

ATTITUDES TO MISTAKES IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Many learners and teachers see mistakes as a problem to be solved or, even better, avoided. However, researchers have shown that mistakes are a positive sign of learning. Learners need to experiment, to take risks, to try to express themselves above their level or while concentrating on something else. Obviously, mistakes are inevitable in the process of language learning because students need to fail, see their mistakes and try again to learn anything new. What lurks from behind students' poor contribution to conversation classes is probably the fear of being wrong, making mistakes and losing face in front of their peers. Clearly, it is the teacher's role to create a student-friendly atmosphere in the classroom and draw out those who do not step forward. They can do so by showing a positive attitude towards students' attempts to speak and encouraging them to take risks with the foreign language. This is the only way to develop their confidence, fluency and overcome their reluctance to speak.

The teacher should ignore the mistakes, at least for the time being. When students give a speech or speak spontaneously in pairs, immediate correction will intimidate them, make them lose the train of thought and simply discourage from participating in the discussion. So it is better to leave the comments till the end of the conversation.

Also the teachers should encourage their students to self-correct. They should not correct on the spot. Instead of giving them ready answers, they should give them a chance to think and self-correct. Encouraging the students to do this, they develop their autonomy and raise language awareness and responsibility for the level of their English. This will foster their ability to manage a conversational exchange with a native speaker or classmates with no need to lean on the teacher.

There are a lot of different non-verbal and verbal ways of error correction. For example the teacher may give a student a hint with a raised eyebrow or shaking his head, or crossing his finger, or repeating the wrong sentence with a rising intonation or a funny facial expression.

All this will help the teachers to make their classes brighter, the students will be always motivated and more confident and the level of their knowledge will be increased faster.