

PODCASTING AND STORYTELLING AS NEW METHODS IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

The aim of the article is to present the interactive ways of teaching English for specific purposes, with special emphasize on medical English.

Keywords: linear and non-linear teaching methods, interactive method, teaching of medical English, podcasting.

Problem of the training quality of medical personnel is becoming increasingly important due to the increasing demands on their level of training. Modern education of future physicians should be focused on mastering foreign languages, providing correct and adequate use of speech as a means of oral and written communication in all areas of professional communication. Foreign language depicts a health care worker as a professional, who has an ability to enter business communication.

English for Specific Purposes or medical English is an integrated subject which combines a series of teaching grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, vocabulary and style of medical English. In addition the above items are closely linked to clinical disciplines and public health disciplines cycle.

Modern classes that we have at higher educational establishments, especially if it is referred to classes of foreign languages, require introduction of new methods during explanation of material and operating it with the students. Therefore, it becomes necessary for medical students not only to teach medical terms in order to use them in the professional life but also to listen how they are used in everyday communication. With the development of innovation technologies we got an opportunity to use different media technologies in teaching English. One of them is podcasting. From a technical point of view "Podcast» (podcast) - a digital media file, or a few files distributed over the Internet for playback on portable media players or personal computers. By format podcasts remind a radio show, play sound, interviews, lectures or other types of oral genre. They can be varied by subjects [2].

Podcasting gives educators an opportunity to bridge the traditional classroom setting with progressive state-of-the-art technologies [3]. It also can reduce the lack of continuous process of language practice, frequent absence of native speakers surrounding. What makes it different is that podcasting is one of brand new and exciting means for students that help them to perform a more active

role in their own learning experience with additional benefits: ease of use and effectiveness as a communication tool. Podcast use has bilingual application – repetitive and supplemental, including additional processing of text (lexical and grammatical) and acquaintance of natural flowing speech [1]. The above-mentioned benefits are enriched by diversity, presented by podcasts, which additionally reveals in showing variety of self-expression in English, communication tips and netiquette manners. Being a source of language cliches a podcast introduction into language learning process has shown positive results in improvement of interpreting skills, development of linguistic world-view, ability to adapt to peculiarities of individual pronunciation, access to effective distant learning monitored by the teacher. The advantages of using podcasts in teaching English to medical students are justified by the following factors: – increasing motivation for language learning; – necessity to be involved into real life situations – showing interactions between medical personnel, relations between physicians and patients; – multi-level authentic material that presents variety of English language (podcasters’ intonations, dialects, individual sense of humor, manner of speech, grammar constructions); – opportunity to connect with foreign experience – to accept and exchange knowledge, skills, achievements and innovative methods in professional sphere. With mobile devices being available to any student such “portable lectures” give students opportunity to get acquainted with problems of their foreign colleagues, innovations and solutions in medicine and its branches, to learn terminological units and professional phrases. The most popular and useful podcasts recommended for medical students and professionals: NEJM This Week, Annals of Internal Medicine Podcast, MedPod101.com podcast, Listen to the Lancet, MUSC Neurological Health Podcast, OR-live, Surgery ICU Rounds Podcast, Survey of Pharmacology, UTHSC Internal Medicine Residency Podcast, Merck Manual of Patient Symptoms, Surgery 101 [4]. The assignments based on podcast activities that require students to generate, edit and discuss podcasts reinforce critical communication skills such as writing a script, critical thinking, pronunciation drilling and its results could be presented either online or in a classroom. Almost any podcast can be adapted to the students’ learning needs, being accessible whenever and as often as students would like. It should be admitted that maintaining students’ private time may be difficult that is why it is reasonable to modify podcasting strategies in order to fit specific situations.

