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## **Some aspects and approaches of successful English learning**

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### *Annotation*

*The article deals with different aspects of English learning. It is denotes that language learning is a complex process that is affected by several areas such as cognitive, affective, static, dynamic, and social factors. Each of these factors affects how learning occurs. Social factors include community attitudes to second language learning, attitudes of the family to language learning, gender roles, and group dynamics in the classroom. Negative attitudes can seriously hamper teacher efforts and student learning. Positive attitudes can greatly enhance the learning process.*

*Key words: learning, adults, approach, technique, language teaching.*

## **Некоторые аспекты и подходы для успешного обучения английского языка**

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### *Аннотация*

*В статье рассматриваются различные аспекты изучения английского языка, уделяется внимание, что изучение иностранного языка является сложным процессом, на который влияют несколько областей, таких как когнитивная, аффективная, статическая, динамическая и социальная. Каждая из этих областей влияет на то, как происходит обучение. Негативное отношение может серьезно помешать усилиям учителя и учебе. Позитивное отношение может значительно улучшить учебный процесс.*

*Ключевые слова: обучение, взрослые, подход, методика, преподавание языка.*

## **Деякі аспекти і підходи для успішного навчання англійській мові**

### *Анотація*

*У статті розглядаються різні аспекти вивчення англійської мови, приділяється увага, що вивчення іноземної мови є складним процесом, на який впливають кілька областей, таких як когнітивна, афективна, статична, динамічна і соціальна. Кожна з цих областей впливає на те, як відбувається навчання. Негативне ставлення може серйозно перешкодити зусиллям вчителя і навчанні. Позитивне ставлення може значно поліпшити навчальний процес.*  
*Ключові слова: навчання, дорослі, підхід, методика, викладання мови.*

### **Some aspects and approaches of successful English learning**

As known, adult students tend to be autonomous and self-directed, goal-oriented, practical, and want the material they learn to be relevant. They bring a great deal of life experience and knowledge to the classroom, which can be drawn upon by the teacher during instruction, and require respect.

Adults often have widely varying motivations for studying a second language. Some are studying ESL for personal or professional advancement; some have financial motivations; some to enhance social relationships or to satisfy external expectations (by a family member or partner); some, such as new immigrants, to enhance their social welfare; and others study a second language out of intellectual curiosity, as a method of escape or stimulation, or for socializing. In an adult learning classroom, a teacher may encounter some or all of these motivations among their students and may find it necessary to adapt content to student aims or to balance competing interests. There are some challenges pertaining to teaching adult learners. They may have set patterns of learning and beliefs about educational processes. Change may be welcome to certain students, but others may find that change is uncomfortable and distressing. You may also be challenging some of your students' beliefs about the education process and learning, which may make them apprehensive. The teacher of adult learners may also have to deal with student anxiety. In addition, the pace of learning can vary widely among adult learners, making class pacing a challenge for teachers. Sometimes, adult learners will have very specific expectations about what they would like to accomplish in the course and may be somewhat inflexible about them. Cognitively, aging plays some part in intellectual development. Adults tend to change and develop more by

experience and the exercise of abilities than by age. They are in the middle of a process rather than attaining developmental milestones. Some physical and psychological changes may occur, however, in later adulthood, which may affect the learner's functioning in the classroom.

### **Factors Affecting Language Learning**

Language learning is a complex process that is affected by several areas such as cognitive, affective, static, dynamic, and social factors. Each of these factors affects how learning occurs. Social factors include community attitudes to second language learning, attitudes of the family to language learning, gender roles, and group dynamics in the classroom. Negative attitudes can seriously hamper teacher efforts and student learning. Positive attitudes can greatly enhance the learning process. Cognitive factors are a person's mental ability to comprehend and learn. They include things such as general intelligence, language aptitude, transfer from the first language or other languages, memory, auditory perception, and grammatical sensitivity. Students may struggle with one or many of these areas and the teacher needs to understand these processes to be able to maximize student comprehension and learning. Affective factors are the behavioral dimensions of language learning. Aspects such as attitude, personality, motivation, relationships with teachers and peers, short and long term goals, and the student's level of anxiety or confidence all affect the way a student participates in class and learns a new language. Some of these elements are closely related to or overlap with social factors. Static factors are elements that do not change in the learning environment. These are components such as age, language aptitude, general intelligence, environmental factors, and expectations. In these cases, the teacher must adapt to optimize the learning process. Dynamic factors are the elements which may change or shift during the learning process. These are factors such as learning style, attitude toward teachers, peers, and methodology, and personal tastes. All of these can enhance or be detrimental to a positive learning experience and the teacher may be able to influence them.

