

ANYKŠČIŲ R. SVĖDASŲ JUOZO TUMO – VAIŽGANTO GIMNAZIJA

TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS

**Parengė anglų kalbos vyresnioji mokytoja
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ANOTACIJA

Metodiniame darbe nagrinėjama aktuali tema – kalbėjimo įgūdžių formavimas ir lavinimas užsienio kalbos (anglų) pamokose.

Iš visų keturių kalbinės veiklos rūšių (skaitymo, klausymo, rašymo ir kalbėjimo), daugelio ekspertų nuomone, kalbėjimas sekasi sunkiausiai. Šiame darbe pateikiama keletas būdų, kaip skatinti moksleivių motyvaciją ir norą mokytis kalbėti užsienio kalba, kaip padaryti įdomesnę kalbinę veiklą pamokose. Taip pat pateikiama keletas kalbinės veiklos lavinimo metodų pavyzdžių, įrodančių, kad moksleiviai, mokomi kalbėjimo naudojant aktyvaus mokymo metodus, gali lengviau ir greičiau išmokti bendravimo įgūdžių užsienio kalba.

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INTRODUCTION. MOTIVATION AND THE NEED TO TALK

Of the four language skills, speaking is generally considered the most difficult to learn. There are many reasons why students tend to be silent listeners rather than active learners in the oral – English class. The most important reason is the psychological pressure of making mistakes in the presence of their classmates; the second reason is their poor vocabulary, and the third is student's motivation. To develop fluency, we must generate a need to speak, to make learners want to speak. The learners themselves must be convinced of the need to relate to the subject and communicate about it to others. They need to feel that they are speaking not simply because the teacher expects them to, but because there is some strong reason to do so – for example, to get or provide information that is required for a purpose. We must arouse in the learners a willingness and need to talk by providing them with something they feel they have a need or reason to talk about. There are different techniques for developing and using vocabulary that teachers often use in their lessons: dialogues, plays, debates, projects, games, etc. I would like to discuss about some methods that, in my opinion, effectively help the students to develop their speaking skills.

TASK – BASED ACTIVITIES

Task – based activities are one of the ways of encouraging the production of spoken English that learners recognize as a means to achieving an objective. A practical example of this: Instead of a free talk or general discussion on a topic like “smoking should be banned”, it might be possible to have a structured activity in which a group of students are required to organise a campaign to convince the authorities or the public that smoking ought to be banned, This is likely to be more meaningful and motivating than the traditional approach because the speaker's attention is focused on performing a real – life activity. He/she is speaking not because the teacher expects him/her to say something for a certain length of time, but for real purpose of convincing people of the need to ban smoking.

SPEAKING THROUGH ASSOCIATION

Speaking through association can be employed in practically any speaking class. This is how it is done: The teacher writes a list of useful words and phrases and asks the students to think about them. The words should be related to the student's life experience.

After giving the students a few minutes to think about the words, the teacher should have them choose one word from the list and try to recall or figure out its meaning. One student should try to explain what he thinks the word means. When the first student finishes his explanation, the teacher asks the other students to expand on the explanation by adding more meaningful words/sentences. After learning the basic meaning of the word, the students want to know if it has any more meanings. This motivates them to turn to a dictionary.

IMPROVISATIONS

Julia M. Dobsom describes the improvisation as „a dramatic hypothetical situation in which two speakers interact without any special preparation.“ The students working with improvisations use the language in an inventive and entertaining form.

Because improvisations demand a high degree of language proficiency and imagination, they should be used with relatively advanced – level students. When students are fairly fluent in English, they should be able to create a conversation around the situation, complete with appropriate facial expressions and gestures. This kind of conversation exercise is fun for the participants and entertains the rest of the class who serve as the audience.

The students who will perform the improvisation can either have a very brief conference in English on what they will do, or they can begin the improvisation immediately.

Through frequent use of improvisations, the students will soon be able to create more meaningful, natural conversation in English. This device is also excellent in helping students get over their shyness in speaking a foreign language.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

In order for the students to relax and open up for discussion, the teacher needs to be a good conference leader. Since the teacher's purpose is only to define the problem, facilitate in the discussion, and summarize conclusions, the process should be democratic rather than authoritarian. A democratic atmosphere encourages effective communication. The teacher should show and encourage sensitivity to all opinions and cultural values.

Group discussion most closely mirrors authentic communication, which is essentially personal, the expression of personal needs, feelings, experiences and knowledge in situations that are never quite the same.

Unfortunately, initiating and sustaining effective discussions is not an easy task. How to effectively design and implement a group discussion shows a problem – solving approach. Problem – solving is a „real – time“ activity that involves a process of discovering what must be done to achieve a goal. Finding effective discussion topics is not a problem if each of the students is asked to come up with two or three problems they would like to talk about, thus creating a bank of topics.

WORK DESCRIPTION

Objective: To encourage English teachers to use various active methods for teaching speaking skills as they motivate the students to speak and increase their involvement in the learning process.

Goals:

- to show how different activities can be used for teaching speaking skills,
- to show how to practice the language in real contexts or in situations,

Practical use

Using various speaking activities during the English lessons give the students an opportunity to become active speakers. The learners are encouraged to show their creativity and express their opinion, likes and dislikes, feelings and experiences, as real – life situations are presented for them to discuss.

CONCLUSION

Task – based activities, speaking through association, improvisations, group discussions and other methods which are used in my English lessons for teaching speaking skills are an excellent means for raising the students motivation level and increasing their involvement in the learning process. These activities require the learners to participate actively because their attention is on performing a life – task.

