

THE RECIPE BOOK TREND

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Resumo: Este trabalho explora a diversidade de técnicas utilizada por professores para alcançar seus objetivos e ter uma aula agradável, sempre tendo em mente que fórmulas mágicas não existem. O sucesso do trabalho depende de dedicação, comprometimento, bom relacionamento com os estudantes e alegria. O livro de receitas é um mito aqui desvendado.

Palavras-chave: Tendências. Técnicas. Livro de Receitas.

Abstract: This essay explores the diversity of techniques used by teachers in order to achieve their goals and have a pleasant class, always having in mind that there is no such thing as a magic wound to make it work. The success of our job depends on hard work, commitment, good relationship with the learners and joy. The recipe book is a myth, here uncovered.

Key words: Trends. Techniques. Recipe book.

1 INTRODUCTION

The teaching-learning process has been discussed since earliest times. The Greek philosopher Socrates is famous for handing us unique insights into the teacher - student relationship. It has been a fertile subject for debate and publishing down through the centuries. There doesn't seem to be a final answer. Today we are still motivated to get a better grip on the dynamic of the teaching-learning process. For over a year the individual members

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of our seminar group have shared with each other the experiences, the worries, the frustrations and the glories of 'teaching'. Despite the fact that perspectives and backgrounds differed considerably, common ground was noticed and helpful solutions were shared.

The context of this paper is the teaching reality experienced in our schools nowadays. Particular attention will be focused on the issues raised in situations where the requirement is to teach a new language. We will join the age old quest for better answers to questions that evolve when the teacher starts to teach and the student begins to learn. Chapter 1 will include a brief overview of some of the concepts, models and theories that have been developed around the teaching-learning process. Chapter 2 will examine the emergence of the 'recipe book' trend and the counter challenge posed by the 'eclectic method'. Chapter 3 will attempt to explore further the role of the teacher and the pedagogic dynamic. Particular effort will be made here to include the input of those in our group.

The experiences and the anxieties that surfaced in our discussion group will be used as 'raw data' for this paper. The analysis of this data, and some of the conclusions I reach, will be shaped by my own personal teaching experience and by my borrowing from some of the more helpful theories that have emerged around the teaching-learning process.

Good teachers are always looking for activities that bring pleasure and entertainment as well as a sense of accomplishment and success. Great teachers are constantly aware of their goal in the current teaching environment and of the subtle adjusting that must go on. What is planned and what actually happens during the lesson is never hardwired. Great teachers are always reaching beyond what they have already grasped about 'the best way to teach'.

Maybe it is in fact impossible to fully grasp the illusive best 'recipe' for great teaching. Maybe the "headache-aspirin" approach of prescribing fixed responses to problematic behavior can be helpful in certain teaching situations. But there is something profoundly important about the dynamic that drives a teacher to constantly reach for a better way.

2 EXPLORING THEORIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

There are several distinguished theories developed over the last centuries in the field of teaching a foreign language. These theories have been influenced to some extent by developments in the fields of linguistics and psychology. In this chapter some of them will be described.

The '**grammar-translation**' method (18th, 19th and early 20th century), for example, is an early method based on the assumptions that language is primarily graphic. According to this approach, the knowledge of the structure of the language is the main purpose of second language study, either as a tool for literary research and translation or for the development of the learner's logical skills.

The **'direct method'** appeared in the nineteenth century, and was advocated by educators such as Berlitz and Gouin. It was essentially based on the way children learn their native language, through the direct association of words and phrases with objects and actions, without the use of native language. This method strictly forbids translation in the classroom. The approach is remarkably opposite to the previous method mentioned. Rivers (1981) argues that, in its purest form, the direct method leads to early fossilization. He also points to the possibility that some modern adaptations might result in an exciting and interesting way of learning a language through activity.

The **'audiolingual'** approach, which was very popular from the 1940s through the 1960s, is based in structural linguistics (structuralism) and behavioristic psychology (Skinner's behaviorism), and places heavy emphasis on spoken rather than written language. This approach stresses habit formation as a mode of learning. Memorization, role playing and drills are the predominant activities. The audiolingual approach does not depend on the instructor's creative ability and does not require excellent proficiency in the language. Therefore, they are easy to be implemented, cheap to be maintained and are still in use by many packaged language courses (especially in Brazil).

By the middle of the century Cognitive psychologists like Vygotsky and Piaget bring up theories that challenge the ineffectiveness of the traditional mechanistic approaches to language teaching. These new 'cognitive' theories later serve as a basis for the new **'natural-communicative'** approaches.

