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IMROVING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS BY APPLYING UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL) PRINCIPLES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING (USING ENGLISH AS AN EXAMPLE)

Annotation

It is obvious that every learner has their strategies and principles for acquiring language skills. Some find comfort in learning through podcasts or audio, while others prefer using textbooks and reading various teaching-related books to learn new languages. This paper aims to highlight the importance of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) method and its advantages for both teachers and students. In this paper, the ways of applying this method in classrooms in order to enhance students' language skills are explained in detail. Over the years, due to technological advancements, conducting lessons has become more comfortable and crucial, owing to increased demand. Therefore, this article explores the significance of UDL and this method's principles, associated with improving students' language skills. With the help of UDL, teachers can establish an equal learning environment, providing opportunities for students to succeed in their academic development. Furthermore, by applying Universal Design for Learners (UDL) principles, educators can foster a positive learning environment that allows language learners to have a higher degree of autonomy in their field of study toward proficiency. By reading this scientific article, you will be provided with practical examples and strategies for using the UDL method in language teaching.

Key words: UDL method, language learners, autonomy, language skills, inclusive learning

TIL O'QITISH JARAYONIDA UDL PRINSIPLARINI QO'LLASH ORQALI TALABALARNING TIL KO'NIKMALARINI RIVOJLANTIRISH

Annotatsiya

Barchamizga ayonki, til ko'nikmalarini egallashda har bir o'quvchining o'z strategiya va tamoyillari mavjud. Ba'zi talabalar til o'rganishda turli podkastlar va audio materiallardan foydalanishni qulay deb topishsa, boshqalar yangi tillarni o'rganish uchun darsliklar va o'qitishga oid turli kitoblardan foydalanishni afzal ko'radilar. Ushbu maqola UDL metodining ahamiyati hamda uning o'qituvchilar va talabalar uchun afzalliklari haqida ma'lumot beradi. Ushbu maqolada talabalarning til ko'nikmalarini oshirish uchun ushbu usulni dars davomida qo'llash usullari batafsil yoritilgan. Bugungi zamonaviy davrda, texnologiyaning taraqqiy etib borayotganligi tufayli darslarni tashkillashtirish qulaylashib bormoqda. Shu sababli, bu maqola UDL metodining ahamiyati va talabalarning til ko'nikmalarini yaxshilash bilan bog'liq bo'lgan ushbu metodning tamoyillarini atroflicha o'rganadi.

Kalit so'zlar: UDL metodi, til o'rganuvchilar, til ko'nikmalari, erkinlik, inklyuziv ta'lim.

УЛУЧШЕНИЕ ЯЗЫКОВЫХ НАВЫКОВ СТУДЕНТОВ ПУТЕМ ПРИМЕНЕНИЯ ПРИНЦИПОВ УНИВЕРСАЛЬНОГО ДИЗАЙНА ДЛЯ ОБУЧАЮЩАЯ(UDL) В ОБУЧЕНИИ ЯЗЫКУ (ИСПОЛЬЗУЯ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ КАК ПРИМЕР)

Аннотация

Очевидно, что каждый учащийся использует свои стратегии и принципы для освоения языковых навыков. Для некоторых людей удобнее изучать языки через полкасты или аудио, в то время как другие предпочитают использовать учебники и читать различные книги, связанные с преподаванием языков, чтобы узнать новые языки. Этот документ нацелен на отражение важности метода Универсального Дизайна для Обучения (UDL) и его преимуществ для учителей и учеников. В статье подробно объясняются способы применения этого метода в классах с целью улучшения языковых навыков студентов. С течением времени, благодаря различным технологиям, проведение уроков становится более комфортным и важным с точки зрения спроса на них. Поэтому в этой статье обсуждается значимость UDL и принципы этого метода, связанные с улучшением языковых навыков студентов. С помощью UDL учителя могут создавать равные условия обучения и предоставлять возможности для успеха студентов в их академическом развитии. Кроме того, с использованием принципов Универсального дизайна для обучающихся (UDL) педагоги могут содействовать созданию позитивной обучающей среды, которая предоставляет языковым обучающимся большую степень автономии в области их изучения. Чтение данной научной статьи предоставит вам практические примеры и стратегии использования метода UDL в обучении языкам.

Ключевые слова: Метод UDL, изучающие язык, самостоятельность, языковые навыки, инклюзивное обучение

Introduction. Universal Design for Learners (UDL) tackles problems and some barriers in the learning environment, including those commonly encountered by English learners. UDL is a teaching and learning method that is a way of thinking about educating and getting knowledge to give all students an equal opportunity to succeed. Specifically, if teachers apply this method while conducting their lessons, they can provide information in multiple formats, and in various ways. The particular reason for this circumstance is that learners are divided into three groups, as defined by teacher Neil Fleming: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic.

The read-and-write types of learners also complete Fleming's Vark method. When teachers have all these types of students, it is the best way to use UDL to teach them. The main aim of UDL is to remove barriers in the learning process and tailor instruction to the needs and skills of each student in the class. Teachers establish an inclusive and equitable learning environment by applying UDL, which enhances language acquisition[1]. Moreover, this method's principles can foster students' motivation and engagement, supporting diverse language learners.

