

Discovering Abilities

An Individual Approach to Foreign Language Teaching in Inclusive Environment

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Abstract—The purpose of this article is to discuss the ways of creating inclusive learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities. The article focuses on the development of multiple learning resources and multifunctional methods of teaching and assessment based on current research in the field of language acquisition and personal experience as a foreign language teacher. The article can be useful for teachers working with blind or visually impaired learners, as well as for those working with students with other special educational needs.

Keywords—*individual approach; foreign language teaching; visually impaired; inclusive environment; brain research*

I. INTRODUCTION

“Every student is unique in his or her strengths and challenges, and it is the job of the teacher to foster highly individualized learning in response to the student. Not the other way around. - Ellen Brandenberger [2]. Examining strengths, weaknesses and preferences of our students, theoretical and practical methods that enhance foreign language acquisition and the activities that positively affect students in inclusive environment provides foreign language teachers with the insight into creating an effective learning environment, based on principles of brain research and inclusive education. Very often our learners even don't realize their strengths and abilities, and one of the basic challenges for a foreign language teacher is to help them find these unique characteristics and to base our teaching methods on them. That refers not only to students with special educational needs but to every other learner in our class. Traditionally, an inclusive class was mint as a general education class in which students with and without disabilities learned together. It was, generally, opposed to a special education, where students with disabilities learned with other disabled students. Being legally blind, I have been teaching Italian language in inclusive environment at the music department of the Russian specialized arts academy for more than ten years. In my classes blind and visually impaired students learn Italian language together with their sighted peers. Normally, even if our students with different educational needs learn together, subconsciously we used to divide them in disabled and non disabled. On the one hand, it helps us to develop new ways of teaching, create new resources and find new approaches to language learning, but, on the other hand, very often it doesn't help us to improve

our teaching methods and to make our learning process more effective. It seems easier to believe that the main difficulties in acquiring a new language are connected mostly with the existing physical characteristics of our students, such as visual or hearing impairment. But very often even students without disability show mediocre academic results and are lowly motivated in learning not only foreign languages, but even other obligatory academic subjects. On the contrary, according to the teaching experience, visually impaired students are often highly motivated and show high academic results in foreign language acquisition. In order to investigate this phenomenon it is necessary to understand the broader sense of inclusion and get a deeper insight into methods of inclusive education. That is why in this article the term "inclusion" is understood in more flexible and broader sense. It implicates many other types of diversity, such as cultural and language differences, age, family background and, what is more important, psychological and mental diversity. Very often teachers try to divide students in good and bad ones according to their academic results, performances or even attendance; others try to treat students equally giving them the same tasks, textbooks and tests. But it is important to understand that every student remains unique in his or her ways of perceiving and learning the material. So there are no regular students, and the simple division in such categories as blind or sighted, disabled or not disabled, talented or not talented, lazy or hardworking is a big simplification that doesn't reflect a real situation that occurs every day in our language classes. The job of a teacher is to understand that each student brings a unique set of strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes in our learning process. Therefore, this broad understanding of inclusion can help us to develop new curricula, textbooks, assessment methods and other educational resources that best suit the needs of our students.

II. THE HUMAN BRAIN RESEARCH

Teaching foreign language is a rather complex task, which requires theoretical knowledge about our brain and certain psychological processes. Teachers working in inclusive environment should be even more attentive to behavioral and mental patterns of their students. Such knowledge enables teachers to increase their effectiveness in their classroom. It has been known that different arias of our brain have different functions, for example the frontal lobes are involved in abstract thinking and the back lobes are

responsible for our vision. Our brain is not fixed at birth but is shaped by experience.

A. *The Research on the Brain Lateralization*

The theory of the brain hemispheres divides our brain into left and right hemisphere, which process information differently. The first one is responsible for language acquisition and logical thinking; the second one is involved in creative tasks, music, arts, remembering faces and images. Normally, language acquisition is meant as a purely left hemispheric process. Consequently, students that tend to learn using their dominant right hemisphere have less chance to succeed in this activity. It's worth remembering that all of my students are musicians, which means, they are likely to be right hemispheric learners. That means these students are expected to show poor results, have low motivation and, as a consequence, low level of language proficiency. They are big "troublemakers" for a teacher, who tries to convey information in clear and logical manner. Therefore, the job of the teacher is not only to give clear and structured information, but also to find a balanced manner, where both types of students would succeed in acquiring and memorizing new material. Here are only some tips that a teacher should know to help the right brain learners.