Beginning in the 1950s, Noam Chomsky and his followers challenged previous assumptions about language structure and language learning, taking the position that language is creative (not memorized), and rule governed (not based on habit), and that universal phenomena of the human mind underlie all language. Chomsky's ideas gave rise to eclecticism in teaching. In addition to the generativist theory, the advances in cognitive science and educational psychology made by Jean Piaget and Lev Semenovich Vygotsky in the first half of the century strongly influenced language teaching theory in the 1960s and 70s. New trends favoring more humanistic views and putting a greater focus on the learner and on social interaction, gave way to the **Natural** (USA) and **Communicative** (England) approaches.

Psychologist Charles Curran's Community Language Learning and Krashen's and Terrell's Natural Approach (in the 1980s) are very representative of this latest trend in language teaching. In his book *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, Krashen concludes that the success of second language acquisition does not depend on whether there is a package of recipe books or even expensive devices at the teacher's disposal. It depends more on the ability of the instructor to create authentic situations that foster communication. Emphasis should be given to encouraging cultural exchanges. This involves a certain degree of dissociation between the teaching learning process and the technical-methodological field. It does allow for a better joining with the personal-psychological range.

Richards and Rogers (1986) describe '**Communicative Language Teaching**' (CLT) as an approach rather than a method as it represents a philosophy of teaching that is based on communicative language use. Contextualization is a basic principle, in opposition to lessons that keep grammatical structures as the core element in the process of teaching a second language. In many ways, CLT represents a repertoire of teaching ideas rather than a fixed set of methodological procedures, and as such is not easily defined or evaluated (Hadley, 1993).

The '**Cognitive Anti-Method**' articulated by Newman (1996) and Newman and Reibel (1968), is described by Ellis (1990) as having the following major theoretical assumptions: second language learning is controlled by the learner rather than by the teacher as they have an innate ability to learn languages; the features are not acquired one by one, by the students, but globally; learners will eventually discover and correct their own mistakes. The most controversial aspect of the cognitive anti-method was the proposal that structural features should not be taught overtly and that language materials need not to be ordered grammatically. Many practitioners, as well as scholars, thought this view was too extreme (Hadley, 1993).

The meaningful learning is essential to language acquisition, as well as the conscious knowledge of grammar. These two features are the foundation of the **Cognitive-Code Method**, according to Chastain (1976). Since each student had a diverse learning style, the teacher should be aware of that and appeal to all senses and differences in learning.

TPR stands for **Total Physical Response** and was created by Dr. James J Asher (1974). It is based upon the way that children learn their mother tongue. Further, it is based on the belief that skills can be more rapidly assimilated if the teacher appeals to the students' kinesthetic-sensory system. Asher et al. state that their research indicates that most of the grammatical structures of the target language and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned through the skillful use of the imperative by the instructor. As with the direct method, the target language is the exclusive language of instruction. Eventually when it has decoded enough, the student reproduces the language quite spontaneously. Hadley (1993) believes that "TPR is not really designed to be a comprehensive method in and of itself, but represents instead a useful set of teaching ideas and techniques that can be integrated into other methodologies for certain instructional purposes.

Introduced by Charles Curran (1976), the '**Community Language Learning**' approach is founded in techniques borrowed from psychological counseling. The basic theoretical premise is that the learners need to be understood and helped in the process of fulfilling personal values and goals. In a small class formed by a group of six to twelve students, the teacher provides the language necessary to enable students to express themselves freely and to say whatever it is they want to say. One of the strengths of the methods seems to be the warm, community atmosphere, but as the content is determined by the participants in the group, some survival skills tend to be neglected.

In the same year, 1976, Gattegno introduced the '**Silent Way**' method. This approach assumes that each learner must work with his/her inner sources (i.e. existing cognitive structures, experiences, emotions, knowledge of the world) to absorb learning from the environment and nothing else, as they are solely responsible for what they learn. The teacher, as implied by the name of the method, remains essentially silent. The place of culture and culture-based language instruction is not clear from the literature about the Silent Way. Richards and Rodgers (1986) explain that manuals for teachers are generally not available and that the Silent Way teacher is responsible for designing and sequencing instructions.

