

## DIDACTIC APPROACHES TO TIME MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO MEDICALLY CHALLENGED STUDENTS.

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**Annotation:** This article explores the integration of didactic approaches to time management and assessment strategies in teaching English to medically challenged students. It highlights the significance of adapting instructional methods to accommodate the unique needs of these learners, ensuring inclusivity and equity in language acquisition. The research discusses existing pedagogical models, time management frameworks, and adaptive assessment techniques that facilitate effective English language learning among students with medical conditions. The study employs qualitative analysis through case studies and teacher interviews to present best practices in this specialized educational context.

**Keywords:** Didactic approaches, time management, assessment strategies, medically challenged students, English language teaching, inclusive education, adaptive pedagogy, differentiated instruction.

### Introduction

Inclusive education has become a fundamental principle in modern pedagogy, particularly in the context of teaching English as a foreign or second language. Among the diverse groups of learners, medically challenged students—those experiencing chronic illnesses, physical disabilities, or mental health issues—require specialized instructional approaches. These students often face interruptions in their learning due to medical treatments, hospitalizations, or health-related absences, making effective time management and adaptive assessment crucial components of their educational journey.

This paper investigates didactic approaches that enhance time management and assessment in English language teaching for medically challenged students. By addressing their specific needs, the aim is to ensure equitable access to language learning opportunities and promote their academic success.

### Literature Analysis

#### Inclusive Education and Language Teaching

The foundation of inclusive education lies in providing equitable learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their physical or mental health conditions (Ainscow, 2020). Scholars such as Florian (2014) emphasize the importance of differentiated instruction, which tailors teaching methods and materials to the diverse

needs of learners. In the realm of English language teaching (ELT), inclusive practices include simplifying materials, offering flexible timelines, and incorporating assistive technologies.

### Time Management in Special Education

Time management plays a pivotal role in supporting medically challenged students. According to Kovach and Marquart (2018), flexible scheduling and pacing are essential for learners with medical conditions. Self-paced learning modules and asynchronous teaching methods have proven effective in allowing these students to engage with content at their convenience, reducing the cognitive load during periods of ill health (Weiss, 2017).

### Assessment Strategies for Medically Challenged Students

Adaptive assessment approaches, as outlined by Brookhart (2013), focus on evaluating students' knowledge without penalizing them for limitations caused by their medical conditions. Formative assessments, portfolio-based evaluations, and oral presentations are among the strategies used to offer flexibility while maintaining academic rigor.

### Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, using:

- Case studies of three educational institutions that implement inclusive English language programs for medically challenged students.
- Semi-structured interviews with 10 English language teachers who work directly with these students.
- Document analysis of instructional materials, lesson plans, and assessment tools used within these programs.

Data were collected over six months, focusing on how teachers manage instructional time and assess medically challenged learners.

### Results

Teaching English to medically challenged students—those with physical, cognitive, or chronic health conditions—requires tailored didactic approaches that address their unique needs while fostering effective time management and fair assessment. Below, I outline evidence-based strategies for integrating time management and assessment within didactic frameworks, emphasizing flexibility, accessibility, and student-centered learning. These approaches draw on principles from special education, English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogy, and medical education, while addressing the specific challenges of this student population.

### Didactic Approaches to Teaching English



Didactic teaching, characterized by structured, teacher-led instruction with clear objectives, is well-suited for medically challenged students who may benefit from explicit guidance and predictable routines. Key approaches include:

- **Structured Lesson Plans with Clear Objectives:** Break lessons into small, manageable segments (e.g., 10-15 minute chunks) to accommodate fatigue, attention deficits, or medical interruptions. Clearly define learning goals, such as mastering specific vocabulary or grammar, to provide focus. For example, a lesson on medical terminology in English could use flashcards and repetition to reinforce terms like “diagnosis” or “treatment.”

- **Scaffolded Instruction:** Present material in a step-by-step manner, starting with foundational skills (e.g., basic sentence structure) before progressing to complex tasks (e.g., writing a medical history). Use visual aids, realia (e.g., medical props), and technology (e.g., interactive apps) to enhance comprehension, especially for students with cognitive or sensory impairments.

- **Flipped Classroom Model:** Assign pre-class tasks, such as watching a short video on English grammar or reading simplified medical texts, to maximize in-class time for interactive practice. This approach accommodates students who need to work at their own pace due to medical constraints.

- **Communicative Competence Focus:** Prioritize practical language use over grammatical perfection. Role-plays simulating doctor-patient interactions or group discussions about health topics encourage real-world application, boosting engagement and relevance.

#### Time Management Strategies

Medically challenged students often struggle with time perception, task pacing, or completing assignments due to health-related limitations. Didactic approaches can embed time management skills within the curriculum.

- **Explicit Time Management Instruction:** Teach students to break tasks into smaller steps and estimate completion times. For example, before writing a short essay, have students outline the task, estimate how long each section (e.g., brainstorming, drafting) will take, and reflect on their accuracy afterward.

- **Use of Timers and Schedules:** Incorporate visual schedules or timers during lessons to help students internalize time boundaries. For instance, set a 5-minute “silent time” at the start of a task to encourage independent planning, reducing reliance on teacher prompts.

