



*For teachers looking for
new and innovative
ideas and practices.*

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*Teaching the students we have
not the ones we wish we have.*



Teaching Freshman Students

Successes & Challenges

On 24th of January of this year CETL organized the first roundtable on Teaching Freshman Students: Challenges & Success. The well attended event gave faculty from all departments and disciplines the space to share success stories, concerns and challenges continuously facing freshman students on campus. Unanimously, the faculty agreed that new admitted students are not prepared for university life. For freshman need a well defined set of skills, core courses and orientation

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programs to integrate into university life; hence the topic of this e-Journal issue. For the last seven months CETL has repeatedly announced a call for reflective articles on the topic. Those who responded to the call are faculty who are known on campus and they write from personal experiences and reflect on their teaching practices. CETL retains hope that more faculty would respond to future e-Journal calls as we all have something to share as we teach or interact with freshman. CETL Director, Hala Nassar Ph.D.



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Library Skills Course 101 and Freshmen Students: from the Perspective of the Library Teaching Team

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Introduction

The role of the 21st century academic librarians has evolved throughout the years. The duty of academic library staff has gone beyond the traditional roles, such as collecting materials, cataloging and classifying books and facilitating book loans. At Bethlehem University, the academic Library staff find themselves at the threshold of teaching.

Alongside with the faculty, academic librarians are equally responsible for the institution's goals and mission to educate and play an essential part in enhancing the teaching and learning process. In this digital age, where proliferation of knowledge is a challenge, the role of librarians has progressed as the knowledge providers are equipped with relevant tools to 'separate the wheat from the chaff', that is, to distinguish essentials from accidentals. Library staff are required to be knowledgeable in different disciplines and obtain various skills. According to Ram Kumar Pathak, 'University libraries are the reservoir of knowledge and information and academics are the best knowledge creators'.

Here at Bethlehem University Library, the library staff as professionals boldly took a step forward and accepted the added responsibility of teaching the information and computer literacy components for first year students. In cooperation with the department of English, the teaching team of the Library accepted the challenge and duty to introduce our freshmen students to the library services, to a variety of library resources and the availability of library facilities; in effect, to teaching information and computer literacy. This, indeed, has reaffirmed the library team in the “teaching dimension” of their professional identity.

Admittedly, teaching freshmen has a positive effect on our daily work. It has given us the opportunity to deal directly with our students and know their academic level. Knowing our students in the classroom helps us to assist them as they come to the Library and make use of the resources and facilities. On our side, we are motivated each day to learn new things and improve our areas of expertise.

What Freshmen Students Face

We know that the transition from high school to the university setting is a challenging and trying period for freshmen students. In the new academic setting, they face a different environment in regard to relationships, space, language, culture and learning methods. Adaptation to the new university environment with a wider scope of learning at all levels is likewise an experience that can have multifaceted effects on first year students. They may become more independent and self-reliant allowing them to develop and improve their coping skills and boost their already growing self-confidence.



Students who attend Bethlehem University classes also come from different areas of Palestine as well as have the opportunity to meet teachers and staff from other countries; hence, they are exposed to different cultures, providing them with a variety of social and cultural backgrounds that open up new horizons for them.

At Bethlehem University we strive to empower students to become individual learners, a completely different approach from the way they were taught to study at schools. This new process of teaching and learning utilizes advanced tools inside and outside the classroom, which – one way or the other - technology provides. For instance, the flipped classroom encourages students to acquire independent learning skills, an experience entirely different from their studies in high school.

Challenges We Faced

The Library Skills course that we teach – as aforementioned - is allied to the English department; hence, it is required to be taught in the English language. It was rather difficult to teach this material in English for freshmen. The native language of our students is Arabic. In general, in government schools English is not given a priority. Hence, it was hard for our students to understand the English terms of the Library/Information Science materials presented to them. To make it easier for our students we translated all the terms to Arabic.

The 21st century is characteristically the *age of technology*. It has been a challenge for us as teachers to gain new skills using advanced technology in teaching. We have attended various courses on Microsoft office, E-class Moodle, Google Apps, etc. in order to be more knowledgeable and better equipped to teach the students more effectively. The use of new software applications enhanced by new tools such as computers and other electronic devices made teaching information and computer literacy to freshmen who belong to the digital generation, more meaningful and relevant.

Another daunting challenge for us as teachers has been to develop new teaching methodologies for each semester. Since we started teaching in 2014, we followed the "traditional" way of teaching information literacy for our freshmen. Material was given as a lecture to students and the information was provided without any interaction in the classroom. However, last year was a kind of an awakening and a realization that as the freshmen passed on to their sophomore years, there was no clear indication that what was taught was retained. A Users' Study survey showed that the facilities of the Library were widely used, but looking for and retrieval of information by users, especially freshmen was almost non-existent.

The Library teaching team started attending sessions –organized by the IT Unit and CETL- in order to learn more about the new teaching techniques and develop their teaching skills. Positive results, were seen among the teaching team as they worked together to produce various learning kits and new methodologies that were more student-centered. We adopted a new teaching technique which is the “flipped classroom” for spring semester this year. To implement the “flipped classroom” technique we invested our time and efforts into preparing videos and designing worksheets. This experience gave us productive time for social and professional bonding, which proved to be rewarding. Commensurately, the “flipped classroom” method has had a positive effect on our students learning and guiding them to be independent learners and get more involved in the classroom; thus eliciting more participation as well.

A challenge that is worth-mentioning here are class interruptions called for – at times without giving reasons – by the Student Senate. Or, this may be due to the socio-political situation in Palestine which has never been calm. There is always a possibility of a class suspension when there is an attack or an incident or a demonstration. This has affected the educational process negatively. In order to address this unstable situation, make-up classes are given, but it's never the same, especially for freshmen students who encounter such disconcerting situations for the first time.

Lessons Learned

Teaching Library skills for freshmen is one of the most prized tasks we do as librarians. To be involved and to be ready to intervene in this learning process for freshmen students helps us to move away from what's routinely mundane. Being in touch with the realities of each student's needs and anxieties, aspirations and dreams, awakens in us the drive to be better 'servants of what is good, true and beautiful.' We always remind ourselves that 'one should never take things for granted.' Working together has reinforced teamwork and solidarity, affirming each other's talents and capabilities and putting the best of who we are and what's best in us, at the service of students. When one is not available for private reasons, another is always ready to replace so that the teaching-learning process is never interrupted.

Teaching Scenarios Spiced with Anecdotes

One of the teaching team library members shares the following experience: 'this past spring term 2019, I had a student with impaired hearing. I was a bit anxious about this situation since it is my 'first-time experience as a librarian-teacher'. To my great surprise, and because he was giving his full attention during class, he was the first one to answer my questions. Unabashedly, he also stood in front of his classmates to explain the exercise sheets I assigned to work on. During the written exam, he obtained a grade of 10/10! I am really happy for this student who has eased out his adjustment into the mainstream of learning, which Bethlehem University provides for students with special needs. Even his physical limitation did not serve as a hindrance for him to excel in class'.

