

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



GRADUATION PROCESS

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TOPIC:

USING CREATIVITY WHEN APPLYING THE ECLECTIC METHOD WITH BEGINNER STUDENTS AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT AT THE U.E.S.

ESSAY

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INTRODUCTION

Through years numerous teaching methods have been created in order to improve the teaching/learning process, which was ruled by those methodological guidelines; but as time passed by, it was discovered that those guidelines could be broken so a teacher would be free to select his/her own techniques according to his/her students' needs, during this process a new method was born, it is what we know now as "The eclectic method".

Due to this, as teamwork we have decided to develop this essay about "Using creativity when applying the eclectic method with beginner students in the foreign language department at the University of El Salvador". This work is intended to contribute in the improvement of the teaching/learning process, especially for those teachers who work with beginners.

The teamwork is taking into consideration the importance of the English language in our country, resulting from the use of creativity applying the Eclectic Method which demands knowledge of such language.

This work includes a brief description of the most common teaching methods, such as grammar translation method, direct method, audio-lingual method, etc. Some of the most important creative activities that can be used for teach English to beginners, such as role plays, dramas, story telling, etc., are explained throughout this work.

The importance of using the Eclectic Method in a creative way, combining a variety of teaching techniques, is also explained on this work. It is relevant to mention that until now some of the English teachers who work with beginners at the F.L.D. are just teaching "by the book", but they are not applying creative

activities according to what students experienced while studying at that Department.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

- ✓ To find out through literature review about the effectiveness of creativity with the application of the Eclectic method to beginners in the acquisition of the English as a second language.

Specific Objectives:

- ✓ To inform teachers of the F.L.D how to use the Eclectic Method in English teaching process.
- ✓ To show the variety of creative activities most frequently used with the Eclectic Method to the English learning process.
- ✓ To explain teachers how to use creativity activities in teaching English as a second language to beginners.

JUSTIFICATION

Education is one of the main elements in the intellectual development of human beings, and the acquisition of a second language increases their level of knowledge, life and career opportunities, personal development, etc. For these reasons this essay is focused on the instructive field and presents the importance of the employment of creativity when using the eclectic method in the F.L.D. by teachers who develop classes addressed to beginners.

By analyzing the eclectic method, this essay will determine its effectiveness within the teaching/learning process of English Language learning in beginners studying in the Foreign Language Department.

As a reference, it is important to mention how the application of the eclectic method using creative activities allow beginners to acquire the second language by creating a comfortable atmosphere; likewise, one of the goals is to show how applying the Eclectic Method in a creative way motivate beginner students learn and make them feel comfortable when learning English as a second language.

The main purpose of this essay is to explain the importance of using the eclectic method in a creative way when teaching beginners. Another reason is to know how creative activities motivate beginner students to learn English, pointing out the importance of the Eclectic Method and its application. This will be useful for teachers who are working with beginners in the FLD at the UES.

Thesis Statement

“The use of the Eclectic Method techniques and strategies in a way to achieve creativity in preparing lessons to boost learning in beginners at the F.L.D of the UES”

English language teaching tradition has been subjected to a tremendous change, especially throughout the twentieth century. Perhaps more than any other discipline, this tradition has been practiced, in various adaptations, in language classrooms all around the world for centuries. As will become evident in this essay, the teaching method characteristics will be briefly touched, in an attempt to reveal the importance of the selection and implementation of the ideal method and techniques for language teaching and learning.

Looking back into the history of language teaching, it was in the last century when the concept of “methods” of language teaching emerged and became a preoccupation of teachers and methodologists. The idea was understood as a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning. Now teachers can say that an important feature of several decades of the last century was the search for a single, “accurate” method. As Prator (1976) mentions, “one method has succeeded another: grammar-translation gave way to the direct method, which was in turn followed by the reading method. The audio-lingual method enjoyed almost uncontested supremacy in many parts of the world, through the 1950s and 1960s. But no more...” (Prator, C.H, 1976).

