparison to other test takers typically in pursuit of acceptance to a higher education program of study.

Proficiency tests

Proficiency tests measure a student's language abilities without regard to any particular curriculum or program of study.

Progress and achievement-based tests

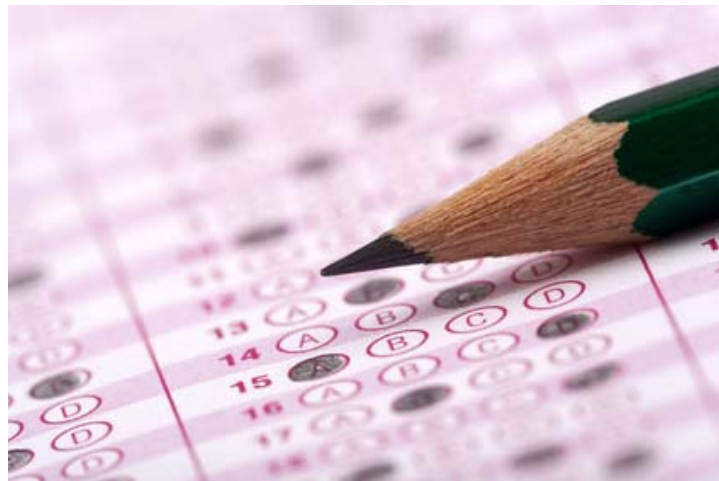
These tests measure whether or not students have attained student learning outcomes and/or instructional aims and objectives within a particular course of study. They are criterion-referenced tests in which students may pass, fail, or receive a grade indicating their performance on a pass/fail spectrum.

Question for thought

Have you taken all of these types of tests? Recall the language tests you've taken in the past and categorize them into one of these test types.

4.2.2. Traditional versus current approaches to language testing

As theories of second language learning have evolved over the years, approaches to assessment and testing have changed accordingly. While educators have traditionally assessed students by indirectly measuring students' underlying ability of a certain skill (e.g. asking students to order pre-written sentences to form a coherent paragraph), current approaches ask students to directly produce or perform those skills (e.g. write a coherent paragraph that includes a main idea and supporting details).



Multiple choice exam paper with answers bubbled in and a green pencil resting on the paper © nazif – Fotolia

Katz, in Celce-Murcia (2014, p.322, Figure 2), illustrates the differing traits between traditional and current language testing approaches:

| Traditional Testing | Current Approaches to Testing |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on language form • Learner produces isolated bits of language that can be scored as right or wrong • Oriented to product • Highly objective scoring • Decontextualized test tasks focused on the right answer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on communicative effect • Integration of skill areas • Includes process and product • Clear criteria to guide scoring • Open-ended answers • Attention to context |

Question for thought



Clearly the current approaches to testing are those that are promoted by most modern day pedagogists, but are there any educational contexts in which traditional testing would be more appropriate? Identify and explain.

4.3. Assessment and Learning

4.3.1. Summative versus Formative purposes for assessment

- *Summative assessments* measure what students have learned as a result of teaching over a period of time. (e.g. students are asked to write definitions and give examples of key terms learned in lecture). Thus, they can be called assessments *of* learning.
- *Formative assessments* are used to help students learn and improve their language skills during the process of instruction (e.g. rubrics for a writing assignment are shared with the students before writing so they can anticipate how they will be evaluated, which consequently influences them to write using certain techniques or with certain styles taught in class). Given that, formative assessments can be called assessments *for* learning.

4.3.2. Types of language assessments

Selected-response format

Multiple-choice, true/false, matching, same/different, odd one out, grammatical/ungrammatical.

Constructed-response format

Brief Constructed Response

Gap filling, short answer, cloze, label a diagram, sentence completion, error correction

Performance-Based Assessment

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Product-focused | Essay, story/play/poem, portfolio, report, video/audio recording, poster, project |
| Performance-focused | Oral presentation, dramatic reading, role play, debate, interview, online chats |
| Process-focused | Observation, reflection, journal, learning log |

Mini-Task



Imagine that you want to verify and assess your students' learning and use of the present continuous tense (BE + ing). Choose 3 types of language assessments (1 selected-response format, 1 brief constructed response, 1 performance-based assessment) and write a few sample test items/questions. Which format(s) do you think would most successfully measure your students' learning?