The same librarian-teacher had another student with physical disability, a blind student totally deprived of vision. Fortunately, Bethlehem University has a dynamic staff with a resource room and computers equipped with Braille. In a smooth flow of tasks transferred from one person to the other, this is how the teaching was done: 'I gave all the materials to the person-in-charge who in turn converted them into Braille for the student to have easy access to the information to study. Eventually, this student with special needs has overcome this limitation with the help of what I consider a team of educators'.

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التحديات التي تواجه سنة اولى في جامعة بيت لحم د. فردوس العيسى



يلتحق سنويا في دائرة العلوم الاجتماعية ما يقارب 80 طالب وطالبة، وذلك بعد ان يكونوا قد اجتازوا متطلبات القبول لجامعة بيت لحم، ومنها معدل التوجيهي لا يقل عن 65%، واجتياز امتحان القبول لقياس مستوى الطلبة في اللغتين العربية والانجليزية وامتحان ثالث خاص بمستوى الرياضيات. في دائرة العلوم الاجتماعية يطرح تخصصين رئيسيين هما تخصص في الخدمة الاجتماعية وتخصص في علم الاجتماع، بالإضافة الى تخصص فرعي في علم النفس بالاستناد للتجربة والتواصل شبه اليومي مع الطلبة اللذين يلتحقون بالدائرة، يظهر انهم يتوجهون العديد من التحديات التي تتحول مع نهاية السنة الاولى نجاحات لدى غالبيتهم، الورقة الحالية تسعى لتحديد اهم تلك التحديات التي يواجهها طلبة سنة اولى عند التحاقهم بأحد التخصصات التي تطرحها دائرة العلوم الاجتماعية، بالإضافة الى تسليط الضوء على النجاحات والانجازات التي يحققها الطلبة مع نهاية السنة الاولى لهم في الجامعة وفي الدائرة، ومن ثم الخروج بتوصيات ملائمة تسهل على الطلبة الملحقين بالدائرة انهاء السنة الاكاديمية الاولى بأمان. وسيتم من خلال الورقة تناول التحديات والنجاحات المتعلقة بالطلبة الملحقين بالسنة الاولى في دائرة العلوم الاجتماعية لأهمية تلك السنة في تحديد استمرار الطلبة في الجامعة وفي التخصص الذي اختاروه

اما فيما يتعلق بالتحديات التي تواجه الطلبة الملحقين بجامعة بيت لحم بشكل عام وبدائرة العلوم الاجتماعية فهي تتنوع بين مستوى المعرفة والمهارات التي يمتلكها الطلبة والتي تهيئهم للاستمرار بالجامعة، اما المستوى الثاني فهو يتعلق باتجاهاتهم ووعيهم بخيارهم ومتطلباته، ويمكننا تلخيص تحديات الجانب المعرفي وما يرافقه من مهارات بالإشارة الى ان الطلبة في الواقع ينهون مرحلة الثانوية العامة ويلتحقون بالجامعة مباشرة، حيث لا يفصل بين المرحلتين على اختلافهما اكثر من شهرين يقضونها بين تجهيز الوثائق والشهادات، وتقديم الامتحان وانتظار القبول والبدء بإجراءات التسجيل والانتظام في الدراسة. مما يعني ان الطلبة قد انتقلوا بشكل مباشر ودون تهيئة دون ان يمروا بمرحلة تمهيد او تهيئة كافية او مناسبة، الامر الذي يشكل لهم صدمة وبنعكس على شكل تعبير عن رغبة في الانسحاب من الجامعة ناهيك عن الآثار النفسية والاجتماعية الاخرى، يجد الطلبة انفسهم امام استكشاف عالم جديد وفلسفة تعليم تبنى على نوع اخر وقد يناقض المعرفة والمهارة التي امتلكوها سابقا، فالتعليم الجامعي يتطلب القدرة على التحليل والاستنتاج وممارسة الفكر النقدي وعكسها في تقارير ومن خلال النقاش، كما ويواجهون حقيقة اخرى متعلقة بالجانب التطبيقي الذي يتطلب منهم التواصل مع مؤسسات المجتمع والتعرف عليها من خلال زيارتها وكتابة تقارير وصفية ونقدية حولها وهذا الامر ايضا ليس من ضمن ما اعتادوا عليه من انماط تدريس اثناء مراحل الدراسة السابقة والتي استمرت ما يقارب 12 عاما

في هذه المرحلة من الحياة يواجه الطالبة تحدي الاعتماد على النفس حتى في التفاصيل اليومية كمعرفة مكان المحاضرات، أسماء المباني، ارقام غرف التدريس فمعنى المكان التي تتم فيه الدراسة قد اختلف عما اعتادوا، ودور المعلم قد اختلف ايضا فيجد الطلبة انفسهم امام دور جديد للمعلم يجب التعرف عليه وفهمه وهو دور المشرف الاكاديمي، على الطلبة بأنفسهم الوصول الى المواد والقراءات الخاصة بالمساقات المختلفة عبر الايكلاس، والمكتبة، يجد الطلبة انفسهم اما نظام يتطلب التحاق بالمحاضرات دون ان ينتظر قرع الجرس

اما التحديات على مستوى التوجهات، يواجه الطلبة الجدد عالم الجامعة الاكثر اتساعا واكثر انفتاحا من عالم المدرسة، فالعلاقات فيه مختلفة ومستواها مختلف، وعليهم ان يتعلموا تقبل الاختلاف واحترامه، ومن جهة اخرى، داخل الصف يجد الطالب \ الطالبة بجانبه اشابه وشباب الامر الذي لم يكن معتادا في المدارس خصوصا في المدارس غير المختلطة، العمل ضمن مجموعات من الجنسين على اتمام نشاط مجتمعي اكاديمي او بحث قد يشكل تحديا ايضا، طبيعة المواضيع التي يتم تناولها بالنقاش والتي تتطرق لقضايا تشكل معضلات ثقافية الامر الذي يضع الطلبة الجدد في صراع بين المألوف والجديد من القيم والتوجهات

وبالرغم من كل تلك التحديات الا انه ومع نهاية السنة الاولى يستطيع الطلبة تحقيق المعرفة والمهارة المتطلبية لهذه المرحلة ويصبحون اكثر ايمانا ووعيا بقدراتهم واكثر تقبلا للاختلاف الذي بدا مع بداية العام الدراسي صعبا او مستحيلا ، فيكتسبون مهارات تواصل اكثر ايجابية، اكثر قدرة على التعبير، وبسبب ما اكتسبوه من معرفة يصبحون اكثر ايمانا بقدراتهم على التغيير والتغير وبقدراتهم على التأثير، ويصبحون اكثر ادراكا للواقع وما فيه من تحديات ومشاكل وصعوبات والتي يتطلب تخصصهم الاكاديمي التهيؤ للتعامل معها بل ومواجهتها، كما ويحقق الطلبة نقلة نوعية في طريقة الدراسة والكتابة الاكاديمية فيصبحون قادرين على التساؤل والبحث عن الاجابة