After the Second World War, each new method or approach was built on the limitations of the preceding one, because each method or approach has its own characteristics and shortcoming, for example; in the Western world the classical method for foreign language learning was associated with the learning of Latin and Greek, both supposed to promote their speakers' intellectuality. At the time, it was of vital importance to focus on grammatical rules, syntactic structures, along with

rote memorization of vocabulary and translation of literary texts. There was no provision for the oral use of the languages under study. Late in the nineteenth century, the Classical Method came to be known as the Grammar Translation Method, which offered very little beyond an insight into the grammatical rules attending the process of translating from the second to the native language.

It is widely recognized that the Grammar Translation Method is still one of the most popular and favorite models of language teaching, which has been strong to educational reforms, remaining a standard and a necessary condition for methodology. With hindsight, its contribution to language learning has been lamentably limited, since it has shifted the focus from the real language to a "dissected body" of nouns, adjectives, and prepositions, doing nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in the foreign language. Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979: 3)

Then, the Direct Method was created and developed in order to overcome the shortcomings of the Grammar-translation method which was unhelpful to those who wanted to learn a foreign language for communication. This method became popular during the early years of the Twentieth Century. It is called Direct Method because the teaching of the foreign languages was done without any resort to the mother tongue. The basic premise of the direct method was that one should attempt to learn a second language in much the same way as children learn their first language. The method emphasised oral interaction, spontaneous use of language, no translation between first and second languages, and a little or no analysis on grammar. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 12), summarized the principles of Direct Method as follows the classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language, only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught, both speech and listening comprehension were taught and also correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.

Then, the Audio-lingual Method emerged and it was based on the principles of behavior psychology. It adapted many of the principles and procedures of the Direct Method, in part as a reaction to the lack of speaking skills of the Reading Approach. New material is presented in the form of a dialogue. Based on the principle that language learning is a habit formation, the method fosters dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases and over-learning. Structures are sequenced and taught one at a time. Structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills. Little or no grammatical explanations are provided; grammar is taught inductively. Skills are sequenced: Listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed in order. Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context. Great importance is given to precise native-like pronunciation. Use of the mother tongue by the teacher is permitted, but discouraged among and by the students. Successful responses are reinforced; great care is taken to prevent learner errors. There is a tendency to focus on manipulation of the target language and to disregard content and meaning.

The Situational Approach emerged and dominated the language teaching field in Britain during the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's. It includes aspects of the Direct Method and of the emerging field of language pedagogy. Some of the characteristics of the Situational Approach are that the spoken language is primary, grammatical structures are graded from simple to complex. In this method, the teacher occupies the central role, teacher takes the responsibility for varying drill and task and choosing the appropriate situations to practice structures. Moreover, teacher acts as a model to be imitated by the students who are required to listen and repeat. Active and verbal interaction between the teacher and the students is of vital importance in this method.

The Communicative Method emerged in the early 1970's as a result of the work of the Council of Europe experts. The Communicative Method is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to

communicate real meaning. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn to use the language, one example can be practicing question forms by asking learners to find out personal information about their colleagues that involves meaningful communication. In the classroom the activities guided by the communicative method are characterized by trying to produce meaningful and real communication, at all levels. As a result there may be more emphasis on skills than systems, lessons are more learner-centered, and there may be use of authentic materials.

After that, during the sixties and seventies, some people were in agreement about which method should be preferred, and several developments indicated a change in language pedagogy away from the single method concept as the main approach to language teaching. It became clear that language learning and teaching were too complex to allow facility. According to Richards and Rogers (2001): "Many of the more innovated methods of the 1970s had a very short shelf-life, because they were linked to very specific claims and to demand practices". These practices became unfashionable and discredited because each method perceived to be more effective than current practice, also the method in use was more complicated than the new one and teachers had the opportunity to have different techniques that allow to enhance the teaching process. In Richards' sight (2002): "The heyday of methods can be considered to have lasted until the late 1980s". There have been various efforts suggesting a more differentiated and more empirically sustained view of language teaching which can be consistently and comprehensively applied to the great variety of situations in which second language teaching occurs. (Stern, 1983: p. 495).