- The left side of our brain processes information in a linear and sequenced manner, from the separate part to the whole picture, while the right side of the brain processes information from the whole picture to its concrete elements in random order. To help the learners, it is important not only to give them one piece of information that should be memorized at the current moment, but to show the whole picture of the language element and its place in a larger system. For example, we should study not only the present tense verb forms, but we need to show the whole verb system and the place of the present tense forms in it as well. We could do it with the help of pictures and tables, but it is not easy to do it with blind learners who perceive information in sequential mode as well. Possible solution can be found in creation of a story or a scene using the needed material.
- Left hemisphere students enjoy making lists, complete their home tasks in time, while right hemispheric students sometimes have troubles in accomplishing their assignments in time and try to give them at the end of the term. That happens because setting up priorities is not an easy task for them and very often they depend on the situation. In practice, to help our right brain students accomplish home tasks in time we should give concrete dates, explain the importance of the tasks several times, ask students to write them down in their notebooks and in their mental "priority lists".
- Right brain students have often troubles in memorizing the vocabulary and the separate expressions. Therefore, it is better to give them more examples in various contexts, including emotional representation, so they could imagine the whole

picture and memorize it better. We can ask them to pronounce a phrase with different tones, intonations and even gestures.

- Right brain students often have good intuition. They can have excellent results at written tests, but when the teacher asks them to explain their answers they get in trouble. It happens not as a result of cheating off, but due to their intuition, which "points" them correct answers. The only advice here can be not to judge them quickly and be sensitive.
- Left brain students have no problems expressing themselves in words, while right brain students know what they mean but have trouble in finding appropriate words and expressions. Then again it happens not by reason of their low language proficiency, but simply because they have such problems even while expressing themselves in their native language. Just listen to them carefully and help them to find appropriate words and expressions.

These observations may help teachers to be more sensitive to our right brain students. Instead of asking them to memorize quickly the required vocabulary, grammar and to do their homework in time, just find the reason for their "strange" behavior and give advice if needed. Often right brain students can not realize that missing lectures, not handing in homework's in time may have bad consequences for them at the end of the term. As a teacher we should be more attentive to these students, give them feedback frequently. It is recommended to discuss individually their progress, their strengths and weaknesses and what else is needed to be successful in language acquisition. Sometimes they should simply write things down, sometimes draw illustrations or highlight words and expressions. It's a good idea to ask them to make a mental video of what they have heard at the lecture because they usually remember better things they are emotionally involved in. But the knowledge of this theory is not enough to build our teaching methods on.

B. *VAK Theory of Learning Styles*

According to this theory, our learners can be divided into groups according to their preferred channel of perception: visual, auditory or kinesthetic (VAK). The concept is quite simple and can be easily applied in language teaching. Normally, students use all the modalities, but they are likely to have one or two preferred channels (dominant learning styles).

- Visual channel can be divided into two sub channels: linguistic and spatial. Visual linguistic learners prefer textbooks, written notes and handouts. They like to write down information and revise it several times. Sometimes, they can remember not the idea of the text, but how it was written on the page. To help these learners we should use textbooks, workbooks with blank spaces to fill in the missing information, lecture handouts. They can be asked to make a glossary, emphasize the key points of the lecture and do additional reading using either traditional or digital media. Spatially oriented learners may have problems

with written language. They prefer visual aids, such as pictures, tables, graphs or videos. To integrate this learning style into general learning process we can use tables, pictures, videos, leave white space in their notebooks to draw pictures or signs. According to the experience, there are many visual linguistic learners among partially sighted students, even if their vision is low. The problem in this case is that these learners usually are slow at reading and writing, but they can not do without it, because it's their main channel of perception. The only way to help them is to give them more time to read, write and do exercises. We can not rely on their individual work. That is why they should often be controlled by the teacher. We can give them such home tasks as filling in the blanks in the workbook or following the existing language pattern.