التوصيات

السنة الاولى تستدعي التخطيط لها اكاديميا باعتبار انها سنة تمهيدية وسنة تهيئ الطالبة والطالب للنظام الاكاديمي باختلافه عن المدرسة، وتهيئهم لمتطلبات وطرق الكتابة والقراءة الاكاديمية، في السنة الاولى يجب تجنب اعطاء الطلبة مواد التخصص او تحديد حتى التخصص بشكل نهائي مما يسمح لهم تغييره بالاستناد الى المعرفة والوعي الجديد
ضرورة بناء برنامج تهيئة واعداد مكثف يشارك فيه طلبة السنة الثالثة والرابعة من اللذين يتصفون بخصائص شخصية ايجابية وقدرات اكاديمية تهيئهم ان يشكلوا القدوة للآخرين من الطلبة الجدد

"أي فقرة يجب أن أحفظ كي أحصل على العلامة؟"

الاستاذة لورا عدوان



في بداية كل فصل دراسي، ينتابني شعور بالترقب حين أدخل إلى صف جديد لألتقي وجوه الطلبة الحائرة تفحصني وتحاول تصنيفي لمعرفة الباب الأقرب للفوز بالعلامات. فالعلامة، كما يذكرني طلبتي في كل فرصة، هي الأهم. وربما هي كذلك في جو مثقل بالاستهلاك الذي يتطلب مراكمة سريعة للميزات الايجابية المكمنة في السيرة الذاتية. كما أن ما يتوفر لدينا من معلومات تقدمها التقنيات المحوسبة وعالم "الديجتال" يغرينا بأننا يمكن أن نحصل على كل ما نحتاجه من معرفة ومعلومات ببحث سريع على شاشة ذكية، و"بكبسة" قص ولصق يتم نقل المعلومات على ورقة التقرير البحثي أو الدراسة، والعلامة من المفترض أن تكون مضمونة، أو هذا هو التوقع

من هنا يبدأ التحدي في اللقاءات الأولى مع الطلبة، حيث أنني نادراً ما علمت الشعية نفسها، وهذا يعني أن الطلبة لا يعرفونني إلا من خلال الاستقصاء الذي يقومون به لجمع المعلومات حول المعلم الجديد الذي يعلمهم، من طلبة اختبروه سابقاً، لتحديد ما تحبه أو تكرهه المعلمة "الفلانية" والأهم ما يكسبنا علامات معه/ا. وفي كل مرة نمضي الشهر الأول في جدل بيزنطي يكون دوري فيه "إقناع" الطلبة بأن يشتروا الكتاب ويقرأوا المقالات والنصوص قبل اللقاء الصفي وبعده، بينما يقترح بعض الطلبة "تصغير المادة" ويبدع آخرون بتقديم حلول لمشكلة القراءة، وقد رشحوا أنفسهم للحديث نيابة عن الجميع، وأحياناً يبدو أنهم فعلاً مرشحات من قبل الجميع، ففي الغالب يُجمع طلبة الصف بأن علي كمعلمة تزويدهم بملخص للمادة. ومن بين الحلول العملية التي سمعتها "تعليم الأشياء المهمة" والتعليم هنا ليست من الفعل علم بمعنى التعريف بالأشياء وإدراكها من خلال أدوات ومناهج العلم، وإنما من وضع علامات أي خطوط تحت الأسطر التي يجب حفظها

حين أصبح هذا واقعاً يتكرر في كل مرة مع أغلب الطلبة، وحين يغضب بعض الطلبة لأنهم لا يجدون المثال الذي أورده لشرح فكرة الدرس مذكوراً بنفس الكلمات والترتيب في نص الكتاب، انتبهت أن المشكلة لا تكمن في الطلبة وإنما هي غالباً في خبراتنا السابقة بـ"التعليم" بما هو: تخطيط الأسطر المهمة لحفظها. وهذه المقالة هي محاولة أولية للإشارة إلى هذه الإشكالية في التعليم، والتي سمعتها أيضاً من زملائي وزميلاتي وكذلك من الطلبة. وأنا لا أشير لها كمشكلة تحتاج إلى حل سريع، ولكن كمحاولة أخرى للتفكير الانعكاسي بخبراتنا التعليمية كمعلمين وطلبة. وكي أتجنب الاتهام الذي يوجه عادة للمشتغلين بعلم الاجتماع وعلم الإنسان بأننا نبدع في النقد دون طرح حلول، سأشارك الطلبة والمعلمين بإحدى محاولاتنا لإيجاد طريقة لإقناع الطلبة بضرورة التفاعل مع مضامين المساق بعيداً عن التعليم (بتخطيط الأسطر)، وليس فقط للتعلم، وإنما لنحاول التفكير معاً بشكل نقدي بما نتعلمه، والحل الذي اقترحه ليس حلاً سحرياً ولكنه مجرب وهو "التمارين"

أذكر أنني حين كنت بعمر طلبتي كنت ضائعة مثلهم، وربما أكثر، ففي تلك المرحلة لم تكن التكنولوجيا معولمة والمعرفة متوفرة "للجميع" كما يتم إيهامنا اليوم! في المرحلة الجامعية الأولى، كنت أدرس اللغة الانجليزية وآدابها، وأذكر أنه كانت تتوفر لدينا في جامعتي إمكانية حضور المحاضرة أكثر من مرة، وكنت أحياناً أفعل ذلك حين أشعر بأنني لم أفهم الشرح لأنني كنت مشغولة في نقل ما يقوله أستاذة المادة ووضع خطوط في صفحات الكتاب، ولكنني في المحاضرات التي تناولت قصيدة ت. س. إليوت "الأرض الخراب"، كنت أخرج كل مرة من المدرج وأنا مشوشة أكثر. وقد لجأت، كما يلجأ معظم الطلبة إلى مكتبات الخدمات الجامعية واشترت الكتب والملخصات ومحاضرات السنوات السابقة التي كان الطلبة يقومون بتسجيلها وتفريغها، فقط كي تزيد الخطوط التي تعلم لي ما كنت أعتقد مهماً. وبعد رحلة طويلة، أرشدتني صديقة كانت تدرس اللغة العربية إلى طريقة بدت لي في البداية صعبة ولكنني فهمت أنني كي أفهم قصيدة إليوت التي لم تقصّر الأستاذة المحاضرة في شرحها، كان علي أن أبذل مجهوداً لأقرأ عن السياق التاريخي الذي كُتبت فيه القصيدة وأطلع على بعض القصص الدينية والأساطير لأفهم رموز القصيدة. وقد دلتني صديقتي على ما بدا لي كنزاً وقتها وهو كتاب يشرح فيه الشاعر العراقي عبد الواحد لؤلؤة "الأرض اليباب" كما ترجم اسم القصيدة، ولم أتفق مع ترجمته للعنوان، ولكن كتابه وشرحه العميق كان دليلي لكتب أخرى تزودني بفهم سياق قصيدة إليوت ودلالاتها

