
Successful Teaching Of English

Students of English as a second language differentiate according to age, level, aptitudes, individual psychological features, motivation, disabilities and many others. Teachers should take into consideration the fact that they do not just teach a class, they shape different identities, so they have to wave themselves on different personalities each class.

Age of learners dictate how a teacher chooses methodology and techniques, since young learners acquire language through play, while adults through abstract thought. Exposing children to a foreign language has proven to be a link in facilitating pronunciation, since the younger a person hears a second language, the easier it gets to mimic pronunciation of native speakers. Older children and adolescents have higher chances than young children to acquire lexis and grammar rapidly. For children, the abstract concepts of grammar rules are difficult to understand, while adolescents have a great ability for abstract thoughts and are able to discuss abstract ideas. Children come with a natural enthusiasm and curiosity, while adults may feel uncomfortable or hostile with unfamiliar teaching techniques. Children have limited attention span, get bored easily and lose interest after ten minutes, while most adolescents and all adults are aware of their educational needs. Children learn when they are in what Lev Vígotski described as the Zone of Proximal Development, while adults may be critical of some teaching methods.

Children are in need for approval from the teacher, while adolescents need peer approval. Young learners are keen to talk about themselves, their own lives, while adolescents are in the middle of their search for identity and a need for self-esteem which may lead them to refuse to talk about thorny topics for fear of mockery. Adolescents need to feel good about themselves, to be valued, and therefore they are extremely vulnerable to the negative judgments of peers, while adults may be under-confident due to previous failure or criticism. Teachers need to encourage students of all ages and offer achievable activities to boost self-esteem along the path of language learning. It is a tricky job, since “using L2 can be a source of embarrassment particularly for shy learners and those who feel they are not very proficient in the L2” (Latsanyphone 2009: p.186).

Students have different aptitudes, and since intelligence is the general aptitude of a human being, it is natural that students perceive, understand reality and learn in different ways. Thus, according to Howard Gardner, there are Multiple Intelligences, and these nine different types are: Linguistic, Musical, Logical - Mathematical, Natural, Body – Kinesthetic, Existential, Interpersonal, Intra – Personal and Spatial Intelligence, as shown here in a graphic form (<https://communicatorz.com/2016/07/27/9-types-of-intelligence/>). Teachers have to design their lesson plans and types of activities to address most if not all these types of intelligence. In Teaching Foreign Languages Through Translation: Considering Multiple Intelligences, Cristina Macau talks about another aspect of intelligence, that is the emotional intelligence such much needed to admit and assist the different learning styles of individuals, and learning how to control personal outburst of emotions may be done through different techniques of NLP (2003: 92).

Motivation is another important driver in achieving language acquisitions. It may push students

to further knowledge or stop them in front of even a tiny obstacle or mistake, since success is sustaining motivation. Intrinsic motivation is desired, because it fuels a longer path, but extrinsic motivation is better than none. A forthcoming exam, the need to get a better job, the desire to understand conversations in English, the need to adapt in a migrant society, curiosity, achievement, high self-esteem or peer pressure are great motivators for learning English.

Self-esteem is an important factor in the behavior and success of students in school and beyond. How students feel about themselves and the way they feel respected or cherished dictate the way they relate to peers, colleagues with disabilities, education and agents of authority, teachers included. A difficult home environment is often linked to indiscipline. Unpleasant memories of previous learning experiences is linked to their attitude in class. Anarchic behavior of peers is more impressive to teenagers than learning success, and teachers must wisely manage these problems. Failure keeps the fire burning for problem behavior. A high temperature in a classroom triggers nervy behavior, too. Fairness they perceive from teachers will decrease the chances of a future disruptive behavior and give a sense of security and stability. Students need to see that teachers treat students equally and do not practice favoritism.

Any teacher wishes for students with high aspirations, goal oriented, perseverant, creative and intelligent, who like to practice and take motivation from errors, enthusiastic and communicative. But individual psychosomatic features of students, as well as their own experiences outside and inside a classroom dictate their approach and motivation for language learning. Some students are not interested in school in general, some are not interested or inclined towards languages, some face starvation at home, some have a part time job to support their family, some are constantly tired from field work, some have poor self-esteem because of constant abuse and violent background at home while some are always cold for lack of proper clothing. Some students only wish to get passing grades, others are interested in hunting good grades and become less motivated after achieving this. All these aspects interfere with the quality of a teaching act and with how students achieve language acquisitions. A successful teacher, however, is the one who builds a bridge between the possibilities of students, their desires and methodological constraints.