- We can recognize auditory learners by talking to themselves or moving their lips. They don't like reading and often read slowly or with mistakes, they prefer others to read. But often they have good pronunciation and are good at reciting poetry. They like talking to their peers and record themselves with the digital recorder. To help these students in learning we can start our lecture by telling what they are going to learn, and at the end of the lecture it is recommended to summarize the material. With auditory learners we can easily use the method of asking questions, brainstorming, group or pair discussion or role-play. Teaching visually impaired students, I noticed that there are many students with well-developed auditory channel, but there are also a great number of learners, blind from birth or early childhood, whose auditory abilities are not high enough. Even if they learn music and have a perfect pitch, their linguistic auditory abilities are rather poor; they can not recognize speech in dialogues, answer questions orally, substituting them with Braille materials. It means that not all students with visual impairment have good auditory skills and we should be attentive developing our adaptive teaching resources.
- Kinesthetic channel can be also divided into two sub channels: kinesthetic (moving) and tactile (touching). During the lecture kinesthetic learners often lose concentration when there's not enough movement. It is advisable for such students to write down notes while listening to the lecture. They may draw pictures, highlight words or expressions. They may scan quickly the text and then read it thoroughly in order to understand it in detail. For such learners a teacher can include activities based on movement, such as appending posters with words in different parts of the room, use colored markers to emphasize key points of the lecture, write down on the blackboard, include activities with toys or subjects, such as pass the toy, learn to use mental visualization. Sometimes it is good to ask them to print materials on computers. They appreciate activities connected with the rhythm, such as rhythmical verb conjugations. There are lots

of tactile oriented students among blind learners. The tactile channel of perception often substitutes the visual one. It is obligatory to give these students Braille texts and workbooks. They cause Braille displays as well. If the tactile channel of perception is developed together with the auditory one, the student is likely to show good academic results in learning the language. We should take it into consideration developing our learning materials.

C. *The Theory of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*

This brain research can also help us to have deeper insight into the understanding of the learning acquisition process. According to the research, conducted by the National Center on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), based on the cognitive learning science, the neuroscience and the works of Lev Vygotsky and Benjamin Bloom, our brain represents a large network of neurons, which is divided into other smaller networks, responsible for performing particular tasks. According to this theory, there are three main areas of the brain that are connected and equally important for the process of learning. They can be divided according to their main function: recognition, strategy and motivation. In the process of learning they are supposed to answer three main questions: what we learn, how we learn and why we learn it. The recognition network enables us to recognize faces, voices, letters, signs, sounds and the world around us. It helps us to give meaning to what we see or hear, the strategy network enables us to plan, execute and monitor our actions and the motivational network helps us to evaluate things and to assign them the emotional meaning. This approach may help teachers to design their lesson plans, regardless of the ability / disability of their students. It provides individuals with equal opportunities to learn.

- Recognition. All the people can recognize objects, sounds, smells and tastes, but we all recognize them in a slightly different way. It happens because our brain is unique and different from any other human brain. That's why every person and every student in our class has his own way of recognition. In foreign language class the great part of the material is presented for recognition. Students should recognize letters, words, texts, audio recordings, even pictures and videos. Recognition process is the key element in our learning system. The first principle of UDL, connected with the recognition process, is called "multiple means of representation", by which we mean the variety of media and methods to illustrate and present new material. It is especially important for visually impaired students, for whom Braille and electronic books remain the leading media in learning a new language. One of the most important aspects of an inclusive environment is equal access to all the resources. Multiple means of representation, which includes large print, Braille, audio recording and electronic formats, is a starting point for creating flexible resources as a part of the inclusive learning environment. So the first and the basic thing we need to do are to provide our class with all the needed

accessible materials. The next important step is providing all our instructions in different formats: write on the blackboard and explain orally, or give handouts and explain. This variety of representational styles allows students with different needs and channels of perception understand better the material.