'**Suggestopedia**' is a wholistic method that tries to direct learning to both the left and right hemisphere of the brain according to Chastain's definition (1988). This method originated in Bulgaria was introduced by Georgi Lozanov (1978), a psychiatrist and physician who believes that relaxation techniques and concentration will help learners tap their subconscious resources. In this way learners will retain greater amounts of vocabulary and structures than they ever thought possible. Chastain (1988) argues that adapting Suggestopedia to the typical classroom situation "presents huge problems because Lozanov recommends implementation only in its original and complete format, which does not fit the typical classroom schedule" (p. 103).

2.2 Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles

"Intelligence refers to the human ability to solve problems or to make something that is valued in one or more cultures" (Gardner, 1997).

Intelligence was traditionally seen as a unitary cognition (one single intelligence), and that individuals could be described as having a single quantifiable intelligence, that could be measured by IQ tests. In a more recent point of view it is seen as different capacities, measured by social criteria, instead of the traditional definition that would consider one single capacity that can be measured by a test.

Among the various current trends in the field of education, the theories of '**Multiple Intelligences**' put forward by Howard Gardner and the theories of '**Learning Styles**' by Kathleen Butler offer interesting insights into classroom dynamics. The core idea is that learning does not happen in a linear and homogeneous way.

Gardner posits that people can be intelligent in different ways. Intelligent is not an all-or-nothing matter; it is a diverse and complex construct. He describes different intelligences and a list of the tasks that contributes to the development of each of them follows below:

1. Logical-Mathematical Intelligence - tasks involving this intelligence require the ability to manipulate numbers, as well as other activities that emphasize the rational, such as finding patterns, establishing cause-and-effect relationships, conducting controlled experiments, sequencing, and others;

2. Linguistic Intelligence - tasks involving this intelligence require the ability to use words and their different components, such as semantics, syntax, phonology, or morphology, for a variety of purposes like debate, persuasion, story-telling, poetry, writing, and instruction;

3. Spatial Intelligence - tasks involving this intelligence require the ability to perceive, create, and re-create images and pictures. They can include tables, graphs, sketches, and other kinds of images, or, simply the use of one's sense of direction or location;

4. Musical Intelligence - tasks involving this intelligence require the ability to produce, understand, or even appreciate music and its components like melody and rhythm. They include choral reading, creating music, analyzing music, or simply playing an instrument, or singing;

5. Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence - tasks involving this intelligence require the ability to manipulate our body in different ways and for different purposes. These can include handling objects, making precise bodily movements, or simply moving and acting things out;

6. Interpersonal Intelligence - tasks involving this intelligence require the ability to work well with others and to perceive slight variations in people's moods, attitudes, and desires. They can include team work or working in a way in which interaction is necessary;

7. Intra-personal Intelligence - tasks involving this intelligence require the ability to understand one's own feelings and emotional states. They can include analysis, reflection, monitoring your own thinking, using self-discipline, often trying to get the most out of yourself;

8. Naturalist Intelligence - tasks involving this intelligence require the ability to be tuned to the natural world of plants and animals, but also to other natural objects such as rocks, clouds, or stars. They can include classifying and categorizing natural objects and living things, showing appreciation and a good understanding of the environment.

Catherine Green in her book, *Tasks for Teacher Education: A Reflective Approach* (Longman, 1998), organized a collection of reading and writing activities samples. These samples specify the kinds of intelligence that can be taken in consideration in order to better fulfill the learner's needs. Those samples will be seen in the fourth chapter.

N. De Lima and Silvia Pereira organized a workshop under the title "Integrating Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences in EFL". The purpose of the workshop was to present some key issues on how to integrate the theories of Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles when 'designing' class. Tasks and activities thus chosen would more fully engage the student in learning process.

The "Learning Style" concept focuses the teachers attention on the importance of accounting for 'how the student learns' and the 'why the student learns'. "Style is an expression of your natural abilities and qualities. It reflects not what you do but HOW and WHY you do it" (Butler, 1995).

style is the consistent, personal way by which people use their natural qualities and abilities to define themselves and their personal efficacy, to experience and relate to their immediate world, to encounter, access, and process information, and to create and produce (Butler, 2000).

Each person has his/her own learning style. Some are very dominant in one or two styles; some others have a blended combination of styles. From each style's dominant perspective:

- a learner with a **Realistic** style enjoys structures, facts and details;
- a learner with an **Analytical** style enjoys ideas, logic and debate;
- a learner with a **Pragmatic** style enjoys strategies, problem-solving and hands-on work;
- a learner with a **Personal** style enjoys people, cooperation and group-work;
- a learner with a **Divergent** style enjoys challenges and creative unconventional tasks.