Larsen-Freeman, 2000, says there has been an additional concern registered during the past decade: the assumption that a method that is suitable in one part of the world is appropriate for all parts of the world. Yet, a language teaching method seems to be socially constructed and must be seen as a product

of a particular social, cultural, economic and political context that cannot be mechanically transferred to another. Prator, 1976, claims that we can succeed quite well without basing our work on any consistent theory of language teaching. He then suggests to the teachers more concern with finding out what techniques succeed the best with students, altering not the method but our attitude to language teaching.

Due to this situation, the role of teachers has changed significantly. Teachers are encouraged to work out a method which suits their own specific teaching situation. For this reason, the group consider that the Eclectic Method is the most suitable in teaching English to beginners, because the Eclectic Method is a variety of different teaching techniques and curricula to accomplish educational goals. It is also useful to promote curiosity, creative thinking, enjoy the learning, make active participants in the classroom and to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that help solving problems that emerge in the classroom. (Rivers, 1981).

Rivers prefers to use the term method instead of approach. Rivers argues that the term method is more convenient because the method consists of the use of a certain number of techniques in a systematic way in order to achieve the aim of language teaching. In accordance with Rivers, 1981, the Eclectic Method allows language teachers to absorb the best techniques and creative activities of all the well known language teaching methods in the classroom procedures. The main criticism of the eclecticism is that "it does not offer any guidance on what basis and by what principles aspects of different methods can be selected and combined". It is not based on a specific theory or disciplines but there are some assumptions underlying it, as an example, the researcher group can mention that there is no one method which is comprehensive enough to the requirements of effective teaching and learning. All methods have some strength and some weaknesses. Experienced teachers are very sensitive to the limitations and different methods, so

they reject the weak points of each method and retain only those aspects that are applicable in particular situations in which they find themselves.

The Eclectic Method is a combination of some specific methods that are the following: the Direct Method, Audio-lingual, The Communicative Approach and The Total Physical Response, these methods are the perfect combination to carry out the eclectic method because the general characteristics of each one are easily adapted to the teaching-learning experience to both, teachers and students.

The group considers that this method may supplement one another especially when there is no one method which can fulfill all language goals and programme objectives. Rivers, 1981, proposed the following principles for the Eclectic Method: the language learning should be taught in the target language whenever possible, language learning must be meaningful and interesting, subject content enriches and provides a cognitive base to the language classroom, and a major principle of the eclectic method is that the teaching process should serve the students, not a particular method. Hence teachers should choose the techniques or procedures that best fit the students' needs and the teaching and learning situation.

The teachers that use the Eclectic Method have freedom to experiment, but also they have a big responsibility in the teaching process. Brosh, 1996, argues that the rejection of the idea of a single method of language teaching was accompanied by a stronger focus on learning, learning styles and learning strategies. Learning began to move away from the teacher's direct control and into the hands of learners through the use of individualized learning, group work and project work. Although the shift of emphasis from the teaching process to the learning process is evident, the speculations around methods and approaches are still quite frequent, (Richard and Rogers, 2002).

The creative activities are used in the classroom procedures for the purposes for which they are most appropriated, (Bandura, 1986). This is necessary and important because teachers face the daily task of helping students to learn a new language, and teachers can not afford the luxury of complete dedication to each new method that comes into fashion to offer guidance to their students. Therefore, the most appropriate thing a teacher can do is to provide the richest environment and as a group, the group believes that the Eclectic Method can provide this environment in which the teacher can enhance the learning process, Rivers (1981).

The teaching process includes different ways in learning classroom environment. If a teacher uses the Eclectic Method in the classroom, the comprehensible input is an important way in language learning. That input must have as much variety and intensity as possible. This is why so much importance is attached to the maximization of the use of the target language in the learning process. The input for language assimilation has some important elements. For example, the development of oral skill in which the interaction takes place between its participants as well as by the context where it occurs, the use of technology, such as projectors or listening booths, authentic materials like the workout of relia and magazines.

