

THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION IN ENGLISH LESSONS

S. G. Lavrentev

*Belarusian State University, Nezavisimosti Av., 4,
220030 Minsk, Belarus, bsu@bsu.by*

The article investigates the important role of effective presentation skills within the English language classroom. The study outlines key components of successful presentations, including structure, delivery, and visual aids. Furthermore, it explores the positive impact of effective presentation on students' confidence, motivation, and critical thinking. The paper provides a practical framework for integrating presentation tasks into English lessons.

Keywords: effective presentation; mediate new material; metacognitive learning strategies; facilitate learners' entry; reinforce perception; 'schemata'; feedback; short-term memory.

ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ЭФФЕКТИВНОЙ ПРЕЗЕНТАЦИИ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

С. Г. Лаврентьев

*Белорусский государственный университет, пр-т Независимости, 4,
220030 Минск, Беларусь, bsu@bsu.by*

В статье исследуется важная роль навыков эффективной презентации на уроках английского языка. Рассматриваются ключевые компоненты успешной презентации, в том числе структура, подача материала и наглядные пособия. Кроме того, исследуется положительное влияние эффективной презентации на уверенность студентов, мотивацию и критическое мышление. В статье представлена практическая основа для интеграции презентационных заданий в уроки английского языка.

Ключевые слова: эффективная презентация; опосредование нового материала; метакогнитивные стратегии обучения; содействие вниканию учащихся в материал; усиление восприятия; «схемы»; обратная связь; кратковременная память.

It would seem fairly obvious that in order for our students to learn something new (a text, a new word, how to perform a task) they need to be first able to perceive and understand it. One of the teacher's jobs is to mediate such new material so that it appears in a form that is most accessible for initial learning.

This kind of mediation may be called 'presentation'; the term is applied here not only to the kind of limited and controlled modelling of a target item

that we do when we introduce a new word or grammatical structure, but also to the initial encounter with comprehensible input in the form of spoken or written texts, as well as various kinds of explanations, instructions and discussion of new language items or tasks.

People may, it is true, perceive and even acquire new language without conscious presentation on the part of a teacher. We learn our first language mostly like this, and there are some who would argue for teaching a foreign language in the same way - by exposing learners to the language phenomena without instructional intervention and letting them absorb it intuitively.

However, raw, unmediated new input is often incomprehensible to learners; it does not function as 'intake', and therefore does not result in learning. In an immersion situation this does not matter: learners have plenty of time for repeated and different exposures to such input and will eventually absorb it. But given the limited time and resources of conventional foreign language classes, as much as possible of this input has to become also 'intake' at first encounter.

Hence the necessity for presenting it in such a way that it can be perceived and understood.

Another contribution of effective teacher presentations of new material in formal courses is that they can help to activate and harness learners' attention, effort, intelligence and conscious ('metacognitive') learning strategies in order to enhance learning - again, something that does not necessarily happen in an immersion situation. For instance, you might point out how a new item is linked to something they already know, or contrast a new bit of grammar with a parallel structure in their own language.

This does not necessarily mean that every single new bit of language - every sound, word, structure, text, and so on - needs to be consciously introduced; or that every new unit in the syllabus has to start with a clearly directed presentation. Moreover, presentations may often not occur at the first stage of learning: they may be given after learners have already engaged with the language in question, as when we clarify the meaning of a word during a discussion, or read aloud a text learners have previously read to themselves.

The ability to mediate new material or instruct effectively is an essential teaching skill; it enables the teacher to facilitate learners' entry into and understanding of new material, and thus promotes further learning.

What happens in an effective presentation?

Attention

The learners are alert, focusing their attention on the teacher and the material to be learnt, and aware that something is coming that they need to take in. You need to make sure that learners are in fact attending; it helps if the target material is perceived as interesting in itself.

Perception

The learners see or hear the target material clearly. This means not only making sure that the material is clearly visible and audible in the first place; it also usually means repeating it in order to give added opportunities for, or reinforce perception. Finally, it helps to get some kind of response from the learners in order to check that they have in fact perceived the material accurately: repetition, for example, or writing.

Understanding

The learners understand the meaning of the material being introduced, and its connection with other things they already know (how it fits into their existing perceptions of reality or 'schemata'). So you may need to illustrate, make links with previously learnt material, explain. A response from the learners, again, can give you valuable feedback on how well they have understood: a restatement of concepts in their own words, for example.

Short-term memory

The learners need to take the material into short-term memory: to remember it, that is, until later in the lesson, when you and they have an opportunity to do further work to consolidate learning. So the more 'impact' the original presentation has - for example, if it is colourful, dramatic, unusual in any way - the better. Note that some learners remember better if the material is seen, others if it is heard, yet others if it is associated with physical movement (visual, aural and kinesthetic input): these should ideally all be utilized within a good presentation. If a lengthy explanation has taken place, it also helps to finish with a brief restatement of the main point.