On the 'Whys' and 'Hows' of Teaching English Effectively

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I. Factors Affecting Second Language Acquisition

o Intelligence

- ✓ Intelligence is highly related to the performance on reading and writing, but not on listening and speaking.
- ✓ In second language classrooms, intelligence plays a strong role when the instruction is formal.

o Aptitude

- ✓ Aptitude tests measure the ability to identify and memorize new sounds, to figure out grammatical rules from language samples, etc.

o Learning Styles & Strategies

- ✓ Field (In)dependence
- ✓ Reflectivity & Impulsivity
- ✓ Visual, Auditory, or Kinesthetic Styles

o Personality

- o inhibition vs. risk-taking
- ✓ *Inhibition discourages risk-taking which is necessary for progress in language learning.*
- ✓ *Successful language learners are moderate risk-takers; they do not take "wild or bold guesses."*
- o Personality variables may be a major factor only in the acquisition of communicative competence (but not in grammatical accuracy of knowledge of linguistic rules).

o Motivation and Attitudes

- ✓ Instrumental motivation vs. Integrative motivation
- ✓ Positive attitude vs. Negative attitude

Learner's Belief
- ✓ Older learners esp. have strong beliefs and opinions about how their instruction should be delivered.
- ✓ Teachers can expand Ss' repertoire of learning strategies and thus develop greater flexibility in their ways of approaching language learning.

Age
- ✓ The relationship between a learner's age and his or her potential for success in second language acquisition is the subject of much lively debate.

II. Theories of Second Language Acquisition
Behaviourism
- ✓ All learning, verbal or nonverbal, takes place through <u>habit formation</u>.
- ✓ Input → correct repetition and imitation → positive reinforcement → habit formation
- ✓ Old habits of the first language may influence SLA.
- ✓ New habits must be formed to acquire a second language.
- ✓ Influence of learners' first language <u>is not simply a matter of habits</u>. There are still other factors involved. Thus, behaviorism provides an <u>incomplete</u> explanation for SLA.
- ✓ When teaching more difficult and different patterns, we can provide more related activities so that students can practice the patterns in an interesting way. As a result, new habits can be formed.

Cognitive Theory
- ✓ Second language learning is a process which involves active mental processes, not simply the forming of habits.
- ✓ Through experience and practice, learners become able to use certain parts of the language automatically.
- ✓ Through some mental process, learners may have sudden progress without extensive practice.
- ✓ The theory itself cannot easily predict what will be automatized through practice and what needs to be restructured.

Creative Constructive Theory
- ✓ L1 and L2 learners work out language rules in a similar way.
- ✓ Acquisition takes place internally as learners read or hear what they understand.
- ✓ Krashen's theory is based on it.

The acquisition-learning hypothesis	✓ Acquisition is the product of a subconscious process. ✓ We learn through a conscious process of study and attention to form and error correction.

The monitor hypothesis	✓ The acquired system initiates the speaker's utterances. ✓ The learned system performs the role of the monitor and polishes what the acquired system has produced.
The natural order hypothesis	✓ All second language learners regardless of their L1 backgrounds pass through similar stages. ✓ The natural order is independent of the input order.
The input hypothesis	✓ Learners acquire a language by receiving comprehensible input, which is slightly above the learners' current level. (i+1)
The affective filter hypothesis	✓ Negative attitudes act as a filter (imaginary barrier), which hinders success in language learning. ✓ It's important to lower students' affective filter.

o **The Second Language Interactionist View**
✓ Modified interaction is a crucial element in the language acquisition process.
✓ <u>Types of conversational modifications</u>
  • Comprehension checks
  • Clarification requests
  • <u>Self-repetition</u> or paraphrase (foreigner talk)

III. Building Teacher Efficacy
o People will be more inclined to take on a task if they believe they can succeed.
o People with high self-efficacy in a task are likely to persist longer.
o People with a high self-efficacy are generally of the opinion that they are in control of their own lives.
o **What type of person are you?**
o *Teacher efficacy measures the extent to which teachers believe their efforts will have a positive effect on student achievement (Henson, 2001)*
o Teacher efficacy influences …
➢ *teaching*
➢ *student achievement*

Teaching & Student Achievement
o *Teaching*
➢ *Are you a reflective teacher?*
➢ *Are you ready to try new techniques?*
➢ *Do you realize value of research and utilized it in practice?*

o *Student achievement*
➢ *Do your students have an ownership of learning?*
➢ *Do your students understand learning is continuous?*

IV. The Rationale for Differentiated Instruction
o How people best learn: the engine that drives effective differentiation
o Looking at a classroom through many eyes

o Understanding the needs of advanced learners
    Advanced learners…
✓ can become mentally lazy, even though they do well in school.
✓ can become "hooked" on the trappings of success.
✓ can become perfectionists.
✓ may fail to develop a sense of self-efficacy.
✓ may fail to develop study and copying skills.

● Key principles
✓ continually raise the ceilings of expectations
✓ make clear what would constitute excellence
✓ balance rigor and joy in learning

o Understanding the needs of struggling learners
✓ Look for the struggling learner's positives.
✓ Don't let what's broken extinguish what works.
✓ Pay attention to relevance.
✓ Go for powerful learning.
✓ Use many avenues to learning.
✓ See with the eyes of love.

● Key principles
✓ Be clear on what students must know.
✓ Set important goals of understanding and use of ideas for them.
✓ Continually find ways to let them know that you believe in them.

V. Strategies for Managing a Differentiated Classroom
o Have a strong rationale for differentiating instruction based on student interest.
o Begin differentiating at a comfortable pace.
o Create and deliver instructions carefully.
o Assign students into groups or seating areas smoothly.
o Have a "home base" for students.
o Make a plan for students to turn in work.
o Give students as much responsibility for their learning as possible.
o Engage students in expressing themselves.

VI. Tips on Instruction
o Foundational to transformational
o Concrete to abstract
o Simple to complex
o Single facet to multiple facets
o Structured to open-ended
o Dependent to independent
o Slow to fast

VII. Tips on Activity Design
- Drawing on existing student interests
- Expanding student interests
- ✓ *Real-life applications of ideas and skills*
- ✓ *New forms of expression*
- Link interest-based exploration with key components of the curriculum
- Develop efficient ways of sharing interest-based findings
- Keep an open eye and an open mind for the student with a serious passion

VIII. Tips on Interaction
- *Asking questions*
- *Providing feedback/ Giving praise*
- *Encouraging talk*
- *Using humor*
- *Referring to the class as "our" class*
- *Discussing things unrelated to class*
- *Addressing students by name*

IX. CONCLUSION
- **Student-centered**
- **Individual Differences**
- **Proportional Considerations**
- ✓ grammar vs. meaning
- ✓ linguistic forms vs. communicative functions
- **Variety**
- ✓ activity types
- ✓ scoring
- ✓ encouragement/ compliment