

'THINKING SKILL' – THE MAIN LEARNING TOOL

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Abstract

The paper deals with an innovative method of foreign language learning in a university environment. The method of teaching with help of four elementary skills - reading, speaking, writing and listening is definitely inconceivable to teaching any foreign language. But automatic answers following the exercise and students' passive memorising does not make speaking language and its learning very natural. This has forced me to find and create the way how to make learners think and realise the point and meaning of learning itself. My paper is about special skill I have tried to apply – 'thinking skill'. I have chosen it to complement other four which teacher normally uses when teaching foreign language (reading, speaking, listening skills). At the same time I put 'thinking skill' into a role to support and enhance learning process. To find and use some methods how to make students think, make their own opinion and also teach them to apply their own experience to learning process was the main goal of this survey. The methods I have applied were provoking students to think before they learn.

Key Words

'Thinking skill', cognition, comprehend the language, provoke thinking, lateral thinking, individual approach, framework, pre-listening activity, broadening knowledge, observation, description, finding connections

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Introduction

The present study introduces an application of several methods to engage learners' thinking into learning process. Drawing on some of L.S.Vygotsky's theories I based my approach on "making and finding logical relations to remember a concept" thus naturally apply thinking. Also E.De Bono's "lateral thinking" was great theoretical base to fulfil demands of my survey. By supporting "creative thought" (E.De Bono, 1970) he also supports the individual's originality and skill in making different views and opinions on a certain subject.

I have experienced teaching for several years by now and I gained an important although a well-known knowledge. Students find learning a very difficult process. I think it is because they do not rely on their thinking, they only memorise the texts and information they are asked to know. David Perkins (1992, New York) describes what happens at schools very nicely: "... first students acquire knowledge. Only then do they think with and about the knowledge they have absorbed."

My survey here suggests a certain way how to try to make students think before they learn and thus get to "learning as a consequence of thinking" (Perkins, D, 1992, New York [on line]). Individual methods were applied on smaller classes of students of University of Life Sciences, where English language is not the main focus of their studies but still an inseparable subject. Level of taught English is pre-intermediate which means quite basic one since majority of students have left secondary schools with very poor knowledge of this language.

I usually start my lessons by a "warming up" exercise – questioning 'how they are'. Practising speaking skill from the very beginning gently prepares them for the learning process. I ask them one simple question "How are you today?" . I have usually received a very quick and obvious answer "I am fine".

But then a big surprise wakes students up. I ask them "Why are you fine? And the challenge is set. Students do not know what to answer. They've never thought of having to think of a reason "why" or what is more sad, they're just used to conventional and not devoted answers. And there comes the theory of E. De Bono's "lateral thinking". He believes that "the student should explore different ways of examining a challenging task, instead of accepting what appears to be solution". Applying this approach I did not let students to get away with such a quick and obvious answer. According to E.De Bono "lateral thinking is clearly seated in the cognitive domain". Drawing on it I asked students to explain their reason for such feeling.

Nevertheless our – teachers'- challenge is set – to support "individual's originality and skill" (E. De Bono, 1970), to provoke students thinking, to teach them to have their own opinion, how to interpret and understand studied material by having them explain things and situations thus deepen their cognition and learning itself. I put learning into position where if students do not think, they will not learn. I think that without this skill any kind of learning is impossible. Unfortunately in a process of teaching foreign language teacher often has to remind students this inseparable part of learning.

Methods

READING (COMPREHENSION)

Teachers often hear students struggling to express their thoughts. It happens because they suffer from lack of vocabulary or they are not used to applying their own thoughts to explain something. I have worked on solving both of these problems and my focus was put on 'thinking' as an accompanying and inseparable tool to learn, on "learning as a consequence of thinking" (Perkins, D, 1992, New York). I found reading and analysing the texts as one of the ways which supplies learners with new vocabulary. By analysing and discussing the article we help students not only to gain new vocabulary but also stir their thinking processes. (Kotekova, D., 2009), "Reading comprehension-tool to improve speaking skill", ERIE 2009).

