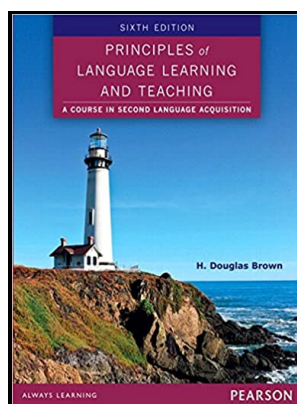


Principles of language study.

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For years to come we shall not secure perfect uniformity and ideal results, but if these nine essential principles are understood and reasonably well observed by the method-writer, course-designer, and teacher, the resultant teaching is bound to be good and the results are bound to be satisfactory. Others conceivably may wish solely to become able to write letters in the language. The same thing holds good in the case of construction, choice of words, etc.

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Concreteness We are enjoined by the principle of concreteness to teach more by example than by precept. At the present day nine essential principles seem to stand out fairly clearly, and may provisionally be named as follows: 1 Initial preparation. This tendency will be greater with some than with others; much depends on the attitude of the student towards the language he is about to learn; he may already have studied other foreign languages, and in doing so may have acquired the wrong attitude towards foreign languages in general.

The principles of language

Nor is that all; not only is his language-material faulty to say the least of it, but his manner of study will probably have impaired very seriously his capacities for any sound form of assimilation. In all these matters, and in other cases as well, we have to consider very seriously two alternatives; we have to weigh the respective advantages and disadvantages, remembering always that our object is to secure rapid but permanent progress. For detailed information on this point we would refer the reader to the statistics which have been compiled by those who have made a special study of this particular subject.

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The capacity for understanding normal, rapid, and even under-articulated speech can only be developed by exercise in listening to such speech, and he will not have had this exercise. One set of prepositions requires the accusative, another the dative, another the genitive, another accusative or dative according to certain semantic considerations. We have seen that unless we enlist these powers in our service we are unlikely to make any real progress in language-study, either in point of quality or quantity.

The Principles Of Language

Nothing is to be gained by speaking at a slower rate; indeed, it will often be found that rapid speech is easier of acquisition than slow speech.

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