حدث هذا قبل سنوات طويلة، واليوم لا أعلم الأدب الانجليزي وإنما علم الاجتماع، وهو علم آخر كالفلسفة والنقد الأدبي وعلم الإنسان وتلك المواضيع التي لم نتعلمها في المدرسة. لذا نمضي للقاء الأول بمناقشة مواضيع العلم ومناهجه البحثية ونوع المعرفة التي يقدمها والتي يستغربها بعض الطلبة في البداية، ويحضر الآخرون حصص المساق في هيئة التذمر وهم يسألون عن فائدة هذا العلم، ولهذا حديث آخر. فيما يخص القراءة والتفكير، يحضرني هنا تعليق أحد الطلبة على قراءة نصوص المادة: "جيلكم غير جيلنا، لم تكن لديكم وسائل تواصل اجتماعي، فكنتم تقرؤون الكتب، نحن تعودنا على الشاشة". وأذكر أنني تجاهلت المشكلة الأساسية حينها، كي لا أضيّع مزيداً من الوقت في الجدل نفسه حول ضرورة القراءة لطالب/ة الجامعة، لأجيبه وزملاء الصف بأن النسخة الالكترونية من كتاب مقدمة في علم الاجتماع تتوفر بالعربية والانجليزية ويمكن قراءته من الشاشة، لنعود للجدل من حيث بدأنا فيطلب مني الطلبة ملخصاً للكتاب.

المشكلة إذاً ليست في الوسيلة؛ أي الشاشة أو الكتاب وإنما هي في إيجاد رغبة بالبحث والتعلم لدى جيل طلبتنا المثقل بهموم تجاوز الحواجز العسكرية للوصول بسلام للمحاضرة والبحث عن عمل وشريك الحياة أو فرصة للسفر إلى عالم تظهر فيه إمكانات أوسع للحياة. لم يعد اكتشاف المعلومة والتوصل إلى تفاصيل حولها يتطلب رحلة إلى مكتبات تعج بالكتب والقراء، حيث تسرد محركات البحث الموجودة في الجهاز المحمول الذي يحمله أغلب الطلبة، وبكبسة زر، عناوين المراجع والكتب حول موضوع معين، وأحياناً قد تزودنا بالمرجع والكتاب كاملاً أو "في أسوأ الأحوال"، قد تدلنا إلى أقرب مكتبة يمكننا قراءة الكتاب فيها. ولكن "إقناع" الطلبة بالذهاب إلى المكتبة يحتاج إلى جولة إضافية من الجدل بأن المكتبة ليست مكاناً لقضاء وقت الفراغ وطلب الدفء من برد الشتاء أو تبادل مشاعر الإعجاب مع صديق/ة بعيداً عن العيون الفضولية، وإقناعهم بأن الوقت الذي أصبحت برامج المكتبات توفره على طلبة اليوم في الوصول للمعلومة هو حظ لم يحالف جيلنا. كان العثور على الكتاب لبنات جيلي يتطلب أياماً، خاصة حين لم أكن محظوظة بصديقة قارئة تدلني على مرجع أبداً منه رحلتي في الموضوع، لترشدني قائمة المراجع في نهايته على المزيد من الكتب التي تبحث في الموضوع. في أيامنا لم يكن في المكتبات شاشات ومحركات بحث سريعة وإنما كانت هناك بطاقات تعريف بالكتب تزدحم في أدراج خشبية كان علي استشارتها لتسجيل رقم الكتاب ومن ثم الجلوس في انتظار دوري لاستلام الكتاب، فتمضي أحياناً ساعة وربما ساعتين وأنا جالسة في قاعة المطالعة ورفيقي الوحيد المسموح بدخوله معي إلى المكتبة هو الدفتر والقلم، حيث يُمنع ادخال رفيق/ة معك للحديث والهمس. فأضطر للجلوس حتى تحضر أمينة المكتبة كتاباً من حيث يتم تخزين الكتب في طابق ما بارد أسفل قاعات القراءة. وفي اللحظة التي أكون قد انسجمت فيها بقراءة إحدى المراجع في قاعة المطالعة، يجبرني مجيء الكتاب الذي حضرت لأجله لترك المرجع، فالأولوية هي قراءة الكتاب سريعاً قبل الساعة السابعة مساءً حين تغلق المكتبة أبوابها، ليس بغرض العثور على المعلومة، فهذا يحتاج إلى وقت وتركيز. وبما أن المكتبة التي كنت أجد فيها معظم الكتب التي كنت أحتاجها بالعربية والإنجليزية لم تكن تسمح باستعارة الكتب، كان علي أن أركز في تصفح الكتاب بقراءة سريعة لتحديد الصفحات التي قد توجد فيها المعلومات التي أحتاجها كي أعود بنسخة مصورة منها لقراءتها بالتفصيل في البيت. كنت كلما فتحت كتاباً دلني كاتبه على كتاب آخر يتطلب مني رحلة انتظار جديدة في المكتبة، حيث أجد المرجع الذي تركته في المرة السابقة ينتظرني لأبدأ بقراءته من حيث انتهيت وعلمته بورقة كنت قد كتبت فيها ملاحظاتي وأسئلتني، لأجد أحياناً أن قارئاً آخر أضاف تعليقاً على تعليقي، وكانت هذه متعة أخرى للتفاعل مع قراء آخرين من خلال قصاصات الورق في الكتب لمن كان حريصاً على الكتاب، ولأن الحرص على الكتب صفة يتمتع بها القليلون، فإن صفحات الكتب في المكتبات العامة كثيراً ما تتحول إلى دفتر تعليقات ورسومات وكلمات من الأغاني الرائجة وغير الرائجة!

أروي هذه التجارب والخبرات التي مررت بها كطالبة، بما هي كذلك، كي أصل إلى التجربة التي أريد مشاركتها في هذا المقال من خبرتي كمعلمة، وخلاصة بعض ما أردت قوله أن البحث عن المرجع الالكتروني أو الكتاب أو الفقرة المهمة فيه ليس سوى البداية، وينطبق هذا على جيلي وجيل اليوم وربما على أجيال ستأتي. فالمعرفة في قول أصبح مكرراً، ولكنه لا يزال يبدو صحيحاً، هي عملية تراكمية، وخبرتنا في العمل المعرفي تشير أنه كلما راكمتنا فهماً من قراءتنا تزداد الأسئلة التي يمكن أن توصلنا إلى إجابات مختلفة عن الإشكالية التي نحن بصدها. وبالعودة إلى المحاضرات مع الطلبة، أذكر أيضاً أن الأسئلة التي كانوا يطرحونها خلال النقاشات فيما بينهم والتي كانت تتضمن آراء متناقضة كانت تشكل جزء مهم من عملية التعلم، بحيث تدفعني لأبحث عن مصادر التناقض بالعودة إلى مراجع مختلفة

