

LANGUAGE LEARNING AND DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

Challenging yet pleasurable communicative approach promotes positive attitude toward the daily study in language learning. Pupils working in groups have comprehension activity, journal sharing, question discussion and role-playing of the characters in the books or plays. Communicative approach not only lightens classroom anxiety but also promotes pupils cooperative learning and enhances their communication abilities.

Keywords: communicative language teaching, communicative activity, language learning, group discussions.

We use language to get things done. It recognizes that there is something that we need find out, or something that we want to say and communicate and it takes that as the reason why we speak language, why we want to communicate with others. For this reason communicative language teaching concentrates in fulfilling specific language functions or tasks, for example such as greeting, introducing yourself, you may want to express likes and dislikes, you might want to enquire about somebody's hobbies, interests, you might want to find directions to someplace. They are actually very concrete things that you want to do with language. The pupil who speaks thinks more about how to say something instead of what to say. No speaking is possible when the speaker has to concentrate on the form. He makes more errors under this condition. More than that, he often refuses to speak when he sees the classmates raise their hands after he has uttered his first sentence. This does not encourage the learner to speak. There are two types of communicative activities that can be implemented in the class. One controlled communicative activity and the other, free communicative activities. Controlled communicative activities include situations creation, guessing games, information gap exercises, exchange of personal information etc. and free communicative activities include pair work and group work, eliciting, role play etc.



To follow communicative approach in the class, one should use workouts. Workouts are language learning and language using activities, which enhance the learner's overall acquisition process, providing by the teacher with variety of ways through which to make this process engaging and rewarding. Samples of such workouts are presented here under different categories.

All learners require such predictable and controlled workouts at times if their goal is to achieve accuracy in language production an interpretation. For example element of language are added, deleted, substituted, recorded, or combined; alternative language elements are presented so that learners must make a choice. Warm-ups/Relaxes are motivational workouts, which add an element of enjoyment and personal involvement. They can be used at various points during the examinations, especially when a relief of tension or a change of pace is called for. For example, games, songs, physical activities, puzzle. Information-Centered Tasks enable learners to use the language naturally while being fully engrossed in fact gathering activities. For example, share-and-tell in the classroom, gathering information outside the classroom, treasure hunts outside the classroom, interviews with peer and others. These workouts are especially important since they enable the language session to broaden its context beyond the four walls of the classroom. For example, improvisation (creating a scene based on a given setting or situation); role playing (assuming the role of someone else, or playing oneself in a typical situation); play enacting; story telling.

Mediations/interventions are workouts, which enable learners to experience bridging information gaps while using the target language. For example, interacting with another or others based on incomplete information; interacting with others to change their opinions; talking one's way out of difficult situation. Group Dynamics and Experiential Tasks are group activities which create opportunity for sharing personal feelings and emotions among learners. For example, small groups or pairs solve problems or discuss issues, which center on topics of personal concern, sharing of self and feelings rather than general subject matter topics external to self. Problem-Solving Tasks involve learners in making decisions about issues while using the target language, enabling them to focus on the features of the activity rather than on language usage. In this type of activity, learners are involved in a "whole-task" process. For example, small group discussions around topical, political or local



issues; posing a concrete problem about which the group must come to a consensus, make recommendations, and arrive a policy statement.

While similarly “whole-task” focused, workouts which involve transferring and reconstruction information emphasize cognitive uses of language. For example, following a language stimulus, often a regarding passage: transferring information from text to a graphic display such as a chart; filling in forms; providing language to complete visual display such as a cartoon or photograph; making judgement about people's motivates and intentions; putting sentence elements in sequence (the strip story.)

Several classifications of communicative speaking tasks have been proposed. For example, Harmer (1982) distinguishes between communicative tasks and uncommunicative tasks in terms of their communicative purpose, communicative desire, focus, range of language, teacher role, and degree of control in material. Gower et al. (1983) classify speaking into three types: controlled activities, guided activities, and creative communication. Warming-up exercises. When people have to work together in a group it is advisable that they get to know each other a little at the beginning. Once they have talked to each other in an introductory exercise they will be less reluctant to cooperate in further activities. One of the pre-requisites of cooperation is knowing the other people's names. A second one is having some idea of what individual members of the group are interested in. One important use of warming-up exercises is with new classes at the beginning of a course or the school year. If you join in the activities and let the class know something about yourself, the pupils are more likely to accept you as a person and not just as a teacher. A second use of warming-up activities lies in getting pupils into the right mood before starting on some new project or task. In the early lessons of many language courses, pupils are encouraged to concentrate heavily upon pronunciation and grammar, while vocabulary is introduced only very slowly. The idea seems to be that even if one has very little to say, that little bit should be said correctly. Pupils can worry a great deal about the machinery of language, but they worry rather little about real communicating much of anything. Under such circumstances, learners have to think about an awful lot of things in order to construct even a simple sentence. They are supposed to force their mouths to produce sounds that seem ridiculous. They have to grope desperately for words that they barely know. They have to perform mental gymnastic trying to remember bizarre grammatical rules. All these challenges are a



fatal distraction from what skillful speakers worry about - the message that they want to convey. If early learners have to worry about getting everything correct, they cannot hope to day anything very interesting. They simply cannot do everything at once and emerge with any real sense of success.

We are definitely in favor of the communicative approach. However, we have seen very competent teachers who don't follow it. For example, they teach grammar the old-fashioned way by giving example sentences and explaining the meaning of the structure, formation rules, etc. They use colors and examples from the pupils' lives, and eventually they have some drilling exercises.

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