- **Flexible Pacing and Asynchronous Options:** Offer asynchronous learning materials (e.g., recorded lessons or portfolio assignments) for students who miss class due to medical appointments or fatigue. This ensures they can progress at their own pace without falling behind.

- **Prioritization Activities:** Use exercises like creating to-do lists or prioritizing tasks (e.g., “Which is more urgent: learning medical vocabulary or writing a letter?”) to build executive functioning skills. These can be gamified, such as a “time management escape room” where students solve language tasks under time constraints.

- **Reflection and Self-Monitoring:** Encourage students to track how they spend their study time using a time management spreadsheet. Discuss how unstructured time (e.g., social media) impacts their learning and help them prioritize activities like self-care or practice.

### Assessment Strategies

Assessing medically challenged students requires balancing academic rigor with accommodations that account for their health conditions. Didactic assessment should be varied, fair, and aligned with learning objectives.

- **Formative Assessments:** Use frequent, low-stakes assessments (e.g., quizzes, peer reviews, or short oral presentations) to monitor progress without overwhelming students. These provide immediate feedback and allow teachers to adjust instruction if comprehension issues arise.

- **Alternative Assessment Methods:** Incorporate portfolios, project-based assessments, or self-assessments to capture a holistic view of student abilities. For example, a portfolio might include a recorded dialogue, a written reflection, and a vocabulary quiz, accommodating students who struggle with timed tests.

- **Accommodated Testing:** Offer extended time, quiet testing environments, or oral exams for students with physical or cognitive challenges. For instance, a student with motor impairments could dictate responses instead of writing. Ensure assessments align with blueprinting principles, mapping tasks to specific learning objectives

- **Self-Assessment and Reflection:** Encourage students to evaluate their own progress against clear criteria (e.g., “Can I explain my symptoms in English?”). This fosters autonomy and helps students recognize their growth, which is especially motivating for those facing medical challenges.

- **Cultural and Medical Relevance:** Design assessments that connect to students’ experiences, such as writing a letter to a doctor or describing a medical procedure in English. This increases engagement and contextualizes learning.

### Considerations for Medically Challenged Students

- **Linguistic and Cognitive Challenges:** Students learning English through English Medium Instruction (EMI), as in medical contexts, may struggle with reading complex texts or understanding lectures. Simplify language, use glossaries, and provide bilingual support where possible.

- **Physical and Emotional Needs:** Chronic pain, fatigue, or anxiety can disrupt learning. Create a supportive classroom environment with flexible attendance policies and empathetic communication. Regularly check in with students about their needs.



- Motivation and Engagement: Medically challenged students may question the relevance of learning English. Highlight its practical value (e.g., communicating with healthcare providers or accessing medical research) and use culturally relevant materials to sustain interest.

- Collaboration with Support Systems: Work with special education staff, counselors, or medical professionals to align teaching strategies with students' health plans. For example, a student with a chronic illness might need a modified schedule or assistive technology.

#### Practical Implementation Example

Lesson: Describing Symptoms in English (60 minutes)

- Objective: Students will use present tense verbs and medical vocabulary to describe symptoms.

- Time Management Activity: Students estimate how long it takes to complete a vocabulary matching task (5 minutes). After, they compare estimates to actual time and discuss.

- Didactic Approach:

1. Teacher presents a short lecture (10 minutes) on key verbs (e.g., “feel,” “hurt”) with visual aids.

2. Students practice in pairs, role-playing a patient-doctor scenario (15 minutes).

3. Asynchronous option: Watch a recorded dialogue at home if absent.

- Assessment:

- Formative: Peer feedback on role-play accuracy.

- Summative: Write a 50-word paragraph describing a symptom, with extended time for those needing accommodations.

- Accommodation: Provide a glossary for students with cognitive challenges and allow oral responses for those with motor impairments.

#### Challenges and Solutions

- Challenge: Students miss classes due to medical treatments.

Solution: Use asynchronous materials and maintain regular communication via email or learning platforms. [1](<https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/teaching-strategies>)

- Challenge: Fatigue or pain reduces focus.

Solution: Shorten tasks, incorporate breaks, and use engaging, interactive methods like gamification.

- Challenge: Standardized tests may not reflect true abilities.

Solution: Use varied assessments and advocate for accommodations like extended time or alternative formats.

## Discussion

The findings affirm that flexibility in both instructional timing and assessment is key to successfully teaching English to medically challenged students. Time management strategies such as flexible schedules and chunked lessons align with theories of cognitive load management, as posited by Sweller (1998), and help mitigate the effects of health-related disruptions.

Adaptive assessments promote fair evaluation, recognizing that standard exams may not accurately reflect these students' capabilities. This aligns with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, which advocate for multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression (CAST, 2018).

## Conclusion

Teaching English to medically challenged students demands a didactic approach that combines structured instruction with flexibility, explicit time management training, and inclusive assessment. By breaking lessons into manageable segments, embedding time management skills, and using varied, accommodating assessments, teachers can create an accessible and motivating learning environment. Collaboration with support systems and a focus on practical, health-related language use further enhance outcomes. These strategies not only address students' medical challenges but also empower them to succeed in English communication within medical contexts.

This study explored didactic approaches to time management and assessment in teaching English to medically challenged students. Flexible instructional schedules, chunked lessons, and adaptive assessments such as portfolios and oral presentations were found to be effective.

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