4.3.3. Feedback

Learners need to be corrected, or at least realize that they've made a mistake, in order to fine-tune their performance while learning from errors throughout the natural acquisition process. Many novice teachers tend to want to explicitly correct their students every time a mistake is made. However, research on error correction feedback suggests that this is not always the most effective way of addressing mistakes, and further, this is frankly tiring for the teacher, perhaps embarrassing and demotivating for the student, and impractical for the flow of class, especially in low to intermediate level classes.



Feedback © geschmacksRaum – Fotolia

4.3.3.1. Oral feedback

In all of these techniques, the desired result is that students will realize they've made a mistake and then reformulate and redeliver a correct response.

Repeating

Asking students to repeat what they've said often triggers the realization that they've made a mistake.

Student: "People is crazy"

Teacher: "Can you say that last sentence again?"

Echoing

When the teacher repeats exactly what a student has said, this recast often indicates that something in the utterance is wrong. The teacher can highlight the error by emphasizing it with a doubtful intonation.
Student: "People is crazy."

Teacher: "People is crazy?"

Direct notification

The teacher can simply tell the students that a mistake has been made, or more subtly, ask the class if they agree with the given answer.

Teacher: "That's not exactly right..."

or

Teacher: "Does anyone else have a different answer?"

Expression

Facial expressions or body gestures can be a quick and effective way to let students know something wasn't right.

Hinting

Using metalanguage, teachers can make a brief comment that leads the student to correct his/her own mistake.

Student: "People is crazy."

Teacher: "People is plural...."

Reformulation

The teacher interrupts and utters the correct form, often in the form of a tag question in order to mitigate a negative reaction from the student.

Student: "People is crazy."

Teacher: "You mean, people are crazy, right?"

Student: "Right, people are crazy!"

Explicit correction and extra explanation

If students don't respond to the previous techniques, the teacher may just have to pause and correct the error directly while taking a minute or two to explain again the rules or process of formulating the correct response.

Recording mistakes to be addressed at a later time

It can often be helpful not to correct mistakes in the moment. One technique is to record common errors frequently made by students and then write them on the board for all the students to correct. This technique provides anonymity for the person who made the mistake in order to avoid embarrassment, but again, it gives students an opportunity to reflect and identify the mistake on their own.

4.3.3.2. Written feedback

Learners' Comments

Teachers often write global comments that indicate the students' overall performance on writing assignments. Praise and positive comments might best be written first followed by constructive criticism, suggesting ways that the student could improve his/her work.

Correction codes/symbols

Instead of explicitly correcting mistakes on writing assignments, teachers and students can use a shared code of symbols to revise writings. When an error is found, the teacher marks it with a code to indicate the error type (e.g. # for number agreement, TENSE for incorrect verb tense). Once students receive their marked paper, they can correct their errors and turn them in again to confirm that they've understood and rectified their mistakes.

Marks/Grades

- Be familiar with the educational institution's grading system
- Develop measurable criteria for calculating grades
- Use grading rubrics, scoring guides or a systematized variety of written notes for qualitative feedback to ensure a standard of quality

4.3.4. Portfolios and Self-Assessment

A portfolio can be defined as a collection of a variety of students' work used to showcase their abilities, progress, and achievements over the course of a term. A portfolio also acts as a form of self-assessment as students can observe a tangible final product of the effort they have put in, giving clear indications of progress as well as boosting self-confidence.

Some materials appropriate for a language class portfolio are:

- Writings samples (including several drafts)
- Audio/video recordings of oral performances
- Tests
- Authentic assignments
- Projects
- Peer reviews
- Self-assessments

Self-assessment promotes learner autonomy, giving students a sense of accomplishment as well as an idea of where they began a course and the progress that they have made as they move on in their path of language learning. A few ways of having students assess themselves are:

- Involving students in the grading process. Teachers might ask students to grade their own work first and then see how it compares with the teacher's mark. Discrepancies will most likely generate further critique from both sides of the student's work, which directly engages the student in his/her education and creates an open teacher-student dialogue.
- Ask students to tick "Can do" statements from a chart that describes abilities in the different skill areas of language learning at the end of a unit or term.
- Record of Achievement (ROA) - Students assess their own abilities, indicating their strengths, weaknesses, progress, and where they see themselves going from here on out. Teachers then collect and reply to the students' assessment and then add their own comments, providing a complete critique.

