

Bringing all students into conversation

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Rezumat

Subiectul articolului se referă la dezvoltarea competențelor de comunicare la studenți. Noi tehnici, de a implica toți studenții în procesul de comunicare, de a dezvolta abilități creative, gândire critică și încredere în sine sunt folosite. Anume la orele de conversație studenții sunt inovativi și imaginativi, ei prompt determină, dacă răspunsul neprogramat este corect sau relevant. Orice act verbal este compus din două activități: comunicare (expunere) și audiere, ori, la lecțiile de conversație, studenții își perfectează abilitățile de audiere, de comportament, cele motivaționale și atitudinale.

The multiple changes taking place in the society today with reference to politics, economy, business and of different other nature make the student communicate, manifest himself, argument requiring from him intelligence and high culture of communication. Consequently, to communicate is an imperative of our times. Since the main and, of course, the ultimate goal of language learning is communication, classroom work should necessarily be directed toward the development of communication skills. Learning a foreign language needs practice, but this practice should be communication practice, not mere pattern practice [5, p.25].

While communicating the student gets pleasure in producing a response which is not only correct from the linguistically point of view but which, at the same time, presents information relevant to himself and other people. Thus, the most important aspect that matters for him is meaning. That is why when we train a new speech pattern, the students, practicing examples that illustrate the new pattern, must pay attention both to the meanings of the sentences and their form, but we teachers should be sure they do this.

It is not enough for the students to give mechanical responses. In such cases other techniques have to be used to lead them into communication. One of them would be the creation of verbal situations relevant to the students' own life and make them think about the meaning and consequences of what he would say in such cases. He must be aware whether his answer is appropriate to the situation and what factors may influence what he would say outside the classroom.

To develop the students' creative abilities is another major task of the teacher. He may require each student to get ready with some questions and answers on the vocabulary and grammar of the already learned speech patterns. The answers will be short, simple, but later some dialogues can develop. The strong point in this kind of work is flexibility and relevance to the classroom situation. Oral short stories including the vocabulary and grammar of the pattern are presented and, in such a way, drawing the attention of the whole class, the material is revised, with all participating in the revision.

To communicate effectively and expressively with others and himself means: to convince; to be able to develop thinking, personality and affectivity; to inform intelligibly and correctly understand the message meaning; to grasp and feel the reactions, attitudes and the receptors' or audience conduct modifications. The speaker must be skilled in evaluating and criticizing his own speech, in other words, to listen to himself as he speaks, to recall what he has said and judge on his own correctness.

“Communication implies novelty. If all responses were predictable, there would be no communication. Therefore, the teacher should train the student to take the proper attitude toward the unknown, both in understanding and in producing speech.”[5. p.31].

It is in classroom conversation that the student learns to be imaginative and innovative. He

learns on the spot whether his unprogrammed response is correct and appropriate. The advantage is that when speaking the student summons all he knows to solve particular problems of expression and understanding. Spontaneous conversation classes lead to the full involvement of every member of the class, though spontaneity is difficult in this sort of situation. At best, a conversation class often consists of a teacher as well as various students for reluctant opinions, and discussion is often confined to a small, interested minority. At worst, the teacher simply finds an opportunity to express all his opinions, and the students' role is confined to vague protest or agreement [6.p.34].

One more great advantage of conversation classes is that they provide opportunities for remedial teaching, that is to go over any mistakes of all kind, let's say, in structure or pronunciation. This is particularly effective at a level where students feel they know a lot and in such a way the teacher can show he has something to teach them.

Anyone who speaks English fluently and who is reasonably inventive, friendly, firm and patient should make a fine conversation leader. A spirit of inventiveness, enthusiastic attitude is essential and also important. Thus we can maintain the lively continuity that is so necessary in conversation classes. A friendly, informal tone is desirable. Yet, one must be firm, when necessary to direct the conversation or to control the group.

Another quality that makes a conversation class successful according to Acy Jackson is patience, necessary in any encounter with students. The teacher (the leader) should put himself in the place of the student, when he had to struggle to express his ideas, at the time he was first learning a new language.

All conversation is composed of two activities: speaking and listening. Listening is far from being a passive activity, it is hard work. During conversation classes the student improves his listening ability if a good listening environment is provided; if the discussed subjects interest the students and if special techniques (exercises) to develop listening skills are used. An English conversation class is considered to be successful when everyone has a chance to talk and everybody sharpens his listening skills, because success in life often depends on how well we listen [1. p.22].

By the time the students reach, either the intermediate or advanced level, they will be accustomed to exchanging ideas through classroom conversation.

Some devices and techniques may be appropriate at all proficiency levels but the way you use them will, of course, depend on the abilities of your students.

In what follows we shall present one technique of how to bring all the students into the conversation class.

To demonstrate a vivid example of interactive communication we have chosen to explore the topic "The World is a Beautiful Place" using the Judicial Process. This discussion strategy is applied because it involves all the students within a class into conversation. To set it up, we randomly gave each student a role. There is a Judge, a Public Prosecutor, an Advocate and a Secretary. The Culprit is the Man. The victims are Nature, Forest, Water, Air, Red Book, Fauna, Ozone. The Public Prosecutor accuses the Man in destroying the Nature, in using it for his own sake and comfort. He presents arguments and invites the Victims to bring their own proofs. The Man tries to stand all the charges. The Advocate takes an active part in defending the Human Being, but anyway he was found guilty and punished.

There is a variety of advantages in using the Judicial Process. The activity implies a wide range of responses. The participants gain knowledge, abilities and fundamental behaviours on the basis of democratic competences and attitudes. They learn through cooperation. The students

have to consult literature and get ready for the process, to work in teams, to apply knowledge in different situations, to be conscious how and where to use the needed material, to make connections, to indentify the problem etc. All these encourage autonomy, stimulate the critical thinking. They reflect, converse, share opinions and the students input is desired and respected. The learning turns into an interactive, self-confident and responsible activity. It becomes motivated and engenders the interest in the actual problems of protecting nature. They are aware of their ideas and deeds, being responsible for the future of the Planet, demonstrating tolerance, affection, sensibility and finally they express their thoughts with accuracy and spontaneously. The teaching-learning is diverse, active and creative both for the teacher and for the students. The heightened participation in class discussions proves the strong motivation of the students. If the teacher provides the students with fresh motivation, showing faith in their abilities, they will try harder in speaking English.

References

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