METHOD: INDIVIDUAL APPROACH/WORK OF STUDENTS – FORGOING TEACHER'S GUIDELINESS.

I have chosen this approach to separate students 'work and especially their thinking process from the automatic following teacher's guidelines. The teacher's task is to identify problems of students' thinking. Those, on the other hand working alone, without teacher's instructions will have to rely only on their own way of thinking. They have to read the article themselves and solve the given tasks.

Their main task is to analyse the text including creating the main point of the article, discussing the content and pointing out the most important ideas. Students are not told to give their own opinion but this is part of teacher's survey. He watches the learners 'approach if any of learners includes it without

reminding them to do so. Solving the specific task students can use dictionaries.

Researchers have identified a number of strategies to stimulate thinking in learners. When reading in the second language is taught, teacher should put the focus on "reading for sense to comprehend the overall meaning of a story". The main procedure of this method is to "identify and compare basic story elements, look for useful key sentences and use them as a tool for summarising the text" (Victoria White, [on line]).

This point of a teacher's plan has got its important role. The individual approach of students without any assistance helps teacher to identify specific needs concerning learners' thinking. Teacher observes the way students solve the task. Their answers show him the way they think, how they have approached the text, how many words they have quoted from the text and how many they have managed to substitute with synonyms and tell them using their own words. Their mistakes will tell teacher where the problem of thinking lies.

PROBLEM DEFINED:

When students start analysing the article, they usually begin reading and repeating the very same lines from the text itself. They do not try to find other words to say the same thing in a different way. They blindly quote the text. They do not even try to say the sentences themselves, they read them. Seven students out of ten quoted the text word by word when looking for the main point. Two of them tried to change the sentence a little bit and only two of the learners used synonyms. Sharing their own opinions was not even tried to be included in their work. Slight thinking process was observed only in 4 students out of 20.

RESOLUTION:

Teacher proceeds by correcting and explaining mistake by mistake. The main task for students was to create the main point of an article.

1. After mistakes recognised he explains them that title usually hides the content itself thus making the point of the article.
2. To avoid quoting the same words and lines students are told to substitute the words of the title by synonyms.
3. At the same time when they try to explain the title in different way, they would actually begin analysing the content as well.
4. By explaining the words learners naturally start using their mind and connecting knowledge they have with the content in the text. They can discuss and compare their own experience which is very important in thinking process. They find out themselves what the article is about and what lies behind the story, etc.

All these activities are supported by teachers questioning. Question "what do you think about it?" should not be omitted.

Certain advice must also be given and emphasized in the way they make their expressions.

5. Learners often use and repeat long sentences straight from the text. They do not try to make their own.

Students should be advised to simplify and shorten their expressions; they should avoid making long, compound sentences. Making the sentence in a basic English structure 'subject-verb-object' will make it easier for students to remember and quote their own utterances.

6. To finally tell the point of an article I use one practical advice that usually helps students very much. I tell them to imagine they want to recommend the article to someone. So they must tell the person why he/she should read it, what the reasons are. In this way students naturally made sentences in a much simpler way than when trying to tell the content.

Pointing out and explaining all students mistakes followed by correcting and answering, supports and develops learners' thinking process. It also helps students to start making their own opinion (especially when giving recommendations) and find connections in their experience which is often absent in their answers.

Learners work on another article proceeding the suggested way.

TASK FOR STUDENTS:

ANALYSING the article – figuring out its point from content

QUESTIONING THEMSELVES - activating background knowledge, giving their own opinions

EXPLAINING – finding synonyms, using them to explain ideas

RECOMMENDING THE ARTICLE to someone they know

GIVING REASONS FOR EVERY OPINION

SIMPLIFYING – avoiding making long and compound expressions

After completing it we notice a difference in their approach and even some progress in awakening their thinking.

SPEAKING (DESCRIBING)

Speaking foreign language is definitely the main aim of the whole process of learning it. When students learn language, they are not only engaged in absorbing and memorising new grammar facts and vocabulary but they are also involved in the process of thinking about what they say and why. According to G. Wells (1994 „distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning – a semiotic process“. „Making meaning“ is closely related to explaining and describing what students see, feel or have on their mind.

