

THE ROLE OF GROUP WORK IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Анотація

У статті розглядається роль групової роботи у розвитку для формування комунікативних компетенцій студентів. Проаналізовано методологічні принципи методики співробітництва та розглянуто переваги групової роботи студентів.

Ключові слова: комунікативна компетенція, методика співробітництва, групова робота.

Abstract

The article considers the role of group work in developing communicative competence of university students. The principles and methodological ideas of cooperative learning approach and advantages of group work are analyzed.

Keywords: communicative competence, cooperative learning approach, group work.

Introduction

The new methods that have attracted the attention of the profession in recent years emphasize cooperative learning and are focused on group work.

Cooperative learning as a new methodological approach to the foreign language teaching gives a chance to solve communicative-cognitive tasks through foreign language communication. Students in the cooperative learning groups maintained equivalent performance to those in regular classrooms. Pair and group work increases students talking time but teachers have to take into account all advantages and disadvantages of different modes of interaction and to find out possible solutions how to improve the situation.

There is a large number of possible arrangements for cooperative learning tasks in language classrooms and teachers need to be familiar with the basic principles of this type of organization. Students are told to work together, Reward contingencies are arranged to encourage this. Tasks are constructed which can only be completed if learners work together. The last point is probably the one to which most attention has been given since task interdependence is a major feature of information-gap tasks and related activities. In these cases, students know only one piece of the solution puzzle or information required to solve a problem and must communicate it to others in their group. More typical of mainstream cooperative learning and less common in current materials is the possibility that task interdependence can be fostered by assigning special functions to group members—for example, chairperson.

In addition to group size and the shared cooperative goals of group work, it should be recognized that group work results in greater diversity of performance from one group to another. This fact suggests that just as individuals contribute to a group, the different groups in a classroom can be linked through different tasks and roles and shared responsibilities to generate whole-class tasks and objectives.

An essential step is the organization of the immediate learning environment so as to allow learners to adopt roles commonly associated with the communicative functions of language it is hoped they will acquire.

Physically placing students in small groups is a necessary but not sufficient condition for this. Experience suggests that care needs to be taken regarding the size, manner of formation, structure and composition of the groups used, and over the activities performed in them.

Especially careful attention needs to be paid to the activities performed by students in groups. Here, materials have a vital role to play. It seems to be possible for example to structure simulation exercises of various kinds so as to facilitate the adoption by students of roles with which are associated the communicative functions of language it is intended that they learn.

Classrooms methodology involves the organization and development of dialogue speech aimed at mutual understanding, interaction, solving of modern and general but significant tasks for every participant of the educational process through line-ups, jigsaw reading, think-pair-share, debate, pair-interviews etc. E. g, jigsaw reading is an activity which involves the splitting of a text into different parts or the use of different texts on the same topic. The parts are given to different learners to read. They must communicate with each other in order to find out the whole message or different views on the topic.

The principles and methodological ideas that guide “cooperative learning” approach may be classified as complex and thus being highly assessed by the teachers:

1. Positive independence - when each student performs his (her) job well the group succeeds.
2. Individual responsibility- when working together in a group each student has a different job.
3. Equal participation- each student is given the same amount of time to speak or complete a task.
4. Simultaneous interaction- when all students are involved at the same time.

One might determine the following advantages of group work:

1. Friendly atmosphere and relationships between learners are formed.
2. Learners have the opportunity to be more independent and self- confident.
3. They are not afraid to make mistakes, they are encouraged.
4. It helps the learners to overcome the problems of language barrier confidence and fear of making mistakes.
5. Learners talking time is longer, it's good for communication.
6. Teacher does not dominate.
7. A teacher has an opportunity to give the task to every student. All learners are involved in the work.
8. It's good for individual work.
9. Shy and weak students have the opportunity to rely on their partners.
10. Learners can use their background knowledge.

Thus, cooperative approach gives us a chance to solve some problems simultaneously. The main purpose is to develop communicative skills, to establish emotional contact with students, to provide with realization of educational task, that is to train them to work in a team, to consider somebody's opinion. As seen from experience the use of the above mentioned methods helps to avoid students nervous tension, to change the forms of activity, to draw attention to the main questions of the lesson.

Conclusion

To summarize the cooperative learning gives the foreign language teachers the possibility to master some new techniques of communicative methods of foreign language training.

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