Materials and methods. Qualitative and secondary data analysis methodologies were used in this research to identify the benefits of the UDL method in improving students' language skills. In UDL classrooms, students are allowed to use multiple options, which they prefer, in order to understand the theme, while in traditional classrooms, they may have only one way to complete the assignments. For example, when teachers apply UDL, they allow their students to create a podcast or a video to

show what they understood from the lesson. Students may also be permitted to draw pictures or create posters to indicate their insight on the topic. However, in traditional classrooms, students may have only one way to submit their assignments, such as by writing essays or completing worksheets, and they may struggle academically by doing these tasks. Therefore, many educators ought to apply UDL in order to enhance students' language skills. Additionally, UDL promotes classroom flexibility, through individual work, small and large teamwork, and a group instruction environment for students.

Teachers help students engage with learning by providing them with lots of choices and autonomy and by incorporating their interests. We often witness that only some students understand whole-group instruction very well. Some students need help understanding what the teacher is explaining to the group[2]. In this case, we conducted lessons in two ways in order to identify whether UDL would help students achieve higher scores in language learning. For the first class, we prepared traditional materials for the lesson, such as textbooks and worksheets for doing tasks related to the topic. The theme was explained to the whole group, and some instructions were given to the students. However, in the UDL class, several materials - short videos, play cards, songs, and visual materials such as posters - were gathered for students to use to teach the topic. So, students had access to different materials they might need. However, there were also certain places where the students could do certain types of work. For example, we created a place for group discussion by gathering chairs together and setting them in a round shape. What we found by applying UDL principles was that some students were more drawn to certain types of audio materials, such as podcasts by their favorite speakers; some were interested in hands-on activities, whereas others were very good at group discussions. Conversely, through the traditional approach, it was complicated to incorporate students' interests and identify what activities they were good at. What is also notable is that some of the students had some difficulties with completing worksheets, as they did not understand the topic very well. As a result, students are unlikely to develop their language skills by using traditional methods. However, teachers can eliminate the difficulties and barriers students face in language learning lessons by applying UDL principles.

Research in neuroscience says that our brain has three networks:

Recognition networks. These networks are about how we categorize the data we receive and gather facts about what we see, hear, and read. Namely, this network of brains is about the "what" of learning.

Strategic networks. This is about the "how" of learning. Through this network, we can plan and perform tasks. We can also express our ideas and opinions on different topics, such as by writing essays or using problem-solving skills.

Affective networks. This network of brains is about the "why" of learning. In this network, we gain motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

Having a closer look at UDL concepts, we are able to know that there are three core principles of UDL:

Multiple means of representation
Multiple means of action and expression
Multiple means of engagement[3].

Multiple means of representation address how the learners understand the topic and comprehend the information that the teacher gave. Language learners process and analyze the data in several ways relating to their abilities, educational background, language skills, and others. This principle in the UDL method is about supplying students with diverse ways to access and engage with different course materials and information. The main goal of representation in UDL is to support students in using multiple materials and representations, offering flexibility in presenting information for teachers as well. Multiple means of action and expression in UDL inspire students to demonstrate their learning through various forms, such as papers, handouts, projects, multimedia, concept maps, etc. Namely, this principle offers diverse ways to express students' understanding and skill development in the classroom. As a result, students can organize, plan, and initiate purposeful actions in the learning environment.

Multiple means of engagement in UDL encourage students to study and sustain enthusiasm for learning. Multiple means of engagement build understanding by providing various options for maintaining persistence. By applying multiple means of engagement teachers can foster collaboration and community among students and give mastery-oriented feedback by applying the multiple means of engagement principle of UDL[4].

We also combined advanced tools for enhanced learning in language teaching classes, as students can access to different devices to improve their language skills. Some developed information technologies can help both students and teachers as a whole. In UDL, if teachers apply several technologies to their classrooms, students are provided with multiple ways to interact with the content, and they are able to show what they have learned through using them. What is also apparent is that using technology within classes is gaining popularity and becoming increasingly crucial among students and teachers. Therefore, here, we provide some of the most valuable technologies for classes to apply while using the UDL method.

Interactive smart boards are largely interactive screens that teachers can use to enhance the learning environment. This type of technology is essential in classes because students have access to this device instead of using computers individually or excessively looking at their textbooks. The particular reason is that some students are better at working with papers, but others prefer using different devices to learn something. The smart boards are beneficial for classes, and unlike other whiteboards, they are not drawn by real or regular markers, and they do not need to be constantly cleaned.

E-books are another useful information technology for classrooms because they are available in digital form. Some students feel more accessible when they work with smart devices rather than looking at their usual books, as they quickly become bored. Another beneficial aspect of e-books is that they are much cheaper compared to actual books, and multiple books can be stored on one device as well.

Using headphones is also crucial for students who are audience members and prefer working with audio or video materials. In the UDL method, as every student learns the lesson in their preferred way, headphones will help them not disturb others[5]. Additionally, several studies have shown that listening to music or learning through videos and audio improves students' cognitive performance, increases motivation and concentration on a particular topic, and reduces stress levels.

