

Kinaesthetic Method in Apprenticeship Training: Support for Finnish Learning in Vocational Education

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Abstract : The purpose of this study is to shed light on what is it like to study in apprenticeship training using Finnish as second language. This study examines the stories and experiences of apprenticeship students learning and studying Finnish as part of their vocational studies. Also, this pilot study examines the effects of learning to pronounce Finnish through body motions and gestures. Many foreign students choose apprenticeships and start vocational training too early, while their language skills in Finnish are still very weak. Both duties at work and school assignments require reasonably good general language skills (B1.1) and, especially at work, language skills are also a safety issue. At work students should be able to simultaneously learn Finnish and do vocational studies in a noisy, demanding, and stressing environment. Learning and understanding new things is very challenging under these circumstances and sometimes students get exhausted and experience a lot of stress - which makes learning even more difficult. Students are different from each other and so are their ways to learn. Thereafter, one of the most important features of apprenticeship training and second language learning is good understanding of adult learners and their needs. Kinaesthetic methods are an effective way to support adult students' cognitive skills and make learning more relaxing and fun. Empirical findings show that language learning can indeed be supported physical ways, by body motions and gestures. The method used here, named TFFL (Touch and Feel Foreign Languages), was designed to support adult language learning, to correct or prevent language fossilization and to help the student to manage emotions. Finnish is considered as a difficult language to learn, mostly because it is so different from nearly all other languages. Many learners complain that they are lost or confused and there is a need to find a way to simultaneously learn the language and to handle negative emotion which come from Finnish language and the learning process itself. Due to the nature of Finnish language good pronunciation skills are needed just to understand the way the language work. Movements (body movements etc.) are a natural part of many cultures but not Finnish - In Finland students have traditionally been expected to stay still and that is not a natural way for many foreign students. However, kinaesthetic TFFL method proved out to be a useful way to help some L2 students to feel phonemes, rhythm and intonation, to improve their Finnish and, thereby, also to successfully complete their vocational studies.

Keywords : Finnish, fossilization, interference, kinaesthetic method

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