

Olha Kovalenko

*National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky
Kiev Polytechnic Institute"*

Kyiv

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' COGNITIVE SKILLS AND ABILITIES IN ENGLISH LESSONS FOR IMPROVING THEIR PROFESSIONAL EFFICIENCY

Fast-paced environment within the processes of globalization in the whole world has predetermined different social changes not only in the sphere of politics, economy, information technology and intercultural relationship among peoples, but also in the field of education in general, and Higher education in particular.

Higher educational establishments have to prepare highly qualified specialists with the sufficient level of one or two foreign languages, who would be able to communicate fluently not only on the household level (private letters, small talks, chatting rooms, friendly conversations), but also in the academic environment (scientific conferences, round tables, symposia, business correspondence, etc.). That is why teachers of English are looking for more productive ways and methods of language teaching to meet the challenges of nowadays' world. But to plan their teaching process, concerning all those requirements, we must take into account our students' personal qualities, interests, their individual abilities to study, the level of desire to master their professional foreign language and their cognitive skills and abilities. When a student is lucky to have good cognitive skills, he can obtain new amount of information quickly and with ease, but when his cognitive skills are poor and weak, and they can't catch the information properly, then the process of studying turns out to be for him a real suffering. But many psychologists prove, that irrespective to peoples' age and individual learning abilities, all cognitive skills could be developed and enhanced with the correct approach to training them.

The leading psychologists of the past and modern ones devoted their scientific researches to this question. The following scholars are among them: R. Cattell, Ch. Spearman, H. Gardener, E. Torrance, C. Dodson, R. Dunn, B. Gorman, M. Beasley, J. Olson and others. Our teachers task is not only to give our students a certain amount of knowledge, but to help them to get this knowledge with ease, regardless their kind of cognitive

skills. The main cognitive skills that determine the studying ability in the process of learning are the following:

- Concentration;
- Perception;
- Memory;
- Logical thinking.

One of the most essential mental ability of a person is considered to be the ability to focus the attention on a particular subject or a thought, picking it out from the sphere of awareness. Students must focus their attention on doing homework, listening to a lecturer, reviewing the studied materials for exams, or preparing and completing the projects. The ability to collect the thoughts make the learning activities easier and more effective, and helps to achieve the comprehension faster. This ability also provides the students with capability to avoid problems connected with different kinds of embarrassment and difficulties, that can happen to a person, when he wanders frustrated and absentminded. The ability to focus the attention on important things will help in future to gain advantages of the social and working opportunities and turn their job into a profitable enterprise.

The second important cognitive ability of a person is perception, which means that we obtain information with the help of our sensory receptors, i.e. ears, eyes, tongue, nose (nostrils), and by touching the subjects, that is, with the help of our skin. Perception is our understanding of the things we feel. Sometimes it may occur that children confuse different letters while reading or writing, which may lead to the inappropriate apprehension in future and as well as inadequate auditory perception of the information got via the ears, may cause misunderstanding. If teachers help their students to improve accuracy and quality of perception, it will result in their ability to achieve information quickly and correctly. It will also help them to improve their speed of reading, and a lot of problems connected with this question will be solved.

Next aspect which is also very important and essential for our mental capability is memory. Psychologists differentiate various kinds of it: short-term or working memory, which is closely connected with “fluid intelligence”, and is depended on heredity, playing a vital role in performing tasks connected with person’s ability to adapt to new

circumstances; and a long-term memory, which is connected with “crystallized intelligence”, where the previous experience is reflected. As Ch. Spearman proves, the indicators of short-term memory of people after 40-50 years are becoming lower and lower; but indicators of long-term memory do not change, regardless the age. If teachers help their students to improve their short-term memory, it will help them to catch, process and understand necessary information. Improved long-term memory will help students to recall previously studied material, keep it and retrieve it when necessary. Scientific researches have shown that approximately 80% of information we receive with the help of our eyes and only 20% of it we get through our ears. So, improving visual and auditory memory will have a great influence on students’ studying abilities.

The last in the list of most important cognitive functions is logical thinking. It is a kind of mental activity, when students use their reasoning ability to achieve a conclusion gradually. Tasks, that require logical thinking, call for links between facts, their structure and steps for reasoning, that have any sense. Psychologists consider, that the ground of logical thinking is the consistent thought. This activity implies encompassing all essential facts, ideas and results, concerning the question and putting them in a step-by-step progression that means, to think logically is to consider in a chain-like mode. So, teachers must help their students to develop and improve logical thinking, which will lead to deeper understanding of a situation, help to work out better solution and make a person brighter and smarter in general.

Thus, the main goal in the process of teaching is not only to supply our students with a particular load of information, but to help them enhance and strengthen their cognitive and mental skills , and to be able to achieve the defined goals more easily and effectively.

REFERENCES

1. Cognitive Skills Determine Learning Ability. Edublox Online Tutor. Retrieved from: <http://www.edubloxtutor.com/cognitive-skills-determine-learning-ability/>
2. Intellectualnye protsessy-Kratkoye vvyedyeniye v psykholgiyu. Retrieved from: <http://www.psi.webzone.ru/intro/intro10.htm>