ومع الزمن طورت آلية لتوسيع عملية البحث لتشمل الطلبة جميعهم من خلال تحويل نقاشاتنا حول الموضوع الذي نبحثه إلى تمارين فمثلاً في دراستنا للاختلافات بين مناهج البحث العلمي في العلوم الاجتماعية وشكل المعرفة الذي تنتجه، كان التمرين الأول يتضمن قراءة عدة أبحاث عن الموضوع نفسه تستخدم منهجيات بحث مختلفة، فكان على الطلبة حل تمارين تتضمن أسئلة قصيرة وواضحة عن بحث معين يختارونه، ومن ثم مشاركة تجربتهم في تحليل مضمون الدراسات مع بقية الطلبة. اكتشفت في التمارين بعض الحلول لتحقيق تفاعل أكبر للتفكير بالنصوص، سواء كانت مطبوعة في الكتب أو على مواقع الكترونية، فالطالب يستطيع الاختيار إذا كانت مشكلته في الأداة

كما وجدت في التمارين الصفية والبيتية فرصة أخرى لإقناع الطلبة بقراءة المادة، والتوصل إلى التفكير بشكل أعمق بالموضوع المطروح. وفي مرات قليلة كان بعض الطلبة يحضرون ومعهم إجابات مختلفة توصلوا إليها عبر سؤال شخص عارف أو من البحث على مواقع الانترنت والاطلاع على كتابات أخرى. ومن تكرار التجربة، توصلت أيضاً إلى أن بعض التمارين تقيّم بشكل غير مباشر مدى فهم الطلبة للمفاهيم الجديدة، فمن خلال الأخطاء المتكررة في الإجابات، كنت ألتقط الأفكار التي لم تصل إلى الطلبة أو بعضهم من خلال شرحي للمادة، ربما لأنني لم أشرحها بشكل وافٍ، وكنت أنتبه لضرورة توضيحها أو لتطوير طريقة الشرح في المحاضرات التالية. إضافة إلى أن التمارين توفر فرصة أكبر للتفاعل الفردي مع كل طالب وطالبة بما تتيحه من مساحة لي طرح الطالب أفكاره ويتلقى ملاحظات فردية على مداخلته، خاصة في الشعب التي يكون عدد الطلبة فيها يزيد عن الثلاثين، ولا تتوفر اللقاءات الصفية فرصة متساوية للجميع للمشاركة

للعودة إلى التعليم من حيث هو إتاحة الفرصة للتفكير والمزيد من السؤال والبحث للمعلم والمتعلم، أذكر باختصار تجربتي في الفصل الماضي مع طلبة التمريض، وقد ركزت في مساق مقدمة علم الاجتماع على أمثلة وتمرين تشرح مداخلات علم الاجتماع الطبي. وكانت هناك أكثر من فرصة تعلمت فيها من مناقشة الأمثلة التي يذكرها طلبتي من تجربتهم العملية في المستشفيات لتوسيع فهمي للأمثلة المطروحة في الكتب حول مفاهيم علم الاجتماع الطبي والتي تتطرق غالباً إلى أمثلة مأخوذة من مجتمعات أوروبية حيث تطورت مفاهيم علم الاجتماع الطبي، وبالمثل وفرت التمارين فرصة للطلبة للاطلاع على المناهج البحثية التي تسهم في اكتساب فهم أعمق للعلاجات التقليدية التي لا يزال يلجأ إليها بعض المرضى بعيداً عن تقنيات الطب الحيوي الحديث

كما هي الحياة عادة، للتمارين سلبياتها، عدا عن الغش الذي يمكن للمعلم المنتبه اكتشافه، تشكل التمارين تحدياً إضافياً للمعلم الذي يجهد لشرح مادة المساق في صف مكتظ وفصل تضييع الكثير من أيامه بين عطل رسمية أو "تعليقات" للدوام، فتجد المعلمة نفسها مضطرة لبذل مجهود إضافي في صياغة تمرين ملائم وممتع في آن، ويتطلب هذا منها وقتاً إضافياً للتصليح وتدوين الملاحظات. ولأن الحلول السريعة والنهائية غير موجودة في الحياة، يمكن الاعتماد على برنامج الـ eclass الذي يسمح بصياغة أنشطة تفاعلية باستخدام الأفلام وتطوير أساليب مختلفة للأسئلة وتصحيحها. يمكن أحياناً تجاوز مشكلة ضيق الوقت جزئياً من خلال ترتيب بعض التمارين بصيغة مجموعات، ولكن التحدي الأكبر الذي تتيحه التمارين عبر التفاعل المباشر مع الطالب/ة هو تخطي حاجز الهروب من القراءة والأهم التفكير بالمادة وليس حفظها. كما أنها تساعد كما هو متوقع في بناء مهارات القراءة والكتابة والبحث إذا تم تصميم التمرين بما يلائم تحقيق الأهداف المعرفية للمساق. هذا ما شعرت به كطالبة، وهو ما لاحظته لدى الطلبة الذين كانوا يتابعون حل التمارين بمقارنة أدائهم بين التمارين الأولى والأخيرة، فكنت في معظم الأحيان أجد تحولاً لدى الطلبة حتى بين أولئك الذين كان هدفهم من حل التمرين أن لا يخسروا علامات، بما أن التمارين كانت مصممة كجزء من التقييم. والأهم في هذا الحل: التمارين هو التبادلية التي تحققها للطرفين: المعلمة التي تطور أدواتها وتوسع معرفتها حول الموضوع من خلال نظرة الجيل الجديد واختباراته الميدانية، والطلبة الذين يحصلون على علامة من خلال تفاعلهم وتفكيرهم بالنصوص وليس من خلال حفظ (أو بصم) الجزء المهم منها



Teaching First Year Students French

Ms. Sylvia Shahwan Mukarker

University life should be an amazing experience for any student, but this can't be achieved without passing through several difficulties. Teaching first year students French is one of those challenges. Others are:

- University is academically-challenging. It requires more effort than high school in addition to various skills that first year students are not used to.
- Due to tuition costs and other expenses, some students are forced to work, ending up with a possibility of heightened stress and lack of sleep leading to failure on the academic level leading to lack of time to study.
- Learning French as a foreign language is challenging, especially for students who were not prepared to study and communicate in a third language (in addition to Arabic and English).
- The heterogeneity of students in the same class considering the knowledge of French. Students at BU have Arabic as a mother tongue and English as a first foreign language. Most of them had no contact with French before entering the university.
- The heterogeneity of students' general academic levels in the same class (a wide spectrum of levels, from very weak to excellent).