A personal learning style represents a combination of features that empowers an individual to gather knowledge and information. It empowers an individual to think about and use that knowledge and information. It empowers an individual to show others what he/she understands and can do in effective ways.

The combination of these two theories can be an important tool at our disposal. If we keep in mind that learners have different styles and various pathways to intelligences, we can try to vary presentations and explanations, activities and assessment in order to foster a full and expanded range of intellectual abilities.

That does not mean that we need to plan every single class in order to cater for five different learning styles and eight intelligences. The point is to try to vary and to strike a balance (Campbell, 2000).

3 THE 'RECIPE BOOK' APPROACH AND THE 'ECLECTIC METHOD'

For many years, it seemed that the language teaching profession was engaged in a chaotic search, as it tried some to reach some consensus about the best way - the one true way to teach a foreign language. Many theories and class activities have been developed along the journey as the product of this search. The collection of these 'miraculous' activities, that will fit in any class, any time, is here named 'the recipe book'.

3.1 The 'Recipe book' approach

Teachers who want to teach interesting lessons for the sake of better learning are always looking for new activities in order to avoid those boring classes and yawning students. They attend seminars, conferences and short-term courses searching for those activities. Many books have also been published with the aim of helping those professionals to enrich their lessons and vanish the boredom. These suggested activities are helpful, indeed, and some of them are really creative and entertaining.

Mario Rinvolucri (*Personalised Listening Comprehension*) has spoken about the power of the 'recipe' to function as a benign Trojan Horse in the development of a teacher. Tessa Woodward has noted in her article 'Splitting the Atom' (*English Teaching Forum 1988*) that language teaching activities are composed of independent elements that can be combined in different, even surprising ways. Her message is that if teachers are aware of a wide range of options in the choice and combination of elements, then they have an immensely powerful tool not only for adapting activities to fit different situations, but also for creating, in effect, wholly new activities.

It is important to understand, though, that the teacher is the one who knows the learners - the target learners are 'the teacher's territory'. Such a teacher has infinitely more potential to adapt to the needs of their learners and the flux of the classroom than any recipe book. This does not mean that teachers should stop using such tools. But there is no doubt that suggested activities and lessons cannot be followed step by step every time they are used. These activities must be adjusted to the learners' needs, improved according to their knowledge, background and context - an everyday-activity recipe book cannot be simply followed step by step. These books should be used more like a source of inspiration rather than a manual to be followed with rigor.

There is still another issue to be considered. If there is such a wide variety of methodologies as seen before and an equal variety of learning styles, why are we searching for one single ultimate answer? Isn't it quite obvious that the answers will vary in the same range that our students' features will?

people with different styles solve problems, learn new information, relate and communicate from different perspectives (Butler, 1995, p.5).

The major point is that the awareness of these differences is part of the teachers' role to enable them to reshape their lesson routine quickly and wisely when necessary. When teachers are aware of the diversity in their classrooms, they have already commanded a position of advantage when it comes to catering for students and assisting them.

As to Renata Costa de Sá Bonotto stated, "one, two, three dominant styles and even a mix of the five may compose a personal style". (*Learning Styles, O Ensino do Inglês como Língua Estrangeira*, APIRS. 2004).

ideologically, viewing teachers as active agents in the development of their own practice, as decision-makers using their own specialist knowledge to guide their actions in particular situations, underlined the autonomous, responsible aspects of teachers' work, and provided an appealing rationale for considering teaching as a worthy, complex, demanding profession, especially when contrasted with the previously dominant view of teaching as the mastering of a series of effective teaching behaviors (Calderhead, 1987, p. 5).

3.2 The Eclectic Method

Different teaching methodologies, different models of learning styles, and a great number of studies have been developed over the years, so why should teachers bother studying about theories, especially when it is quite obvious that there is not an agreement in how the language acquisition takes place? McLaughlin (1987) observes that

in the present stage of the development of our knowledge, it seems premature to argue for the 'truth' of one theory over another (McLaughlin, 1987, p.6).

Studying theories has the function of helping teachers organize the data of experience and different techniques. These theories provide a framework on which to order meaning and awareness to our everyday work. The teacher's choosing, ignoring and changing activities demonstrate that we are working on some underlying assumptions about what is useful and efficient in the teaching learning process. It seems as if we have our own internal guidance. Studying theories, models and methods helps to uncover these underlying assumptions and increases the teachers' level of self-awareness.