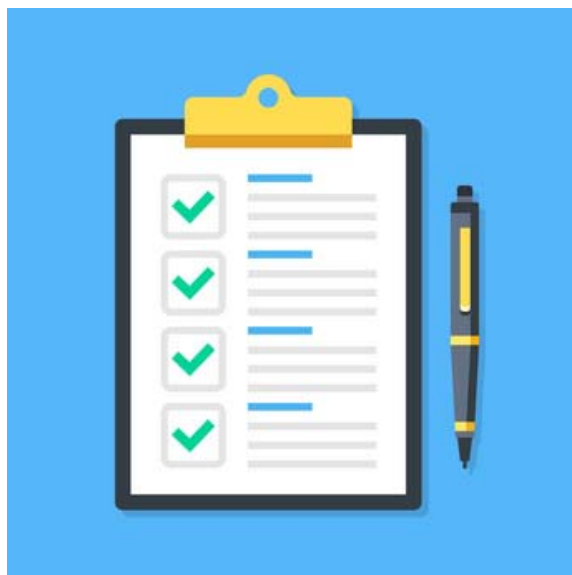
Mini-Task

Find the ALTE "Can do" statement charts online, and assess your own ability in one of your foreign languages.



4.3.5. Course and Instructor Feedback for the Teacher

An often neglected technique for course improvement is students giving teachers feedback at the end of the course. Teacher and course evaluation forms can be filled out anonymously by students on the last day to give the teacher indications about what did and did not work in terms of course content, methodology, assignments, evaluations, classroom management, etc. This way, teachers can get authentic, truthful feedback from the students themselves on how to improve the course for next time. Also, the instructor can get perspective on what aspects of his/her teaching are well received by students and what he/she might be able to improve on to become a more well-rounded teacher.



Clipboard with green ticks checkmarks and pen. Checklist, complete tasks, to-do list, survey, exam concepts - © Jane Kelly – Fotolia

Summary

The terms *assessment* and *evaluation* often conjure up in our mind images of pencil and paper, fill-in-the-bubble or multiple choice, standardized tests. While these types of assessment do have their role in L2 instruction, effective language teachers have the knowledge and ability to implement regular assessments in each and every class, via the myriad of forms mentioned in this unit, as a way to provide concrete information on the learning process for both students and teachers.

Instead of merely handing out a pre-written test at the end of learning units to then be marked, quantified, and categorized, today's language teachers put careful thought and planning into developing assessments that align with student learning goals and the educational institution's instructional aims.

As the field advances, more emphasis is being placed on formative assessment so that students and teachers can move forward in a cooperative effort to plan and monitor learning aims and progress. This way, focus is placed on the abilities and skills that students can perform while consistent and reliable feedback is provided in a multi-layered delivery from teachers, peers, and students themselves.

Quiz

Show what you know

Identify the following statements as True or False:

1. A test taken at the end of a unit which aims to measure student progress within a particular course of study is an example of a placement test.
2. Summative assessments are assessments for learning that aid students in anticipating how they are evaluated, and thus, become aware of how their language skills have improved over the course of learning.
3. An assignment in which students are asked to write a screenplay and record a short film to be viewed in class is considered a performance-based, product-focused assessment.
4. A recast is a type of oral feedback in which the teacher echoes an utterance made by a student in hopes that he/she notices and corrects an error that was made.
5. Self-assessment and instructor feedback are two ways in which students can reflect on what they have learned while providing valuable insight for both themselves and the teacher on how to move forward and improve on their course of language learning and teaching, respectively.

See the answers below.

1. A test taken at the end of a unit which aims to measure student progress within a particular course of study is an example of a placement test. **FALSE.**

Placement tests assess level of knowledge of a language.

2. Summative assessments are assessments for learning that aid students in anticipating how they are evaluated, and thus, become aware of how their language skills have improved over the course of learning. **FALSE.**

Summative assessment evaluates student learning at the conclusion of a defined instructional period so there is not time for the student to improve.

3. An assignment in which students are asked to write a screenplay and record a short film to be viewed in class is considered a performance-based, product-focused assessment. **TRUE.**

These are usually language projects carried out in teams.

