

# BLOCK 4.

## The past meets the present: Language teaching methods in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries

### Sub-block 4.2. Humanistic or Holistic methods

#### Unit 4.2.1. Introduction

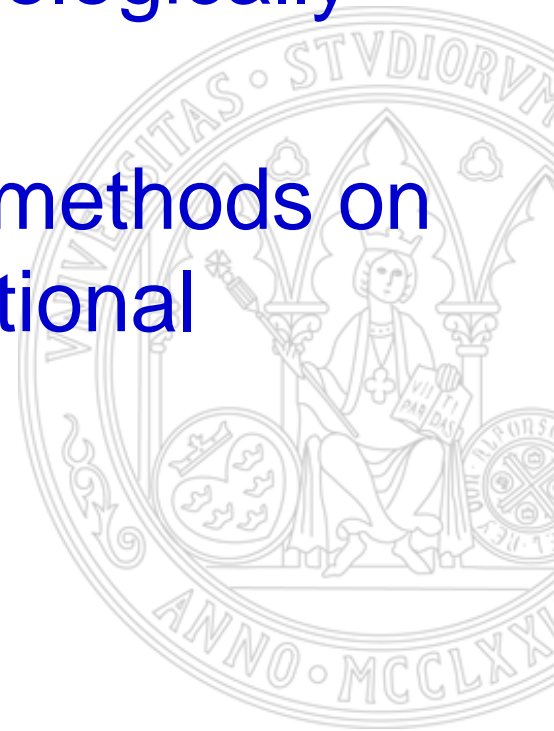
# Outline

1. Objectives of this unit
2. Historical background of Humanistic Methods
3. General principles of Humanistic Methods
4. Influence of Humanistic Methods on FLT



# 1. Objectives of this unit

1. Understand the linguistic and historical origin of humanistic and psychologically based methods.
2. Identify the influence of these methods on the subsequent Notional-Functional Syllabuses and CLT.



## 2. Historical background of Humanistic Methods



*Remember from section 5 in Unit 4.1.1.:*

- ✓ The enthusiasm about structurally based methods started to decline around the late 1960s onwards.
- ✓ Three solutions to the drawbacks of the these methods:
  - 1) Cognitive Approach (1970s-1980s), linked to Cognitive Psychology
  - 2) CLT, strongly tied within Applied Linguistics. Early origins: 1970s. Language as a system for communication.



*Unit 4.3.2*

**3) Humanistic methods, from the late 1960s until the early 1980s**

## 2. Historical background of Humanistic Methods

3) Humanistic methods, from the late 1960s until the early 1980s. Emerged from educational theory and from psychology, with a strong view on learning and learners but without an explicit theory of language:

- Total Physical Response (TPR)
- Silent Way
- Suggestopedia
- Community Language Learning / Counselling Learning (CL)

✓ The emergence of the Humanistic Methods is due to two reasons (Grundy, 2004: 283):

- a) a shift from the “dehumanizing science” of the ALM, the SLT and the AVSG
- b) social protests in Europe and the USA in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

### 3. General principles of Humanistic Methods

Moskowitz, G. (1978). *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

*... blend what the student feels, thinks and knows with what he is learning in the target language. Rather than self-denial being the acceptable way of life, self actualization and self-esteem are the ideals the exercises pursue. [The techniques] help build rapport, cohesiveness, and caring that far transcend what is already there ... help students to be themselves, to accept themselves, and be proud of themselves ... help foster a climate of caring and sharing in the foreign language class.*

(Moskowitz, 1978: 2. Our highlighting)

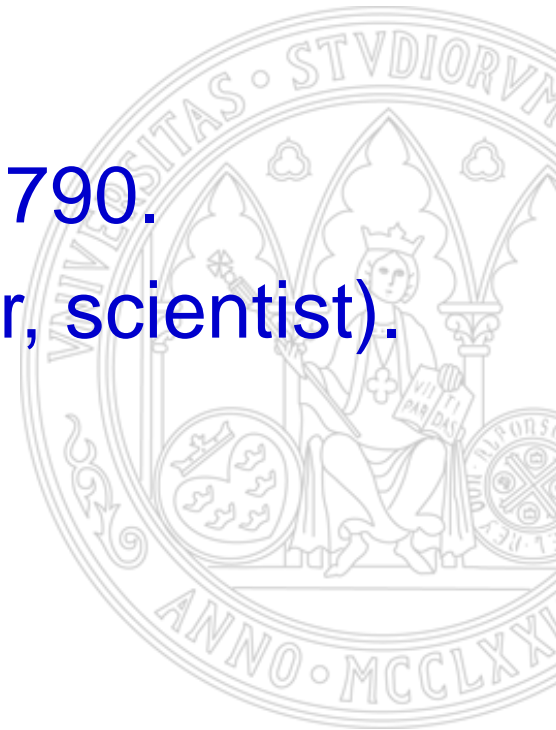
**Whole person: the affective and the cognitive realms**

# 3. General principles of Humanistic Methods

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.  
Involve me and I learn”

(Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790.

North-American politician, inventor, scientist).





### 3. General principles of Humanistic Methods

Cardinal principles of humanistic teaching (Grundy, 2004: 283-284):

1. *Respecting learners as people, including fostering the individual learner's self-esteem.*
2. *Recognising the affective as well as the cognitive nature of the learning experience.*
3. *Respecting the learner's knowledge and independence.*
4. *Recognising the teachers who manifest their authority by means of praise and blame undermine the autonomy and independence of the learner.*
5. *Respecting learner language and acknowledging the individual's entitlement to freedom from external correction and authority.*
6. *Rethinking traditional syllabuses and materials.*
7. *Teaching in an enabling way, including questioning the role of teachers as performers or entertainers who first determine and then fill the knowledge gap that exists between themselves and their learners.*
8. *Questioning institutionalised norms and rejecting the kind of pedagogy which sets itself up as the artificial means to a natural end.*



*Can you think of any sort of predecessors of the Humanistic Methods?*



# 4. Influence of Humanistic Methods on FLT

- ✓ Slight influence as “one-fits-all” methods.
  - *The underlying genuine and justified concern for socio-emotional growth ... [has] been overtaken by an unhealthy desire to turn pedagogy into compulsory psychotherapy.*

(Alwright & Hanks, 2009: 44)
  - Too much attention given to the personal, holistic side rather than to the language and analytic side (Brumfit, 1982)
- ✓ However, certain isolated traits of Humanistic Methods have been retained in the later Notio-Functional Syllabuses and CLT (Sánchez, 2009: 209):
  - Structures selected according to their functional usefulness and communicative frequency
  - Emphasis on the learner as a person, the main character in the learning/teaching process; attention to communicative needs and motivation; fostering social relationships with interactive activities.

