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Processes

In Writing Task 1 you may be asked to describe a process or other pictorial information such as a cycle or map. In order to produce a report describing a process you should take a similar approach to the one you used in describing data. You should examine the information carefully – which will be in pictorial form – and make sure you understand it. Look specifically at the beginning and at the end of the process. Then, following the same principles as mentioned in previous writing tasks, you should provide an opening sentence that summarizes the *overall* function of the process [5,46].

Grammar is often the area that students struggle with the most and it can easily bring a student's score down. Examiners look for how many 'error free' sentences you have. You therefore need to make sure each sentence has no errors. Even a small mistake like an article in the wrong place or misplaced plural counts towards this:

- Use the present simple to describe processes.
- Use the passive voice if the process is describing something being made, like a book, e.g. the book is printed and then collated, after which it is bound.
- Use the active voice when you describe something which is happening: The moisture evaporates and condenses on the
- Try to vary the structure of your sentences by putting the time phrase at the beginning and the end of the sentence [6].

In Writing Task 1 you don't need to write a conclusion, instead check your writing efficiently. You should check that you use formal words, e.g. *approximately* not *roughly*, *improved* not *got better*. Check your spelling and the tenses, check singular/plural agreement, especially in processes. Make sure you answer all parts of the question and link the different charts to each other. Avoid repetition, if you use the correct reference words and synonyms, this won't happen.

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INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the use of interactive methods while teaching the English language at a higher school. There is no doubt that today the role of foreign languages is growing fast. The knowledge of a foreign language gives an opportunity to use it in all spheres of a social life. The article under discussion deals with one of the most effective ways of teaching, so called an interactive method widely used in everyday life as well as its advantages in a foreign language learning. It is known that interaction and collaboration among students are considered to be one of the effective factors in foreign language learning. It is natural that real life communication in the classroom is of great value to the students. The authors consider some stages that could be used for real life problem solving.

Key words: interaction, collaboration, communication, approach, advantage, solution, stage, implementation, brainstorming, opportunity, obstacle.

Аннотация. Научно-технические и культурные потребности определяют необходимость использования современной концепции обучения иностранным языкам. Обучение иностранному языку происходит как обучение средству межкультурной коммуникации. Смена целей обучения требует инновационных технологий. Данная статья посвящена интерактивным методам обучения, что предполагает организацию процесса обучения как модели общения. К интерактивным методам обучения относятся парная и групповая работа, дискуссии, а также ролевые игры.

Авторы предлагают конкретные задачи, направленные на формирование умений работать в команде, что, в конечном счете, стимулирует мыслительную активную деятельность учащихся и способствует мотивации обучения.

Ключевые слова: взаимодействие, сотрудничество, общение, подход, преимущество, решение, этап, осуществление, мозговой штурм, возможность, препятствие.

When teaching a foreign language we want our students to use the language communicatively, express their ideas in speech and writing and understand what they are listening and reading. This is especially important for students who will need English after graduating. So we should create favourable psychological atmosphere in class and make it a better environment for language learning.

The aim of the present article is to develop communicative competence of our students. Working in pairs or in small groups, creative activities such as discussion and role play are of great significance. Students probably do not assimilate new material effectively unless they are given a chance to use it themselves to express their own ideas. So it is at the “free use” stage of the lesson that most of the learning is likely to take place.

Interactive activities help students to use the language as it provides them with an opportunity to practice the English language more effectively. M. Bygate [1] suggests the two sets of skills.

The first set of skills includes such skills as the idea of inviting someone to speak and keeping the conversation.

The second one is connected with negotiating meaning, i.e. making sure that the person you are speaking to has understood you in a proper way and you understood him/her too.

So, what is interaction? First of all, it should involve not just expressing one’s own ideas but understanding those of others. Why is using communicative tasks in the classroom preferred? The answer is simple: they involve the learners in producing or interacting in the target language, while attention is mainly focused on meaning rather than form.