- **Strategy.** Strategic networks are responsible for our decisions and choices. Strategy is involved in everything we do, starting from drinking a cup of tea and finishing with the decision to marry. Strategic process has several steps: 1. setting a goal, 2. designing an action plan, 3. executing the plan, 4. monitoring of the executed action, 5. correcting or adjusting the actions. Strategic processes are usually parallel; sometimes they have a subconscious nature. The strategic networks, as well as the recognition arias, differ from student to student. Some learners are better at executing, others at monitoring or correcting. The investigation of this phenomenon allows us to develop our teaching methods and apply them in our lessons. The second principle of UDL, connected with strategy, is called "multiple means of action and expression", which means providing students with different opportunities to show what they have learned. In order to do this we may give different tasks and ask students to choose what suits them best. For example, we can offer to do exercises in their workbooks or write an essay, to read and discuss texts in pairs or in group or to read text at home and answer the questions individually, to write a letter to their foreign friend or to learn and act out a dialogue. Some of the very important tasks should be obligatory. This principle may be implied in our assessment system. Teachers can also allow students different ways of testing, such as written tests, online tests, oral presentation or creative tasks.
- **Motivation.** Motivational networks have also an important influence on learning process. We notice that some students are concentrated, others are distracted, some are organized, and others never do their homework. There are many factors that influence these students such as their interest (or the lack of interest), familiarity of the material and its connection with the previously learned material, the emotional state, motivation, mood and many other factors. We intuitively understand that motivation is the key element in the teaching, but this concept is almost neglected in our curricula, lesson plans and teaching materials. The third principle of UDL, based on the motivation, is called "multiple means of engagement", which means offering the choice of tasks and adjustable levels of challenge. The theory of UDL allows us to understand that the simple division of student into categories according to their physical abilities is not enough to base on our teaching system on. Developing our educational resources we should take into consideration at least the differences in recognition and strategy patterns, and understand the huge power of motivation.

D. Multiple Intelligence Theory

The last theory, described in this article, is the multiple intelligence theory developed by the scientist Howard Gardner. This model describes seven separate intelligences: verbal / linguistic, mathematical / logical, musical / rhythmic, bodily / kinesthetic, visual / spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Sometimes natural and existential intelligences are added to the list. These intelligence patterns reflect the panorama of learning styles. All these models are present in everyone, but students tend to be more talented in one or two main arias. Here is the short description of the types of the intelligence and some techniques that we can apply during our lessons.

- **Linguistic (verbal abilities).** Possible activities: asking and answering questions, retelling texts, creating stories, summarizing, recording speech and listening to it.
- **Mathematic (logical thinking and structuring):** writing key words or phrases in logical sequence, dividing text into parts and giving appropriate headings, comparing various materials.
- **Visual / spatial (good imagination and creative thinking):** making a scheme of the material, filling in the tables or blanks, coloring, highlighting most important points of the lecture, imagining material as a big picture or as a film.
- **Music (music abilities and sense of rhythm):** creating a song or a rap with needed materials, speaking with different intonations, accents, emotional states, using music as a background at the lessons, making the rythmized text.
- **Kinesthetic (motor abilities and wish to move):** creating a map of the needed material, adding movement to learning, making the sketch, writing words and expressions on the cards and putting them in different places of the room.
- **Interpersonal (communicative skills and sensitiveness towards the others):** working in groups and pairs, explaining the material to the peers, all kinds of discussions, dialogues and role-plays.
- **Intrapersonal (ability to learn independently):** creating an individual plan of working, setting individual goals, working independently and discussing the results and the progress with the teacher.

