

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Communication activities and especially the building of communicative skills occur when we, teachers, take time to choose the best ways to develop realistic and practical classroom situations.

Communication activity is not a new phenomenon – most teachers experience it every day. These teaching practices and the motives for the way we do them should be looked upon, questioned and discussed systematically.

Teachers can teach communicative skills in many different ways thus developing the speaking ability of their students as well as the reflective knowledge of the foreign language.

No matter the differences in methods, communicative skills should be aimed beyond the classroom, they should be used as social issues and become part of the oral intercultural communication.

At the wonderful “Effective Communication and Practical Teaching Skills with an Introduction to Scottish Culture” teacher training course in Scotland the main idea about the spoken performance is that communication activities should be used effectively and successfully by both learners and teachers.

In the first place the lecturers point out that the different teaching methodologies contain different percentage of communication activities. For example, the Grammar-Translation method, the Task-Based learning and the Total Physical Response method give little time and opportunity for communication.

Just on the contrary, the use of the Direct Method, the so called Natural Approach and especially one recent teaching method “Dogme” make teachers adaptable and flexible in their approach.

The choice of topic is the next important point to consider – students could be greatly encouraged to speak and share information by being suggested the right and challenging topic.

Thirdly, the so-called “Pronunciation Journey” is put forth. The question that we, teachers, should answer is whether is whether we teach students to be intelligible or we teach them to speak like natives. The answer, of course, is somewhere in the middle or should we say “ it depends”?

On the one hand, if we want to prove that “practice makes perfect”, we should pay great attention to word stress, sentence stress, connected speech and last but not least intonation. We practice units of intonation which are communicated phonologically through tone groups or we pay attention to the “phonetic punctuation”. (Victor Borge)

However, it may be said that if we let students develop their speech freely, without working so much on phonetic-pronunciation rules, they would enjoy their spoken performance more.

Taking everything into account, it must be stated that no matter the methods used, good communication is a result of balanced consideration of age groups, advance in knowledge, challenging topics, the spirit of co-operation, mutual respect and most important – the freedom to express oneself creatively.

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