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## МЕТОДИКА ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

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### **TEACHING EFL STUDENTS IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE GROUPS** **ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ** **ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ У ПОЛІЕТНІЧНИХ ГРУПАХ СТУДЕНТІВ** **ОСОБЕННОСТИ ОБУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ КАК ИНОСТРАННОМУ** **В ПОЛИЭТНИЧЕСКИХ ГРУППАХ СТУДЕНТОВ**

Розглянуто особливості викладання англійської як іноземної мови в поліетнічних групах студентів у рамках культууроорієнтованої педагогічної моделі освіти, яка визнає важливість включення фонових національно-культурних знань іноземних студентів у всі аспекти навчання. Розроблено теоретичні та практичні положення культууроорієнтованої освіти. Підкреслено її потужний потенціал у досягненні академічних успіхів студентів поліетнічних і лінгвістичних груп. У рамках обговорення загальних концептуальних питань розглянуто ряд педагогічних парадигм і пропозицій, спрямованих на виправлення неуспішності студентів. Докладно досліджено чотири основні компоненти культууроорієнтованої освіти: розробка бази знань про культурне різноманіття, увага, створення навчальних спільнот, особливості спілкування зі студентами поліетнічних груп. Вони сприяють глибшому розумінню того, які концептуальні засади у викладанні англійської як іноземної мови можуть бути перенесені в навчальний процес у рамках культууроорієнтованої освіти. Показано, як узгодити стратегії навчання з тим, щоб підвищувати внутрішню мотивацію студентів, що вивчають англійську як іноземну мову, всередині і між різними поліетнічними групами.

*Ключові слова:* викладання англійської як іноземної мови, поліетнічні групи студентів, культууроорієнтована модель освіти, увага, навчальні спільноти, база знань про національно-культурні особливості.

Рассмотрены особенности обучения английскому как иностранному языку в полиэтнических группах студентов в рамках культууроориентированной педагогической модели образования, которая признает важность включения фоновых национально-культурных знаний иностранных студентов во все аспекты обучения. Разработаны теоретические и практические положения культууроориентированного

образования. Подчеркнут его мощный потенциал в достижении академических успехов студентов полиэтнических и лингвистических групп. Вслед за обсуждением общих концептуальных вопросов рассмотрен ряд педагогических парадигм и предложений, направленных на исправление неуспеваемости студентов. Подробно исследованы четыре основных компонента культуруориентированного образования: разработка базы знаний о культурном разнообразии, демонстрация внимания, создание учебных сообществ, особенности общения со студентами полиэтнических групп. Они способствуют более глубокому пониманию того, какие концептуальные принципы в преподавании английского как иностранного языка могут быть перенесены в учебный процесс в рамках культуруориентированного образования. Показано, как согласовать стратегии обучения с тем, чтобы поддерживать внутреннюю мотивацию студентов, изучающих английский как иностранный язык, внутри и между различными полиэтническими группами.

*Ключевые слова:* обучение английскому как иностранному языку, полиэтнические группы студентов, культуруориентированное образование, внимание, учебные сообщества, база знаний о национально-культурных особенностях.

**The article focuses on teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to culturally diverse students, providing a pedagogical framework of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning. It develops theoretical and practical issues about culturally responsive teaching, outlining its potential power in achieving the academic success of ethnically and linguistically diverse students. These general conceptual issues are followed by a discussion of some pedagogical paradigms and suggestions for reversing the underachievement of students. The article develops in detail four essential components of culturally responsive teaching: developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, demonstrating caring, and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically diverse students. They facilitate a deeper understanding of how conceptual principles about teaching EFL and through cultural responsive teaching can be translated into instructional actions. The article demonstrates how to align teaching strategies so they are supportive of EFL students' intrinsic motivation within and across culturally diverse groups.**

*Keywords:* teaching EFL, ethnically diverse students' groups, culturally responsive teaching, caring, learning community, knowledge base about cultural diversity.

To prepare EFL teachers to work more effectively with students who are not part of the Ukrainian ethnic, racial, and cultural mainstream requires a more thorough knowledge of the specific cultures of different ethnic groups, how they affect learning behaviors, and how classroom interactions and instruction can be changed to embrace these differences. Ukrainian education has not been very culturally responsive to ethnically diverse students [2, p. 127]. Instead, these students have been expected to divorce themselves from their cultures and learn according to Ukrainian cultural norms. This placed them in double jeopardy – having to master the academic tasks while functioning under cultural conditions unnatural (and often unfamiliar) to them. Removing this second burden is a significant contribution to improving their academic achievement. This can be done by all the teachers being culturally responsive to ethnically diverse students throughout their instructional processes.