4. A recast is a type of oral feedback in which the teacher echoes an utterance made by a student in hopes that he/she notices and corrects an error that was made. **TRUE.**

Recasts are an implicit way of providing corrective feedback. They are not obtrusive and allow communication to go on smoothly.

5. Self-assessment and instructor feedback are two ways in which students can reflect on what they have learned while providing valuable insight for both themselves and the teacher on how to move forward and improve on their course of language learning and teaching, respectively. **TRUE.**

When used in combination, they are a powerful assessment tool.

5. The lesson plan

Aims of this unit

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Understand why and to what extent a teacher should plan lessons based on the multitude of factors that contribute to the students' classroom experience.
2. Effectively write and assess student learning outcomes at the course and lesson level.
3. Write a detailed, formal lesson plan for a class you may potentially teach.

5.1. Introduction

Planning a lesson is the culmination of all of the factors of L2 learning and L2 instruction that manifest according to the particular students and educational environment at hand as the teacher prepares to lead a group of learners for the class period. At its core, lesson planning is a thinking process. It involves considering second language acquisition theory and how the teacher can apply principles founded in academic research findings to an actual classroom. A teacher must decide what specific techniques he/she will implement while keeping in mind the broader approach or method from which they stem, which may be influenced by the language skills or topics being addressed in the lesson as well as the audience, the educational context, and the teacher's personal philosophy of teaching.



Time to plan © ra2 studio – Fotolia

Needless to say, lesson planning can be a complicated process that teachers' real life circumstances do not always provide the time to do properly. In these situations, some teachers follow the notes provided in the teacher's book while others write down a vague checklist of language points or activities to progress through during the class period. Scrivener (2005) even describes a "jungle path" lesson in which the teacher enters the classroom without having prepared, and as a result must improvise from moment to moment.

Obviously, none of these alternatives are ideal, and they are eventually bound to end in disinterest, loss of attentiveness, or even unrest on behalf of the students, not to mention an ineffective, worn down teacher. While a perfectly written and executed lesson plan is rare, the thinking process that the teacher undergoes while planning is worth the effort and will result in a satisfied group of learners who achieve the learning goals set by themselves and their teacher.

5.2. What does planning do for the instructor?



Time to plan © magele-picture - Fotolia

Decision making

While considering student needs and teaching objectives, lesson planning guides the teacher towards the appropriate classroom application of:

- course content
- linguistic exposure and associated language skills
- timing and sequencing of instruction and activities
- selection and use of materials

Decision making - Road map

Planning a structured class gives the teacher a rough guide to check periodically, especially if detours or shortcuts come up during the course of the lesson. Even for the most spontaneous instructors, having this framework to fall back on gives confidence to the teacher and direction for the students to follow.

Log of activity/accomplishments

Logging what has been attempted and accomplished in the classroom throughout the course acts as an important form of teacher self-assessment as well as for monitoring course goals and educational standards. This log can also be useful when creating assessment tools such as quizzes and exams.

Class management through planning

A well thought out lesson that takes students' interests and learning needs into account should keep students highly engaged and constantly 'on the tip of their toes.' Depending on the personality dynamics of a particular group, teachers can plan lessons to either "stir" or "settle" the class according to their typical behavior. For example, a group that is largely hesitant to participate could be "stirred" or stimulated with an opening that includes interactive speaking activities in which they must move around the room in pairs or small groups. On the contrary, a loud and boisterous group might settle down when presented with activities that require students to practice receptive language skills to start the class such as reading, listening or writing.

5.3. Student needs

In order to determine how to approach small-scale planning (at the level of individual lesson plans) to a large-scale blueprint of the entire course (in the form of a syllabus), conducting a needs analysis is a means of assessing students' language learning needs.



Needs analysis © BillionPhotos.com - Fotolia

A thorough **needs analysis** will look at the tasks and activities learners will use English for, the knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situations, the learners' wants, their previous learning experiences, as well as an identification of the learners' current skills and language use.

