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DISCUSSION AS AN EFFECTIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHOD

The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and to be understood. More than ever, communication is so important and the range of communication channels is growing, we communicate in person, on the phone or online. The stronger language skills people have, the more opportunities for personal growth, success in study and career development they obtain. Foreign language teachers are faced with the challenge of finding various rational methods and new ways of improving a foreign language learning process and communicative skills of their students.

Leading discussion is one of the most challenging teaching methods and it can be one of the most rewarding. If we use discussion as a teaching method, we allow us to stimulate students' critical thinking, we appreciate students' contribution in discussion and at the same time we challenge them to think more deeply and express their ideas more clearly. Possibility to ask and to be asked through discussion provide a means of measuring learning and exploring in-depth the key concepts of the course.

In comparison with the lecture or conversation discussion encourages students to be more active and creative, it promotes meaningful and emotionally-colored way of solving the problem. In addition, students learn to express their thoughts in practice using already learned lexical units and grammatical constructions. Various socio-psychological phenomena are also possible in a discussion; moreover, discussion influences the formation of teamwork skills and the ability to express the opinions of other accomplices with respect.

What are the key points of teaching through discussion to be mentioned?

Preparing for discussions

First of all, we have to decide what we want our students to get out of the discussion. For example, it can be sharing responses, making new connections, solving certain problems. We have to decide in which way we organize a discussion: students can work in small groups, role-play, or they write and share a paragraph in response to the theme. It is possible to leave time to wrap up and summarize the discussion for the students, or to debrief after activities such as debates or role-plays.

Developing a clear goal for the discussion

We should be able to explain what the students will be able to do with the information or ideas.

Problematizing of the topic

It is important to give students an open-ended problem to solve, a task to complete, a judgment to reach, a decision to make, or a list to create—something that demands conclusions.

Using of different learning preferences

We can be most effective if we combine teaching methods to reach as many students as possible: for example, combine verbal and visual explanations, explain concepts using both a “big-picture” and a detail-oriented approach, and give students opportunities for active learning and reflection.

Summarizing the major ideas and writing them on the board

It helps students especially for those who are visual learners to pick out the most important ideas from the discussion and understanding their significance.

Choosing an appropriate discussion format

There are different discussion activities which can be used that will help students to meet our goals for the discussion. We can use Think-Pair-Share, Affinity Mapping, Chalk Talk and other conversation structures.

Encouraging students' participation

To encourage all students to answer questions, particularly those who tend to be quiet, it would be effective to use verbal and non-verbal cues. Making eye contact and moving around the classroom help to draw attention of all the students. Placing the emphasis on student ideas and making a habit of asking students for informal

feedback also increase student participation in discussion.

Showing respect for all questions and comments

We have to listen to the students carefully and thank them for their contributions. Even if we do not agree with them, it is important to point out what is valuable about students' arguments. It is necessary to develop helpful responses to incorrect answers or comments that are not sufficiently related to the issue currently being discussed.

Choosing a debriefing method

Always debrief students; it is the most important part of a discussion, the time to summarize and synthesize. The process of learning in discussions happens during debriefing. We can use debriefing to correct incorrect notions. We can slip in any points that students neglected but that are important.

It should be noted that during the discussion it is important to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect among the audience:

- do not interrupt the speaker;
- speak in turn, and not simultaneously;
- criticize the idea, not the person who expressed them;
- do not change the topic of the discussion.

In conclusion, we can say that despite some difficulties in using discussion method of teaching such as getting started discussion, attendance, losing control during discussion, discussion monopolizers, this method can be a stimulating, enjoyable way to teach.

REFERENCES

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