Teaching Issues on the way of my work experience through the main aspects of myconsideration inthe **combination of communicative approach, counterpoint /critical thinking and incorporation of new technologies on English language/literature classes in middle and high school.**

***“What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of a child.” Bernard Shaw***

The English language is in demand around the world which creates a requirement for a various number of methods and techniques to accomplish the best results in the less time. In recent years attention has shifted from what to teach students, to the process and methodology of teaching and how students learn and attain. Questions have arisen regarding the nature of English language acquirement on different age stages, miscellaneous approaches to teaching are being explored, and distinct paradigms of methodology are being discussed.

The main concern for me as a teacher is to find the link between theory and practice, the divergence between training and development, the role of reflection. That is why the need to articulate and develop alternative methods of English language teaching is considered my high priority. This is valid in order to make students be able to comprehend the language of native speaker in natural conversation and moreover realize that languages are not just different words for the same things but totally different concepts, totally different ways of experiencing the world around us. To transfer to the main issues of this work I would like to delineate the main principles I assume as vital and core in my perception and teaching:

1. Know yourself: is to commit to a daily practice of reflection and review; to broaden one’s outlook and vision in a constantly different angle;
2. Know the children: is to meet them where they are as they are, for they were born in another time. Every learner has an individual range of levels. Every class is a mixed-level class. Their first need is significance, that they have value and mean something to us even when they are not A-students. Children perceive on their own level, i.e. they are very vulnerable, for them love is spelled as TIME! If we want our students to feel significant, we need to spend time with them productively.
3. Establish limits: is where students’ creativity flourishes within the boundaries the teacher sets but they are in need of ones that are interconnected with the security the student needs. That is to say students who act responsibly can have wider boundaries and more privileges, which can transform later to their future motivation for learning.
4. Ask the children and model great questioning. As in “Why did this happen?” ; “If that happens, what might happen next?” Turn their questions into moments of wondering, “What do you want to do about it?” To interest a child and bring up his/her curiosity are the key points.
5. Surrender control and allow space. Let students walk to the edge but not over. It is an illusion. Students develop infinite possibilities beyond adult anticipation. They even gain skills, tools and ways of thinking without adult intervention. If we limit them we cannot gain any personality statement, any creativity. Children who learn to be creative at a young age will learn creative problem solving when they are older.
6. Never ever give up on a child.

These are to be the grounds I establish and aspire to my work experience with my students. According to all mentioned above I discovered that the best way to fulfil my teaching strategy is to produce a method of combining approaches and techniques together with the incorporation of new technologies in my class.

Communicative approach is established as the dominant model in ELT mainly because the scope of it has greatly expanded. It is now seen as the one that aims to (a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. The students accumulate language learning as the learning to communicate, which they find very important in today’s cosmopolitan world and times of mass transitions. CLT is based on a theory that language is communication.

The target of this approach (not method) will be acquired best through the process of struggling to communicate, when students are not allowed to use their native language and are supposed to produce truly English conversation. Communicative competence is the desired goal (i.e. the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately). Any device which helps the learners is accepted – varying according to the age, interest, etc. Teacher helps in any way that motivates the students to work with the language which is often created by the individual through trial and error. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated, whereas the teacher’s role is undisputable.

*"A liberally educated person meets new ideas with curiosity and fascination. An illiberally educated person meets new ideas with fear."   
 James B. Stockdale*

As I assume communicative principles can be applied to the teaching of any skill, at any level; there is a wide variety of activities and exercise types used in a typical class:

1. Presentation of a brief dialog or several mini dialogs, proceeded by motivation (relating to the learners probable community, situation, experience) and a discussion or a role play of the function and scenery – people, roles, setting, topic, use of informal or formal language;
2. Oral practice of each utterance of the dialog to be presented on the spot (class repetition, group/pair work, individual) generally preceded by the model;
3. Questions and answers interaction based on the dialog/situation (inverted “wh” or “or” questions) or related to the students’ personal experiences but centered around the topic;
4. Oral recognition, interpretative activities;
5. Oral production – proceeding from guided to freer communication activities;
6. Sampling of the written assignment;
7. Evaluation of learning (oral only), e.g. “How would you ask your friend to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? And how would you ask me to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?”
8. Demonstration; Elicitation; Workshops; Plenary/Panel discussions; etc.

The significant point of these tasks is that students are lead to rate the statements differently. Also important is the fact that old knowledge is not put away, it will form the basis on which new knowledge will be built. Although communicative language teaching is accepted by many (e.g. David Nunan) as the most effective approach among those in general use as it is an integral part of the language learning program, there is still plenty of field to examine and experiment with. Personally I consider it to be an exciting and valid teaching tool for effective language acquisition.

Counterpoint Thinking is designed to help students to resist their proclivity to want certainty and to perceive either/ors. More importantly, the Counterpoints help students to tolerate ambiguity and to perceive interdependencies (T. Melchior).

To illustrate, when secondary school students are shown terms such as individual/ group, freedom/responsibility and fantasy/reality and asked what they perceive, they tend to respond that they see the terms as opposites, which is consistent with the ineffective thinking traits, especially the either/or perception. The teacher's task, therefore, is to focus the students on the interdependencies. How can this be accomplished? The teacher could present the students with the terms individual/group and ask, "Suppose you are the author of the Bill of Rights. Do your laws protect the rights of individuals or the rights of groups?" With a little knowledge and a little reflection, the students should observe that the rights of both are protected, so then the teacher might ask, "So how can they be opposites?" Similarly, the teacher might then ask about freedom/responsibility, "You just received your driver's license. Is this a new freedom or a new responsibility?" Again the students should realize that both terms apply and that they are interdependent because they learn that freedom is inherent in the concept of responsibility and that the reverse applies as well.

*"Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. A teacher’s purpose is not to create students in his own image, but to develop students who can create their* *own image."  Malcolm Forbes*

Counterpoint thinking can be interconnected with critical thinking, problem-solving method and problem-based learning. As known in Bloom’s taxonomy the basic concept is that a child moves from concrete learning and recall of information, to understanding what was learned, applying that learning, analyzing the concept from various angles, evaluating what they learned and finally to the ability to create their own point of view.

The basic and principal counterpoints are: Independence / Dependence; Impulsivity / Reflection; Individual / Group; Fantasy / Realism; Freedom / Responsibility; Inhumanity / Sensitivity; Chaos / Cosmos; Static / Dynamic; Objective / Subjective. They are designed to help students attend to some of the complexities inherent in the human condition. Conflict and tension are central to the arts and the sciences, to daily life, and to everyone's mental processing. I believe that the concept of the Counterpoints helps students to become less impulsive and more reflective, more tolerant of ambiguity and more open and more flexible in their thinking and less categorical in their judgments. In addition, I try to teach students to resist what we call the certainty principle, to be open to problems, new ideas, and new challenges. Most importantly, I try to teach students that confusion is not something to be abhorred and that it can be an opportunity for growth. The primary purpose is the improvement of listening and speaking comprehension skills, it also works well in reinforcing specific structures used in situational context: means-end analysis; working backward; simplification; generalization and specialization; trial and error; contradiction; restate the problem, etc.

Technology plays a huge role in our learners’ abilities to build knowledge, think critically and creatively, and extend learning beyond the classroom. Our use of technology really demonstrates an important shift in teaching practice - the focus is not on the technology itself; instead I focus on how technology can support the learning and what tools will do this best. Infusing technology into my teaching makes learning experiences exciting, relevant, and differentiated.

The endless challenges of education keep me motivated and inspired.