

MAIN PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR STUDENTS

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Abstract. Unlike traditional methodology, modern methodology is much more student-centred. According to Richardson, the teacher's main role is to "help learning to happen," which includes "involving" students in what is going on "by enabling them to work at their own speed, by not giving long explanations, by encouraging them to participate, talk, interact, do things, etc."

Key words: cooperation, activity, communicate, encourage, modern methodology.

The teacher is here not to explain but to encourage and help students to explore, try out, make learning interesting.

The Seven Principles:

Encourage contact between students and faculty.

Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students

Encourage active learning.

Give prompt feedback.

Emphasize time on task.

Communicate high expectations.

Respect diverse talents and ways of learning

The principles work on their own, but together they "employ six powerful forces":

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| • Activity | • Expectations |
| • Cooperation | • Interaction |
| • Diversity | • Responsibility |

Though being essential, the aim of learning a foreign language according to modern methodology is still discussed, and there is a variety of possible aims. In his book Learning Teaching, Richardson claims, that nowadays a great emphasis is put on "communication of meaning" Richardson also highlights the communicative competence which is, as he defines it, "being able to use the language for meaningful communication".

Since modern methodology is aiming for something different, also the way to achieve the goal has changed. As pointed out by Richardson, "attention shifted to the knowledge and skills needed to use grammar and other aspects of language appropriately for different communicative purposes such as making requests, giving advice, making suggestions, describing wishes and needs and so on". Instead of memorizing grammatical rules and isolated vocabulary, modern methodology prefers to present contextualized language and to develop skills.

Let us now focus on one important part of modern teaching - teaching skills. The main skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They can be classified into two groups: receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing). These skills consist of sub-skills; for example, reading includes skimming (reading for gist), scanning (reading for specific information), intensive reading, and extensive reading. While listening, students can listen

for gist, or for specific information: for some details, like numbers, addresses, directions etc. In real life we do not normally listen for every word spoken. Therefore, as many professionals today agree, the task should be realistic too.

The tasks should improve skills, not test memory. According to Jim Scrivener, with receptive skills it is always better to assign one task, let the students accomplish it, have feedback, and then assign another task, let the students read or listen to the text again, have feedback, etc. Richardson also points out that the tasks should be graded from the easiest to the most difficult, or, in other words, from the most general to the most detailed, and the students must know what the assignments are before the listening or reading itself is done. If the students do not manage to accomplish the task, the teacher should play the listening again or give them more time for reading.

To sum up the modern methodology principles, we can highlight the student-centred interaction which is connected to the involvement of the students in everything going on during the lesson. To be effective, the methods follow after each other in a suitable order, and there should be a balance of teaching focused on different aspects of the language.

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