

## TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO EFL LEARNERS

*Angela PUȘCAȘU, lector superior*

### **Rezumat**

*Folosirea noilor tehnologii în predarea unei limbi străine a devenit tot mai populară în ultimul timp. Este bine știut faptul că materialele audio-vizuale sunt de mare ajutor în predarea limbii străine. Ele stimulează și facilitează predarea și învățarea unei limbi străine. Studenții de astăzi sunt născuți în perioada noilor tehnologii informaționale, comparativ cu studenții precedenți. Iată de ce profesorii sunt nevoiți să-și ajusteze metodele și strategiile de predare conform noilor cerințe ale societății moderne de astăzi, pentru a motiva studenții să învețe. Metodele tradiționale de predare continuă să fie folosite cu succes mai departe, deoarece o limbă străină este predată și învățată cu succes numai integrând cele două metode: metoda tradițională și cea netradițională. Un profesor de succes știe a selecta metodele în așa fel ca să motiveze studentul și să-l pregătească pentru viața de mai departe de adult.*

Teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) who want to develop successful lessons face numerous challenges, including large class sizes and inadequate instructional materials and technological support. Another problem is unmotivated students who refuse to participate in class activities. Uncooperative and unmotivated students are a serious problem and can easily disrupt the instructional process.

Often, routine activities structured around whole class lectures and drills can contribute to the lack of motivation, especially when the students are children or adolescents. As many teachers know, project-based tasks alleviate this problem by allowing students to use their imagination and creativity and actively express themselves in a variety of interesting and enjoyable tasks. As teachers, we continue to search and explore new ways to design and deliver instruction in order for our students to reach their learning potential, starting them from where they are and moving them forward on a learning continuum. But for many of students, the traditional approaches to learning seem limiting and many of them feel frustrated and discouraged [1, p. 9].

Our language classrooms are tapestries of the world around us. Students come to us with varying ability levels, a myriad of language and cultural backgrounds, an abundance of interests, and an assortment of learning profiles. These students need inspiring, engaging lessons that will permit them to reach their highest potential and meaningful tasks that are relevant both to them and to the world in which they live. These students need variety, choices, challenges, complexity and opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities.

Learners nowadays think and behave differently than those from previous generations. These students were born into a world of information technology, they prefer to multitask rather than focus on one thing at a time, and they can be attracted to the ideas of a peer or a web video than what their teachers have to offer. To increase motivation for these students to work, we as teachers need to get students moving and include visuals when teaching English. Teachers need to update their teaching strategies. They need to adopt more technology-based tasks, to include visual content and provide the opportunity to be physically active in the classroom. If students are not given ample opportunities to practice and to receive feedback, then the classroom experience wanes in comparison with learners' personal lives. The relationship between teacher and student becomes more tenuous, and student interest in learning drops. English teachers must ask themselves how to combine most effectively the value of personal interaction with the glittery attraction of the digital world [4, p. 36].

Some teachers might object to this call to change. Why should we teachers adjust to our students' expectations? This may be true. Teachers and students may need to meet each other halfway. The problem is that often both parties operate in ways that do not take the needs of the other into consideration.

Having many years of experience does not guarantee expert teaching. Experience is useful only when the teacher continually engages in self-reflection and modifies classroom techniques to better serve

the needs of students. Teachers must prepare to teach a wide range of students in terms of interest, motivation and ability, some of whom may need additional assistance. Effective teachers assess needs, abilities and preparedness on a class-by-class basis and respond to these needs accordingly.

Effective teachers adjust their lessons based upon the needs and abilities of their students. They always keep abreast of development in their field or discipline and incorporate these ideas into their lessons. They also organize the material in such a way as to best facilitate learning. Good teachers formulate specific goals and objectives and then select the best methods for meeting those objectives. They establish a productive learning atmosphere and use effective communication skills.

To teach is to engage students in learning; thus teaching consists of getting students involved in the active construction of knowledge. A teacher requires not only knowledge of subject matter but also knowledge of how students learn and how to transform them into active learners. The aim of teaching is not only to transmit information but also to transform learners from passive recipients of other people's knowledge into active constructors of their own. That's why it is very important to combine traditional and non-traditional methods of teaching; to use these old and new strategies when teaching and create a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom [2, p. 29].

What is effective teaching and who are effective teachers? The components of effective teaching are as follows:

1. knowledge of basic principles and procedures (pedagogical theory);
2. planning and preparation;
3. teaching experience (practice);
4. self-reflection and modification of techniques;
5. flexibility.

Learning is a social process, students interact with each other, they work together, construct and share what they have learned. We need to be experimenting with new methods in education, so that we are better able to adapt to the dynamics of our changing world. Games, simulations and social networking are already permeating our workplace as productive and development tools. But we don't need to wait for the distant future to understand if and how we can implement these technologies. Students today are using these technologies now. It is teachers who are building the steps towards the future. Young people learn best when it's relevant to them, when there's social connection tied to it, and when they actually have a personal interest.

### **Bibliography**

1. Brown, H. D., Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Prentice Hall, 1994.
2. Deborah, J., Innovative Classroom Techniques, TESOL Series II, 1999.
3. Harmer, J., The Practice of English Language Teaching, Longman, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2007.
4. Sharma, P., Using the Technology in and Beyond the Language Classroom, Macmillan, 2007.