One of the best ways how to practise this skill is to start describing. What we describe is not so important as how often we decide to describe, of course using foreign language. I would say that any kind of activity is suitable e.g. walking in the streets, shopping, cooking at home those all are activities which we naturally do every day and which we can use as a main tool to practise speaking. If we practise talking about our daily activities, we definitely have to use ‘thinking tool’.

METHOD 1: DESCRIBING ACTIVITY

For students sitting in the class the simplest activity to describe is the most present one. We soon find out that even such simple activity can cause troubles. Describing the present situation-sitting in the class is one of the suitable ones. They can use for example: “I am sitting at school at the moment. I am also trying to say some words. I am talking to my teacher. My class mates are looking at me while the sun is shining. My teacher is waiting for my answer, etc.” ‘Making meaning-semiotic process’ (G.Wells, 1994) has been encouraged.

Part of this method is of course giving students their homework where they choose for example a favourite part of the day and they describe activities they do or they describe only one activity, for example ‘food shopping’ but in every detail. They will have to mention every single activity that brings them to the shop, that makes them buy things and that also brings them back home with food.

A very positive view was expressed when doing this homework. Students found themselves in quite peculiar and funny situation when describing their food shopping. Majority of them ended up buying only food they could name in English. Another funny situation was that coming back home the first thing they did was taking dictionaries and looking up the words for groceries they did not buy because they did not know their name. Students said that they kept repeating translating their list of food supply and after a few times of shopping they managed to bring home most of the things they needed.

Another good idea how to strengthen learners’ thinking is discussion about their ambitions and dreams. This is the topic that could awake learners’ mind.

I found students not having any dreams, but not knowing about importance of dreams in their life either, no general motivation in life...

I found them living from one day to the other, having no necessity to be inspired and to be motivated every morning when they get out of bed.

Seven out of ten Students kept hesitating when expressing their dream. Six out of ten students did not have any dream at all. They live from day to day and they don’t even wonder if it is nice to live with no excitement. Eight of them were happy to

live such life. Talking about their goal in life we came out to the main one which is to finish the university. Then very general opinions dominated, such as having a family and a good job. I continued provoking their individuality and originality (E.De Bono, 1970) asking them what a good job means to them. Funny thing was nine out of ten students wanted to be the managers or directors of the banks. Unfortunately money motivation prevail deeper philosophical sense of life.

RESOLUTION: Students usually accept the lectures and tasks very passively on their lessons. They do not ask themselves questions WHY? WHY NOT? Asking them to describe something for homework they are forced to translate and find lots of activities which they consider very normal and natural but when they need to tell them in foreign language, they are lost. By doing so they enrich their vocabulary and next time when talking or explaining something, they will organise their thoughts in much simpler and smoother way. They use 'thinking tool'. Practising to describe all activities we do every day teacher leads learners to subconsciously discover their process of thinking.

A positive reflection was expressed by students especially on the task of describing their every-day activities. Seven out of ten said that going shopping with an English dictionary was more than fun and apart from that they had definitely enriched their vocabulary. Three students found it too demanding to use dictionary so often every day but they have admitted that it was a good way of learning new words.

Being inspired by Shari Tishman I have also chosen another method and that is "describing an object". Shari Tishman says that " Examining object closely is an excellent way to motivate and sharpen students' thinking" (EL, 2008, Vol.65, No.5,pp 44).

METHOD 2: DESCRIBING "the object of their attention" (Tishman, S. EL, 2008, Vol.65, No.5,pp 45)

To increase students' thinking we-teachers should awake learners' observation skills. Above mentioned activities such as walking in the streets, shopping, etc. they all provide excellent opportunities to observe and think. "To encourage students' thinking requires a deliberate approach but not necessarily a complicated one." (Shari Tishman, 2008).

This method is about having one object in the middle of our attention and we are going to try to describe it.

