

MIXING UP THE TYPES OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION USED IN YOUR ESL CLASS

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Annotation:

The article gives the information about the teacher activeness in class. Different types of classroom interaction you can use to vary your lesson plan, the teacher simply in the role of facilitator.

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There are different types of classroom interaction you can use to vary your lesson plan. Teacher-centered activity is when the teacher controls the group. This can consist of lecturing, explaining a new grammar concept on the board, having a whole-class discussion, choral drilling or asking individual students questions. Alternatively, students can work individually, in pairs or in groups. You can even have the entire class working together on a project or game, with you as the teacher simply in the role of facilitator. At times you can assign a student to be in charge of running a game, and you can sit with the class and be a participant. Mixing up the types of classroom interaction used in your ESL class can help students stay attentive and interested.

Another key part of classroom interaction is teacher feedback. In order to improve, students must get feedback and correction. During accuracy exercises, you may choose to correct students right away, while during fluency exercises you may want to simply listen and jot down any glaring mistakes. You can give feedback orally or in writing. Sometimes you may want to correct an individual student in front of other students, while at other times it is better to offer general suggestions and corrections for the entire group. When giving feedback, always bear in mind the cultural context, as some students may not be comfortable receiving individual correction in front of their peers. ESL teachers must handle a class of students who may not speak the same language, which is an element that sets these teachers apart from foreign language teachers. As a result, it can be difficult for the teacher to offer instruction in a single language. ESL teachers must frequently explain things through the use of pictures, gestures and demonstrations. The goal of an ESL teacher is to have their students gain the same English proficiency as native speakers.

Every teacher has some kind of theoretical principles which function as a frame for their ideas of methods and techniques. A *technique* is the narrowest of all three; it is just one single procedure to use in the classroom. *Methods* are between approaches and techniques, just

the mediator between theory and classroom practice. Some methods can share a number of techniques and, though some techniques have developed autonomously, the most important ones start from the main methods.

Now it seems appropriate to mention the three major language learning issues that language pedagogy and ELT have dealt with through this century and that always concern researchers and the teaching profession. Stern labels them as follows:

1. *The Language 1-Language 2 connection*, that is, the disparity in the learner's mind between the inevitable dominance of the mother tongue and the weaknesses of the second language knowledge.
2. *The explicit-implicit option*, that is, the choice between more conscious ways of learning a foreign language and more subconscious or automatic ways of learning it. This issue remains to a great extent unresolved and has very often posed a dilemma to the FLT profession and research, as, for example, during the debate between cognitivism and audiolingual strategies in the 60s.
3. *The code-communication dilemma* has become a major issue recently. It refers to the problems that learners have to cope with when learning a new language, as they have to pay attention on the one hand to linguistic forms (the code) and on the other to real communication.

Classification of active methods in learning a foreign language

The term teaching method refers to the general principles, pedagogy and management strategies used for classroom instruction. Your choice of teaching method depends on what fits you — your educational philosophy, classroom demographic, subject area(s) and school mission statement. A teaching method comprises the principles and methods used for instruction to be implemented by teachers to achieve the desired learning in students. These strategies are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and partly by the nature of the learner. For a particular teaching method to be appropriate and efficient it has to be in relation with the characteristic of the learner and the type of learning it is supposed to bring about. In today's school the trend is that it encourages a lot of creativity. It is a known fact that human advancement comes through reasoning.

The Grammar-Translation Method focuses on the teaching of the foreign language grammar through the presentation of rules together with some exceptions and lists of vocabulary translated into the mother tongue. Translation is considered its most important classroom activity. The main procedure of an ordinary lesson followed this plan: a presentation of a grammatical rule, followed by a list of vocabulary and, finally, translation exercises from selected texts (Stern 1983: 453).

Other activities and procedures can be the following:

- reading comprehension questions about the text;
- students find antonyms and synonyms from words in the text;
- vocabulary is selected from the reading texts and it is memorized;

sentences are formed with the new words;

-students recognize and memorize cognates and *false* cognates;

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