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BLENDED LEARNING: NEW CHALLENGES - OLD SOLUTIONS.

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The potentialities of the application of multiple intelligences theory in English language teaching in the framework of blended classes are focused on because one of its difficulties in organizing the efficient teaching environment is adapting learners' psychological variabilities to the specific online communication.

Key words: blended learning, multiple intelligences theory.

It is of the utmost importance that we recognize and nurture all of the varied human intelligences, and all of the combinations of intelligences. We are all so different because we all have different combinations of intelligences. If we recognize this, I think we will have at least a better chance of dealing appropriately with the many problems we face in the world" H.Gardner (1993).

The main aim of the article is to provide the initial platform for widening the outlook and to highlight one of the potential paths to travel more confidently in the online blended mazes for English language teachers by sharing some experience tips with the colleagues. The traditional classroom organization which has existed for many centuries has changed radically in no time at all. Nobody could be bold enough to use make true life predictions about our unstable future which is, on the one side, is threatened not by phantasy or science fiction threats but the threatening present-day reality, and, on the other side, is evidently captured by the artificial intellect.

At present, one of the top-priority tasks for Ukrainian ELT world is to adapt effectively and promptly to the transforming ELT realities, to help the teachers in

Ukraine to adjust, to the devastating and, at the same time, revolutionizing changes they are facing. Blended learning (mixed learning or hybrid learning) though "all learning is blended learning" [1] and though it "has always been a major part of the landscape of training, learning and instructions" [2] has appeared to become a leading flexible form for integrating traditional and distant teaching and learning. It is usually understood as the enhanced combination of traditional classroom activities and information technologies, combination of the content referring to a particular subject and the procedures of its application.

There are three main types of teacher-learner interaction in the blended learning classroom: teacher-led instruction, online teacher-led instruction and collaborating activities and stations [3]. The main advantages of blended learning include applying more interactive tasks, enhancing motivation, developing self-study skills, giving the possibility of managing the learning process by learners themselves, raising the learner's responsibility by making it possible to teach how to learn. However, it implies a number of difficulties: more time- and labour-consuming efforts for the teacher to design a well-arranged and well-functioning flexible course, problems caused by the organization and creation of necessary information, transforming it into an electronic resource and transferring it efficiently to learners, adapting to their possibilities to work actively within computer-centred framework with the gadgets available.

In addition, there is another challenge: all those interested in the methodological research related to blended learning emphasize one of the most important distinction between the traditional teaching and blended teaching - the change in the interrelations between a teacher and a student and the change of the role of a teacher: a) for organizing the necessary teaching process; b) for organizing individual cognitive activity of learners; c) for organizing individual support for every learner; d) for organizing group activities, enabling a student to monitor his/her studies. This learner-centered approach brings forth a number of challenges dealing with learners' psychological diversity, their cognitive abilities and preferences being many and varied.

We are far from declaring that we have invented the universal approach or method of dealing with all the challenges of online learning. Our task is to attract attention to one aspect which has been neglected in spite of its potentialities: learning styles and multiple intelligences, because it is one of the models enabling a learner to take on responsibility for self-study and a teacher to take on responsibility for directing efficient training. Generally speaking, multiple intelligence approach demonstrates the strategies for learning and training while learning styles approach demonstrates the tactics how to achieve the goals.

Though there are some ways of defining the notion "multiple intelligences", it mainly refers to psychological understanding what intelligence is: a) to refer it to some particular intelligent acts (e.g., painting, inventing); b) to refer it to particular mental processes (e.g., generalizing, making conclusions). Without going into details, we propose to accept the well-acknowledged theory of multiple intelligences by H.Gardner based on the pluralistic idea that the individual human mind is able to use multiple cognitive advantages and strengths of this individual: "some finite set of mental processes gives rise to a full range of of intelligent human activities", I.e. solving real problems in real-life situations [4]. Being the outstanding developmental psychologist, H. Gardner supported the idea that there are some mental abilities that are equal but separate, and that they form the pinnacle of the hierarchy called intelligence. Our cognition can be differentiated into modalities: visual - spatial (picture smart), verbal - linguistic (word smart), musical - rhythmic (sound smart), logical - mathematical (number - reasoning smart, intrapersonal (self-smart), interpersonal (people smart), naturalistic (nature smart), bodily-kinesthetic (body smart). Generally speaking, intelligence can be defined as the cognitive ability to deal with cognitive complexity.

At present, there are eight basic intelligences that are universally recognized: 1) interpersonal intelligence, the ability of a person to comprehend and react appropriately in conflict situations; 2) intrapersonal intelligence, the ability of a person to properly evaluate his/her personal strengths and weaknesses and use them properly in a variety of situations; 3) bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, the ability of a

person to use the potentialities of his/her body to solve problems; 4) linguistic, the ability of a person to use verbal communication to build efficient interaction; 5) logical-mathematical intelligence, the ability of a person to use logical mental operations (deducing, cause-result, comparison) to adapt to the real situation; 6) musical intelligence, the ability of a person to sense elements of music (melody, pitch, rhythm, tempo) and use it in real life; 7) spatial intelligence, the ability of a person to easily orient in any place and to use it to visually represent his/her ideas; 8) naturalistic intelligence, the ability of a person to sense the elements of the world around him/her (fauna, flora, cultural artefacts) and to use it solve the actual problem.

Later other intelligences have been added: emotional intelligence, practical intelligence, mechanical intelligence, existential intelligence which considers philosophical outlook, spirituality though H.Gardner insisted on the idea of the sequence of development of an intelligence from early childhood to maturity because the sequence is considered universal for every individual but unique to intelligences. For example, emotional intelligence includes the ability to be aware of the feelings of other people, the ability to understand empathy developed usually as a result of interaction with other people, the ability to remain hopeful and optimistic under various real-life circumstances. At present, when psychologists indicate a great and disappointing lack of empathy and even open cooperation, it can cause problems in interpersonal relationships, alienation and even aggression.