Teaching French, an informed teacher should be able to better observe students and adjust teaching methods with one goal: to help students deal with difficulties, using necessary routes and detours. Learning difficulty first appears as an obstacle to be tackled, which implies learning to observe students and their cognitive processes to diagnose real needs in order to develop an appropriate teaching strategy. Difficulty becomes a lever to change the teaching practices to 'build a teaching posture' capable of taking charge of this difficulty within the class itself by differentiating tasks and skills. The teacher should create appropriate conditions for learning, diagnose learning disabilities, promote student interactions, anticipate difficulties, articulate classroom work, homework and enhance team work. Diversity in educational methods based on recreational activities mainly held in class is essential, such as role play and diversity of exercises and questions respecting different levels of students in the same group and focusing on classwork, as some students work and have no enough time for homework. Full correction of the exams and rapid feedback is of great importance, as students are not only evaluated by exams, but learn from them.

Learning French is thus taken up in order to understand and remedy, in the classroom space, the students' difficulties in improving their ordinary language and school language practices by changing the teacher's outlook on the activity of students, even to start work on all of his practices and his design of teaching. By working on our 'teaching posture,' we can rediscover our profession, in contact with students as they are, with their resistance and their mysteries. Instead of focusing on the 'student in difficulty,' teachers try to analyze what can impede learning to better work around difficulties in the collective framework of the class. Proposal of a strategic approach (analysis of experiences, concrete tracks for the class) to advance students. Analysis of barriers to learning by implementing adapted learning situations in reading, writing and language, while promoting interactions between students and teamwork.

'Begin by studying your students better', according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Seek answers to the difficulties that university students can meet in learning French. It sets the pedagogical principles that can lead students to succeed while providing concrete examples of innovative and effective classroom activities.

The teacher faced with difficulties should rather open horizons to the student to build attitudes which base success and a relationship of trust. It is very important to individualize the teaching/learning process by encouraging verbal interactions to enhance better comprehension and interaction in a new language, especially for students learning the language for the first time.

Some methods can promote student progress: how to create the conditions for learning, how to diagnose, what methods to put in place in reading, writing or language, how to encourage interactions, how to anticipate difficulties by identifying the obstacles encountered, what progress to organize, how to promote the autonomy of the student as a course subject, reader or writer topic? There are many specific examples of possible activities; the incomplete text, the text with blanks, the dictation, the exploration of a poem, the interview, the composition, reconstructing texts or grammatical classification, reader networks, commenting on texts or to express himself through drawing, presentation, etc.

Enhance work in groups to make the student an actor of his/her learning. It is by playing on the dynamics of the group, that the autonomy and initiative of the student's work. By modifying the evaluation so that it is fair, motivating and understood by the student, that we can restore his self-esteem, to understand what being read, what is written and what is articulated. This is an answer to the difficulties that teachers must solve (and that they cannot solve alone) in the face of heterogeneous classes, where there is a strong risk of losing some students.

Teaching French to an Arabic speaking audience requires specific strategies and teaching/learning techniques. Vocabulary as well as grammar are indispensable in learning a foreign language. Without the knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar it is hard to communicate nor to be understood. Vocabulary acquisition (lexical competence) is the basic element of learning a foreign language, which other language skills are based on. This acquisition requires the teacher to employ several techniques and strategies. His / her role is not only in vocabulary acquisition, but also in the whole process of learning a foreign language. The teacher is a mediator, guide and advisor, whose attitude can be a source of inspiration to the learners or can demotivate them and push them to give up learning the language. He / she must vary the documents used in class and intensify the use of authentic documents which allow the presentation of vocabulary in its natural context. He / she must encourage the use of dictionaries to foster the active and autonomous learning. The student can use gestures, sounds, images, etc.. to explain new words without referring to his mother language.

Lexical competence, according to the CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is defined as the knowledge to use vocabulary that consists of lexical and grammatical elements. This means having the ability to correctly use words and expressions of a given language, to transmit a precise meaning. The teaching of this competence is done by teaching language based on four skills; speaking and writing production, in addition to oral and written comprehension.

Recommendations for teaching French as a foreign language to freshmen students

- Memorization is a cornerstone in language acquisition. The learner should memorize words with correct pronunciation, meaning and use. It is essential to store new information in memory and to restore them when they are in need, as the memory is strongly related to the learning process.

- Fun activities arouse the curiosity of the learner and encourage the learning process. At Bethlehem University, various activities are applied to enhance better learning of French. I did a photography competition with the theme “Why I love BU?”, where students expressed their feelings in a paragraph in French describing a photo. A day was dedicated for making crêpes and even creating brochures and posters. A French film day was organized, where students watched films in a simple language. We also had a video conference with a Swiss story-teller, who told stories adapted to different levels of students. Such activities, although simple, have a positive impact regarding learning French and liking the language.
- The use of exercises that develop morphology, such as structural exercises or exercises of morphological combination.
- Intensification of reading activities. Reading provides a gateway to the lexicon by the acquisition of written forms.
- Intensification of written activities and written production. Written activities help the learner to use the acquired knowledge in the system of writing, and to be able to reproduce and to reuse language structures.
- Concentration on oral activities which enhance memorization and enrichment of the vocabulary.
- Vocabulary acquisition in context where words are not isolated units but a network of terms linked together by various sense relations.
- Repetition develops the learning of vocabulary and structure.
- The use of new technology and computer. Students using technology get in touch with the language in a direct and realistic way. They thus perform an effective job and find motivation needed in learning. They can communicate with people around the world which invites them to study the language independently.
- Introducing exercises with blanks, then reformulation exercises which leads to writing a longer text.
- Some proposed activities are multiple choice questions, connections, tables, puzzles and summary.

Conclusion

The acquisition of a foreign language requires specific procedures, activities and attitudes taken by the teacher and the learner. It requires regular classification, memorization of words and interpretation of terms in their context. Vocabulary teaching is essential to the mastering of the foreign language in the four competences. The teacher must employ techniques and adapted strategies for the acquisition of the language. The learner must do his/her best as a partner in the learning process. The main aim is to improve the teaching of French in BU, and to facilitate the process for our students.



A field with treasure...

Br. Alejandro Cerna

In the Gospel, Jesus talks about a man who finds treasure in a field, someone had hidden a treasure there! Not being a thief, the man goes and sells all his possessions, then with the money he made, he buys the field so he can have the treasure. (Vgr. Mt. 13, 44ss).

I arrived at Bethlehem University in August 2017 knowing nothing about the students I would encounter, teach, and work with. Yet I believe that the very awareness of that fact is a treasure in itself. Knowing how much we ignore, allows us to take humility as a starting point and approach it with eyes wide open and have a certain predisposition for wonder. I prepared my lessons in the weeks before the beginning of the term, and also prepared a personal introduction of myself to share with students. As a Brother, I'm keenly aware that teaching is not an end in itself. De La Salle had so much more in mind, and I strongly believe God does too. Striving for being a good teacher, I could prepare the best lesson I could deliver. However, the initial steps in the path to the real challenge are: accompanying lives, touching hearts, being an older brother for those who God entrusts to my care. Therefore I have to be myself with my students so they can be themselves with me; I have to let them know me, so I can have an open door for those who might want or need me to know them.

