"I'm All Ears, Teacher" Different Learning Types and Student-Centered Classrooms

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Abstract
Psychologist Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligence has been influential in language teaching circles. Teachers who recognize the multiple intelligence of their students acknowledge that students bring with them specific and unique strengths, which are often not taken into account in classroom situations. Gardner has theorized that individuals have at least seven distinct intelligences that can be developed over a lifetime. In my lesson plan I try to realize that the students have different strengths and I need to prepare a lesson plan that is suitable for all needs. However, it has been estimated that for up to 25 percent of the population, the mode of instruction does make a difference in their success as learners. (Levin et al. 1974 cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991)

A student-centered approach helps students to develop a "can-do" attitude. It is effective, motivating, and enjoyable. We don't want our students to become people who can't communicate in the real world, who are tongue-tied because they're worried about making mistakes and losing face, who can't survive without a teacher to help them and guide them, who look away in embarrassment when someone asks, "Can anyone here speak English?"] Bearing in my mind Leo Jones' words, I plan my lessons in order to facilitate language learning acquisition among diverse students. As a school, we try to focus on different learning types. Our counselling department share us all the reports and data about different learning types, so we plan our lessons accordingly. To illustrate, we had a lesson plan about "shopping vocabulary" for ninth and tenth graders in high school. We planned our lesson like that:

Name of the activity: "I'm all ears,teacher!"
Level of the students: 9-10th graders (high school)
Objective: The students are able to use shopping vocabulary and shop names correctly and effectively either in pair or group work.
Number of the students: 24
Timing: 80 min.
Class Environment: Class should be arranged for group or pair work.
Tools and equipment: Projector, sound system, colourful papers and cartoons, pens, photos of shops, souvenirs.

1. As a preparation
We asked our students to find some Turkish shops that have English names. They brought them to the class and also they were supposed to bring their possessions (shoes, books, jewelleries,etc.). The teacher gives all the shops names in unjumbled form and asks the students to work in pairs and write them with the correct spelling. Then the teacher tells them to relax and listen to a piece of music.While the students are listening to the song, the teacher describes the shops. After the musical part, the teacher divides the students into groups of six and they try to visualize the shops. They write a dialogue with the criteria that will be shown on the slide. After 10 minutes, the students make up the names of their shops and they act their dialogues out in class. Each group has 10 minutes to act. Then, the teacher shows the pictures of shops (that was given as a preparation) and makes students differentiate between their own shops and the shops that they found earlier. They draw differences and similarities about name, aim, physical look, etc. For the last 5 minutes, the students fill out the peer evuluation forms and evaluate their friends.

2. At the end of the lesson
I realized that the students were so eager to take part and act these dialogues out. It contributed to their self-confidence.They don't care about the mistakes, which was our main objective. This lesson plan made our students feel more motivated and confident. They were happy that they enjoyed while producing something together.We realized that multiple intelligence, different learning types and hands-on training can help us achieve more in classroom.

References

[1] "Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching" Diane Larsen Freeman, Oxford University Press

[2] "The Student-Centered Classroom" Leo Jones, Cambridge University Press