Teacher brings an interesting object to the class or he simply asks students to bring their favourite object themselves. If we work with an object brought by a student, we gain extra information straight away. It can tell us about students feeling which are reflected in the chosen object.

Students are asked to describe the object. As they proceed they should try to find reasons why the object is so big, or small, old, touched by time, etc. Students should also try to ask questions about it, to find connections with other related objects, e.g. why they don't see this stove in their kitchen any more. After asking there comes finding the answers for their questions, thus finding connections of the object with their lives or of their grandparents.

Description encourages expansive thinking. Object hides many secrets about its character and look. It definitely speaks about its way it was/is used, what it is for, if it is important for the life or if it holds decorative or emotional function in our life, etc. Learners are engaged in activities which lead them to discover this secret of the object. Their close examining awakens their curiosity (they are not even curious these days) and guides them to complex thinking. Thinking is thus strongly involved.

PROCESS

One of our student's books holds the topic "Old and new" which I find as an excellent opportunity to try making students find connections of the object chosen by student and the article. They should apply their thinking. I brought a picture of the old grandmother's stove. Most of the students do not use stove at home, unless they spend their weekends with grandparents or at the cottage. They are used to more comfortable and practical "cooker".

1. **DEFINING THE OBJECT.** Students had to observe the object first and then think of questions, ideas, themes connected to the "stove".
2. **DESCRIBING THE LOOK, THE FIRST IMPRESSION.** They started describing the object from the outside, what it looks like, what it is for, what makes it warm, where the wood to be burnt in is taken from, etc. They look at the object from very general point of view.
3. **PRACTICAL VIEW, REASONING.** I asked learners if they use it at home. A question that makes them be involved in the story of the 'stove'. I call it "reasoning". They said 'no' which made them think why they don't use it at home any more. We all fell into discussion about the past and conditions of life in the 19 century when the stoves were still common and we obviously couldn't avoid comparing life today and then.
4. **LOOKING FOR CONNECTIONS WITH THE PAST.** Students were directed to use their own questions and ideas to find out more about the "stove" and life in the past in which they began to be nicely curious. Discussion about the difference between life in the past and today let students wonder what they would do without internet or cell phone

today, how they would live without such technological progress.

5. **FINDING ADVANTAGES OF PRESENCE.** Learners naturally moved from the magic of the past into technology of a presence. Description of a simple "stove" opened students' mind to perceive things in a slightly different way. They started thinking. They realised that boiling water for tea does not have to last half an hour and that washing clothes does not have to be done by hands but this was not in such way all the time.

RESOLUTION:

Simple observing and examining the picture of the "stove" from the time of our grandparents has lead students to ask lot of curious questions about the object, often developing their explanations from their own experience in grandmother's house. Especially exciting topic was brought up when students asked if their grandparents had always had enough wood to keep their stove working. We were 'forced' to go inside the story of life in the past. Questions of the type: 'Did they live close to woods?', 'Could they cut the wood in this forest?' 'Was it forbidden as it is today?' 'Who cut the wood, men or also women?' 'Was there any central heating?' etc. Describing the stove brought students to a different context of a society in which the stove was commonly used. Students were interested in object of the past, object not so familiar to them in modern society. They were actually creating questions that triggered their own discovery process which was the point of "object-centred discussion" (S.Tishman).

I found students thinking, finding connections and appreciating not only technical progress today but also values of life and strength of our grandparents to live in such different conditions in the past. We could not avoid comparing the advantages and disadvantages of life today and in the 19century. Learners

noticed that technology they experience nowadays was not part of life in the past. A very positive outcome of this method was that they even developed discussion about having washing machines today, and washing clothes by hands in the past or dishwasher contrary to washing up by hands. The most interesting contrast was noticed when they started imagining their life without internet or using horses instead to pass some message in the past. I was very pleased in the end when I saw respect towards it all.

CONCLUSION:

Looking at something carefully, trying to describe features that all is a form of cognition. It highly evokes learners' thinking and also generates their own ideas and opinions. "Students need to become adept at thinking things through for themselves", says S.Tishman. By teaching students to observe the objects, we help them to notice objects in their everyday life and maybe even discover role and value of things in general which they normally ignore. "Making and finding logical relations to remember a concept" (Vygotsky, 1970) is also what our aim was.