Conducting a needs analysis provides teachers and curriculum designers with the following vital information for planning purposes:

- A demographic profile of students' language and cultural backgrounds
- An idea of students' proficiency level, including formal and communicative knowledge of the target language
- To determine students' prior, current, and future uses of the language
- To determine what language skills are necessary to enable students to accomplish their goals inside and outside of the classroom
- To understand students' attitudes and motivations for language learning

A needs analysis can include a written questionnaire eliciting the students' own opinions on this information as well as formal written and oral assessments to ascertain a more accurate representation of students' abilities. Considering this valuable information when planning aids the teacher in deciding how to deliver the lessons in terms of situations for language use, grammar topics, lexis, tasks and activities, etc. according to our own particular students' needs.

Question for thought



Consider this needs analysis questionnaire designed for a task-based conversation course. Would this type of analysis be appropriate for teenagers learning English in ESO (Escuela Secundaria Obligatoria)? How might you modify the questionnaire in order to elicit these particular students' needs, and thus, be able to appropriately plan the course and lessons?

5.4. Student learning outcomes versus lesson aims/objectives

Lesson **aims** and **objectives** are often expressed in the form of a checklist from the teacher's point of view. They are the teacher's to-do list in an effort to cover the standards of the educational system in which he/she is working.

Consider the following objective checklist.



Lesson objectives, ESL intermediate class, October 12th 2018

- *Review house chore vocabulary*
- *Teach present continuous tense (be + verb + ING, e.g. I am sweeping the floor.)*
- *Mingle around the room and have short conversations on at-home and family life*
- *Introduce weather vocabulary*
- *Watch video of local weather report*

Divide students into small groups to write a weather report for their home country

As we can see, the above statements are a mix of the teacher's pedagogic goals and steps for implementing activities during the lesson. While these statements are helpful for the teacher to imagine how he/she will execute the lesson, they do not consider the students' perspective nor do they provide opportunities for assessment of what the students should be able to do by the end of the lesson.

Student learning outcomes can be thought of as user-friendly statements that describe what students will be able to do at the end of a period of time, most often being at the end of the lesson, term, or course.

These outcomes should be able to be observed, measured, and assessed by the teacher by the end of the period. While objectives/aims are typically considered from a teacher-centered perspective, developing student learning outcomes places the emphasis on what the student will be able to do, making for a student-centered approach.

Sometimes these outcomes are set by the educational institution, although they often are phrased in the form of objectives/aims or standards. With this in mind, the responsibility of writing effective, observable, measurable student learning outcomes that can be assessed often falls on the shoulder of the teacher. Compare the following student learning outcomes to the aims/objectives just mentioned.



At the end of the lesson, students will be able to use the present continuous tense to:

- Talk about common chores and duties done at home.
- Discuss domestic-related topics and life events such as falling in love, marriage, having a baby, growing up, parenting, divorce, and growing old.
- Describe and report the weather



Achievement of learning outcomes will be assessed by:

- A short, written oral, information gap quiz in which students must match a domestic scenario to its appropriate house chore.
- Individual and whole class oral elicitation of classmates' favorite responses to questions in domestic-related topic discussion.
- A written (and optional recorded oral) report of current weather conditions in various world cities.

By comparing these two seemingly subtle differences in approaching lesson planning, we can see how the system of student learning outcomes not only makes for a more student-centered class, but also it creates a practical framework for teachers to set appropriate goals, assessable for their students. To sum up...

... student learning outcomes should:

- state in clear terms what it is that students should be able to do at the end of the course [or lesson] that they couldn't do at the beginning
- focus on student products, artifacts, or performances, rather than on instructional techniques or course content.
- are student-centered rather than instructor-centered.
- explicitly communicate course expectations to your students.

Mini-Task



Visit Indiana University's Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning's webpage on developing learning outcomes:

Use this resource to help you write student learning outcomes for your lesson plan on Assignment 3 of this module.

5.5. Formal Planning

Lesson planning is not just a pre-class procedure, but rather, it should be looked at as a three-stage holistic process in order for the teacher to develop an efficient system that consistently adapts to students' needs and interests, their successful or unsuccessful achievement of learning outcomes, available materials, and requirements of the educational context.