We also found different digital tools and resources to deliver diverse language input and support learning styles. Teachers can use the following resources to provide a diverse range of language input:

Language learning apps are one of the best ways for students who favor using online apps to learn a specific language. There is a wide range of apps for language acquisition, such as Duolingo, Elsa Speak, Babbel, Mondly, Rosetta Stone, Busuu, and others. These types of language-learning apps improve memory and brain function. Moreover, children always feel energized and motivated when learning languages through these apps, which are designed to make the learner interested in the tasks.

Results and analysis. Because UDL gives all students the same and equal opportunities to learn and succeed, students are allowed to use a wide range of materials. They are provided with a variety of techniques. Several students have different levels of learning or approaches to learning languages. If teachers apply for UDL in classrooms, all students can have access to learn equally and achieve higher results. The two types of lessons we conducted to identify the significance of UDL principle represented different results.
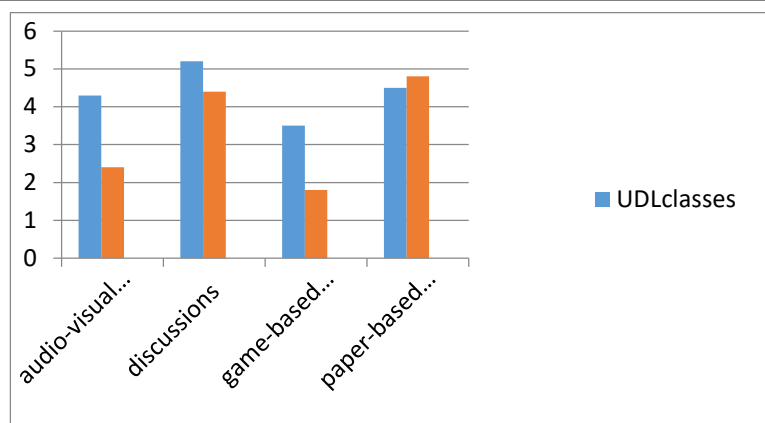
The research was conducted using four types of techniques (using several videos and podcasts, organizing discussion groups in the classroom, having different games based on the topic, and preparing paper-based activities for students), which can boost students' learning abilities. As evident from the bar chart, most students who engaged in these techniques got higher scores in UDL classes[6]. The main reason for getting high scores is that the environment in the UDL classes allowed students to work freely since there were all types of materials from which students could choose according to their preferences. Conversely, in ordinary classes, students had a lack of understanding on a particular topic as the theme was explained to the whole group. Furthermore, they had problems working with various materials, such as podcasts. As a result, they received lower scores for listening tasks because they never used these principles before.

Regarding debates, ordinary classroom students participate in discussions less actively. Because students who study in typical lessons were not used to having debates in small groups, they needed help expressing their ideas appropriately. In contrast, ordinary class students showed higher results compared to UDL class students in working with paper-based activities, as they had applied this method before. What is more interesting from the results is that UDL classes allowed students to show good commendation and knowledge of the subject matter, demonstrating breadth and depth of mastery in understanding the new theme. We experienced that students who used to engage in UDL classes had self-confidence and demonstrated leadership ability. In contrast, ordinary class students used only the same learning methods, which led to lessons' inefficiency.

Discussion. Many researchers conducted their research based on the Universal Design for Learning and its principles. Davis Rose, co-founder and Chief Education Officer at CAST (Centre for Applied Special Technology), has been at the forefront of UDL research and advocacy[7]. Dr. Rose's work has grown into a new field named Universal Design for Learning. His research delves into the cognitive science behind UDL, and his book, "Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning" gives detailed information about this method. David Rose has expressed various opinions about UDL based on his extensive research and advocacy for inclusive education. According to Dr. Rose, UDL plays a pivotal role in promoting equity and inclusion in education. He emphasizes the importance of creating learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students, ensuring that every learner has equitable access to a high-quality education. Dr. Rose acknowledges that the role of technology in supporting UDL implementation and providing learners with innovative tools and resources to access and engage with content effectively is also essential. Overall, David Rose's opinions on UDL underscore the importance of creating an inclusive, accessible, and engaging learning environment that meets the needs of all learners. His advocacy for UDL principles continues to shape educational practices, inform policy decisions, and promote effective teaching strategies that benefit students with diverse learning profiles. Another researcher, Thomas Hehir, who is a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has been a proponent of UDL in inclusive education[8]. His research on UDL focuses on how UDL principles can benefit students with disabilities and diverse learning needs, promoting access to high-quality education for all students. Similarly, Dr. Thomas Hehir also advocates for UDL to promote equity and access to education.

Conclusion. Researchers highlight the importance of providing all students, including those with disabilities and diverse learning needs, equal opportunities to engage in the classroom. Thomas Hehir recognizes UDL as a framework that addresses learner variability by offering multiple means of representation, action, expression, and engagement. Furthermore, he also encourages partnerships and community engagement to create a supportive and conducive educational environment that benefits all learners. Dr. Thomas's advocacy for UDL aligns with the broader goal of promoting inclusive education practices that empower all learners to reach their full potential.

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