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## **ACTIVITY-BASED LEARNING FOR ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

With the passing in the second reading of the draft law «On the use of the English language» [1] and its possible introduction as the language of international communication in the public sphere in Ukraine, the need to review the current and innovative methods and techniques to enhance and accelerate the process of language acquisition has increased.

The review of pedagogical literature and scholarly publications on teaching languages presented a plethora of different approaches clustered into two broad groups: teacher-centred (grammar translation, direct method, lecture-based, lexical etc.) and learner-centred approaches (content and language integrated learning, communicative, humanistic communicative, natural, situational, constructivist [5], and other more recent innovative approaches like inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, etc). Given the overall educational shift towards human-centred learning, accelerated development of technology and artificial intelligence, significant decrease in academic hours for ESL classroom instruction throughout the universities, it is important to turn to activity-based learning.

Activity-based learning (ABL) is an educational approach which turns learners from passive recipients of teacher's instructions to active participants of the training process. As education is not only about acquiring knowledge, skills and competences, but also about socialising, building professional networks and possibility of face-to-face communication, ABL naturally fits the language teaching principles thanks to its practical, engaging activities that facilitate language acquisition through: 1) immediate implication of previously acquired knowledge and, hence, better memory retention and increased motivation. Motivation of learning activity is essential to producing positive learning outcomes; 2) allowing students to work autonomously, at their own pace; 3) developing skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century employment, namely critical, creative and collaborative skills; 4) helping create a sense of friendly community in the classroom through interpersonal interaction with a teacher and peers [4]; 5) improving students' academic achievements [2].

Some relatively new pedagogical approaches directed at fostering communicative competence in an ESL learner are heavily reliant on activity-based learning:

- flipped learning (an approach which involves swapping the homework and class activities);

- design-thinking methodology (a human-centered multilevel approach to tackling issues and searching resolutions in innovative and creative way, introduced by the Stanford design school for the field of project-management);

- mastery learning (an approach which requires breaking down learning material into smaller clear chunks according to learning outcomes, and obliges students demonstrate their understanding before they can move forward to the next chunk [3]);

- project-based learning (a student-centred collaborative method of teaching aimed at working out a solution to a problem).

These approaches can be integrated into higher education ESL classroom due to their time-saving construct and empowerment for autonomous self-study

The traditional active learning strategies within ABL that are widely used in ESL classrooms include role-plays, simulations, case studies; pair and group discussions; think-pair-share, mingling activities. Among more contemporary, technology-drive active learning strategies there are online competitive quizzes (Kahoot, Wordwall), polling, social annotation, thinking maps, genius hour, etc.

Regardless of approach or strategy used for teaching, it is necessary for the higher education teacher to follow certain rules of ABL: consider the appropriateness of chosen topics, their relevance to learning objectives and outcomes; clarify the instructions to students; design the activities and consider assessment tools that will be used to assess students' participation.

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