The article aims to study the ways of improving the academic success of ethnically diverse university students through *culturally responsive teaching* (CRT), and providing higher school lecturers with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to do this. CRT is considered as a conceptual pedagogical framework for providing effective academic support for culturally diverse EFL learners. The article identifies a set of theoretical and

practical principles of the CRT that can serve as the linguistic foundation for teaching EFL in mainstream classes with culturally diverse students. The article outlines linguistically responsive pedagogical practices that flow directly from those principles. Four essential elements of the culturally responsive teaching are examined: developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, demonstrating caring and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically diverse students. They facilitate a deeper understanding of how conceptual principles about teaching EFL and through cultural diversity can be translated into instructional actions.

The current topicality of the research is that the present educational system of Ukraine basing its expectations, delivery, and curricular content on the norms of the mainstream population seems to be insufficient for students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. As a result, these students experience a mismatch between home and university expectations. It results in their low academic achievement. The underlying message throughout the article is the need to change teaching conceptions and techniques for cultural, racial and ethnic diversity from the current orientation towards weaknesses, problems and pathologies to strengths, promises, and possibilities.

For more than five decades EFL teachers have been developing strategies to comply with the responsibility to accommodate diverse students in an inclusive classroom [1; 2; 6; 8; 10; 11]; these challenges are compounded by the increasing diversity among the student population. The number of foreign students whose home language is neither Ukrainian nor English continues to increase in Ukraine every year. As a result, the main focus in teaching EFL has switched from the “What” to the “Who”: Who is the learner in the classroom? EFL teachers should be responsible for teaching their diverse students and for ensuring they all learn. To meet the requirement, educators should know their students’ background, and incorporate their knowledge into quality learning experiences. *Culturally responsive teaching* involves incorporating into learning experiences students’ “cultural references” [8, p. 22], their prior experiences both in the countries of their origin and the current living situations, as well as the learning styles of diverse students, to make learning more appropriate and effective for them [6, p. 107]. “Culture is central to learning. It plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. A pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures” [6, p. 109].

Power pedagogy through CRT has been debated by different researchers, practitioners, scholars who study teaching modes that work best with ethnically diverse students [1; 3; 5; 6; 8; 10; 11]. Their findings include explanations of the CRT salient components as well as its potential power for reversing the achievements trends of culturally diverse students. *Culturally responsive teaching* is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest and appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly [6, p. 108]. As a result, the academic achievement of ethnically diverse students will improve when they are taught through their own cultural and experiential filters [3; 5; 8; 10].

Educators generally agree that effective teaching requires mastery of content knowledge and pedagogical skills. As Howard so aptly stated, “We can’t teach what

we don't know" [7, p. 66]. This statement applies to knowledge both of student populations and subject matter, and is imperative to meeting the educational needs of ethnically diverse students. Part of this knowledge includes understanding the cultural characteristics and contributions of different ethnic groups [8; 10]. Culture encompasses many things, some of which are more important for EFL teachers to know than others because they have direct implications for teaching and learning. Among these are ethnic groups' cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions, and relational patterns. For example, EFL teachers need to know (a) which ethnic groups give priority to communal living and cooperative problem solving and how these preferences affect educational motivation, aspiration, and task performance; (b) how different ethnic groups' protocols of appropriate ways for students to interact with teachers are exhibited in instructional settings; and (c) the implications of gender role socialization in different ethnic groups for implementing equity initiatives in classroom instruction. This information constitutes the first essential component of the knowledge base of culturally responsive teaching.

The knowledge that teachers need to have about cultural diversity goes beyond mere awareness of the fact that ethnic groups have different values or express similar values in various ways. Thus, the second requirement for developing a knowledge base for culturally responsive teaching is acquiring detailed factual information about the cultural particularities of specific ethnic groups (e.g., African, Asian, etc.). It is necessary to make teaching more interesting, stimulating, and responsive to ethnically diverse students. Teachers should be aware of the contributions of different ethnic groups to a wide variety of disciplines, and have a deeper understanding of multicultural education theory, research, and scholarship. This is a third important pillar of the knowledge foundation of culturally responsive teaching. It has to be located, learned, and woven into the preparation programs of teachers and classroom instruction.

Creating classroom climates that are conducive to learning for ethnically diverse students is a second critical component of preparation for culturally responsive teaching. Teachers need to know how to use cultural scaffolding in teaching these students – that is, using their own cultures and experiences to expand their intellectual horizons and academic achievement. This begins by demonstrating culturally sensitive caring and building culturally responsive learning communities. Teachers have to care so much about ethnically diverse students and their achievement that they accept nothing less than high-level success from them and work diligently to accomplish it [5; 9]. Culturally responsive caring also places “teachers in an ethical, emotional, and academic partnership with ethnically diverse students, a partnership that is anchored in respect, honor, integrity, resource sharing, and a deep belief in the possibility of transcendence” [6, p. 102–103].