The call for this essay reminds us that they are the students 'we have' and perhaps, only perhaps, not the ones we 'wish we had'. From a Lasallian perspective, at the end of the day, which student could I wish to have, if not any and all of those God wants to put in my way? So, they are the students I wish I had and it's wonderful to actually have them! It certainly doesn't make them perfect or modify their skills in any way, but it makes me appreciative of who they are and have a willingness to work and help. Not who I wish they were, but who they wish they were is even better. In other words who God wants them and calls them to be; which is the best possible version of themselves.

So I've found amazing people in my students; young men and women with dreams and expectations, with hopes for the future. Men and women who have lived and are living complicated circumstances, yet still dare to dream, dare to hope, dare to work to make those dreams and hopes come true. I admire that strength that underlies the students' youthful joy and energy. Some of my students come from afar, some as far as Tel Aviv, some go through multiple checkpoints and travel obstructions and many hours to be here. I admire that.

I have to say that even though they truly are the students I wish to have, I'm not yet the teacher I'd like to be. I am not yet fully the Brother, God calls me to be; here lies one of the biggest challenges.

I found that many of my students have serious difficulties when it comes to creative critical and divergent thinking. From teaching about nine different teaching methods in my course EDUC409, when the time for a midterm exam came, I designed an exam with nine different exercises (designing the ideal classroom, proposing a game, finding an appropriate reading, building a Venn diagram), and the students had to decide which method they would use as a basis to answer each exercise. No repetitions allowed so, 9 exercises, 9 methods: Go!

I think my students panicked when they realized the kind of testing, although I did allow more time for the exam. My students enjoyed the experience and learnt to appreciate the importance of this new paradigm of thought, and what it could bring to their teaching practice, but also to their lives, their country, their world.

With the Higher Diploma students, a different challenge arose: parts of the contents for EDUC322 course for the teachers already in the field were exactly the same that they had covered in a previous course. I did a quick revision of these methods but in a new perspective, and then, when the outline was fully covered I approached the content in an analytical discussion of examples of extraordinary educational systems, institutions, projects and ideas such as A.S. Neil, Froebel, Pestalozzi, Montessori, Ferrer, Dewey. I found the experience of criticizing and discussing all these radical and innovative educational ideas a very rich process, and could have an impact classrooms and schools and, of course, on students.

The students in EDUC200 course, discussing Educational Psychology, came to the understanding of the important links between psychology and pedagogy and how educational methods, institutions, classrooms, technology, schedules, actors all interact and have an impact in the outcomes of the educational process and the lives of the students and participants. By the end of the term, all students designed a creative schooling proposal in which, stating the values they wanted to work with, and the objectives towards which they wanted to educate. They imagined and described buildings, materials, schedules, rules and all kinds of things related to the educational process in utopian congruence and consistency with their intentions as educators. Will one of these ideas become someday a reality for Palestine? I can't say. However, a 'may be' at this point is well worth the effort.

I understand that the call for essays for this e- Journal CETL issue is an opportunity to talk about freshmen students. However, the fact being I am new here and all students were new to me, so I've something to say about each of the groups I worked with.

Last but not least, my EDUC131 students, are fresh from high school and new to university life. Even having chosen the SAT English program, many of them really struggle with the language. I admit being a Mexican speaking English with a non-native accent didn't make it any easier. But given my ignorance of the Arabic language, choices were limited. Together, we had to find a way to understand each other, and little by little, we did. Mimic, videos, images, text on the slide all had a role to play.

I remember well one day in which I wanted to give them a review of the last two or three topics in our lectures. I came to the room half an hour before the lecture time and had the whole board full with drawings; it was a mind map, representing visually all the important concepts, notions and personalities in our content so far. When they came into the room, they were amazed by all the doodling on the board, almost absolutely lacking words. After a while though, and having given them the interpretations of my not-very-artistic drawings, they found it very useful and, with time, they got used to it... we even had some exercises in which they began creating their own mind-maps and learning how to create them, organize them and use them effectively as study aids. In another instance in the same course we were trying to learn the different kinds of constructivism so we developed a metaphor in which constructivist learning was represented by the activity of driving a car, so, in talking about people following or failing to follow transit laws, learning to drive by themselves or following predetermined methods, etc. we got to effectively represent the concepts we wanted to learn, and easily understand and identify them.

Young people are young people, everywhere; their simplicity, their joy, their hopefulness are all things we should respect, admire and enjoy. These Palestinian young students I've had the privilege of teaching and knowing, are amazing people: kind, respectful, worried about their grades and hard-working when properly motivated. Yes, they have their challenges: punctuality is not their strong suit and many are used to thinking of education as raw memorization; they still have to further discover, value and practice creativity and divergent thinking, intelligent criticism and the possibilities it offers.

They care too much about the number or letter they get as a grade and, sometimes, not enough about what it really represents in terms of their knowledge, attitudes and skills; they have to learn to discern the value and credibility of information and sources they find online and to properly quote them when they use them; they still have a long way to go in personal organization and adequate prioritization of their tasks and duties, they have to learn to be brave in having independent opinions and speaking their minds in respectful yet firm manners, and being coherent with their values and ideas, but then again, Don't we all?

In the Gospel, Jesus talks about a man who finds treasure in a field... like that man we, Lasallian teachers are invited to recognize the treasure in our students, the treasure of their uniqueness and that of the presence of God in each one of them. A treasure we must find and we must also commit to help students find in themselves. The man in the gospel sells everything he has to own the field. Likewise, we must be willing to give our best, our all, not because we want to own that treasure, but because helping students own their own treasures is our vocation and the way to find and enjoy our personal treasures ourselves.

300 years after his death, Saint La Salle keeps calling us, inviting us to live our teaching vocation, but through eternally innovative perspective. I want to respond. What about you?

First Year Students: Successes and Challenges.English 101 2pm class Reflection, Fall Semester 2019

Mr. Steve Liddle

I am sharing my experience with the three 2 pm 100-minute English language classes for the Fall semester of 2018. This experience with 42 mostly first year students from a wide spectrum of abilities was instructive. Previously my language teaching moved quickly

on to group work but I found the pressure regularly to assess and what I surmised was the lack of a group working culture made me change my approach.

Also the lack of a tutor made me realise invigilating class tests was not a guarantee of individual performance. In other words, as it was almost impossible to stop cheating I resorted to handing in sentence work, the best three of the 10 or more I carried out, the fairest way to assess sentence construction competency. I would recommend tutors for any class over 20. Not only do class dynamics change dramatically with students who are not already competent in written English or who struggle understanding spoken instructions, but in unstreamed classes with an across-the-normal-curve range of abilities it is more easily encourages interest groups to form along competency lines. With the number of Palestinian students who have studied abroad, and are trilingual in languages including English, perhaps a pool of interested assistants could be drawn up and paid a going rate?

