

in our orientations toward it. Let me explain: Teacher training programs and their organizers make too much fuss about it. From the start they expect teachers produce in writing a rich detailed description of any prediction and practice they may get involved in their classroom presentation. Many of these trainers insist that teachers should instead of teachers' textbook take their lesson plan to the classroom and act verbatim.

As I see it, if we simplify it to a handful of notes jotted down on the margin of our textbooks we find 'lesson planning' very handy and teacher friendly. We gradually learn to record them in icons and symbols rather than in detailed sentences, most of them in our minds rather than on the margin of texts. Good and not so good habits and abilities take time to grow and get internalized. You cannot expect any runner to run 100 meters under 10 seconds. No film producer expects his actor to walk onto the stage with the scenario at hand.

***c. How does a teacher of a foreign language use that language genuinely outside the school environment?***

It is important that teachers of a foreign language develop a feeling towards the language they teach: The feeling that what they teach is not merely a school subject to be taught and used in a classroom. To develop such a feeling, it is not enough even not necessary, to have a conscious knowledge of its structures. Rather, teach-

ers need to have some experience of using it for real world problems, as I said a feeling that it exists as something real. You must have a chance to listen to it, use it to get something done with. This all can be done genuinely when and where the authenticity of language in use is not lost. I am sure you have your own ways. In my younger years when I was trying to learn English, to make it real, there were not so many facilities as they are available now. There was only one private library with English books in our city. Its membership was confined to certain celebrities. One day I helped a foreigner while shopping to get a rug he liked. When he learned I was a student learning English he wrote a letter of recommendation to the head of the library. Ever after I was privileged to check out all sorts of books. The three unforgettable which helped me most were:

How to Learn to Paint Water

Color, How to Learn to Type, and An Anthology of Greek Mythology. I taught myself how to paint water color and type my homework without being much conscious of English and by typing my homework won the admiration of my English teacher. Now I have all sorts of tricks up my sleeve to make English real to me like what I am doing now: chewing up and digesting my old sweet memories and sharing them with you. The root of the problem, as I see it, lies in the fact that we as teachers of English as a foreign language, most often, maybe, always take it as a school subject, and rarely, maybe never, take it as a real language used unconsciously for information or pleasure.



know that, though there is a bit of truth with both sides the question does not seem to have easy answers. I hope you agree with me, it is not the case that we leave one class happy and the other unhappy simply because we happen to teach differently or our students behave differently. As I see it, we are happy if we succeed in striking harmony between ourselves and our students; and unhappy if we fail to do so. Better question to leave you with is: how can a teacher strike a harmonious note between himself and the students? Give in to what they desire or discipline them to obey the instructions verbatim? Harmony surely lies in a place between the two. A penny for your thought!

***b. Do we need to have written lesson plans for every lesson and every class we teach?***

What it is and how it should be prepared, and what it should contain are old issues in any teacher training program. Course organizers argue for and explain; student-teachers get excited about, and make up their minds not to walk into their classrooms without one when they start teaching. Only a few try their hands and luck for a few sessions very soon, however, they brush it under the carpet. Have you ever seriously asked yourself why lesson planning has such an unfortunate fate with foreign language teachers?

The root of the problem, as I see it, lies





# The Root of the Problem

J.B.Sadeghian Ph.D in Applied Linguistics

Email: jbsadeghian@gmail.com



## A Reminder:

A reader kindly wrote: *"I am a freelance English teacher and a regular reader of Roshd, Foreign Language Teaching Journal. I studied (italics is mine) your column about teachers' motivation in the latest issue of this magazine and I found it really 'thought-provoking.'"*

I have chosen the format of 'Notes' for that column because I intend them to be read as notes, as a daily newspaper, short story, a recipe. They are not academic, researched, and documented papers to be studied as such. Most of the time, though proved by experience, they are my own intuitive beliefs, controversial, and their relevance and reliability need to be questioned by the readers.

So please read them to enjoy, test and question their truth. And also, when you write to me write a line or two about yourself. It helps.

## Note 5

In 'The Root of the Problem' (Roshd, No. 108), I echoed the common assertion that: "Our English teachers are not motivated enough to carry out a modest successful

teaching." In my own way, there I attempted to brief what motivation is and what a motivated teacher's profile is like. I attached a number of questions to the note. Some readers responded to the attached questions, others wrote supportive comments about the argument itself.

The questions which were usefully controversial and attracted more interests were as follow:

***a. Why do most teachers, who teach more than one class a year, do not get the same satisfaction and pleasure from their classes? One class they are happy to work with, the other is the Halloween Night, they are scared to walk in.***

Most answers put all the eggs in the learners' baskets. They say a class composed of more willing learners with appropriate previous learning cause the teacher to leave the classroom happier and more satisfied. A few put the ball in the teachers' side and state: In the long run, they argue, especially with younger students, it is the teacher who runs the show and is responsible for his/her satisfaction. We all well