III. TEACHING VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

This section of the article deals with factors that influence foreign language acquisition in case of blind or low vision students and the ways of creating supportive materials and teaching methods. It has been noticed in the course of my language teaching practice that very often legally blind people had higher motivation in learning the language and performed better in class, while their sighted peers sometimes were less motivated, missed classes and showed rather average results. I could suppose that it happens

because blind people sometimes have very good hearing ability and develop good memory. Being blind myself I understand that in many situations it is just quicker and easier to memorize numbers, names and other required information than to write it down. I have never met a blind person who carries the Braille slate and stylus with them. Consequently, they get used to memorizing large amounts of the information. Another reason for their academic achievements consists in their educational motivation. From early childhood good parents try to explain to their visually impaired children that education is the only way for them to get a good job and to be successful in life. However, later on I met other visually impaired students, whose performance in class was not as brilliant as I expected. They read slowly and had difficulties in memorizing new vocabulary. But the most interesting point consisted in their inability to listen and to understand oral speech. They preferred things to be written down in Braille. That contradicted with the notion that all visually impaired students had good hearing ability. In my teaching experience I met various students that showed average results being visually impaired, on the other hand, there are lots of sighted students that show excellent results and learn language quickly with high motivation. Nevertheless, there are some general aspects important for every language teacher working with visually impaired students.

- It has been noticed that it becomes impossible for blind and low visual students to grasp texts in a normal structural way, like their sighted peers do. Braille texts are read by fingers, sign by sign. So blind people perceive information in a sequential linear way, which makes impossible several types of reading comprehension tasks, such as scanning or matching. Normal books usually have such elements as columns, graphs, tables or pictures. All these elements should be correctly converted into Braille or digital form because they create huge difficulties for blind people and it is the task of the teacher to minimize them.
- It has been noticed that students with low vision who use magnifiers read text in the same linear way. Their eyes get tired very quickly. That is why they often read slowly with lots of mistakes. In order to achieve good results, teachers should give them more time for doing exercises, make more pauses. The amount of reading for these students should be limited.
- In reading tasks it is not easy for a blind person to find information in the text, even if they have it in Braille or digital format. That is why they try to hold all the information in their memory. As a result, they get tired and sometimes lose concentration after the task. For that reason it is better to use short texts and change activities several times during the lesson.
- Another important aspect is that blind people should be aware of everything the teacher does; otherwise they feel distracted or even offended. If a teacher writes on the blackboard, everything, including the spelling of the words, should be clearly explained. If

a teacher uses body language, shows pictures, images and other visual aids it is necessary to describe and explain it.

- Sometimes listening tasks included in textbooks may cause troubles for blind students, even if they have well-developed listening skills. If they use their computer with screen reading software, it is impossible to read and to listen at the same time in order to answer the question or fill in the gap. Blind students get distracted because they must follow the speaker and listen to their synthesizer, which is almost impossible. The only way of dealing with these tasks is to read all the questions first and hold them in memory. But there should always be extra time for that. These exercises may be very stressful if given at the exams, so it is better to substitute them.
- Large amount of material is usually learned by heart by blind students. It happens mostly due to the fact that these students can not use their visual memory and look quickly through their notes. Even if they write notes of lectures, when they answer at the exams, it becomes difficult to find quickly the needed point. So in most cases they write to memorize.
- It is important to use tactile books and pictures working with children. But for older students it makes almost no sense. Blind people consider all imagery information useless and forget it quickly if it is not connected with their practical experience. For example, if they look at the tactile image of the dog, they will probably not guess it. The majority of information exists in the form of signs or words. That is why it is important to explain from word to possible image, not the other way round. For this reason blind people can be good interpreters. They translate directly from word to word, without taking into consideration images.
- Modern technologies are of great help to blind people. Sometimes there's almost no difference between blind and sighted students in the way they complete several tasks. Blind students should have all the texts and materials in Braille or in electronic format. When they read using screen reading programs, they listen to the text. But, actually, they listen in the same sequential and linear mode, which means they can listen word by word or letter by letter. They can return to the previous sentence or paragraph, if needed. That's why blind people call this process "reading", even if it is a particular kind of listening.
- The attention of the blind students is more focused. They should concentrate on the object of attention to memorize it. But very often blind students memorize texts and speech patterns quicker and better. The thinking process is connected with concrete or abstract concepts. In comparison with sighted peers, blind people can not think using images.