The activities teachers use when teaching need to be creative and by using the Eclectic Method, teachers provide students opportunities to question, to think, to define their thoughts, and to extend their understanding in a more creative way. Teachers can have a huge influence on encouraging students to be creative but for creativity to flourish it needs to use a methodology which fits in any language teaching situation (Nunan, 1991: p. 228). As it is known, each methodology has its own benefits and drawbacks and these are closely connected to the learner's learning process. It is important for teachers to be eclectic; in other words, to use an Eclectic Method to teach in a creative way the second language for beginners from the F.L.D.

The Eclectic Method would help the teacher to encourage creativity when preparing lessons for beginners because students are starting to acquire a second language and activities used should be innovative so that students can acquire it easier. In using the Eclectic Method, teachers have the opportunity to use creative activities to improve the students learning process.

According to Chambers, 1969, creativity can be defined as a multi-dimensional process of interaction between an organism and its environment, which leads to the creation of unique products or ideas. In Abra's opinion, 1989, the term creativity circumscribes the capability of creating or perceiving something unusual. Wermke, 1994, points out that no uniform definition has been established so far about creativity, (Karen Rosnick, 2009, Chapter 2, page 26).

However, the group considers that creative teaching can be defined in two ways: teaching creatively and teaching for creativity. Teaching creatively might be described with teachers using their imagination to obtain the best of each approach in order to make the learning process as interesting as possible for students, as well as effective and engage them. While teaching for creativity may be described as using resources to imaginative students' motivation to use their own creative thinking in the learning process; nevertheless, it is important to mention that teaching creatively is the core to teach for creativity as a non-creative teacher will instead, discourage his/her student to use creativity.

Teaching with creativity and teaching for creativity involve all the characteristics of good teaching including high motivation, high expectations, the ability to communicate and listen and the ability to interest, engage and inspire. Creative teachers need expertise in their particular fields but they need more than this. The Eclectic Method aims teachers to develop techniques that stimulate curiosity and raise self esteem and confidence also that involves important factors that help in the learning and teaching process such as activities that encourage spontaneous use of the language. For instance, role-plays are useful to get

motivation, to get new vocabulary and also help to promote communicative competence between students in a fun way, (Lynn DellaPietra, 2009, Chapter 2).

It is important that teachers put into practice techniques related to the social environment in which students can practice dynamics, these are easily adjusted to age, level, and interests and can make use of the four skills; for example, role plays, dramas, etc. Moreover, there should be activities where the teacher acts only as a facilitator and promotes the whole class participation. Also, creative teachers have to take into account that in each task they do during the English class, there should be reinforcement in order for the students to learn the main point of the class and they can use exercises based on grammar. Teachers must recognize when encouragement is needed and confidence threatened. They must balance structured learning with opportunities for self-direction; and the management of groups while giving attention to individuals, (Fai Hui and David L. Grossman, 2003)

There are several advantages when the class is planned with the use of creative activities in the classroom: Students feel motivated and challenging. Creative activities allow the use of setting time limits on tasks and using competition or races to increase student focus and give an exciting buzz to an activity that could otherwise be quite ordinary; also students get involved in the activity itself and are more engaged therefore to contribute in class, so even shy students can join in, (Lynn DellaPietra, 2009, Chap. 2).

Eclectic teachers must be familiar with and able to adapt and employ a variety of teaching techniques in addition to having an appropriate knowledge of the language. These techniques of teaching include classroom behavior or classroom activities and procedures which employ specific strategies selected by teachers to achieve their objectives. All the strategies and classroom activities are selected by the teacher according to the Eclectic Method principles, the language

competency and teaching techniques go hand in hand in enhancing teacher effectiveness in the classroom, (Rivers, 1981).

The attitude of the eclectic teacher also influences student success. A positive attitude is essential. Teachers need to be confident that their students are capable of learning another language. Eclectic teacher need to learn to be flexible, this is because foreign or second language learning and teaching is dynamic and subject to change, as there is not only one way to teach English. This is also due to the fact that maintaining a flexible teaching philosophy allows them to accommodate the various learning styles, greater diversity, and varied goals students bring with them to the English classroom (Geelan, 2006).

