EFFECTIVE METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Teachers play an important role in designing teaching techniques through years of teaching experience and training. A language classroom is totally different from a typical lecture-style classroom where a teacher indulges in a one-way lecture and students take down notes .It is actually difficult to say which teaching method is effective unless used in a classroom of students with different need, learning experience, intellectual levels, cultural background and attitude towards learning English as a Second Language. Sometimes more than one method is used to bring out the desired results in the language classroom where communication becomes the key factor of teaching-learning process. It should be holistic in nature, bringing an all round development to the learner. Teacher and learner should work in unison to make knowledge complete. Theory won't help in much, if not implemented through practice and application of various teaching methodologies that just gives the right nutrition for knowledge acquiring. Unless students learn to utilize the classroom method to express thoughts and feelings outside into the real world situations, the learning cannot be successful no matter whatever teaching method is applied in English. Teacher- student role becomes the centre in bringing out the maximum within the limited time in a classroom.

Keywords: Techniques, Methodology, Interaction, Incorporate, Approach, Sentiments, Drawback, Linguist, Memorizing, Initiator.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers have to handle the language classroom carefully without hurting the sentiments and the shortcomings that may make a student feel low in front of others. Thus teachers have to work out a teaching methodology that may bring out the maximum for students to grasp the contents easily and make the teaching-learning sessions meaningful. In recent years, language teachers and researchers have focused their attention on observing and developing approaches and strategies that leads to an effective learning process in acquiring English as a SL. In order to make learning process smooth and effective, language teachers have to design various teaching methods out of their personal teaching experience and training. English teachers deal with a number of issues such as students" age, sex, race, attitude, intelligence factor, confidence level and motivation. There are various language teaching techniques that help students to understand more clearly and participate in the learning process more actively. Sometimes more than one technique is combined to make an ESL classroom meaningful.

TYPES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

As a language teacher it is very important to know yourself and your students. Not only your subject matter is important, but also your students" cultural background and other personal factors- emotional and psychological are equally important. Language teachers have experimented with certain language teaching methods in isolation or combination and found one or more than one method effective and worth using. I hope this paper will help ESL teachers to gain an insight into developing an appropriate teaching material and selecting an effective, suitable teaching method that can practically be implemented in the classroom.

THE GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD

Had been used by the language teachers for many years. It was also known as the Classical method as it was used to teach the classical Latin and Greek literature (Chastain 1988). It was believed that this method would help students to read and appreciate the foreign literature. It was also thought that by studying the grammar of the target language students will be able to understand the grammar of their native language and learn to speak and write the native language in a much better way. Though students may not develop communicative fluency in the target language, but would become mentally sharp in the process of using target language to understand the native language through some similarities between the two.

THE DIRECT METHOD

The Direct Method became popular when students failed to communicate effectively using The Grammar-Translation Method. It allowed no translation of any kind. Students were helped directly to pick up the target language through the use of demonsration and visual aids without seeking any help from the native language.

THE AUDIO-LINGUAL METHOD

The Audio-Lingual Method is orally based just like The Direct Method. However it does not focus on picking up a vocabulary by using it in a situation like the Direct Method but drills students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns. Teacher wants students to use the target language communicatively and in order to do so want students to over learn the target language. The teacher provides with models for the students to imitate accurately and as quickly as possible. This way the students form new habits in the target language, overcoming the old habits of the native language. Teachers provide with tapes of model speakers and students imitate the teacher's models.

THE SILENT-WAY METHOD

The Silent-Way Method came into existence when the idea of learning a language by forming a set of habits was seriously challenged in the early 1960s. Linguist like Caleb Gattegno looked at language learning from a learner's point of view by studying the way babies and young children picked up the language. Gattegno's Silent- Way method is similar in certain aspects with Chomsky's Cognitive Approach proposing that speakers have knowledge of underlying abstract rules, which allow them to understand and create novel utterances. In other words, students are responsible for their own learning. They are initiators of learning and capable of independently acquiring language. This method gave importance to the learning process and not teaching.

THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

The Communicative Approach came into lime light in 1970s, when Linguists realised that students may know the linguistic usage but are unable to use the language. It became very clear that students should learn to perform certain functions such as inviting, declining, praising etc in a social context. It means being able to communicate students did not require linguistic competence, but communicative competence that taught them what to say, when to say, how to say and whom to say. In this method the teacher's role is to establish situations to promote communication. Students interact a great deal with one another in a given context. The purpose of this communicative method of teaching was to make students speak confidently, apt to a given situation rather than just mastering the language forms. New information focusses less on the structure of the language. This approach is very student-centred as it depends entirely on the students' ability to use the language. Basically, it produces motivation in students.

TASK-BASED APPROACH

Task-based Approach Task-based learning focuses on the use of authentic language through meaningful tasks such as visiting the doctor or making a telephone call. This method encourages meaningful communication and is student-centered. It encourages problem solving, creativity and spontaneity. Meaning is central to this approach.

