

COMMUNICATIVE TEACHING AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING

In English Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching and cooperative learning share a common characteristic: in a meaningful task students are asked to exchange information among themselves in small groups or with the teacher. This kind of student collaboration has two benefits. First, the whole group actively participates in a task at the same time and students can then compare their findings when the task is over; and second, the meaningful task is rehearsed in class for later use in the real communication outside the class. Communicative language teaching requires authentic communication, which includes a believable setting, a normal speed in speaking, and a range of lexical items suitable for the problems solution and inspires students for communication. Communication is used in order to get, to give, or exchange information. It follows that communication involves enabling someone else to understand what we want to tell them. As well as informing our listener or reader, we may hope to amuse, entertain, or mislead, for example. In order to do all these things effectively, they need to have a stock of conventional fixed and semi-fixed expressions at their disposal, to make appropriate choices from this stock and to speak with appropriate intonation and tone of voice. Students should learn a foreign language for performing different functions: to ask and re-ask, to prove and explain, to approve and encourage, to criticize and dispute, to agree and disagree, to clarify and contradict and so on. Cooperative learning tasks encourage students to work together, give an opportunity for every student to participate in the activity. Improving self-esteem, enjoyment of doing the task, lack of fear of making mistakes, desire to express their own point of view are the key in this approach. The main task for a teacher is to provide language support in terms of useful vocabulary and grammar so that students are able to succeed in the task. Students will benefit more from these activities

if they understand that communicating and sharing with their group mates is a language learning strategy that they can use outside a class setting. Teachers should bear in mind the following guidelines:

— The activity must be purposeful and meaningful. Students should be given convincing reasons for doing the activity, and they should know what they will have achieved.

— The activity must be authentic. Students must be able to use the items for academic and non-academic purposes.

— A diversity of activities is needed.

— The ideas should be interesting and challenging.

— A relaxed atmosphere is conducive to free expression.

— The teacher should give praise and reinforce a good performance with encouraging comments.

— Learning is most effective when learners are the initiators of the learning process.

— The teacher should be enthusiastic and engender enthusiasm.

The communicative goal of a course should ever-present. Regular communicative activities, such as warm-ups, also emphasize the communicative nature and goal of a course. Communicating in English and learning the English language go hand in hand. Teachers should create opportunities for students to participate in varied activities and interactions. To participate willingly, they must feel able and confident, not threatened by failure, reprimand or ridicule. The teacher must be responsible for establishing a positive atmosphere, appropriate activities, and encouraging learners. Motivation is essential for learning and it is closely connected with the success. I'd like to show some activities including games. The justification for using them in the class is proved in practice as benefiting students in a variety of ways. These benefits range from cognitive aspects of language learning to more cooperative group dynamics. Learner-learner interaction is useful because psychological burden of public performance. This work is more likely to lead to negation of meaning than interaction with the teacher. The activities may be classified according to the level of knowledge. «Cards and words» represent the first group. The students get cards with the task «*What is associated with travelling?*»(*University, fashion, celebrity, success, Australia*). According to their cards they should

collect as many words as possible asking their group mates. If the word was named, they should say «Sorry, it was mentioned,» and ask the group-mates to think over and give another word. Having asked all group mates they must make the conclusion about the most interesting answer, the most argumentative or unexpected answer. It is worth mentioning the next group «Cards and sentences». «**What can be countless**»? (*Precious, unforgettable, mysterious, obvious, fresh, suspicious*). It is necessary to include some new interesting adjectives. Students try to express their point of view using examples. There is one more interesting activity including idioms. «*People say that you are a home bird. Is it true?*» (*Social climber, gate crasher, Nosy Parker, Doubt Thomas, day dreamer, couch potato.*) They can agree or strongly reject the information giving their arguments. Students might be asked to explain embarrassing situations described on cards. An overall framework for such activities will ensure that students are called upon to:

- *Listen and gather* information from their group mates
- *Exchange* information and work together in order to
- *Produce* information, expressing surprise, doubt, approval, agreement or disagreement, and so on.

Let's point out general benefits of such activities. They are effective:

- *Encourage* creative and spontaneous use of language
- *Promote* communicative competence
- *Motivates*
- *Gives* fun

As for class dynamics they are:

- Student centered;
- A teacher acts only as facilitator;
- Build class cohesion;
- Foster the whole group participation;
- Promote friendly atmosphere.

The few examples explained here should be considered only as a starting point. With some imagination and experience, countless other activities will no doubt come to mind.

