

TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS WITH AUTISM: Montessori-Oriented versus Audio-Lingual Method

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ABSTRACT

Students with special needs specifically those suffering from autism spectrum disorder experience considerable difficulties in learning languages. This, accordingly, requires making more effort, applying further skills and different teaching methods on the part of the foreign language teachers instructing these students. Therefore, this qualitative study was designed to examine the effectiveness of the Montessori-Oriented Method of English language teaching compared to the Audio Lingual Method. To this end, two English language teachers dealing with seven students with autism were selected from two educational centers for autistic children in Iran. Data obtained from interviews with the teachers, observations of language classes, and teaching documents were analyzed to compare the two methods under investigation. The results indicated that both Montessori-Oriented Method and Audio Lingual Method improved the students' English language productive skills; however, the the Montessori-Oriented Method further contributed to enhancing the students' interaction with peers, increasing their motivation and making them more independent. This study yielded some pedagogical implications for teachers, teacher educators and educational material developers of students with autism.

Keywords: *Montessori Method, Audio Lingual Method, English language teachers, autism, English language proficieny.*