

Learner Variables

Reflection Statement

Learning a language can be a stressful endeavor. Firstly, there are so many different beliefs about language learning in existence and I feel the need to address them at the beginning of class. Not only will students get to know each other, but will also quickly realize that there might be others who feel the same way or find it interesting that their peers have absolutely different opinions. This exercise will be a first step to help students feel confident in the classroom. In addition, by sharing my beliefs and philosophies about language learning students will know what I expect from them. And I as a teacher have a better understanding of where their attitudes toward language learning are coming from. This will also help to create activities which address certain aspects of their beliefs and will create a more enjoyable and relaxed classroom atmosphere. The second part of this activity is collecting personal information from the students. This also helps me in focusing on students' needs e.g. why they learn a language, what their interests and hobbies are. Using their personal information I can create activities for the classroom and homework that interest my students. This way they will be more motivated when working on assignments because it is appealing to them, but they also comprehend materials better if they are of interest to them.

Teaching Portfolio - Language Teaching Materials - Learner Variables

ASSIGNMENT TOPIC: First/ Second Day (Beliefs about Language Learning)

Level of language: any level

Goal: Get students think about their beliefs of language learning; share with students your teaching philosophy and get to know students

Class Outline:

This activity or exercise should be done at the beginning of the semester. It can be done at every level. Students receive a handout (refer to HO1-Beliefs about Language Learning). Students fill it out. Afterwards the entire class discusses the results and shares their beliefs. In addition, the teacher shares his/her belief about language learning or their teaching philosophy with the students. Furthermore, students fill out a second handout (refer to HO2-Personal Information). I will also show a movie that I created with my peers at the University of Kentucky during my Master's studies. This video address certain misconceptions about Germany in a fun way and might motivate students in the classroom because it gives them examples for why German can be more than just a language requirement.

HO1 BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

PART ONE

Read each of the following statements and decide if you: 1. strongly agree, 2. agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4. disagree, 5. strongly disagree

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language
 2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.
 3. Some languages are easier to learn than others:

English is a) very difficult

- b) difficult
 - c) a language of medium difficulty
 - d) an easy language
 - e) a very easy language

4. Italian L1 speakers are good at learning languages in general
 5. It is an advantage being a bilingual when learning another language
 6. It is necessary to know about English speaking cultures in order to speak English well
 7. It is important to have excellent pronunciation when speaking English
 8. The most important part of learning a language is vocabulary
 9. There is a right and a wrong way to learn a language
 10. My own approach to language learning is very profitable
 11. It is important to repeat and practice a lot
 12. The most important part of learning is the grammar
 13. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language
 14. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other academic subjects.
 15. Translation has no useful role to play in the language learning classroom.

PART TWO

Answer the following questions

16. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well?
 17. What kinds of activity are most profitable
 - a) in the classroom
 - b) at home
 18. Which activities are most difficult for the teacher?
 19. Do you think it is worthwhile spending time on pronunciation during lessons?
 20. Do you always understand why you are doing a certain exercise/activity?
 21. Do you always try to speak English during the lessons?
 22. Do you like to know the meaning of every single word when you are reading/listening to something?
 23. Do you learn from your mistakes?
 24. Do you learn from other people's mistakes?
 25. Do you prefer grammar to be explained in your L1 or in English with lots of examples?
 26. What particular strategies, if any, do you use to learn languages?

HO2: Personal Information:

Your Name: _____

1. Why do you want to learn German?

2. Have you had German before?

3. Do you have family members that come from German speaking countries?

4. What is your major/minor?

5. What are your hobbies?

6. What are your interests?