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**Master One Semester II**

***Part Three*: *Students Psychological Dimension and the Teaching Practice***

**Lesson 6**

***C) Facilitation:***

* *Facilitation is thought to be a paramount component of effective teaching. It can relate to both the cognitive and affective contexts.*
* *From a cognitive parameter, facilitating the process of language learning to students can be approached through the use of some activities and techniques like task repetition (6) (Edwards & Willis, 2005); or code switching (Kumar & Eng ,2009).*
* *As for the affective parameter, Underhill (1999) states that facilitation depends tremendously on the teacher’s abilities and skills to build up a more relaxing atmosphere in the classroom allowing the enhancement of more learning opportunities.*
* *As far as affective facilitation is concerned, Underhill (1999) distinguishes three different kinds of teachers:*
* *lecturer, teacher and facilitator.*
* *A lecturer is a teacher having a good mastery of the topic to be taught, but no skill or methodology for achieving their teaching objectives.*
* *A teacher is the one who has both knowledge of the topic and the practical teaching skills.*
* *Yet, a teacher does not focus on the enhancement of ‘personal and interpersonal classroom skills’ nor does he target the development of learners’ ‘self-direction and self-evaluation’ (Underhill, 1999).*
* *Yet, a facilitator is a teacher who, in addition to his/her knowledge of the topic and familiarity with appropriate teaching skills and techniques, pays undivided attention to learners’ affective aspects so as to help them reach their learning objectives in a more responsible way.*
* *In Underhill’s words a facilitator:*
* *“actively studies and pays attention to the psychological learning atmosphere and the inner processes of learning on a moment by moment basis, with the aim of enabling learners to take as much responsibility for their learning as they can”*

*Underhill (1999) in Arnold (1999: 126)*

* *But, as Underhill (1999) clarifies, the three terms mentioned above do not necessary apply to their respective definitions in their normal use: a lecturer (as a job), for example, can have all the characteristics of a good facilitator. The reverse, however, is true.*
* *Emery (1999) states that the exam-oriented nature of ELT makes language teachers stress on passing on knowledge about the target language to their students forgetting some humanistic aspects of teaching.*
* *Such a fact is believed to have certain negative effects on students’ achievement. Emery (1999) thinks that if learners are to achieve optimum learning results, teachers need to reconsider their role and bring about some concrete changes to the practice of teaching.*
* *She points out that the creation of a facilitating learning environment is the new role that the teacher has to accomplish in the language classroom.*
* *As far as facilitation is concerned, Emery (1999) underlines three main elements building up the facilitative process. These are:*

*Initiation:*

It consists of the making of a fertile and supportive atmosphere in the classroom.

This does not rely only on the provision of a suitable classroom setting, but also and most importantly on the understanding and development of two basic teaching skills: ‘the ability to listen accurately’ and ‘an attitude of availability’(Emery, 1999).

*Observation:*

It is the observation and acceptance of students’ quality of performance, regardless of its degree of appropriateness, along with the teachers’ recognition of their students’ actual potential.

The main aim of observation is to try to understand the learners’ behaviour so as to be able to encourage them do better, rather than to force them to (Emery, 1999).

*Response:*

According to Emery (1999), the teachers’ response is to take the form of an engagement of partnership with the students helping them and sharing knowledge with them, and not passing it on in an authoritative way.

Brown (2000) makes reference to facilitation as one among other roles attributed to what he calls “the interactive teacher”. He suggests that:

*“The facilitating role requires that you step away from the managerial or directive role and allow students, with your guidance and gentle prodding, to find their own pathways to success. A facilitator capitalizes on the principle of intrinsic motivation by allowing students to discover language through using it pragmatically, rather than by telling them about language”.*

*Brown (2000: 167- 8)*

* In a communicative approach to foreign language teaching and learning, Littlewood (1999) refers to the changing role of the teacher; traditionally defined as ‘instructor’, mentioning the notion of ‘facilitator of learning’.
* The latter function, according to Littlewood (1999), subsumes a number of tasks mainly:
* giving help or advice to students
* localising students’ “strengths and weaknesses”
* contributing in classroom activities “as a co-communicator” participant
* trying just to be “a human among humans”.

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