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Researching the foreign language learning styles of students in different departments

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Abstract

This research has been carried out to determine language learning styles of college students' in different sections and to determine how to teach it better. Population of the study is Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, while the sample group is composed of students studying at Physical Education and Sports and Classroom Teaching departments. Research data have been collected through written sources and survey method. The questionnaire has been applied to the students of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade classes randomly only after its understandability, scope validity and reliability have been tested. In this way, the research has included a total of 199 students, 93 of whom study at Physical Education and Sport, while 106 of whom are classroom teaching students. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the questionnaire has been found 0.65. This is a current value of a coefficient according to the researchers. After the collected data have been coded in an appropriate statistical environment, frequency (f), percent (%), cross-tables have been applied as statistical operations, and to test the differences chi-square (X²) operation has been conducted. As a result of the operation, to determine (%) distributions and to detect differences in opinions for each question, comments have been made upon by accepting 0.05 as confidence interval. In conclusion, we can say that students, in general, learn better by reading, talking, listening, writing, through visual items and solving examples and we can also say that current English teaching method is not efficient according to the collected data.

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Introduction

Innovations occur rapidly in all areas in today's era of science and technology. In parallel with this rapid growth is seen the rapid learning and teaching. There are several physical, social, psychological and environmental factors which affect the individual before and during learning phase.

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In studies conducted on the subject, we revealed important data about the complex structures that affect the capability and willing to undertake the responsibility of the academic success of students (Zimmerman, 1994).

Learning strategies, according to Derry and Murph, a plan that requires the knowledge of a variety of learning skills and tactics; to Mayer, they are students' behaviours for deciding how to process the data and effectively fulfill them. Weinstein described learning strategies as which students use during learning and also the behavior and thoughts for influencing the process of encoding information. Wittrock regarded learning strategies as techniques which transfer the senses to short-and long-term memory and the stimulate these senses in long-term memory of the individuals while learning (Erden & Akman, 1995; Acikgoz, 1996).

The technological developments taking place in the world, social, cultural, scientific innovations, do not reflect new information in the training programs at the same pace. Keeping pace with developments for the individuals and reaching new information, therefore, starts carry to a different significance. In today's world in which learner-centered teaching processes is repeatedly emphasized, individuals are expected to reach information; use the information by interpreting and they are also expected to put forward new information in the light of available information. Individuals should be aware of how they learn to become equipped with these features.

There are two important differences about how the information is learned. The first of them, how we perceive information, and the second, how we treat the information that we perceive. Each of us perceive the facts distinctively, we insert them into our minds in different ways. Some of us realize the truths by feeling, some through watching, some with thinking, some of us realize by doing. (McCarthy, 1987; Morris & McCarthy, 1990; McCarthy, 2000).

The fact that individuals become aware of how they learn, how they reach information, interpret and use that information and put forward new information in the light of available information can be possible with the fact that they must learn learning as well as short and concise narrative learning strategies. Learning strategy is defined as each of techniques which facilitate self-learning for the individual (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986).

One of the most important reasons behind the failure of students is stated to be student's lack of skills and attitudes towards course work (Küçükahmet, 2000).

Study skills usually are usually examined under the headings of work plans, work environment, regulation, effective reading, lecture listening, note-taking, effective writing skills, participating in class actively, homework, preparing for exams and tests entry (Crow, 1968; Dodge, 1994; Lewis & Doorlag, 1999; McEwan, 1996; Smith, 2000, Thomas, 1993; Yeşilyaprak, 2000; Yıldırım et al., 2000).

It is known that there are many physical, mental, social, psychological and environmental factors which affect study habits of students. Together with these factors, the goals and objectives of individuals, the differences in school program and the difficulty level of the course can also affect the way they work, and so there may be differences in perception and learning situations of the course.

The need for foreign languages is also increasing with each passing day. According to the requirements we cannot say that we are successful in foreign language teaching. This failure is attributed to many reasons. However, as the concept of learning is regarded better than teaching a foreign language today, it is, therefore, accepted that a student must take an active role in the process of learning rather than a teacher (Gündüz, 2004).

Based on this information in our study, we have tried to determine foreign language learning styles of students studying at different levels and how the language can be taught best.

1. Material and Methods

This has been performed to determine college students' foreign language learning styles studying different sections and study aimed to determine how the foreign language can be better taught.

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