Caring is a moral imperative, a social responsibility, and a pedagogical necessity. It requires that teachers use “knowledge and strategic thinking to decide how to act in the best interests of others... [and] binds individuals to their society, to their communities, and to each other” [9, p. 4]. Thus, teachers need to understand that culturally responsive caring is *action oriented* in that it demonstrates high expectations and uses imaginative strategies to ensure academic success for ethnically diverse students.

The process of building culturally responsive communities of learning is important for teachers to know as well. Culturally responsive teachers should understand how conflicts between different work styles may interfere with academic efforts and outcomes,

and how to design more communal learning environments. The emphasis should be on holistic or integrated learning. Personal, moral, social, political, cultural, and academic knowledge and skills should be taught simultaneously. Culturally responsive teachers help students to understand that knowledge has moral and political elements and consequences, which obligate them to take “social action to promote freedom, equality, and justice for everyone” [8, p. 22].

Effective cross-cultural communication is another pivotal element of preparing for culturally responsive teaching. Porter and Samovar explained that culture influences “what we talk about; how we talk about it; what we see, attend to, or ignore; how we think; and what we think about” [11, p. 21]. Montagu and Watson added that communication is the “ground of meeting and the foundation of community” among human beings [2, p. 126]. In fact, determining what ethnically diverse students know and can do, as well as what they are capable of knowing and doing, is often a function of how well teachers can communicate with them. The intellectual thought of students from different ethnic groups is culturally encoded [4, p. 429]. Its expressive forms and substance are strongly influenced by cultural socialization. Teachers need to be able to decipher these codes to teach EFL ethnically diverse students more effectively.

Characteristics of ethnic communication styles are core traits of group trends, not descriptions of the behaviors of individual members of the group. It is imperative for teachers to understand these realities because many of them are hesitant about dealing with cultural descriptors for fear of stereotyping and overgeneralizing. Culturally responsive teachers should know how the communication styles of different ethnic groups reflect cultural values and shape learning behaviors and how to modify classroom interactions to better accommodate them. It includes knowing the linguistic structures of various ethnic communication styles as well as contextual factors, cultural nuances, discourse features, logic and rhythm, delivery, vocabulary usage, role relationships of speakers and listeners, intonation, gestures, and body movements.

Cultural characteristics provide the criteria for determining how instructional strategies should be modified for ethnically diverse students. Developing skills in this area should begin with teacher’s educating students confronting the misconceptions and controversies surrounding learning styles. Learning styles do have “core structures, and specific patterns by ethnic groups are discernible” [9, p. 5]. The internal structure of ethnic learning styles includes at least eight key components: preferred content; ways of working through learning tasks; techniques for organizing and conveying ideas and thoughts; physical and social settings for task performance; structural arrangements of work, study, and performance space; perceptual stimulation for receiving, processing, and demonstrating comprehension and competence; motivations, incentives, and rewards for learning; and interpersonal interactional styles. These dimensions provide different points of entry and emphasis for matching instruction to the learning styles of students from various ethnic groups. To respond most effectively to them, teachers need to know how they are configured for different ethnic groups as well as the patterns of variance that exist within the configurations.

Another powerful way to establish cultural congruity in teaching is integrating ethnic and cultural diversity into the most fundamental and high-status aspects of the instructional process on a habitual basis [3]. Rigorous analysis of teaching behaviors reveals that a high percentage of instructional time is devoted to giving examples, scenarios, and vignettes to demonstrate how information, principles, concepts, and

skills operate in practice. These make up the pedagogical bridges that connect prior knowledge with new knowledge, the known with the unknown, and abstractions with lived realities. Teachers need to develop rich repertoires of multicultural instructional examples to use in teaching ethnically diverse students.

The process begins with understanding the role and prominence of examples in the instructional process, knowing the cultures and experiences of different ethnic groups, harvesting teaching examples from these critical sources, and learning how to apply multicultural examples in teaching other knowledge and skills – for instance, using illustrations of ethnic architecture, samples of ethnic literature in teaching the concept of genre and reading skills such as comprehension, inferential thinking, vocabulary building, and translation. Research indicates that culturally relevant examples have positive effects on the academic achievement of ethnically diverse students. They are valuable models and incentives for doing culturally responsive teaching and should be a routine part of teacher preparation programs.

To sum up, taking into account the fact that culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the instructional process, culturally responsive teaching requires a more thorough knowledge of the specific cultures of different ethnic groups, how they affect learning behaviors, and how classroom interactions and instruction can be changed to embrace these differences. This can be done by all teachers being culturally responsive to ethnically diverse students throughout their instructional processes.

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