Challenges:

1. Group work to encourage oral competency and confidence
2. Prompt feedback on work done in class and at home (and not copied from others on class mornings or downloaded from online sentence banks)
3. Attendance for whole lesson
4. Proper preparation for unit tests
5. Lack of recognition of latter unit work being summative of previous units

As a general principle, language learning with large broad-ability range classes can often become dominated by those more orally competent. Also, the resort to regular testing (especially as an attention-keeping tactic in greater than 50 minute classes) can satisfy a quiescent attendance agenda and an education philosophy in which 'competition-is-the-only/ best-way-to-excellence but is neither motivating for those least competent nor the way language learning best happens.

Therefore research and my experience is that education in language learning is most effectively achieved by most when it encourages early oral competency through small group work (pairs in cultures where co-education is not the norm), across the ability range success by appointing language learning buddies (of unequal competency which can be successful when they operate at conclusion of timed exercises).

Also consistent use of cross-language comparisons through comparative slides, asking class to supply own-language equivalents and using subtitled/auto-translated clips such as Youtubes and TedTalks and instituting sufficient vocal rote learning and structured exercises –especially for verb forms– contributes both to increased success in daily dialogues and to intrinsic motivation.

The experience of large numbers ‘failing’ at the end of a semester’s language acquisition, whether the cut-off is set at 60 percent or the usual 50, is not motivating either for teachers or students. The reasons so many do not do well overall – and feel they cannot catch-up after a certain number of similar fails without cheating – can be addressed without lowering standards, finger-pointing over teacher competency or failing to guarantee second-year teachers that students are competent enough for academic understanding and writing.

Prerequisite competency and use of summer schools is one way to guarantee students are better prepared and can catch-up. However, I would like to see a system that promotes early success and instituting mechanisms of catch-ups within the semester.

With that in mind, I changed my approach to this submission. The TedTalk about how the various ways polyglots learn their multiple languages is significant here for its central insight: early success is essential for both the joy of learning and continued motivation. So I invite you to watch this brief YouTube, read my summary, and discuss ways this approach can be instituted in a formal classroom situation. My short answer is tutors and small groups; in this context, pairs.

Another approach is dialogue. Dialogue that could be rewarded both by satisfaction of learning it gives and by, for example, a 20 minute-20 point credit for 20 ten-sentence dialogue completions during the first lesson of each week. The first ten could be given to students, the next ten their own constructions on a theme.

If it is true that nothing succeeds like your own success, all competency levels need to have success from the very first day. This may mean less emphasis on assessment for the first three or four weeks, with more students building basic vocabulary and verb forms in their books to enable basic sentences. Why not allow students to choose their best seven unit tests, but only make the final six (of 10) compulsory. In other words, if students do not do well in the first two or three, which is the case for many of the students with little previous English, these would not count. Students would not feel put off from the beginning. As language acquisition is accumulative, the last six or seven would encompass previously learned skills and much vocabulary so would be more important?

Lydia Machova in the TED Talk The secrets of learning a new language interviewed scores of polyglots, ordinary people who can speak many languages fluently. https://www.ted.com/talks/lydia_machova_the_secrets_of_learning_a_new_language?language=en

In this TED Talk she gives the secret to language learning was to start speaking from day one. To enable this she recommends finding interesting content on YouTube or in podcasts. In my classes I found the use of Youtubes with Arabic subtitles encouraged motivation by enabling students to make transfers from their own language to English.

Machova says ‘it is crucial to find enjoyment in process of language learning’ in such ways. But that enjoyment in speaking the language is not enough. Students have to apply three principles:

- The development of effective methods. To put learning into long-term memory you have revise repeatedly using ‘space-repetition’. For example the apps Anki and Memrise can help you to write the 500 most frequently used word. Also polyglot youtube channels and websites have ways to learn that can help. [Note: Memrise is not recommended by memory experts as it is nothing new to offer)

- Creation of systems for learning. Copied for personalized. For example, wake up 15 minutes earlier to revise vocab; listen to podcasts on way to work; develop routines: “I will practice speaking with a friend each Tuesday and Thursday for 20 minutes” “I will listen to YouTube Video while having breakfast”.
- Be patient – learn in small chunks in a way you enjoy. The 5 percent increase in vocabulary per class is backed by findings about retention.

Lydia concludes by saying that when learning a language, nothing is more motivating than your own success. She gives the examples of polyglots Benny who learned Gaelic and German in school, and Lucas learned English for 10 years - both unsuccessfully. It was only when they developed their own methods of immediate speaking and systematic fun methods of memorizing words that they succeeded.

Effective learning – use of apps or cards should be encouraged

The Anki app is a cross-platform mobile and desktop flashcard app that is one of the most effective. Anki lets you make your own flashcards, on any device. Creating cards is done by typing what you want on the front and back of each card. In addition to plain text, you can add images. You can make these cards with text, sound, and images – or download pre-made ones. And it automatically does backups and syncs to other devices via the iCloud.

Some memory learning is better than others

The simplified model of acquiring information involves: 1) retention intention 2) encoding 3) storage 4) retrieval. The second most important part of the process of memorization is encoding – that is, any attempt to manipulate the information you are trying to memorize in order to remember it better.

Encoding can be further divided into shallow and deep. Deep encoding in language learning is nothing more than creating sentences with the words you intend to memorize. In other words, it’s creating contexts for the items you want to learn. Shallow encoding encompasses almost everything else. Counting vowels, writing down the said items, and so on. But deep encoding is the fastest and the most certain way of memorizing information and maximizing your chance of retrieving it. It has been found that mindless repetitions of words or passive rehearsal will not achieve deep encoding “[...] to increase your chances of memorizing new words permanently you need to use them in a task.” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001: 14)

For large classes of over 25 breaking them into pairs right from day one would help create the recommended language speaking culture. Using previous lesson’s words in sentences that they have to immediately speak and build into a dialogue needs practice. (I tried but not able to achieve an enjoyable routine in my class of 42 due partly to other pressures to cover the curriculum, catch up with other classes/compensate for lost ones). I would recommend playing Lydia’s YouTube with the Arabic subtitles on in the very first class, whether using Password or Unlock. If this could be achieved in the first 20 minutes of each class both confidence and encoding would be ensured within the first five or six lessons. More, I began sending students the PowerPoint of the 100-minute class before they came to class. This meant they could familiarize themselves with the vocabulary and exercises involved.

This was also successful for students who have little oral competency, and those who could not attend for medical or approved personal reasons. With such a large afternoon class and no assistant, I could not invigilate sufficiently to guarantee cheating had not taken place. Therefore for on-course work I used only sentence work handed in or sent in, that was their own work (not copied or taken off the internet).

A stronger oral component of the assessment – say 20 percent – may also help motivation to begin speak sentences in English. But without assistance, this proved impossible to do without getting behind in the curriculum.

I am more than happy to provide an appendix of You tubes and TedTalks, and local historical pictures, that worked well with classes and tutor students. Also a recent article on critical thinking techniques now that this is becoming more important for liberal arts subjects and is incorporated into English language learning in such courses as Unlock.