Moreover, including creative activities in teaching English is essential in the English classrooms. There are other elements which are very important in the teaching English process, as it was mentioned before the teacher is one of those elements. They are leaders and usually do the best that they can with the resources that they have in order to facilitate the learning process of the students. Another element is the way to teach the target language in the classroom. One of the most effective ways to teach the target language is being creative in doing the different activities during the class period.

One important aspect in students is to have motivation. This is the strength that helps students get engaged in the process and the eclectic teacher is a crucial element to cultivate it in his/her students by promoting the motivation in a comfortable classroom environment. However, the learners can learn and they learn when they are ready and willing to do it. And an eclectic teacher can create the conditions for this. Motivation is a big issue for all learning, but perhaps in particular for language learning.

Furthermore, learning a language requires a great deal of effort and games help students to make easier the effort of learning. It is also necessary that a teacher uses the Eclectic Method in class to facilitate the learning process to students, this method helps the teacher to associate the different activities to be used along with the learning styles that each student own. These activities will bring all four learning styles into play: auditory, they learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances, visual, these learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs, and kinaesthetic/tactile, they learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. These styles are the ones that each student put into practice according to the necessities that each student has in the English learning process.

Many experienced textbooks manual and methodology writers have argued that games are not just time filling activities but have a great educational value. Lee, 1970 holds that most language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms. He also says that games should be treated as central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching program. Richard and Amato (2001) claims that many teachers often overlook the fact that in a relaxed atmosphere, real learning takes place, and students use the language they have been exposed to and have practiced earlier, it is a good way of practicing language for students that teachers provide a model of what learners will use the language they are learning in real context in the future.

Games are also icebreakers from usual routine of the language class. Beginners and lower intermediates mostly need a lot of repetition in order to fully absorb new vocabulary and grammar and this can be achieved through fun language games. Teachers don't need activities that require complicated materials or the traditional board games with a lot of tiny pieces that they can lose easily, especially if they have a large class because in some cases it is difficult for teachers to manage large groups, and is necessary to use a set of activities that help students to acquire the English learning process in a non traditional way.

Additionally, using games during the class have shown through these effective advantages in various ways; therefore, these activities cannot be denied. However, in order to achieve a successful teaching and learning process is essential that suitable games are chosen. Whenever a game is to be conducted, the number of students, proficiency level, cultural context, timing, learning topic and the classroom setting are factors that should be taken in to account; for instance, a game must be more than just fun; moreover, it should bear upon participation of all the students involved and interested in the classroom, it should also encourage students to focus on the language rather than on the language itself and finally should give students a chance to learn, practice or review specific language material assigning them different activities (Springer, Alexander and Becker, 2006).

Activities that involve a combination of creativity, motivation, innovation and discipline to learn a second language create a meaningful context for language use. Even though motivation for learners of English help to get involved and participate actively in the learning activities, vocabulary games bring real world context in to the classroom and enhance students use of English in flexible and communicative way. The mentioned activities especially focus on helping learners develop and use words in different contexts by making the lessons enjoyable.

Therefore, it is necessary to explore whether students learn vocabulary effectively through games and how they learn it (Herr, 2007).

The group considers that teaching for creativity is not an easy option, even for expertise or eclectic teachers, but it can be enjoyable and deeply fulfilling. It can involve more time and planning to generate and develop ideas and to evaluate whether they have worked. It involves confidence to improvise and take detours, to pick up unexpected opportunities for learning; to live with uncertainty and to risk admitting that an idea led nowhere. Creative teachers are always willing to experiment but they recognize the need to learn from experience. All of this requires more, not less, expertise of teachers.

Moreover, the interaction between teacher and learners is a real reason to use the Eclectic Method. Interaction is the way in which learners assimilate and internalize the language so that they can re-use it in new contexts. In this sense interaction is not a simple concept; it involves any process in which the learner is actively working with the language.