Decision-making before, during, and after class © contrastwerkstatt – Fotolia

5.5.1. Before class

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <p>Step 1</p> | <p>Identify where the class is in terms of the global course curriculum and familiarize oneself with the potential materials for the particular lesson (textbook chapter(s), activities, tasks, worksheets, web resources, multimedia video/audio, authentic print materials, realia, etc.). Some materials may be provided by the educational institution while others must be searched for and tracked down by the instructor.</p> |
| <p>Step 2</p> | <p>Determine student learning outcomes and lesson aims, and determine how they will be assessed.</p> |
| <p>Step 3</p> | <p>Contextualize the lesson according to how it can be linked to previous and future lessons. Pay special attention to how the content of the lesson relates to students' lives outside of the classroom. How will students apply the knowledge and skills learned in class to 'real life' situations?</p> |
| <p>Step 4</p> | <p>Match these components to the timing of the class period. It may be helpful to use a lesson plan template in order to consider all possible factors (for an example, see Assignment 3 of this module). The following are aspects you might consider while planning the delivery of the lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration of each activity • Supplementary activities if there is extra time • Activities that could be shortened, omitted, or continued in the next lesson if time expires • Sequencing of activities - opening and closing, pacing of each activity and transition from one activity to the next • Details of activities - What will the teacher and students do for each activity? Consider teacher and student talk time, individual/pair/group work, classroom arrangement, use of materials, teacher giving clear instructions, evaluation student performance - Do students having a tangible task to complete? How will students prove they've learned to accomplish the intended aim of the activity? |

Mini-Task



Consider Figures 1, 2, and 3 on pages 366-367 in Celce-Murcia (2014), which illustrate ways of opening a lesson, closing a lesson, and providing variety, respectively. Use at least one techniques from each figure when writing your lesson plan for Assignment 3 of this module.

5.5.2. During class

Lessons inevitably do not go 100% to plan. That is, situations arise in the spontaneity of the classroom experience that alter the teacher's vision of how the lesson should be executed.

Examples of events that cause derivations from the plan include:

- Students did not do their homework.
- The level of a task or assignment is not appropriate (too basic or too advanced) for the learners
- Students recently covered the material in another class.
- Discussion topics don't appeal to students or activities end up creating silence rather than bubbly conversation.
- Activity timing is not as anticipated. Students either finish an activity too early, leaving dead space to fill, or they take longer than expected, leading to an abrupt stoppage, and consequently, an incomplete task.
- Classroom technology (e.g. computers, projector, whiteboard, internet, etc.) breaks down.

In response to these seemingly unpredictable mishaps, teachers must be prepared to have alternative activities to substitute those gone wrong from the original plan. With that in mind, real life time constraints sometimes prevent us from having a Plan B, and so, experienced teachers develop over time a 'bag of tricks' or impromptu activities that he/she can implement when there is downtime to fill.

Occasionally, a special moment may occur in class in which a sensitive teacher notices that students either are especially engaged in the material or they become completely lost. In both cases, the teacher may decide to take a moment to stop the class and reflect on the issue at hand. In the case that students are noticeably interested, the teacher might exploit this magic moment in which the entire class is engaged and extend the activity. On the other hand, if students seem distraught when it comes to carrying out activities or tasks, it may be a good opportunity to pause for a moment and bring the class together to regroup and directly address students' questions and doubts.

It is important to note that any modifications such as postponing, omitting, shortening or extending of activities **should be noted on the lesson plan** as a record for after class decision making so that next time the lesson is taught, the instructor can anticipate potential deviations from the plan or modify it accordingly.

5.5.3. After class

The final part of the process is to review the lesson to assess the efficacy of your plan and learn from students' reactions to the lesson.

Some questions the teacher may consider are:

- How did the students react to each part of the lesson? Were they engaged or unenthused?
- Were there any students who found the activities too easy or were any left behind because they were too challenged?
- How did the pace of the lesson suit the students' attention span and ability to achieve student outcomes?
- What did students learn to do that they were unable to do before class?
- Did the students engage in meaningful communication in the target language?

Reviewing how the lesson went not only helps teachers identify how their students are learning and progressing, but it also acts as a form of self-assessment as a teacher.



© Antonioguilem - Fotolia

A teacher who follows up on his/her performance will learn from classroom events, which will only work towards shaping a more experienced and knowledgeable instructor who is ready to deal with spur of the moment changes in the classroom at a moment's notice.

Finally, apart from the teacher fine-tuning his/her own personal teaching, the educational program will also benefit as curriculum planning will take into account the successes and failures of past lessons.