LISTENING

Listening is another integral part of the communication process especially when we talk about teaching foreign language. "It is one of the more difficult aspects of the language arts to assess. It cannot be easily observed and can be measured only through inference". (Temple and Gillet, 1984)

That is the reason why it should never be separated from the other skills such as reading and speaking. Talking about learning as a consequence of applying 'thinking skill' is a very important part of the teaching process. Listening comprehension definitely complements reading and speaking skills. "In this part of study I've also focused on making students think as a consequence of listening.

METHOD: START WITH PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Although listening to the words said by native speakers can be sometimes quite difficult for our students, it is an extremely necessary activity to do. Teacher should make sure that learners will comprehend the text within and after the process of listening. The best way to do so is to prepare some pre-listening activities. It is so called "formal assessment" (Temple and Gillet, 1984) which is prepared by teachers "based on perceived needs". (Temple and Gillet, 1984). Before students start listening to the text itself, they will actually have the opportunity to express their opinion, ask questions and even analyse the topic. They "need assistance to activate what they already know about the ideas they are going to hear" (A. Pekin, J.Pekin, J.Muge, D.Baytan, 1982)

Bearing in mind that learning should be consequence of thinking, teacher guides students to thinking activities. He should lead them to the idea that: "... act of listening requires

not just hearing but thinking, as well as a good deal of interest and information which both speaker and listener must have in common". (King, 1984, [on line])

It positively affects the process of comprehension because students are informed what to focus on.

1. **PURPOSE OF LISTENING.** . I proceeded according to the "Directed-Listening Thinking activity" (Stauffer, 1980) where learners are provided with the framework to organize their listening process. They are told what their aim of listening is. If they need to only understand the text or they will have to analyse it from some point of view as well. They are introduced to the theme of the article and are told that afterwards they will talk about different cultures in the world. Our topic for the whole module was 'Countries and cultures'. I found it as an excellent opportunity to broaden students' knowledge about the world, to awake their thinking and use also their own experience when analysing the text.
2. **SET OF QUESTIONS.** I have prepared a set of questions part of 'formal assessment' method (Temple and Gillet, 1984))that made them think and search for their journeys abroad. For example 'Which country have you visited? Why did you go there? What were you doing all day? Have you met any new friends? Did these friends come from that country? What did you like about them?' There can be lots of different questions that basically prepare learners to talk about different cultures, people and remind them that there certainly are differences in countries all around the world. We will come to this conclusion by their subconscious and natural applying their own experiences thus finding connections and importance of what they have experienced themselves with learning process as such.

3. **DEFINING THE TOPIC** (After all questions and relaxed discussing the topic about travelling, being abroad, seeing foreign cultures, people , even talking to them, students are told the name of the article that will lead them to enrich their latest knowledge about the world's culture. The name of the article was 'Just a myth'.

4. **VOCABULARY.** Teacher needs to find out if learners understand all the words in the name of the text. They need to define all unknown words and if possible-by themselves. If they look them up in dictionaries themselves, they will more likely remember more of them than if just having the words translated by teacher.

We had the word 'myth'. It was quite unknown so learners looked up the word in dictionary.

5. **EXPLAINING VOCABULARY.** Students had to explain unknown words in English but in different way than they found in dictionaries.

Teacher can also provide some vocabulary that students might need while listening to the text. It's good to write it on the board for visual check up and fluent comprehension. Students can thus recognise the words explained ahead and also written. They won't get lost while listening. They will be able to follow the text uninterruptedly.

6. **DISCUSSION.** We have developed the idea of myth generally, why people usually say things like that, why these sentences are sometimes believed in and sometimes not. We even discussed some myths known for the Czech Republic.

The topic of listening was becoming more and more familiar to all students and that was definitely a very good comprehension start.

