Using Methods to Shape the Way We Teach

Webinar #1 in the series

13 July 2011

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Introduction to Webinar Series

- Using Methods to Shape the Way We Teach
- 5 Sessions – 2 weeks apart with pre-reading, reflection questions and follow-up discussion.
- Ning for readings, reflection and discussions
- Vidcasts beginning in September, after the webinars
- Questions along the way? Post on Ning.

Why Methods?

- Best teaching practices usually have roots in a method or combination of methods.

- For many teachers, methods provide grounding in principles of teaching and learning.

- Teacher training programs typically have a methods course or courses.

The work of Language Teaching

- The teaching of any subject is an act that is mental , social , physical, emotional, practical, behavioral, experiential, historical, cultural, spiritual and personal.

- Language teaching is even more complex to include views on the nature of language, of language teaching and learning plus the overarching sociocultural context. (Adamson 2004).

A Study of Methods

- A foil for reflection
- Becoming clear on where we stand give us the power of choice
- Methods are part of the knowledge base of teachers.
- Importance of interacting with other's views to gain greater clarity
- Methods help us to expand our set of techniques.

A Criticism of Methods

- They are "prescriptions".

- Can give the impression of looking for one "best method"

- Teachers don't use methods when planning.

- Methods don't explain what actually happens in classrooms.

- Methods come in and out of "style".

Thought in action links

- Methods link thought and action.
- The word "thought" is meant to include beliefs, attitudes, values and awarenesses.
- This linkage is crucial from an educational standpoint.

Which method is best?

- Is this a question worth considering?
- If so, why?
- If not, why not?
- What is the question that we really wish to focus on?

Doubting game and Believing game

- Peter Elbow

- What does it mean to play the doubting game?

- How about the believing game?

Reflect and discuss

- What do you think of when you hear the word "method"? Why?

- What are the methods that were used when you first started studying English?

- What other methods have you encountered in your studies?

- Is there a method that you prefer?

Affective factors in language learning

- Why focus on affective factors?

- Think about a personal experience – either recent or in the past – where you learned something new.

- What feelings do you recall as you began that learning process?
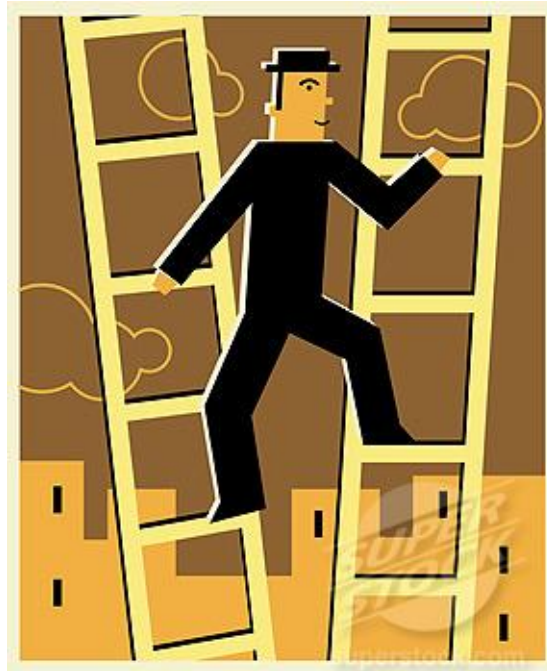
Why affect?

- Affect and cognition go hand in hand in learning.

- In traditional education, thought or cognition tends to be privileged over feelings.

- "Whole person" learning

- "Habits of mind" and "Habits of being"

- J. Dewey, J. Heron, D. Kolb, J. Mezirow

Affective filter

- Performance anxiety
- Feelings of anxiety, shame, fear impede learning

Methods that address the affective domain of language learning

Techniques and Principles

Community Language Learning

- Also known as Counseling-Learning
- Charles Curran
- 1970's
- Whole-person learning

Underlying principles

- Importance of relationship between teachers and students

- Students must feel secure in order to learn.

- Feelings about learning are acknowledged.

- Students' native language can be used.

- Reflection on learning process is important

- Language is used for communication.

Some practices for CLL/CL

- Recording of teacher-guided student conversations

- Use of transcription of conversations

- Active listening

- Small group games and tasks

Trying it out

- Which principles do you agree with and why?

- Which principles do you question and why?

- Which practices can you imagine using in your classrooms?

- Make a commitment to try out one new practice in your classes soon.

Adaptations

- How can a teacher incorporate parts of Community Language Learning/Counseling Learning in to their teaching without taking on the entire method?

- Some examples

Desuggestopedia

- Formerly known as Suggestopedia
- Georgi Lozanov
- Contributions made by Evelina Gateva
- 1970's
- Reflects a belief in an enormous human capacity for learning

Underlying principles

- Power of suggestion and desuggestion
- Peripheral learning
- Role of teacher authority in increasing trust
- Combining arts with language engages both hemispheres of the brain.
- Learning should be joyful and "easy".

Some practices for Desuggestopedia

- Classroom set-up
- Peripheral learning
- Positive suggestion
- Choose a new identity
- Role play
- "Concerts"
- Role of sleep in learning

Trying it out

- Which principles do you agree with and why?

- Which principles do you question and why?

- Which practices can you imagine using in your classrooms?

- Make a commitment to try out one new practice in your classes soon.

Adaptations

- How can a teacher incorporate parts of Desuggestopedia in to their teaching without taking on the entire method?

- Some examples

Review of the Webinar

- Why methods are helpful in shaping the way we teach

- A look at how affect influences learning

- Two methods that deal with affect, CLL and Desuggestopedia

- An invitation to explore the principles and try out the techniques in your own classes

Wrap up

- Thank you for your presence and participation!

- See you on Ning where the discussion will continue.

We'll be together again. . .

- 27 July 2011 – same time, same place