According to S. Reagan, T. Fox and D. Bleich (1994) [2] collaboration is a social orientation when the participants share a general sense of purpose and orientation. Under this definition, a group of students becomes a community of people who bring some experience to the classroom to interact about things that really concern them.

Interaction and collaboration among students are considered to be one of the most effective factors when learning a foreign language. K. Shumin emphasizes the fact that self-esteem, empathy and motivation are all fostered when students are engaged in interaction [3]. Also, real life communication in the classroom is useful to the students as they talk to gain some information they want, reach a decision or solve a problem.

Therefore, interactive and collaborative activities require the teacher to step out of the limelight and give every student a full role in developing activities accepting all kinds of opinions and being tolerant of errors students make while trying to communicate. For this purpose, W. Rivers shares the activity called “real life problem solving” [4].

When doing a real life problem-solving activity K. Englander [5] puts a list of stages and time limits on the blackboard. The students are divided into groups of four to six. Mention should be noted that at the very beginning the activity is not explained in detail to the students. After ringing a small bell (or anything that could be heard during the conversation) to end each stage she explains what the students are to do in the next one. The activity has strict time limits, with seven stages totaling 30 minutes, and after that the bell is used to signal the end of each stage. According to K. Englander, the stages are as follows:

- Stating the problems and choosing one (5 min.);
- Analyzing the problem (5 min.);
- Brainstorming solutions (5 min.);
- Choosing two solutions (3 min.);
- Thinking the solutions through (5 min.);
- Identifying a report -back date (2 min.);
- Following up on the report-back date (5 min.)

Let’s consider each of them in detail. Every student talks about a real problem he/she is having at the moment. It could concern absolutely everything, e.g. university, home or work, but it should be a problem that concerns the student himself, not his friend or a broad social problem unless it touches the student directly. After each student of the group states a problem, the group chooses one to focus on.

There is more than one approach to analyze the problem. One of the three approaches outlined below is chosen. The members of the group begin asking the relevant questions and the person with the problem answers as honestly as possible.

The following three approaches are written on index cards for the groups to use during the activity.

1. Find the pattern behind the problem. Does it happen with certain people? Does it happen to other people too?

2. Analyze the motives and goals of the participants. What do/did you want? Were your desires in conflict? If so, why? What are the advantages and disadvantages to the other people if they change their behavior?

3. Gain more information. How did you try to solve the problem? Did the solutions work or not?

The person having a problem is silent taking notes. The group members brainstorm as many solutions as possible: elaboration and variations are encouraged.

The person with the problem reviews the notes taken during the brainstorming session and identifies two that are worth exploring. Generally speaking, solutions that foster prevention rather than punishment are preferred. The student tells the group which two solutions were chosen.

With the help of the group the student anticipates how the chosen solutions would actually be implemented. For example, what steps are necessary and what people should be involved in? What additional help will he need? The two possible solutions should be detailed.

The student with the problem sets a date when he/she will report back to the group what has happened. This commitment to the group seems to make the difference between a classroom activity and a real life event.

At this point the teacher makes a chart of groups and their report-back dates and posts it for future reference. The students are given a nice opportunity to discuss the nature of their problems and chosen solutions with the whole class if they wish. They are not required to do this. Some choose to discuss it, others don't.

On a particular group's report-back date 5 minutes of class time is given for them to meet while the rest of the students do the regular class activity. They leave the room, sitting together in the hall, and the student with the problem reports on what occurred. If no action was taken, they discuss what the obstacles were, when they brainstorm new solutions and think over two new ones, and after that they set a new report-back date.

One of the attractive things of this activity is the student's response: "Oh, this is real", "I can really use this information" or "I have really learned a lot from my classmates about how to solve my problem". Such feedback makes the effort put into the activity. When moving through the activity the outcome is consistently positive.

However, there may be resistance or delay during the first stage when students state the problems and choose some. The groups are given 15 minutes to do the activity for the first time. This situation requires the teacher's guidance to direct the students' attention away from the general and toward the specific one. For example, students ruminated on drug use in society today and needed to be redirected toward thinking about the issue's impact on their lives.