Thus, it is important to notice the following:

- adapt study materials into Braille or electronic format. Electronic format is cheaper and more flexible. After scanning, it's also necessary to recognize the material and to convert images into text. All the material should have linear form, avoiding tables, graphs, columns, pictures or images;
- some types of exercises are difficult or almost impossible to do with blind students, for example: note taking while listening, answering question after a long text, gap filling, matching exercise, scramble sentences, matching pictures and parts of the texts;
- blind students need more time for reading and writing. They percept information in sequential linear format, which is low enough;
- blind students should have all the materials in advance in the preferred format. It means that the language course should be carefully planned. It is impossible to give materials directly at the lesson;
- it is important to explain everything written on the blackboard, to spell words and describe actions;
- it is good to do more conversational tasks, group or pair work. Individual work with teacher is also of a great help;
- it is impossible to use signs of phonetic transcription;
- it is necessary to test first all online resources used in teaching process, not all of them are accessible;
- it is important to be careful using films and videos. In order to do this it the teacher needs to build the atmosphere of mutual help and respect. In this case "watching" films together as well as "describing" pictures together with a sighted peer can result in a huge benefit for both students not only for language purposes but also for understanding each other's personalities.
- individual work is very important. Every student is unique and has his personal needs.

It is important to understand that some students learn differently from others and it doesn't depend on their physical disability. Very often it simply depends on the functions of the human brain.

IV. EXEMPLARY CLASSROOM MODEL

Here are some examples, based on my teaching experience. All of these students are musicians and learn Italian language. Difficult students are of a special interest.

- Aliona, legally blind, reads Braille and is very good at languages. She is highly motivated and wants to use Italian language in different extra class activities, such as correspondence or chatting. She knows computers, but not very good at using them. Her leading perception channels are tactile and auditory. She likes music and languages, but she can not see information written on the blackboard or presented in the videos. Possible solution: access to all learning materials in Braille; oral explanation of every visual content; class and group discussions; pair and group work.
- Margarita, low vision student, reads slowly with lots of mistakes in pronunciation. She has troubles in recognizing speech patterns in oral communication. She relies always on written textbooks and always writes the notes down. Possible solution: a place close to the blackboard; large print materials; constant control; guided exercises based on speech models; working with texts: asking comprehension questions, retelling; doing exercises in the workbook; constant work with the teacher; more time for exercises and tests.
- Andrej, sighted student, lacks motivation. He usually doesn't attend lectures, needs to work hard to get money. Possible solution: clear and well-structured textbook; online tasks; motivating tasks, such as correspondence or participating in online projects; translation tasks; thorough control in the middle and at the end of the term.
- Vladimir, legally blind, doesn't like reading, but listens a lot to the radio. He has well developed auditory skills and is good at speaking. He knows several foreign languages. Possible solution: lectures and oral presentations; extra audio material such as audio books; possibly, electronic materials; class and group discussions; pair and group work.
- Anna, sighted student, is very good at reading and writing. She doesn't know grammar very well but likes different oral and written activities. Possible solution: various forms of group and pair work; exercises in the workbook; individual motivating home tasks such as writing an essay; participation in online projects or correspondence.
- Polina, sighted student, is often distracted. She comes rarely at the lessons and often has difficulty understanding the material. She writes down everything she sees on the blackboard, but doesn't understand its meaning. She can not work at home independently because she lacks motivation. Possible solution: constant and thorough control by the teacher at the lessons; asking questions; participation in pair work; more motivational and easy tasks.
- Maria, legally blind, reads Braille, but cannot identify the meaning of the whole text. She has low language proficiency, but tries to do her best to get a good mark. She can not recognize oral speech patterns and needs to touch everything by hands. Possible solution: Braille materials; asking questions based on the text; retelling; constant control by the teacher; possibly pair work.
- Michael, sighted student, is an ambitious person. Sometimes he misses lectures but does almost all the tasks. He likes to be praised and wants to get a good

mark at the end of the term. Possible solution: challenging tasks such as writing an essay or a letter; additional video course; class and group discussions; group and pair work; control of his workbook in order not to miss any important point.