Summary

Lesson planning involves our overall understanding of second language learning and teaching and takes into account many factors, especially the student body and the educational institution's learning goals.

By planning, teachers ensure that they are achieving curricular goals, making sound decisions based on grounded principles of learning and teaching, creating opportunity for post-class reflection and assessment, and perhaps most importantly for the novice teacher, that they are entering the classroom with the confidence necessary to successfully transmit the knowledge and skills that their students are seeking to attain.

As teachers become more experienced, they will inevitably adapt their lesson planning style to their personal teaching philosophy along with the aforementioned factors, but as long as they are engaging in the thinking process of planning before each lesson, they are on track to successfully facilitating the connection between objectives, student learning outcomes and activities and tasks in the classroom.

Quiz

Show what you know

Identify the following statements as True or False:

1. A well thought out lesson not only prepares the teacher to execute a coherent plan of instruction, but also it acts as a classroom management tool that keeps students engaged while minimizing behavior issues.
2. A needs analysis is a tool used by teachers and administrators to aid in the development of the curriculum and/or course, taking into account factors such as students' language proficiency, educational and cultural demographics, and motivations for learning the language.
3. Student learning outcomes are a list of objectives, tasks, and activities that teachers wish to implement within a class period.
4. Lesson planning is a process that includes organization and reflection on behalf of the teacher before, during, and even after the class is finished.
5. Students' first language and cultural background as well as level of proficiency in the target language are dispensable factors of language learning and do not need to be considered when planning a lesson.

See the answers below.

1. A well thought out lesson not only prepares the teacher to execute a coherent plan of instruction, but also it acts as a classroom management tool that keeps students engaged while minimizing behavior issues. **TRUE.**

Lesson plans are key in language teaching.

2. A needs analysis is a tool used by teachers and administrators to aid in the development of the curriculum and/or course, taking into account factors such as students' language proficiency, educational and cultural demographics, and motivations for learning the language. **TRUE.**

All teachers pay attention to their learners' needs but they usually do it informally. A needs analysis can also be done formally, for example via a survey administered to all the students.

3. Student learning outcomes are a list of objectives, tasks, and activities that teachers wish to implement within a class period. **FALSE.**

Student learning outcomes are the goals the students expect to achieve by taking a course.

4. Lesson planning is a process that includes organization and reflection on behalf of the teacher before, during, and even after the class is finished. **TRUE.**

It is a crucial component of language teaching that can be used and improved course after course.

5. Students' first language and cultural background as well as level of proficiency in the target language are dispensable factors of language learning and do not need to be considered when planning a lesson. **FALSE.**

These are all individual differences that will have an impact on the design of the lesson.

Bibliography

Carroll, J. B. & Sapon, S. (1959). *Modern Language Aptitude Test*. New York: The Psychological Corporation.

Celce-Murcia, M. (2014). An overview of language teaching approaches. In: M. Celce-Murcia, D. Brinton & M. A. Snow (eds.). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (4th edition, pp. 2-14). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning / Heinle Cengage Learning.

Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.

Cook, V. J. (1988). *Chomsky's Universal Grammar. An introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Dörnyei, Z. & Ryan, S. (2015). *The Psychology of the Language Learner Revisited*. New York: Routledge.

Gardner, R. C. & Lambert, W. E. (1972). Motivational variables in second language acquisition. In: R. C. Gardner & W. Lambert (eds.). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning* (pp. 119-216). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Guilloteaux, M. J. & Dörnyei, Z. (2008). Motivating language learners: A classroom-oriented investigation of the effects of motivational strategies on student motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42, 55-77.

Guiora, A. (1972). Construct validity and transpositional research: Toward an empirical study of psychoanalytic concepts. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 13, 139-150.

Kappe, F. R. & Flier, H. van der (2012). Predicting academic achievement in higher education: What's more important than being smart?. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 27, 605-619.

Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (1999). *How Languages are Learned* (2nd edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

Long, M. H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. Ritchie & T. Bhatia (eds.). *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp.413-468). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Muñoz, C. (2002). *Aprender Idiomas*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Tomita, Y. (2011). *The Role of Form-Focused Instruction: Learner Investment in L2 Communication*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto.

White, L. (1989). *Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.