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METHODS AND PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Annotation. The author opens an essence of the concepts in the context of the all-educational purposes of the principles of teaching English as a Foreign Language. It is also given classroom implications in this article.

Key words: Communicative competence; principle; conscious approach; automaticity; meaningful learning; anticipation of reward; intrinsic motivation.

The aim of teaching English at school is to teach students how to use English for communicative needs. One of the main methodological principles is the Principle of Communicative Competence. It means that students should be involved in oral and written communication throughout the whole course of learning English. Communicative goals are best achieved by giving great attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and not just parallel structures. Some classroom implications of this principle are evident. Teachers try to keep every technique that they do as authentic as possible.

Goals of foreign language programs vary, depending on the nature of the language taught and methodological preferences. Since there are many different approaches to teaching a foreign language, you will need to work closely with your course supervisor to ensure that your instruction is compatible with your department's approach.

Research suggests that a key factor in effective language teaching is the creation of a comfortable classroom atmosphere. Somewaystodothisinclude:

- Assure students at the beginning of the course that it is normal to make errors and that they need not be afraid to respond in class.
- Provide plenty of positive feedback.
 Even when responses are incorrect,
 look for ways to comment positively
 before correcting.
- Correct selectively and carefully so as not to intimidate students.
- Use pair work, group work and quick writing tasks to provide students with "thinking time" before conducting large-group activities.
- Arrange for students to meet with you during your office hours for short, individual conferences. Some students find this one-to-one situation less stressful than speaking in front of a group. Such meetings can also increase student-instructor rapport, which, in turn, may increase students' comfort with participating in class.
- Encourage equal participation by all students, so more-advanced students don't intimidate weaker students.

Use language that students will actually encounter in the real world. Remember that



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someday your students will no longer be in your classroom. Make sure you are preparing them to be independent learners and manipulators or users of English "out there". The Principle of an Integrated Approach Students do not assimilate sounds, grammar units, lexical items as discrete components of the language, but they acquire them in sentence-patterns, and pattern-dialogues related to certain situations. Students should use their skills as interdependent parts of their language experience.

The Principle of Conscious Approach Students under- stand both the form and the content of the material they are to learn. Students are also aware of how they should treat the material while performing various exercises. Such an approach to language learning usually contrasts with "mechanical" learning through repetitive drill. The Principle of Activity This principle implies that mastering English is only possible if the student is an active participant in the process of learning. From psychology we know that activity arises under certain conditions. First of all, the learner should feel a need to learn the subject (in our case is a foreign language). The main sources of activity are motivation, and interest. The Principle Visualization — Visualization may be defined as a specially organized demonstration of linguistic material of the target language. Since pupils learn a foreign language in artificial conditions and not in real life, as in the case when children acquire their mother tongue, visualization should be extensively used in foreign language teaching. Visualization implies an extensive use of audio-visual aids and audio-visual materials throughout the whole course of foreign language teaching. The Principle Systematic Teaching Every work that is not done purely mechanically requires systematic

approach to work implementation. The teaching of English must be systematic and very carefully planned. This means that the whole course and each lesson must be conducted according to a well-thought program or outline of the lesson. The Principle of Accessibility This principle implies the subject-matter of the instruction must correspond to the age and mental abilities of the learners; be neither too difficult not too easy for them (the material should be slightly above student's level); and be neither too much nor too little

Automaticity Now we will take a look at a set of principles which is called "cognitive" because the principles relate mainly to mental and intellectual functions. Evidence of the success with which children learn foreign languages is difficult to dispute, especially when children are living in the country where this language is spoken. We attribute children's success to their tendency to acquire language subconsciously, which is without analyzing the forms of language. They learn the language without thinking about it. This childlike processing is sometimes called automatic processing. So, in order to manage the incredible complexity of language, learners must move away from processing language unit by unit and piece by piece, to an automatic processing in which language forms must be on the periphery of attention. Overanalyzing language by thinking too much about its forms and rules hinder the graduation to automaticity. What does this principle say to you as a teacher? Here are some possibilities. • Make sure that a large proportion of your lessons are focused on the use of language for purposes that are as genuine as a classroom context might permit. Automaticity isn't gained overnight. Teachers need to exercise patience with

students as teachers slowly help them to



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achieve fluency. Meaningful Learning Meaningful learning will lead towards better long-term retention than rote learning. In the past, rote learning occupied much time of the class hour. Students were drilled and drilled in an attempt to learn language forms. Now we know that drilling easily lends itself to rote learning. Teachers should avoid the following pitfalls of rote learning: too much grammar ex- planation; too many abstract principles and theories; too much drilling and memorization; activities whose pur- poses are not clear; activities that do not contribute to accomplishing the goals of the lesson; techniques that are very mechanical or tricky. The Anticipation of Reward According to this principle, human beings are universally driven to act or behave by the anticipation of some sort of reward that will ensue because of the behavior. Really, there is virtually nothing that we do that is not inspired and driven by a sense of purpose or goal. The anticipation of reward is the most powerful factor in directing one's behavior. Some class- room implications of this principle for teachers are as follows: Provide verbal praise and encouragement to students as a form of shortterm reward. Encourage students to reward each other with compliments and supportive action Display enthusiasm and excitement by yourself in the classroom because if you are dull, lifeless, bored and have low energy, you can be almost sure that your pupils will be the same. Try to get students to see the long-term reward in learning English by pointing out the prestige in being able to speak English.

The Intrinsic Motivation Principle Simply stated, this principle is that the most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated within the learner. Teachers can perform a great service to learners and to the learning process by considering what the intrinsic motives of their students are and by

carefully designing classroom tasks. The students will perform the task because it is interesting, useful, or challenging, and not because they anticipate some rewards from the teacher. Strategic Investment In the past the language teaching profession largely concerned itself with the "delivery" of language to the student. Teaching methods, textbooks, or grammar rules were considered as the primary factors in successful teaching. Nowadays, teachers are focusing more intently on the role of the learner in the process. The "methods" that the learner uses are as important as the teacher's methods or more so. Thus, this principle is — the successful mastery of the foreign language will be due to a learner's own personal "investment" of time, effort, and attention to the language. Some classroom applications of this principle indicate teachers must give ample verbal and non-verbal assurances to students, sequence techniques from easier to more difficult, and sustain self-confidence where it already ex-ists and build it where it does not.

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