This problem-solving activity can be integrated into various syllabus designs. For content-based instruction the learner's lives become the center of attention. As far as a functional syllabus is concerned, practice in brainstorming, supporting, advising, agreeing or disagreeing is also the focus. For structural syllabus students get practice in using conditionals, modals as well as past, present and future tenses. After the first implementation of the activity the teacher becomes just a time-keeper, making interaction possible to occur among the group members.

During the term the teacher tries to be mindful of the requirements outlined earlier: that an activity uses real life communication and it should be collaborative. These criteria are more likely met if every time we undertake the activity during the term the group members remain constant. Student collaboration is fostered by the growing satisfaction of addressing issues that occur in their lives and solving some actual problems together.

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<i>Исмагамбетова Л.Ш.</i> Особенности внедрения полиязычного образования в Республике Казахстан. -----	3
<i>Bassett D., Shayakhmet A.</i> How to use the internet efficiently for research -----	7
<i>Antonyan Rusanna.</i> Workshop: “how to motivate students to create digital stories” -----	8
<i>Колмухамедова Н.Н.</i> English for specific purposes: concept of esp and curriculum design -----	8
<i>Мальцева Н.Г.</i> Лингводидактические исследования инпута в обучении иностранному языку. -----	11
<i>Абуханова А.Г.</i> Развитие языковой личности на базе корпусных данных -----	13
<i>Мулдагалиева А.А., Окушева Г.Т.</i> Difficulties with vocabulary learning. -----	16
<i>Артыкова Е.У., Алмабаева Г.Б.</i> Modern information technologies in education system -----	18
<i>Кашкинбаева К.С., Жунусова Д.А.</i> Языковая личность: этнокультурные и методические компоненты обучения иностранному языку. -----	21
<i>Болат Б., Набижанкызы З.</i> Tips for Ielts writing task 1 -----	23
<i>Нурмуханбетова А.А., Баймуратова И.А.</i> Interactive activities in the classroom . -----	27
<i>Жубанова К.Х., Попова Н.В.</i> Use irregular verbs correctly -----	30
<i>Карашина Г.Т., Оразаева Г.А., Жанадилова З.М.</i> Classroom activities for developing speaking skills -----	32
<i>Abdikairova U., Aysultanova K.A.</i> Higher education (social workers) used to prepare the example of the pronouncements and pedagogical bases -----	35
<i>Penny Lew Chooi Yin., Seri Kembangan, Malaysia, Artykova E.U. Almabaeva G.</i> New teaching and information technologies in education system . -----	38
<i>Баймуратова И.А., Исабаева Б.</i> Ағылшын тіліндегі “ing” жұрнақты етістік формасының сөйлемде атқаратын қызметі мен олардың қазақ тіліне аударылу тәсілдері -----	40
<i>Карабаева Б.Н., Мадиева З.К.</i> Group work and pair work in teaching English -----	43
<i>Lomachenko N.L., Sabyrbayeva N.K.</i> The importance of teaching free communication -----	45
<i>Түлеубаева Б.Б., Жиренишина К.А.</i> Шетел тілінде білім берудегі жоба технологиясы. -----	47
<i>Abylkasova A.B., Artykova E.U.</i> Teaching vocabulary as an essential part of learning a foreign language for non native students -----	49
<i>Makhazhanova L.M., Aliyarova L.M.</i> Teaching the process of reading comprehension -----	52
<i>Omarova Sh.B., Omarova A.B.</i> Modern forms, methods and mean of distant learning -----	55
<i>Rakhmetova V.Zh., Madiyeva Z.K.</i> How to use new publications to give an effective lesson -----	57
<i>Smagulova A.S., Tastemirova B.I.</i> The problem of intercultural communication in foreign languages. -----	60
<i>Makhmetova D.M., Gumarova Sh.B.</i> Elsp teaching based on project works . -----	63
<i>Arinova B.A., Seitkerim B.E., Tleugabylova Z.A.</i> Educational and educative potential of spiritual and moral education programme of "self-knowledge" -----	66

