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**Application of Community Language Learning for Effective Teaching**

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### ABSTRACT

Community Language Learning (also called Counseling Language Learning) was created by Charles A Curran, a Jesuit priest and professor of psychology, and Paul La Forge inspired by the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers. It aims to remove the anxiety from learning by changing the relationship between the teacher and student. The Counseling-Learning educational model is applied to language learning, and in this form it became known as Community Language Learning seeks to encourage teachers to see their learners as whole persons, where their feelings, intellect, interpersonal relationships, protective reactions, and desire to learn are addressed and balanced. The CLL view of learning is a holistic one, since “true” human learning is both cognitive and affective. This technique is used over a considerable period of time, until learners are able to apply words in the new language without translation, gradually moving from a situation of dependence on the teacher-counselor to a state of independence. The value of CLL has been its emphasis on whole-person learning; the role of a supportive, non-judgmental teacher; the passing of responsibility for learning to the learners. The humanistic approach of CLL, which views learners and teachers as a community, and thus the teacher as more facilitator than teacher, fits in nicely with current trends in education.

#### 1. Introduction

*“Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow”*

Community Language Learning (also called Counseling Language Learning) was created by Charles A Curran, a Jesuit priest and professor of psychology, and Paul La Forge inspired by the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers. Curran's counsel-learning theory relies heavily from Carl Rogers' view of counsel: an openness and innovative view of allowing man to create his own learning and knowledge path. Community Language Learning originates from the field of psychology, it stems from a psychological view of man and man's nature of learning. Curran outlines the ideology of learning as an

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interrelated process of an entire person which was not traditionally accepted. The accepted psychological view of man's learning was segmented until Curran's time. Hence CLL approach to language teaching aims to remove the anxiety from learning by changing the relationship between the teacher and student.

Activities of CLL

*“In this approach attempts are made to build strong personal links between the teacher and student so that there are no blocks to learning”*

CLL combines innovative learning tasks and activities. They include:

- ✓ **Translation:** Learners form a small circle. A learner whispers a message or meaning he or she wants to express, the teacher translates or interprets it in the target language, and the learner repeats the teacher's translation.
- ✓ **Group Work:** Learners engage in various group tasks, such as small-group discussion of a topic, preparing a conversation, preparing a summary of a topic for presentation to another group, preparing a story that will be presented to the teacher and the rest of the class.
- ✓ **Recording:** Learners record conversations in the target language.
- ✓ **Transcription:** Learners transcribe utterances and conversations they have recorded for practice and analysis of linguistic forms.
- ✓ **Analysis:** Learners analyze and study transcriptions of target language sentences in order to focus on particular lexical usage or on the application of particular grammar rules.
- ✓ **Reflection and observation:** Learners reflect and report on their experience of the class, as a class or in groups. This usually consists of expressions of feelings - sense of one another, reactions to silence, concern for something to say, etc.
- ✓ **Listening:** Learners listen to a monologue by the teacher involving elements they might have elicited in class interactions.

- ✓ **Free conversation:** Learners engage in free conversation with the teacher or with other learners. This might include discussion of what they learned as well as feelings they had about how they learned.

## 2. Five Stages of CLL

"In order for any learning to take place ... what is first needed is for the members to interact in an interpersonal relationship in which students and teacher join together to facilitate learning in a context of valuing and prizing each individual in the group"

The learner passes through five psychological stages as learning progresses, which Curran compares to the progressing from childhood to adulthood.

**Birth:** The learners know nothing of the target language, and are completely dependent on the teacher for everything they want to say.

**Self:** The learners start to get an idea of how the language works and to use it for themselves, but still seek the teacher's help.

**Separate Existence:** They start to use the language without referring to the teacher.

**Adolescence:** The learners continue to express themselves independently, but being aware of gaps in their knowledge, and start to turn back to the teacher.

**Independence:** The learners continue their learning independently. They no longer need the teacher, and may start to act as counselors for less advanced students.

## 3. Importance of Community Language Learning

"Curran's approach is beyond simply a methodical pedagogy, but is rather a veritable philosophy of learning which provides profound, even quasi-theological reflections on

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humankind! It encourages holistic learning, personal growth, and self-development.

Learning a language is not viewed necessarily as an individual accomplishment, but rather as a collective experience, something to be disseminated out into the community at large at a later stage in the second-language acquisition process”

The basic principle of the methodology is to establish interpersonal relationships between the teacher and learners to facilitate learning. Community Language Learning was designed to ease the anxiety of Foreign Language Learners in educational contexts and promote group dynamics. In CLL, the aim is to involve the learner's whole personality. The teacher understands the fears of the learner and vulnerabilities as they struggle to master another language. By being sensitive to the learner's fear, the teacher can turn the negative energy of those fears into positive energy and enthusiasm for learning. This methodology is not based on the usual methods by which languages are taught rather the approach is patterned upon counseling techniques and adapted to the peculiar anxiety and threat as well as the personal and language problems a person encounters in the learning of foreign languages. Consequently, the learner is not thought of as a student but as a client. The language-counseling relationship begins with the client's linguistic confusion and conflict. Then slowly the teacher-counselor strives to enable him to arrive at his own increasingly independent language adequacy.

#### **4. Advantages of CLL**

*“The strengths of the method include creating a supportive community to lower student anxiety and help them overcome threatening affective factors, such as making errors or competing with peers”*

In the beginning of the course, the learners are totally dependent on the teacher's translation, but over time they are able to engage in more direct communication as they move towards independence. In addition, learners are not limited in their topics of conversation, regardless of their language proficiency. Learners are free to talk about the affairs of daily life. This approach to language learning encourages the meaningful use of

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language which the learner can store, synthesize and use in new situations. CLL allows learners to practice the structure or characteristic patterning of sentences and conversations. Moreover, it is believed that from the teacher's translation, learners will be able to induce a grammar far more complex than they are able to use on their own. One key reason this method seemed to work, was that it allowed the learners to continue using their L1, while promoting the L2. It is important to be aware of its existence, so that when the need arises, the strengths of CLL can be utilized.

### **5. Applying Community Language Learning Today**

*“Community Language Teaching is not a method; it is an approach, which transcends the boundaries of concrete methods and, concomitantly, techniques. It is a theoretical position about the nature of language and language learning and teaching”*

Applying CLL today to teach language broadens its appeal. There are some different techniques that have surfaced, such as: learners in conversation circle, transcription of student-generated text using technology, small group tasks, reflecting on experience, listening sessions, recordings of student-generated conversations, and transcriptions. Games and songs complement these activities. The humanistic approach of CLL, which views learners and teachers as a community, and the teacher as a facilitator more than teacher, fits in nicely with current trends in education.

### **6. Conclusion**

Community Language Learning is the most responsive of the methods which is reviewed in terms of its sensitivity to learned communicative intent. It is applied in various settings; it is used as an aid for language learning, under the radar, academically. The value of CLL has been its emphasis on whole-person learning; the role of a supportive, non-judgmental teacher; the passing of responsibility for learning to the learners. The teacher must also be relatively non-directive and must be prepared to accept and even encourage the adolescent aggression of the learner as he or she strives for independence.

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