Students like improvisations and task – based activities very much. While doing these activities they can express their opinion, interests, needs and feelings and expand their vocabulary. Such activities help the students to learn communicate, make decisions or suggestions and improve their speaking skills, and also they provide the speaker with interest in and motivation for speaking.

That is why I recommend these speaking activities to the English teachers.

LITERATURE

1. English Teaching Forum. Volume 32 Nr. 2 April 1994
2. English Teaching Forum. Volume 31 Nr.1 January 1993
3. English Teaching Forum. Volume 31 Nr. 3 July 1993
4. A Forum Anthology. Volume 4 1989
5. Effective Techniques For English Conversation Groups. Julia M. Dobson 1992

„Lifeboat“

In this discussion – group activity, students must make decisions based on their perceptions of a person's worth. Seven people are in a lifeboat equipped to handle only five; two must be abandoned, and the students discuss who it should be.

It might be interesting to examine the students' criteria in selecting who should die. Did they tend to value:

- youth or old age?
- male or female?
- usefulness or uselessness to society?
- sickness or health?
- duty to job or to self and family?
- strong or weak?
- educated or uneducated?
- those with family or those without close relatives?

Lifeboat

An ocean liner sank at sea, and seven people escaped in a lifeboat. Unfortunately, the lifeboat only has enough room and supplies for five people. Therefore, two people will have to abandon the lifeboat. The ocean contains hungry sharks, so those people who have to leave the boat will die. You must select two people who will have to be sacrificed. Justify the reasons why you picked these two and also justify the reasons why the other five should live. To help you make your selection, the following information is presented.

1. A one-year-old baby that is travelling with its grandmother. The baby is extremely sick, suffering from a rare but possibly treatable disease.
2. The baby's 55-year-old grandmother. She is in good health but has been depressed since the death of her husband.
3. The captain of the ocean liner. He is 31 years old and has ten children. His wife is dead; he has no insurance.
4. A 42-year-old pregnant woman. Gossip on the ship indicates that she may be a prostitute. Her heavy makeup and vulgar language seem to indicate the gossip is true.
5. A 70-year-old scientist. He was one of the original developers of the atomic bomb which was dropped on Japan during the World War Two. His recent research might possibly lead to a cure for lung cancer in the next year or two.
6. A 21-year-old university student. He is an All – American football player. He is extremely brilliant and an I.Q. (Intelligence quotient) of 170 (based on a scale of 100 as „average“, 170 is extremely high). He is a homosexual and very active in gay rights.
7. A 72-year-old doctor who is a specialist in rare childhood diseases. Some people think he is a saint. But what most of them don't know is that he is a drug addict. The police are investigating him because there is evidence that he sells drug to young people.

„Survival on the Moon“

Present the list of items. Form groups and rank the items in order of importance for survival under moon conditions. A secretary writes the list on the board and the presenter defends the list. Finally, the teacher presents a sheet of the correct rankings given by NASA.

You are a member of a space crew originally scheduled to meet with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. Because of mechanical difficulties, however, your ship was forced to land at a place 200 miles from the meeting point. During the landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged, and since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200-mile trip. Below are listed fifteen items left intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank and order them in terms of importance to your crew in allowing them to reach the meeting point.

- Box of matches
- Food concentrate
- 50 feet of nylon rope
- Parachute silk
- Portable heating unit
- Two 45 caliber pistols
- One case of dehydrated milk
- Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen
- Stellar map
- Life raft
- Magnetic compass
- 5 gallons of water
- Signal flares
- First – aid kit containing injection needles
- Solar – powered FM receiver – transmitter
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Correct rankings – official rankings given by NASA

- 15 box of matches - no oxygen
- 4 food concentrate - can live for some time without food
- 6 50 feet nylon rope – for travel over rough terrain
- 8 parachute silk – carrying
- 13 portable heating unit – yhe light side of the moon is hot
- 11 two 45 caliber pistols – some use for propulsion
- 12 one case dehydrated milk – needs water to work
- 1 two 100-lb. Tanks of oxygen – no air on the moon
- 3 stellar map – needed for navigation
- 9 life raft – some value for shelter or carrying
- 14 magnetic compass – moon’s magnetic field is different
- 2 five gallons of water – you can’t live long without this
- 10 signal flares – no oxygen
- 7 first – aid kit containing injection needles – first – aid kit useful, but needles are useless
- 5 solar – powered FM receiver – transmitter – communication

SITUATIONS FOR IMPROVISATIONS

1. You are in a restaurant. You have just had a good dinner. The waiter is waiting for you to pay the bill. You look for your wallet and find that you have left it at home.
2. The car in front of your car suddenly stops, and you cannot avoid hitting it. Both cars are damaged. The driver gets out of his car and comes toward you.
3. One day you get up early and go downstairs. There, to your surprise, is a stranger sleeping on the sofa. You wake your mother up and ask her who the stranger is.
4. You have not cooked anything for dinner because you were at a meeting all day. Your husband comes home and is very hungry. He wants to eat right away.
5. You are awakened in the middle of the night by a loud noise outside the window. You look out of the window and see a strange man standing there singing. You ask him to stop singing but he refuses.
6. You run into an old friend whom you have not seen for years. He used to weigh 100 kilos. Now he weighs 75 kilos.
7. Your house has been robbed. You call the police. When the policeman comes, he asks you a number of questions.
8. You are trying on shoes in a shoe store. You have tried on many different pairs, and the salesman is losing his patience.
9. You buy a new radio. You take it home, but it does not work, so you take it back to the store and complain to the manager.
10. You are at your mother – in – law's home. You are admiring a vase on the table. You pick it up and then drop it accidentally. You apologize to your mother – in – law.