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TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE – IMPORTANCE OF USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО КАК ВТОРОГО ЯЗЫКА – ВАЖНОСТЬ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ИНФОРМАЦИОННЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ В ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

УДК: 372-76/16

This article discusses the peculiarities that nowadays generation possesses and the requirements in academic field. It also emphasizes the role of new technology in teaching and learning English as a second language.

В этой статье рассматриваются особенности нынешнего поколения и требования в учебной сфере. Также, отмечается роль новых технологий в обучении и изучении английского языка.

Бул макалада азыркы жаш муундун өзгөчөлүктөрү, окуу чөйрөсүндөгү талаптар, жана англис тилин окутуудагы жана окуудагы жаны технологиянын ролу каралат.

For the last years the role of English language is growing to its climax. Present requirements of life and work increasing the need to know English. For example, when a person goes to a job interview they ask the question, “Do you speak English?” it proves the reality of life nowadays. Knowledge of English language does not only mean the language itself, but also the history, culture and way of life of people speaking this language.

English teachers working with students at universities know that learners nowadays think and behave differently than those from previous generations. These students were born into a world of information technology; they prefer to multitask rather than focus on one thing at a time. This generation has been given different names, including Net Gen, the Millennials, and Generation Y. (McCrindle Research 2006). At present, the task for English teachers is how to engage students and keep them study this language with enthusiasm. Certainly, when the course is taught in one definite way it becomes boring and the effectiveness of learning and teaching decreases. When we, teachers examine the generation that we are teaching, we should understand the nature of this people.

Lancaster and Stillman (2002) provide a historical perspective of dividing the last 70 years into four distinct generations.

1. The Baby Boomer generation (1946-1964). This large generation was due to many soldiers who returned home after World War II and started families. More people were born in this twenty year period than at any other time in United States history.

2. Generation X (1965 - 1980). This generation was much smaller than the Boomer generation. Gen Xers have been generally characterized as hard working, independent, and skeptical.

3. Generation Y (1981 - 1999). This generation came into being during the last two decades of the 20th century. Its members are identified as confident and technologically advanced, and they come with a sense of entitlement.

4. Generation Z (2000 - present). This name refers to those born since 2000, a group that has received little attention in the literature thus far.

According to above mentioned author, we can say that we are teaching Gen Y who are technologically advanced. Experienced teachers who have been around a while know that the values today’s students hold are not congruent with traditional course content and methods. Teachers who merely follow the textbook are likely to be perceived as “old hat”. Therefore, teacher effectiveness depends on the ability to adapt instruction to the needs of today’s learners. In his book “Educating the Net Generation”: How to Engage Students in the 21st Century, Pletka (2007) writes that a significant number of American youth drop out of high school in part because they feel disengaged in the classroom.

The most important characteristic of this generation is its comfort with technology, in other words, today’s youth have never known life without computers and the Internet, and therefore see information technology as an integral part of their lives. English language teachers have identified many useful ways to bring new technology into the classroom, implementing video-based activities through sites such as YouTube; incorporating video games, and blogs; and making use of instant messages. Integrating videos into lessons creates appealing visuals and a special interactive environment in the English as a second language classroom. Teaching English through videos also allows teachers to be creative when designing language lessons. What is a blog? A blog (a blend of the words web and log) is a web page with regular diary or journal entries that incorporates different postings by authors and responses to these posts by an audience. Blogs are easy to set up and posts are simple to comment on. Two websites that support the free creation of blogs are www.blogger.com and <http://wordpress.com>.

It is important to mention that teachers need regular encouragement and guidance about how to use new technologies. Power Point, for instance, is popular software that can promote interaction and learning. However, for new users who lack the proper training, its menus, options, and icons can be frightening. And once teachers have learned how to create a presentation, they

must also learn how to incorporate it into their class in a way that present generation will find engaging. Teachers need to understand the nature of this generation and adopt teaching strategies that work with them; otherwise, students feel bored and learning will be minimized.

Those of us paid to teach English today may form the primary obstacle to present generation learning in a way they want to. Sandars and Morrison (2007) explain: "As we see it, the main barrier to implementing such teaching is likely to be not the learners but the educators; there seems reluctance among many educators to move away from traditional teaching methods ... a radical departure from a system that has worked well for a very long time". Why are English teachers reluctant to adapt? It is probably fair to say that many prefer to stay on their current course because it is familiar and has reaped some benefits. This attitude is unfortunate because for learning to occur, teachers need to update their teaching strategies. They need to adopt more technology – based tasks.

Above mentioned points prove that present generation has different values and needs than previous generations. They know about technology more than previous year's youth and prefer variety to repeated and similar tasks. Life is also changing every day and

information technology can give most varied information and materials that we need now. Taking all these into account, English teachers need to understand what present generation wants, and adopt teaching strategies that respond to nowadays academic needs.

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