How to teach English then? Is there a single particular method that can be applied to any student and any class? We are all different, we are all unique. If you are an English teacher, you cannot help but notice that such diversity might be an issue. In such a diverse universe - so many different people, so many different methods, and you are the one who has to deal with it, you are the one who has to decide.

Ellis (1985) believes that every teacher has already got a language learning theory. Despite the fact that teachers follow examples, apply previously studied techniques, each one has her/his own unique way of teaching, following their instincts. Teachers do not follow every step suggested by specialists, they do not follow only one method. Teachers' beliefs, values, expectations, goals, experience serve as a filter through which judgments and decisions are made. Their experiences, school practice, personality, education, weaknesses and strengths will form the structure of principles of this filter. Teachers tend to reject methods that conflict with their own theories of teaching.

Although there is not a complete consensus on the issue of what is the best methodology, there is a basic agreement about the features that are relevant and significant in the teaching-learning process.

Rather than seeking for a method that provides one ultimate answer, this essay suggests the sorts of questions that need to be asked and demonstrate ways of looking for solutions to both practical and theoretical questions.

The techniques, classroom activities, and tasks that form the methodology of teaching should be designed by the teacher for specific lessons and groups, but always having in mind that there is not such a thing as a recipe that will be always successful, despite the group features and the context.

4 EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND THE PEDAGOGIC DYNAMIC

4.1 Experiences shared - the challenges and the joys of teaching

Teachers work in very different kinds of situations, with different kinds of content, and have different experiences and skills. Somehow teachers teach. It is never a perfectly controlled experiment but there are common threads

Even though the teaching experiences and stories that emerged in our seminar group were so diverse, certain difficulties continuously surfaced. Lack of interest of the students, lessons that seem distant from the students' interests and beliefs, inadequate textbooks that must be followed, are common complaints among this group. But after several meetings and debates, we got to the conclusion that we can manage our difficulties and we have, and also that the analysis of our procedures should be done regularly and that we can cope with the inadequacy of our text books as long as we do not follow them as the only available source.

4.2 Not Being a Native Speaker Teacher

According to the shared experiences over the last year with my colleagues, being a teacher is hard, priceless and not always rewarding. But teaching English as a second language in a foreign country may be especially rough. First because it is not your first language, second because it links to countries like the U.S.A., which have been suffering some political disapproval in the international panorama lately. Anyway you can turn these two things to your advantage. Even though it is easy to feel that you have a lot of disadvantages in relation to native speakers, concentrate in what you **can** do and not in what you **cannot**. It is important to consider that a British or Canadian teacher, for instance, would not be able to make comparisons between their first language and Brazilians first language. So what might have seemed a positive feature, being a native speaker teacher, could create an inevitable gap between teacher and learner.

Besides, it is much harder for a foreign teacher to understand the learners' environment, background and traditions, and these factors, as we are going to analyze later on, are fundamental to build a connection between the teacher and the learner.

4.3 Reflecting your teaching

Think about your own childhood school experiences just for a moment. Consider a teacher who was outstandingly good, from whom you really learnt well. Can you picture her/him? Well, if you can, that is a good beginning in case you are judging your own performance.

It is important to keep that image in mind, though, what was a good teacher, twenty or thirty years ago, and what is a good teacher nowadays are two different things. In the past, especially language teachers were the only source of knowledge, today, we have satellite television, internet, and it is a fact that English is almost everywhere. Consequently, the teacher's knowledge became just another extra source for learners, and the teachers' role has undoubtedly changed, she/he became an assistant, a challenger, a guide rather than a portable encyclopedia.

Day after day we have become more and more aware of the fact that teachers create their own roles as a natural response to their theories of teaching and learning and the kind of classroom environment they believe best supports their students' demands. While many teachers have been told to teach within a frame work or methodology established by their school, "the way they teach is often a personal interpretation of what they think is best in a given situation" (Richards, 1996, p. 104).

4.4 The motivated teacher

motivation is some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action. If we perceive a goal (that is, something we wish to achieve) and if that goal is sufficiently attractive, we will be strongly motivated to do whatever is necessary to reach that goal (from *The Practice of English Language Teaching* by J. Harmer, Addison Wesley Longman Ltd., 1991).

Generally speaking, strongly motivated students with long-term goals are easier to be taught than those who have not such goals. Therefore, short-term objectives will often provide the only source of motivation for these last ones, making the teacher's role especially important. And that is because the teacher will become the main tool of connection between the learner and the language, as students who have a lack of interest in acquiring the new language do not tend to be independent learners.