Let's make grammar interesting and appealing. Grammar is vital if we want to make things reasonably easy and understandable for listeners and interlocutors. Communication is an essential life skill and people don't talk

for the sake of practising grammar or demonstrating their knowledge of vocabulary. They talk to get things done: to suggest, invite, agree, disagree, apologise, complain, negotiate, and give explanations and so on. Students can know rules, but they make mistakes in practice. Such activities help them to be confident in grammar. Teaching from language to communication gives an opportunity to practise new material; the students are given freer practice activities and are strongly encouraged to use the target grammar items. Each student gets a card and tries to find somebody who fits the description on the card: **«Be inquisitive and ask your group mates the questions, then make a conclusion!»** «Do you like to ask silly questions? Do you want to live in any exotic country? Do you envy people? Do you want to be famous? Do you like to gossip? Do you blame people for their wrongdoings? Do you always remember to do up your seatbelt before you travel by car? Do you like to praise people?» Students walk around the class asking the questions, clarifying some facts and collecting the information. Then, they make conclusions using correctly The Present Indefinite Tense. In real communication, one can never be sure what someone is going to say. That's why working with the group, the students get different answers and they should spontaneously react commenting on them.

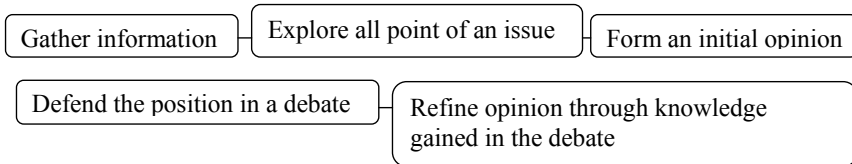
The next level is to make a question. They get cards with the task to find a person *who likes Italian food, knows the capitals of many countries, dislikes chocolate, wants to take part in TV castings, writes New Year Resolutions, adores swimming on cold water, wants to be top student.* They should be careful in making a question, giving information and in making conclusions. The teacher might expect the students to use correctly auxiliary verbs for asking questions «DO — DOES», form negation (Ann doesn't want to take part in TV castings, but Olga does), use **s** or **es** when they speak about their group mates. Communication is not just a matter of information and language. It also involves purpose and attitude. Then, I'd like to give an example of the activity connected with Passive voice — the difference between active and passive. The task is: **Express curiosity. Ask your group-mates a question and then make a conclusion.** There is a set of cards containing ideas such as: *Do you like to invite your friends for a cup of tea or to be invited? Do you like to inspire people by your ideas or to be inspired? Do you like envy people or to be envied? Do you*

like to gossip or be gossiped? When we want to pay a special attention to The Present Perfect Passive and The Past Simple, it is useful to have such activity. ***What is the life experience of your group mates? Ask questions to find someone who:*** *has been stopped for speeding and when? Has been fined for breaking the rules? Has been given a nickname? Has been accused of telling lies? Has been photographed with a celebrity and when? Has been called a stupid person?* Thus, we can say that:

- Students learn a language by using it, hearing it.
- The teacher’s job is to provide opportunities for students to use language in a meaningful way.
- The teacher should not control the language that is used to complete the task, but should help students to express their meaning.
- Once the task is complete, the attention given to specific linguistic items that have arisen from the task is useful in promoting language learning.

Using formally learnt language to communicate helps make it more automatically available for spontaneous use. During meaningful communication further segments of language may be acquired subconsciously. When the students are practising the question ***Do you?*** Grammatical competence will normally develop as learning process.

Other advantages of verifying the interaction in classroom teaching are: changes of interaction bring a change of pace and focus, that helps to keep students interested. Pair and group work provides opportunities for many more individuals to use the language. Students perform differently without the pressure of a teacher and whole-class attention. Students learn to be more self-reliant and express their opinion. Communication enables people to bring together, get some additional information about each other (interests, hobbies, likes and dislikes and so on). Let’s point out the role of Problem-solving tasks. These tasks can stimulate a wide range discussion. Obviously learners are more likely to be engaged if the problem is a local one that affects them, or one that is within their own experience. One of these activities is widely used in the classroom — Debate. Debating is a great way to get students speaking English. The debates spark student’s interest with stimulating and relevant topics. Basically, there are five steps to the debating process. They are:



Debates «**For and Against**» are conducive to speaking and expressing own points of view. We have organized such debates as: *Are teen curfews a good thing? Should Olympic athletes be tested for drugs? Should celebrities be responsible for the products they endorse? Should laws be stricter for young drivers? Should the paparazzi be banned? If you find a historical treasure, does it belong to you? If you see someone cheating during a test, should you tell? Should boxing be banned?* Taking part in debates students perform a variety of language skills — listening, reacting, giving arguments, expressing own point of view, explaining, accepting the ideas or rejecting, insisting on their ideas, proving facts, giving the assessment, being tolerant to the diverse viewpoints, being open-minded in the solution of the problem.

Once the task has been completed, the teacher can focus on any language points he or she wishes to draw attention to. Praising words are very important in the assessment of students' activity in performing the task. If you want the learners to be able to converse in English or any other foreign language, you need to make the classroom a conversational place. If the students do not talk naturally during the course of each lesson, it is hardly surprising when they can still speak at all after several years of English classes. Learning is more effective when learners are active in the learning process, assuming responsibility for their learning and participating in the decisions making activities.

Literature

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3. R.E. Slavin «Cooperative learning» Longman, 1983.