

DEBATES AS A PERFECT FORM FOR SPEAKING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL SPECIALITIES STUDENTS

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Speaking is a basic activity that every human being acquires at the process of growing and development. Inevitable part of every language learning program is the focus on mastering speaking skills applying a full range of modern approaches and techniques. It comes without saying that the more diverse the activities are, the better results can be achieved since the diversification is a key for covering different learning types of students, particularly, students of technical faculties.

Being not that talkative, future engineers, programmers and mathematicians tend to express their thoughts rather in a succinct form. Considering all peculiarities of technical background and speaking habits of students, debates seem to be a perfect form to improve students' speaking skills.

There are several solid reasons to hold university debates. Characterised as spontaneous expression of contradictive viewpoints, debates are definitely worth to practise at a class. Moreover, debates have a number of advantages in comparison to dialogues, role-plays, discussions and oral topics. They are typically of a limited timespan for each speaker of the group which means not that stressful for students, majority of who prefer to speak less.

To make debates effective, a teacher should mind the controversial topic. Brainstorming of potential themes is the first stage: suitable for age groups topics should resonate with student existing interests, suit their educational background and be definitely connected with their speciality. There are to polar vectors of opinions in all debates: pros and cons, splitting in groups should be conducted on the basis of student's personal attitudes to avoid any confrontations inside of the mini groups.

Another useful approach to facilitate fruitful debates is building anticipation and to give students enough time for organising the answers sequences by structuring brainstormed arguments and main points.

Language tools and specific vocabulary lie in the heart of every effective discussion. When conducting classroom debates students are facing multiple challenges connected with the application of appropriate terminology, grammatical constructions, linking devices, non-verbal means. Consequently, assistance in coming up with relevant vocabulary is one of critical elements at pre-debate phase. A teacher acts as an information source in case other members of the team cannot provide a high level of specific terminology. In order to save precious time list of appropriate vocabulary is prepared before the lesson.

Well-structured and organizer debates equals efficient debates. Basically, the purpose of all debates is to encourage spontaneous still coherent speech. Introduction of useful language for stating one's opinions, agreeing/disagreeing, rejections, contradiction, support, suggestion and summarising would benefit to the classroom order and clear direction.

To summarize, we should stress that debates are one of the most effective forms for speaking skills development among the students of technical specialists since this activity facilitates them in building confidence, breaking language barriers in known environment, preparing for conference speech and protecting their scientific papers, diplomas, dissertations. Debates help students structure their answers by analysing and later synthesizing the arguments to support ideas, views and opinions.

References:

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