CONCLUSION

Comprehension is very much improved if listening activity is organised and well-structured. Students were very pleased when they could mention their own experiences from travelling and visiting countries abroad. Six out of ten students travel regularly and they gladly shared their stories with their classmates. Pre-listening activities help learners to adjust their thinking so listening itself can proceed in much easier way. Teacher must keep in mind that a purpose of the listening exercise is not to memorise the whole text word by word but to develop students' process of thinking and via thinking comprehend the heard text. This has been well achieved by letting students find connections with familiar for them situations, places, people and after all asking them to make inferences and reflect the ideas, respond with their own opinion to what it has been heard. These are all activities well-planned beforehand by a teacher to make sure that learners follow a certain structure which simplifies listening comprehension.

On the top of that teacher finishes the whole listening process by carrying on in asking questions and discussing the article by having students comparing the myths in different countries with myths in their own country, expressing their own opinion and applying their experiences from travelling. Students are guided to use thinking but in a very natural way that would not put them off.

Results

Methods described above have tried to make students think before they start learning. This was supposed to help them to learn, make it easier for them to absorb information and naturally remember it.

The very first progress I noticed was that all students had learned not only to hear the question 'How are you?' at the beginning of each lesson, but they also perceived its meaning and answered it with a very pregnant content. At the same time they've learned not only to express their opinion but also explain it straight away without teacher challenging them to do so. Their thinking process was definitely stirred.

Reading process has awakened learners' individual work and approach where they had a chance to apply their own way to analyse the text without teacher's guidance. They were provoked to discover and explore their own thinking. By analysing their mistakes afterwards they worked on another task of the same kind finding it much easier to comprehend and discuss the text.

Observation that has been practised within 'speaking part' was also found as a very good learning tool. Students find describing daily activities or objects very obvious in their mother tongue but saying them in English was a challenge for their mind. Learners soon found out that using simple sentences is much more effective than compound ones. They have also learned not only to look at the object from the outside but also see connections inside the observed topic. They started appreciating the presence of their daily routines which they ignored before.

Concerning the final skill that was also enriched by 'thinking' I have to say that pre-listening activities helped students to comprehend the text in a much easier way than just listen to it straight away. Activities that have been prepared before-hand helped learners to follow a certain structure thus develop the context and discuss the background of the story before listening itself. When they started listening to the text they were already familiar with the whole subject that made them comprehend, reflect and discuss the article afterwards much smoother.

Findings and Discussion

Applying 'thinking tool' to teaching process is always a very challenging task. I have to say that several methods I have used have brought considerable results. Victoria White's method "reading for sense to comprehend the overall meaning of a story" was appreciated especially by learners. Its main procedure was to "identify and compare basic story elements, look for useful key sentences and use them as a tool for summarising the text". I have definitely noticed progress in students' thinking. We read the article named "The 1900 House". To discuss the topic was hard only when working individually. At this moment I would like to emphasise the importance of teacher's assistance. After pointing out their mistakes in thinking and in steps of analysing, they found connections much easier. They discussed the title and found historical connections with lives of their grandparents. As soon as they had been challenged to talk about lives of their grandmothers, they could discuss the topic without being stressed they do not know the exact words from the article. They naturally found synonyms and used short sentences. They did not try to quote the text. They looked for their own experience since they regularly visit their grandparents. They were also asked to talk to them about their lives in the past and discuss advantages and disadvantages they see in their lives nowadays. Students came back to the lesson with an amazing amount of information about life in the past. The next article they have read was about "Hazardous History", text closely related to the previous one, focused on health. After following a certain framework given by a teacher before ("formal assessment" method (Temple and Gillet, 1984), learners found connections between two articles very naturally, even adding their own experience from talking to their grandparents.

On the other hand I have to admit that the method of 'an individual approach/work' of students in reading task is effective for the teacher but students did not proceed very much in analysing the text individually. They require explicit instructions and guided hand of a teacher. After they were told their problems of thinking, they approached the text in different and more effective way. Nevertheless the first step by teacher must have been done and that is to discover and analyse learners' thinking. Only then could I apply the specific methods.