### **Approaches for Teaching**

Over the years, language teachers have adopted, adapted, invented and developed a bewildering variety of terms which describe the activities they engage in and the beliefs which they hold. As one who has been concerned with the teaching of English as a foreign language for almost twenty years, I have sometimes found it taxing to beat my way through the undergrowth of overlapping terminology that surrounds this field. We talk and write of the Aural Approach and the Audio-Lingual Method; the Translation Approach; the Direct Method and the Mimic-and-Memorize Method; pattern practice techniques; Grammar Method; and even the Natural or “Nature” Method of language pedagogy. For my own work, I have found it necessary and fruitful to impose a system on three terms in the language-teaching lexicon. Perhaps it will be useful for the readers of E.L.T. to consider three new definitions. It would seem a worthwhile endeavor to attempt to limit the use of some of the more common terms when we talk professionally about the concepts of language teaching. If, disagreeing about ways to teach language, we can refer to a framework about which ones we do agree on, and focus clearly on the distinctions between views, we may be able to determine in what areas advocates of various language-teaching systems employ the same terms differently, and where we use differing terminology in what are essentially the same situations. We might well find out that language teachers do not differ among themselves as much as has been heretofore supposed. The definitions below are therefore presented as a pedagogical filing system within which many ideas, opposing or compatible, may be filed. The trio of terms, which I am attempting to re-locate in the scheme of definitions are approach, method, and techniques. The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that techniques carry out a method, which is consistent with an approach. The definitions are offered with some diffidence – there are many roads to Nirvana, and this is certainly not the only route. Not every aspect of language teaching has been referred to with this framework. First, let us take up the term approach. I view an approach – any approach – as a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith – something which one believes

but cannot necessarily prove. It is often unarguable except in terms of the effectiveness of the methods, which grow out of it. First, here is a list of linguistically assumptions: Language is human, aural-oral, and symbolically meaningful. Any given language is structured uniquely. This can also be stated negatively: no two languages are structured alike. The structure of a language can be discovered, and usefully and systematically described, although such descriptions may differ at various levels and for various purposes. If language is accepted as aural-oral, an obvious corollary to these assumptions is that writing is a secondary manifestation and ultimately speech-based. I must, however, immediately add that this is not necessarily a statement of the relative importance of speech and writing. One can, of course, argue that writing, often more deliberate and thoughtful, and always more permanent than speech, is therefore more important. The second type of assumption – those that relate to language teaching and learning – take the form of three priority statements, one procedural statement, and a comparison statement, all arising from the linguistically assumption. Primary manifestations (the aural-oral aspects) should be taught before secondary (reading and writing). Understanding the spoken language is taught more efficiently before oral production, and is indeed a first step towards production. The secondary manifestations (the reading and writing aspects) should be taught in the stated order, since graphic symbols must be seen before they are produced, and thus reading, in a sense, is actually a first step in learning to write. Other uses of language – tertiary in this scheme – such as literary and artistic manifestations, pedagogically also follow reception/production order. It is perhaps doubtful if foreign students of English should be instructed in the production of literary English. Our procedural assumption stated that a) languages are habits, b) habits are established by repetition, and c) languages must be taught through repetition of some sort. An assumption that is not always accepted, and about which there is currently much discussion, revolves around the usefulness of bilingual comparison: each language is uniquely structured, as we have said. It is therefore beneficial to compare the learner's language with the target language in order to isolate those features of the target language, which can be predicted, with a fair degree of accuracy, to cause trouble for the learner. Let us move on to our second definition – of

method. Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, not part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach, there can be many methods. Several factors influence the orderly presentation of language to students. The order will be influenced by the nature of the student's language as compared to English. Teaching English to Hindi speakers and teaching English to speakers of Chinese differ methodologically. The age of the student, his cultural background, and his previous experience with English modify the method employed. The experience of the teacher and his level of English mastery are significant. The goal of a course must be considered – whether it is aimed at reading, fluency in speech, inculcating translation skills – all these shape methodology. The place of English in the curriculum and the time available during a given course are not unimportant. As can be seen from the above, textbooks ought to be written within methodological limitations. It may be of value to compare briefly two methods, which share an approach. The approach, again, is the aural-oral. The methods are frequently called mim-mem (mimic-memorize), and pattern practice. Both share the factor of goal – they aim at automatic oral production coupled with skill in understanding the stream of speech. They each function best under intensive course conditions. Each is primarily for adults, and neither, per se, assumes previous language learning experience. The order of presentation differs. The Mim-Mem Method begins with a situation – greetings perhaps, or food and meals, or getting a room at a hotel. The student must mimic a native speaker, real or recorded, and remember a rather large number of useful sentences within the situation. From the memorized sentences certain structures are drawn, phonological and grammatical, for particular emphasis and drill. The choice of these structures ideally depends on the result of a bilingual analysis and description. There is nothing in the mim-mem method which contradicts the assumptions which make up the aural-oral approach. On the other hand, the pattern practice method ideally uses bilingual comparison at the very beginning, and starts with grammatical and phonological structures chosen with the results of a bilingual comparison in mind. These structures are drilled and built up into a situation through the addition of lexical

items. Again, there is nothing here which contradicts the aural-oral approach. Both methods have been used with success. Both lie within the same approach, yet each has distinctive features. The last term, which will be discussed, is technique. A technique is implementation – that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well.

