# **Teaching Philosophy**

**Teaching Purpose**

“In learning you will teach / And in teaching you will learn.” This is a quote from Phil Collins’ Son of Man; a song written for *Tarzan* by Walt Disney; a 1999 animated drama adventure film. You can watch the video clip on my YouTube channel; <https://youtu.be/rR0ectdIG6M>. This quote illustrates my original attitude to teaching and learning. As a firm supporter myself (or even a communicant, one might call me) of lifelong education, I genuinely consider teaching part of my continuous both personal and professional advancement and development. **This is exactly why I teach, especially English**. On the one hand, by having a strong academic background you can be equipped with all tools required to handle any arising subject situation (learning), however, on the other hand, by teaching this subject – knowledge can be applied to serve almost any possible short- or long-term goal and purpose.

For example, **my** **short-term teaching goals** involvethe successful completion and achievement of learner’s personal goals; whatever those might be. Scoring high in class or an exam, getting an English competency certificate, learning to effectively communicate orally and written in English for everyday life, academic or business purposes, learning about English (British or American) culture, experiencing all the above in the limits of a real or a virtual classroom. In addition, **my** **long-term teaching goals** encompass the essential concept of education itself. That would be change. Education for me, means that a core alternation, or swing, takes place inside the learner. Have you watched “My Fair Lady” or “Educating Rita” or “Dead Poets Society”? All these movies, and many more others, about education visualize a change in the representation, or attitude, of the learner concerning certain individual characteristics or skills. Elaborating this, I have concluded that apart from any language skills covered in short-term goals, teachers should focus on practical and transferable skills and abilities; from computer and visual literacy (practical skills) to motivation and time management (transferable skills), for instance.

**Teaching Style**

The **Communicative Approach (1980s)** is largely closely attached to my teaching style. My teaching addresses learners' specific needs, using a variety of official and authentic material (newspaper articles, websites, blog posts, literature, reports) in a communicative, and as much as possible, real-life, context, reducing “Affective Filter”, and thus facilitating language acquisition. The same approach emphasized (and actually still does!) on conveying the meaning through speaking. The purpose of learning a language is not actually the language itself. Through language, the learner will be able to meet the culture of the Target Language, and easily connect with new people. This is also the ultimate aim. Teaching process is personalized to individual learner's needs, as everyone is different. And everyone who wants to learn a new language can acquire a new language.

However, on the other hand, **preceding approaches** have still much to offer. Their outcomes and proceedings are still being widely used; according to learners’ individual needs. For instance, the Grammar Translation Approach (1880) has bequeathed us the fill-in-the-blanks exercises, for instance; the Direct Approach (1910) the conversation practice; the Reading Approach (1930) the deductive grammar instruction; the Audio-lingual Approach (1940) the habit formation drills, along with grammar games; the Affective Humanistic (1970) has shown us the use of creative thought through dramatic games, singing and dancing, along with positive reinforcement; while the Comprehension Approach (1980) the role reversal exercises. Moreover, all these approaches, invaluable as they might be, do not meet today’s learning needs.

All these approaches and techniques, as I have mentioned so far, can be well employed correspondingly to the goals of each **individual learner**. Whether elementary, middle, high school students, or an adult learner focusing on General English, or university students or academics interested in Academic English, or business and other people in English for Specific Purposes (Business English, for instance). Anyone can acquire a new language if properly motivated, and engaged in meaningful activities. Yet, there is not a single formula of success for that, as far as I know. A teacher should be well-equipped and prepared to tackle any arising learning situation.

**Teaching Techniques**

There are numerous **teaching techniques**one can employ in lesson planning. Robert Gagne’s basic theory of instructional design may act as guide in almost any teaching situation; English is no exception. This instructional design theory incorporates the following events, which can be used in any order and as many times as they are believed to be necessary: Gaining the attention and interest of the audience. Informing students of the learning objectives and assessment. Stimulating Recall of Prior Learning. Presenting the content with clear explanations and warm language. Providing students guided, less-guided, and independent practice. There is also the 20/80 rule in lesson design. 20% of class time is devoted to instructions, and the 80% of time is spent to students’ practice. Thus, students are getting the most of classroom time not only to practice but also to assimilate new knowledge and information.

In addition, my main concern is **how to motivate learners on daily basis;** that way learning comes natural. A list of such activities used at this stage could include: Written Prompt on the Whiteboard: Question or Statement, Visual Prompt, Scrambled Sentence Strips, Back-to-Back Information Gap: Recycling Vocabulary, Dress-up or Box Props, Vocabulary Scramble, Warm-up with Dialogue, Idiom Madness, or Ranking Activities/Value Lines. All these activities embodied in warm language and teacher talk prove to be an invaluable tool to gain the attention and interest of learners.

Apart from Warm-Up Activities (see last paragraph), Objective Discussion, and Presenting Instruction or Modeling Activities, a teacher should also make a good use of **guided practice, independent practice, and assessment activities**. A guided practise activity could be a Fill-in-the-blank Questioning; in which learners need to complete sentences; in a real-life-like situation, students are observed whether they have understood instructions. Independent practice and Assessment activities can be used interchangeably. Writing an essay or preparing and delivering a presentation, for example, can be used as an index, both to students and teacher, of the student’s ability, either written or oral, application of learning objectives. The evaluation and assessment of learners takes place through activities like those students have already been exposed and always in a real-life context. Portfolio and continuous assessment would be my choice of final assessment; removing, thus, exam stress from learners and prompting them to relax and enjoy the learning procedure.

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