Another modern method in teaching English to medical student is storytelling. Traditional English for medical students teaching has mostly involved linear methods such as reading and translating into the students' first language and analyzing medical jargon, where the relationship between what is known and what is unknown is predictable. The end result of such teaching methods has been the development of competence rather than capability. Traditional education and

curriculum have mainly been planned and designed aiming at enhancing competence contrary to the requirements of the modern complex world. Although developing competence is a necessary part of the zone of complexity, by itself it is not enough for learning to take place. Capability is necessary for the individuals to change, produce new knowledge and enhance performance through feedback. Therefore, as Fraser and Greenhalgh [6, p.802] put it, the learning outcomes in the new curriculum should focus on capabilities, not competencies. Capability, according to them, is achieved by the use of non-linear methods such as storytelling and small group, problem based learning. The method has been used by doctors and nurses in professional training and there is some evidence that clinical knowledge is retained in memory in the form of stories rather than non-integrated facts [8]. Storytelling takes precedence over traditional teaching of English to students of medicine with regard to their motivation, interest and class participation. It helps students of medicine learn and remember more of medical English compared with the traditional reading, translating and analyzing medical texts and terminology. Storytelling helps students of medicine increase and expands their medical knowledge more than the traditional reading, translating and analyzing medical texts and terminology. Learning will be more meaningful, challenging and stimulating if teachers and learners use storytelling for reflective learning. They further claim that storytelling by itself is a theory of learning.

A number of studies have lent support to storytelling as a teaching and learning strategy. Mello performed a research study on a bi-monthly storytelling-sessions basis over a period of nine months school year. She found that storytelling was enjoyable, entertaining and interesting. She also reported that students' overall learning, listening and interacting skills improved [7].

The method is used in such a way: teacher gathers the cases written in English, using medical terminology related to every disease case. The cases include infectious diseases, degenerative diseases, neoplasia, metabolic disorders, hormonal diseases and mental disorders. Then the teacher orally narrates the cases with the students listening in a relaxed manner. Before telling the stories, the teacher hands out lists of new words and terms. They are asked to guess the meaning of words from context of the story. Only at the end of each session the students might ask the teacher to explain the meanings of unknown words or use a medical dictionary to look up the meanings of technical vocabulary. Each case presents a problem and the situation involved. The students do not have the main text of the cases, but are allowed to take notes while listening. They are told to think about the stories and report back next session and discuss problems and important points with the fellow members of their group. During the session the teacher acts as a mentor to support his students to solve the problems. All

indications are that storytelling as a teaching strategy takes precedence over the traditional teaching method in English for medical students teaching context.

Accordingly, all the research hypotheses, that storytelling takes precedence over traditional teaching of English to students of medicine with regard to their motivation, interest and class participation, that storytelling helps students of medicine learn and remember more of medical English compared with the traditional reading, translating and analyzing medical texts and terminology, that storytelling helps students of medicine increase and expand their medical knowledge more than the traditional reading, translating and analyzing medical texts and terminology were confirmed. The power of storytelling as a teaching strategy may lie with the fact that it is a non-linear method. It seems that Fraser and Greenhalgh are true in saying that modern education should develop students' capability rather than competence and this is achieved by the use of non-linear methods such as storytelling [6, p.801]. The traditional methods, on the other hand, help develop competence in a task familiar and an environment familiar situation. Linear and non-linear divide is what differentiates between old and new curriculum on one hand and old and new class on the other. It is believed that linear methods develop competence, but non-linear methods create capability. Competence by itself is not enough; capability is necessary for individuals to learn and develop. Storytelling is one non-linear method used in education as a teaching strategy. Its usefulness has been established in health care education.

CONCLUSION

The development of modern world shows us the necessity to follow the innovations and use them in our teaching practice. Integration of podcasts and storytelling method into educational process shows benefits also for language teachers: the introduction of them into the language learning process definitely means professional development and creativity for educators, language trainers and teachers: it gives precious opportunity to follow curriculum, but also to match with current educational and social processes, as well as deepen knowledge in your students' specialization and their future career. The key role of these methods consists in performing as interactive tool, presenting ability to teach (and educate) not only in the classroom, but also online, adding more active character to your classes which in turn means active educational minds and creative thinking abilities.

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