- Larissa, sighted student, is not good at oral language, but likes writing essays, letters and translates her opera arias very well. Possible solution: individual tasks such as reading a book or writing an essay; participation in online projects or correspondence; involving her in oral work by asking motivational questions; exercises in the workbook; asking to do more translations in order to show them as a model to other students.

These are only some ideas how the discussed system may be applied in our inclusive environment. It is clear that our students need the variety of the media, including large print, Braille, audio and electronic formats. Group, pair and individual work should be included in the curriculum and depend not only upon the requirements of the course but also on the specific characteristics of learners.

V. CONCLUSION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Constant research helps us to develop appropriate resources for teaching Italian language at Russian specialized arts academy, which are designed for students with special educational needs. These resources include textbooks, workbooks, online tests, additional audio materials, two projects and the assessment system. The first and the main principle of our resources is accessibility and variety of the representational media. First of all, we have elaborated books in large print that can be used by students without disability and by students with low vision. Secondly, we have Braille and electronic copies of all the Italian textbooks and resources. Using electronic resources makes possible to modify information by adding images, if needed, changing the font or highlighting the words. Visually impaired students can read these texts in two ways: by using Braille displays (which are rarely used in Russia due to their high cost) and with the help of various screen reading programs. Another very important principle of our resources is their professional orientation. They correspond to all modern standards of high education. The next important principle is modular representation of the material. By modular representation it is meant the division of the entire course material into smaller blocks, which are more flexible. Such division helps students to set concrete goals for each term and to achieve better results on the exams.

Another media used in our learning process is the workbook. From the point of view of the brain theory the workbook is more suitable for people with visual-language channel of perception, but it can also be used by people with tactile or kinesthetic channels of perception. It can be used by people with intrapersonal modality of learning, as well as for students of linguistic, logical and kinesthetic modalities. But it has almost no sense to use it with students of auditory channel of perception. So students with visual impairment and highly developed auditory skills may choose other forms

of work and substitute the workbook with more creative tasks. The workbook is extremely useful for people with low vision, even if they write rather slowly. For other students it's a good means for accomplishing tasks, monitoring, correcting and adjusting information. In comparison with textbooks, workbooks may be more flexible. Their content may change according to curricular modifications or the needs of the students.

Online tests are good for all types of students. Learners can do them at their own pace from home using their computer or tablet. Online tests vary according to the topic of the course. Teachers can use them for testing not only separate topics but the whole course as well. Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended to test the accessibility of all the online resources. They should meet all the criteria of the accessibility for people that use screen reading software. So there should be at least one blind person who can test the resources beforehand and express his opinion.

Assessment is an important component of every teaching and learning process. Apart from traditional oral exam practices, we use a point-rating system, in which students get points for their attendance and different tasks. Point-rating assessment system includes all the principles of multiple strategy and multiple engagement. Students can choose between several tasks that best suit their interests and needs. They can do exercises in their textbooks and workbooks; read a book and then discuss it with the teacher; correspond with a student from another country; write an essay; find the required information in the Internet and analyze it; translate texts; do online tests; write and present orally dialogues, etc. Some of the tasks remain obligatory. If a student wasn't present at the lecture, he must compensate it with other tasks. We suppose that the point-rating system is very flexible and can be adapted to different educational needs of our students.

Lastly, it is worth discussing two projects that are designed to develop creative skills of our students. The first one deals with writing letters to foreign students from different countries, who study Italian language at the beginning level. This project increases motivation even with those students, who was not motivated before. The second project is a book of the written works of our students, which includes essays, dialogues, letters and translations of their musical pieces. This project has become popular with our students. In this project students may work on an individual level.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that brain research is strongly connected to the methods of teaching foreign languages, especially when we deal with students with special educational needs. There's no need to treat them according to their physical characteristics, but we should take into account several particular aspects of their learning system. We should have a deeper insight in mental abilities of our students and to analyze them thoroughly. The principle of multiple representation can help us organize our teaching resources. The principles of multiple strategy and multiple engagement help us to motivate even those students who were previously not motivated at all. Thus, our teaching

process in inclusive environment should be highly individualized.

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