Techniques depend on the teacher, his individual artistry, and on the composition of the class. Particular problems can be tackled equally successfully by the use of different techniques. For example, in teaching the difference between the pronunciation of the English /l/ and /r/ to some Oriental students, teachers sometimes get results by requiring only imitation. If imitation fails, another technique requires the use of a pencil in the mouth to prevent the student's tongue from touching the alveolar ridge, hence inhibiting the pronunciation of /l/. Another teacher or the same teacher at another time might depend upon a drawing or chart of the human vocal apparatus.

When visitors view a class, they see mostly techniques. Teachers often feel uneasy in the presence of visitors, fearing a misinterpretation of their classes. This, in my view, arises largely out of a confusion of techniques based on various methods. The effectiveness of any particular technique must be taken in relation to that method. A particular technique might at one time in the progress of a course be used quite wrongly because it is out of the order required by the method. Later on it might be considered correct. Laboratory tape-machines and phonographs are techniques. The recently popular teaching machines are techniques.

English Language Institute at the University of Michigan is a technique. And even the airplane, which slowly circles over the American Midwest transmitting educational TV signals, is under this classification, a four-engined technique. Machines have enjoyed great favor recently. Positive claims have been made for their effectiveness in language teaching. In truth, they have great value. But their value depends on method and approach. The operative factor in the use of language laboratories is not the number of booths or the modernity of the electronic equipment, but what kind of approach is

adopted, and what method the equipment carries out. A teaching machine, however complex, is a technique, the principles of step-increment learning are factors of approach, the actual program employed displays method. Charles A. Curran, a professor of psychology and counseling at Loyola University, believed that language learning techniques are comparable to the techniques used in counseling. Based on the techniques of Rogerian counseling, Community Language Learning can be associated with the techniques used in group counseling sessions. The roles of the teacher and student are redefined to reflect the roles of a counselor and a client. This humanistic technique focuses on the emotions, feelings, and behavioral skills of the students and requires them to become intimate as a group and to interact with one another in a supportive way. There is no specific syllabus used in the Community Language Learning approach. Students follow a topic-based curriculum. The teacher introduces grammatical concepts and vocabulary as they come up. Students learn collaboratively through group discussion, free conversation, reflection, observation, some translating, and listening. Transcriptions and recordings are also used. The teacher must be aware of the developmental stages of learning that occur. These stages are recognized in the acronym SARD, which stands for security, attention and aggression, retention and reflection, and discrimination. The Community Language Learning approach recognizes the range of emotions through which a student progresses while learning a language, including a stage of aggression towards the teacher. In the Natural Approach, the emphasis is on language input rather than language practice. There is an emphasis on emotional preparedness, a prolonged period of input before expression, and a focus on comprehension. A distinction is made between learning and acquisition. Learning of rules can be used to self-monitor, but it does not aid acquisition. Acquisition, on the other hand, is the unconscious intake and application of knowledge. The process of acquisition is slower than the process of learning and parallels the way in which we acquire our first language. Spanish instructor, Tracy Terrell, and applied linguist, Stephen Krashen, developed the Natural Approach in 1983. They believed that communication skills are the most important element in language teaching, not the memorization and application of grammar rules. Their writings include a number of



learning theories and hypotheses: the acquisition/learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis. This hypothesis refers to the difference between acquiring a language and learning a language. Acquiring implies an unconscious intake and application of language skills. Learning a language implies the conscious process of memorization, referencing, and utilization of a set of rules that apply to the language. Krashen and Terrell believed that acquisition is more natural than learning. The hypothesis relates to “learned” language. Students can monitor themselves and their performance by using their set of memorized or learned rules. This is a conscious process. This hypothesis is concerned with the “order of acquisition” that linguists discovered when studying the stages of linguistic development in children learning their first language. There seems to be a predictable order of grammatical units that children and adults acquire. Errors or backsliding occur as students try to apply general rules to all aspects of the language. Rather than considering this a negative development, backsliding indicates a new stage in cognitive development that should be noted as a positive factor in language learning. This hypothesis refers to the acquisition process. Krashen and Terrell claimed that linguistic development occurs when the input provided by the teacher is slightly higher than the stage at which the student is currently competent. Students become fluent by building up their input and allowing for communication to emerge naturally. Students can generally understand meaning from context and are able to decipher meaning without extensive explanation. Affective Filter Hypothesis. This hypothesis takes into account the students’ motivation and attitude in the classroom. Stress, anxiety, and lack of confidence can seriously impede students’ linguistic development. Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate those elements that can block student input. Creating a positive learning environment that is free of stress and anxiety will improve motivation and learning.

### **References**

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