

TEACHING AND MOTIVATING SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS STUDENTS

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Introduction

Israeli schools for children with special education needs (SEN) implement methodology proposed by the National Association for people with learning disabilities (LD). SEN should be identified as early as possible so that lessons and methods will aid students' behavior and learning ability. Although there are only eight students in SEN classes, each needs an individual approach because each one has different needs. Specific individual programs are composed in accordance with the students' learning styles in order to develop learning skills, which are necessary for the final exams and their further studies.

Concentration and Motivation

The research in both educational theory and cognitive psychology claims that not all SEN students are the same, and they have different learning styles. "Students preferentially take in and process information in different ways: by seeing and hearing, reflecting and acting, reasoning logically and intuitively, analyzing and visualizing, steadily and in fits and starts" (M. Felder,

2002). That is why teaching methods vary. Nevertheless, "the key to motivating the child with attentional problems is to modify and adjust the learning environment" (Lavoie, 2015). Many SEN students find it difficult to focus in class, especially those with both dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Therefore, distractible children should sit far from the windows and close to the teacher, who should reduce the level of distraction in the room. Pre-listening and pre-reading activities, as well as pair-work, group-work, and class discussions, can interest and motivate pupils with ADHD.

Students Who Still Refuse to Study

Some students are very challenging and refuse to participate in the lessons. They answer back and complain that they are tired or have a difficult time. In this case, teachers should ask them general questions about the weather, news, and other topics, so that they will get involved in the spoken activities. To provoke their interest in learning, teach them proverbs, such as "No

pain – no gain,” “London wasn’t built in a day,” “Practice makes perfect,” or tell jokes in English. Nevertheless, students with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) might misunderstand proverbs and react inadequately, so explain their meaning. Table games, such as dominos, snakes and ladders, or bingo keep SEN students busy and involved in the classroom activities. You can also show them a film without translation. Allow them to download specific apps and do some exercises on their mobile devices, to motivate learning.

Traditional and Modern Ways of Teaching

Remedial teachers can teach SEN students with the help of traditional textbooks and notebooks, as well as learning technology. If textbooks are still used in the class, teachers should read the texts and the instructions aloud because sometimes LD students have extreme difficulty with silent reading. Children affected by dyslexia have difficulties with reading and writing, so they can learn new information through pictures, diagrams, and other visual aids. These can aid reading comprehension significantly and motivate students. Since many dyslexic students are good at art, they can prepare their own pictures and share them with classmates. Multisensory teaching is highly recommended, so remedial teachers should teach the language using visual, auditory, mnemonic, tactile and kinesthetic strategies to enhance the children’s memories.

Learning technology has contributed greatly to learning. A great deal of research shows that visual learning tools help students with dyslexia and ADHD retrieve and remember information better. Technology tools are especially useful for students with dysgraphia, for whom typing is much easier than writing with pen and paper. Therefore online ESL lessons, in addition to traditional ones, are widely used in Israeli SEN schools. “Technology use can be a key factor for some students in turning a learning disability into a learning difference” (O’Connell et al).

Class computers and projectors work well for frontal lessons. Audio-video activities make lessons exciting and pique the students’ curiosity. They like singing, so they can pick up vocabulary from songs on YouTube and learn grammar. You can also give them some self-check tasks to complete on their personal devices in order “to complete the task and to bypass an area of difficulty”

(Young and McCormack 2014).

Conclusion

SEN students face greater challenges in EFL learning than their peers and need more support from their teachers, who can teach both traditional lessons with printed textbooks and computerized ones. With the help of variety of methods and creativity, teachers can prepare interesting, motivating and success-oriented lessons to help SEN students succeed in school and get a university degree.

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