The explanation of the theory, the discussion of his supporters' and opponents' arguments is beyond the range of this article, and those who are interested in deeper understanding of the nature of intelligences, their "signs", the distinction between a talent, a skill, and multiple intelligence, are able to study Gardner's fundamental works and find out the criteria which each of the intelligences must satisfy.

Though H.Gardner did not intend to get ELT world interested in his theory, it, almost from the very beginning, attracted educators' attention due to its evident potentialities for application in the versatile, diverse, multifaceted English language learning and teaching activities, because the theory highlights the different ways learners can learn and obtain information effectively. Indeed, both teachers and

learners possess the multiple intelligences, the Intelligences are interdependent and they interrelate in a variety of ways in real-life situations, the intelligences like communicative competence can be developed and improved. The idea was interpreted by T. Armstrong for applying it in school education [5].

We'd like to share some tips for using in the blended learning environment. Firstly, it is necessary to thank Mary Ann Christison, one of TESOL Presidents, who attracted my attention to this invaluable treasure box of teaching resources at 1997 TESOL International Conference in Orlando. In her article "Applying Multiple Intelligence Theory" she offered a clear-cut plan for applying the theory in practical EL teaching: 5 steps to introduce it into efficient and understandable practice [6]. Step 1 consists in introducing a basic theory for getting teachers interested in the theory itself by using Armstrong's list "The Human Intelligence Hunt" which includes eight actions - one for each intelligence (" Find some who can sing, who can easily count, who can differentiate kinds of flowers", etc.). Step 2 supposes that teachers could test MI inventory and design their own multiple intelligence profile. Step 3 relates to identifying the activities teachers usually do in their classes and match them with the multiple intelligences. Step 4 focuses on conducting the teacher's individual audit of his/her individual strategies to make sure that they imply a variety of multiple intelligences. Step 5 deals with developing different assessment techniques that address the eight intelligences. She also showed some very useful and open-ended techniques: e.g., Intelligence Menus - filling in the chart consisting of eight columns and the list of various activities; Lesson Planning Chart - making notations to remind a teacher what intelligence to use in what class with a definite activity, what changes to make and why; "Find your partner activity", which presupposes that some of learners obtain a list of questions and others - a list of answers, thus using the bodily-kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligences in class; Multiple Intelligence Inventory for ESL teachers - for making your multiple intelligence profile.

It is evident that it is almost impossible to create eight learning centers for every group of learners to take into account their differences and to match them with each other though it is quite possible to involve learners into a variety of activities: a)

debates, discussions, creating worksheets, composing poems or stories (linguistic intelligence); b) problem-solutions, calculations, puzzles (logical-mathematical intelligence); c) drawing charts or pictures, making videos, clips (spatial intelligence); d) crafting (making something with clay, wood, sewing, knitting, embroidering), demonstrating, making some layout arrangements in class (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence); e) doing some environmental projects (naturalistic intelligence); f) offering learners to organise interest groups, giving them individual problems for solving (intrapersonal intelligence); g) doing group projects (interpersonal intelligence).

But if you concentrate on the idea, you can test how it can be useful for you personally and how it can broaden the range of your activities making them more compatible with your students.

There is the list of rather simple initial stages for introducing MI potentialities into your class:

Stage 1. Make your MI profile using MI inventory.

Stage 2. Make your students' MI profiles.

Stage 3. Make the list of activities which are realistic for your teaching environment and for your students' availability.

Step 4. Categorize them in accordance with the multiple intelligences.

Step 5. Adapt the activities to your students' MI preferences.

Step 6. Evaluate the results obtained and make corrections in the design of your classes.

Let's experiment with "My family" topic: there are some tasks for focusing on using the MI ideas with your online learners:

1. Conduct a survey and find out texts about families of famous scientists, authors, celebrities (linguistic intelligence).

2. Draw a graphic chart demonstrating their family trees (spatial intelligence).

3. Indicate the interrelations between the members of their families; use debates for teaching rhetoric techniques using, for example, proper discourse markers for agreeing, disagreeing, persuading, emphasizing; use brainstorming for collecting

and discussing the project ideas; use technologies to have your learners interact via Skype or Viber (interpersonal intelligence).

4. Find out their typical body language signs (winking, nodding, shrugging shoulders, smiling, jesticulating), their eating, drinking habits; develop multimedia presentations, clips, videos (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence).

5. Compose a song or choose pieces of music to illustrate attitudes, emotions, feelings of people in portraits or pictures (musical intelligence).

6. Widen the scope of understanding oneself via blogs, blogs, essays, emails, mobile Twitter, Facebook, Whatsap, Instagram messages (intrapersonal intelligence).

7. Find out if any of the persons under discussion were or are interested in the environmental challenges (naturalistic intelligence).

8. Conduct the research into the history of the family and present it in a table, diagram, chart (logical intelligence).

Consequently, you will determine the strengths of your learners because It is quite evident that they will display them fulfilling each of MI-oriented tasks which will enable to differentiate the tasks according to their MI preferences, thus making your teaching more student-friendly, inspiring and motivating.

Thus, for all the methodological attraction and for all its proven capacity, it is also quite evident that every teacher will use the ideas in quite a different way to make their classes more mobile, more flexible, more creative, more individual-oriented. Mobilizing the potentialities of multiple inteligenes can help a teacher create his/her own MI profile and MI profile of his/her learners. In any case you will understand your strengths and weaknesses better and become more conscious about the brain-friendly approach to designing your online course to use more effectively the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning. We hope that this tip will lead to a broader use of theoretically-grounded research and pedagogical approaches.

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