The eclectic teacher links the input to the interaction in a creative way using an appropriate range of interactive processes. The most obvious meaning of interaction is dialogue and it can of course mean interaction with an interlocutor, for example, this can be an interaction between the teacher, the assistant or the exchange student. It also means interaction with a text, whether spoken or written.

To conclude, the group can say that, learning and teaching language are not automatic; they require a lot of effort on the part of the participants. The Eclectic Method provides the English teacher new and creative ways of understanding, interpreting and organizing knowledge and involves the students experience into a complex process of changing learning habits and perceptions. Also, the Eclectic Method suggests that the provision of study skills should be viewed as academic

enablers that provide learners with systematic instruction in, and repeated practice of academic techniques.

The group also considers that by using the Eclectic Method creatively the teachers and students can get vary own process of teaching and learning, revision and refinement of the teaching and language process. Also, with the Eclectic Method the creative activities are very important during the class not only for fun or just spent time; games are helpful in order to supply the necessities of the students in learning process. Finally, these activities can provide students the opportunity to use their imagination and creativity, and can motivate them to learn English language with the different activities applied in classroom.

METHODOLOGY

The demand for the knowledge of a second Language increases every day; for this reason learning English is a necessity for many people. To satisfy this need all English Educational Institutions should improve the conditions for a better Teaching/Learning process, using for this purpose the eclectic method in a creative way. This can allow the learner's acquisition easier.

For constructing this essay, it was necessary to search many sources that were related with the essay which is entitled: "Using creativity when applying the Eclectic Method with beginner students at The Foreign Language Department at The University of El Salvador". First, it was determined what information would be needed to review in order to support the topic. For doing that, it was necessary to read different book sources, as well as academic articles; also, the group read about previous researches which were taken into consideration to support the idea of this essay.

After gathering all the information from the literary and web sources, the group was able to write this essay by doing a literature review first. It means that the group went through a process of reading all sources found to just take the more relevant points to support just the idea they had at that time. Before reading all the information, the group had only an idea of what the essay would be about.

After doing the literature review, the topic of the essay was clear and it was the first step before starting developing the arguments. These arguments were taken into consideration to build credible evidence based on previous research. It was done by comparing all the ideas the group had with the experts' opinion. Finally, the group started writing the essay applying all the supporting ideas that they found from the experts.

While writing the essay, the most relevant information was put into the body of the work, which explains what is known about the topic. From that position, the evidence provided by the gathered data, created a logical and defensive set of conclusions which provide answers to the questions about the topic. Eventually, all sources used for doing this essay gave relevant information about the topic and support the importance of this essay in the English Language teaching process.

CONCLUSIONS

After having finished this essay, the group concludes that teachers who are working with beginners at the FLD need to discover their own Eclectic Approach through the use of creativity by applying a variety of teaching techniques so that beginners can acquire the second Language easier. A wide range of techniques and creative activities is recommended to help beginners become more interested in learning a second Language.

Besides, teachers should teach in a creative way for students to have fun when learning so it cannot be a boring or a frustrating experience. Balancing creative activities through the Eclectic Method can help beginners to understand the rules of the second language. In this way, the current English teaching/learning process for beginners in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador can be enhanced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is really convenient for English teachers to take into consideration the importance on having a variety of creative activities when teaching beginners, applying a mixture of the different teaching English methods that exist to develop the eclectic method; furthermore, teachers should be more interested in making students learn in a funny and comfortable environment, so that the acquisition of the Language can be easier for them.

Moreover, for beginner students of English as a second language, we recommend the eclectic method so they can acquire the language in a creative and easy way to understand, in order to fulfill the class objectives.

To the Foreign Language Department at the UES, we recommend that is essential to encourage teachers to use different teaching methods for teaching beginners and motivate them more to apply their self-developed eclectic method in a creative way by using different techniques and activities to help enhance the teaching-learning process. This will make students feel the process of acquiring a second language more comfortable.

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