Teachers seek to improve students' confidence and interest in learning and to build a classroom climate that will motivate students. But only an enthusiastic motivated teacher is able to perform a lively interesting lesson. Experience and knowledge are insufficient as a basis for a successful class, they are starting points for teacher development actually.

4.5 The motivated student

students who are forced to learn in the same way day after day can become bored and lose their motivation for learning... Studies on the roles of teacher control and student choice in learning show that self-motivation on the part of students can be expected only if students have opportunities that interest them (Silver et al, 1999 apud Glasser, 1985).

Motivation is definitely one of the main factors that will interfere in the success or in the failure of language learners, independently of the kind of methodology has been chosen by the teacher.

There is a central role of the learners' beliefs in the learning process. And learners' beliefs cover a wide range of issues and influence their motivation, their expectations about the language and their perception. And differences between teachers' and students' beliefs can lead to a mismatch between their assumptions about what is useful and interesting to be focused. So, on more time, the importance of knowing the group we are teaching is brought to the picture.

In accordance with the great outstanding Brazilian scholar, Paulo Freire (1997), when he has formerly pointed out that the most important agenda, for human beings, is the promotion of the so-called "human curiosity" - and that is "what really matters, more than any new teaching methods and/or approaches", concludes the author.

4.6 The 'personal' ingredient in the teaching process

Being a teacher is, by nature, a personal activity, if we consider that it is a person trying to help another person to develop certain skills. It is sometimes tempting to think of students in terms of their all too obvious flaws. Flaws that have to be overcome. "She is good at reading and comprehension, but cannot communicate orally." "It is hard to believe that they still make mistakes with the third person singular in the present tense".

The awareness of individual language problems and achievements is important indeed, but an equal awareness of individual interests, age, life style and life quality of the students might enable teachers to develop a more effective lesson plan and become more personal.

rather than viewing the development of teaching skill as the mastery of general principles and theories that have been determined by others, the acquisition of teaching expertise is seen to be a process that involves the teacher in actively constructing a personal and workable theory of teaching (Richards, 1998. *Beyond Training*).

Because it is important for learners to be seen as human beings as well, and not only in the range of teachers' failures or victories, since they have a life outside classroom. Students always bring their 'outside world' into the classroom environment. This includes not only their history and expectations, but also their feelings, emotions and self-esteem.

What may be seen at first as 'extra baggage' can become a point of connection for the teacher. How is that? According to this theory, when emotions and feelings are involved, the learner's level of awareness is heightened, facilitating the learning storage in the brain, as evidenced by an increase in synapse weight as well as chemical and electrical conductivity.

Becoming personal, at some stand, the teacher may find the way to drive into the students' psyche.

According to Wolf (1969), each learner has his/ her own personal logic to store information. The consolidation of knowledge in the memory happens in two different ways, either through repetitive mechanisms or something psychologically meaningful, as memory records everything that is emotionally loaded. And we cannot afford to lose this tool in order to help our students in their second language learning acquisition process.

In the chapter of Multiple Intelligences it was briefly remarked that the Learning Styles display four dimensions: psychological, cognitive, affective and environmental.

5 CONCLUSION

In this study we have seen how cognitive principles, teaching methods and language acquisition theories have changed over the years. The various methodologies and approaches that have been reviewed here have experienced differential success and popularity along these years. Currently, many English teachers are adopting an eclectic approach to language learning and teaching, believing that the search for the "one true way" can be futile and frustrating. As we keep in mind that learning is an extremely complex process and that learners are individual with different personalities, learning styles, and preferences, we have begun to look for a multiplicity of ways to respond to the challenge of teaching. Eclecticism, however, needs to be principled if instruction is to be effective, and techniques and activities need to be chosen intelligently to relate to specific program objectives (Richards; Rodgers, 1986).

As we become sensitive to the way people learn differently, we can start to offer alternatives that would both contemplate and foster our student's abilities. Being aware of this diverse universe, we realize the importance of understanding the role of the teacher as an explorer of his/her own pedagogical practice. To do so, teachers ought to question their basic assumptions and reflect on their pedagogic practice and class management.

This essay has proposed some general ideas that might work as guide lines for developing teachers that are searching for successful classes with highly motivated students.

Therefore, making the most of the students' learning experience in the English classroom has to do with observation, reflection, planning and teaching according to the uniqueness of every learning context.

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