Another inspirational method was following the work of L.S.Vygotsky (1978) and the part of 'thinking process and skill' and also his principle of learning as "a social activity". L.S. Vygotsky says that "social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development" meaning that students play an active role in learning. The role of a teacher is shifted to the 'professional assistant' in order to help learners to look for their own experience and connect it with the topic discussed. Students found very interesting and exciting when they were asked to talk to their grandparents about life in the past. They naturally became part of creating their own experience and opinion which they did not have before and they absorbed it from reading the text only. They could experience it themselves by discussing it easily with people who lived in that time and also who they know very well so their process of questioning was lightened. "Connections between people and the socio-cultural context in which they act" (Vygotsky, 1978) were nicely applied and by our learners considered interesting.

Practising most of the skills (reading, speaking, listening) and complementing them by specific approach focused on making students think was found as truly fruitful. Students were lead to discover and analyse not only their thoughts but also the world they live in, their own experiences. In a process of giving their

own opinions they were discovering not only new vocabulary but they subconsciously learned and remembered things. Their thinking was definitely awoken and enhanced.

Also De Bono's theory of "lateral thinking" was proved to be effective. Apart from supporting the cognitive process of learners' approach to studying, it is also strongly linked to "a concept of humour". The question 'Why are you fine?' has definitely evoked not only surprise but also laugh. Students did not expect it, they have never heard it before, thus when thinking of an answer they came out with funny reasons first. Laugh brought up a very relaxed atmosphere and on the top of that students started answering truthful answers. If they were not fine, they had not replied an obvious answer 'I am fine' but the true one. One of the most pleasurable outcomes of "lateral thinking" method was that students learned to give the reason why they feel so automatically and naturally. They did not have to be asked any more to explain their feeling. And not only thinking process had definitely been applied. Also students' cooperation in communication and expressing their opinions and views in foreign language was very much enhanced.

Teacher should always try to make students observe and describe things around them so students do not absorb the facts but they come out with the facts themselves thus remembering them better. They can thus explore different points of view and find new connections and relationships between things. By observing and describing they open their mind to see something when they are looking at it which is also quite appreciated in life as such. Positive views were expressed towards describing "the object of their attention" (S.Tishman) of their own choice. They usually picked up the thing that was somehow challenging to describe or strange or funny to see. They brought for example 'dry hornet', or a 'bird feather' they keep in their pocket etc.

Describing the objects of this kind made the topic even more interesting, especially when looking for connections with their lives. At the same time it proves again what Vygotsky believed in: "humans use tools that develop from a culture to mediate their social environments". And talking about these tools and realising their connections definitely lead to "higher thinking skill" (Vygotsky, 1978).

Conclusion

Present study was aimed at awakening students' 'thinking skill' and involving it into learning process. The findings indicate that students definitely found it useful and much more effective when involving their own experience and opinion into the material being taught. "Making and finding logical relations" (Vygotsky, 1978) between things helped them to remember the concept easier. This survey also proved that giving students framework by a teacher it prepares them better to comprehend and absorb given material. Students received helpful guidance from a teacher in a form of questions or even the special strategy in which they could discover their own weaknesses in their individual approach to learning. They found out that reading a certain text does not always mean memorising its lines but that in a way of careful dividing text into "basic story elements" (V.White), simplifying their expressions or substituting them by synonyms it was much easier to be engaged with the material being read.

Teacher should avoid teaching purely by handing over information. He should find the way how to make students discover new information themselves. Certain activities like questioning or describing, noticing everyday object and situations, translating them into English etc. should be applied to provoke thinking. If this strategy of cooperation of the

teacher and learners is done regularly, it will continuously raise independent and natural thinking process in students. It is certain that it might take some time to improve learners' 'thinking skill' but even participants themselves let themselves hear that paying attention to simple but everyday objects and situations and translating them into English definitely helped them to improve their speaking even supported their confidence. According students' own reflection they have definitely started using their own thoughts and opinions more often.

Learning happens best when people can develop their own ideas and build their own opinions on the subject.

After all "We need to think better if we are to become better people.' Paul, aged 10".

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