" The more specific the method, the more powerful the methodology."

Methodologies

The categories of methodologies are:

T – Traditional

M– Modern

AV– Audio-visual

I – Innovative

Some of the oft used methodologies include Lecture, ppts, dumb charade, mime, string narrative, One-Act plays, questioning, lark, rhetoric, and interaction. The following methodologies will deal with some effective use in language teaching and to enrich the system of imparting knowledge/education.

• GDs –M-General Discussion is considered as one of the modern approaches of delivering in a class. It is especially helpful in management-oriented classes, where the scope lies in vigorous discussion, brainstorming, ideation and mind mapping. It makes the class lively and helps the learners to develop their oral, decision-making, note taking, leadership, questioning and problem-solving skills.

• Cue Cards – M-The "best approach to teaching vocabulary is to teach children some strategies for learning the meaning of words in context, and then encourage them to read voluminously and from a wide variety of texts and genres."(Cited in Sebastian Wren) The clarifying cue card/Flash cards provide students strategies to use when they encounter difficult words. The strategies give all students a way to learn words on their own. Flash cards also helpful in self-study groups.

• Role-play Simulations –M- role-playing is a learning method. Learners take on the role profiles of specific characters or organizations in a contrived setting. Role-play is designed primarily to build first person experience in a safe and supportive environment. Role-play is widely acknowledged as a powerful teaching technique in face to face teaching.

• Lecture –T: One of the conventional approaches of teaching; lecture suits everyone for the sake of convenience .The teacher delivers through the method of chalk and board or handouts and it is more of dictating of notes and penning down teachers' words. It is the delivery end that is more active in comparison to the receiving end, in the context of interaction.

• Interaction – T: Interaction method of imparting knowledge is pretty synonymous to the lecture mode only that in the former, there is active participation both on the students' and at the teachers' end. It is more of a question and answer session, where new ideas are extracted and new concepts come before the class.

• Ideation/Brainstorming – M: A modern methodology of teaching where a concept can be best delivered through brainstorming. Brainstorming is best done through 'wh' questions, leading to triggering of thoughts and clarity in the concept. From brainstorming, ideation or extracting the ideas according to the suitability of the student. For example, in a homogeneous class, the requirement of student 'A' may vary from the requirement of student 'B', thereby leading to mind mapping where

after ideation, it completely depends on the student for how much he will absorb and how much he will let it go. Student 'A' might absorb more than student 'B' according to caliber, learning ability and intelligence.

• Skits – T/ M: Skits, which existed in the society for eons is both a traditional and modern approach .It is a participatory learning technique. Sitting and scratching head and wishing to teach possessives or future tense, through skits can be like icing on the sugar! It makes students more skilled and rounded individuals. It gives the practical experience in communicating, to develop tolerance to see something from various perspectives. It can make one's perception level sharp. To move further, a class of Management, Organization Behaviour to Social Welfare can even be taught through street - plays.

• Anecdotes – I: Innovative in its application anecdotes can act as a great appetizer for a class. It specifically helps as it gives the fact of various eminent people in their goals of life and helps the students to visualize their goals in a similar fashion. Anecdotes travel across cultures breaking the mental, barriers and acts as real examples where we can dream and realize those dreams.

• Narratives T/M: This is usually a story; an account of a sequence of events, whether fictional or non-fictional. Some of the tools are: Storybooks, novels etc. We all love stories. And usage of vocabulary and management lessons can be best done with the help of narratives, which is quick grasping, absorbing, reflective, introspective and interesting as well.

• Interviews – M: An out-of-box technique interview method involves the students from the start of the assignment. Collecting information, collating them, presenting them in sequence, writing it down, presenting before the class, and finally evaluation, these procedures testify and enhances the quality of the student. This makes direct involvement with the personalities.

• Games – M: Not unheard of but management classes and language classes are best done through games. An innovative, modern methodology, games can be effective, thought provoking and real fun to spear head concepts, especially in ice-breaking classes and improving vocabulary classes.

• Movies – AV: Most opted and chosen medium of imparting knowledge, this audio-visual medium, movies is an appreciated methodology to drive home concepts. We all know that feast of eyes and senses, is well remembered and implemented. Let us say for example the documentary films or even movies like 'Taare Zameen Par' or even classics like 'Benhur' can bring in some historical insights as in the latter or an awe inspiring, motivating, defying the norms of society under the facade of falsehood as in the former, can be absorbing for the learners.

• Rhetoric – T/M: "In writing, as in any field, there is only one way to take a person from a novice to a veteran, and that method is practice. The ways are: Identifying rhetoric in written pieces, practicing prewriting strategies with rhetoric in mind, writing about prewriting, and practice writing..... Teachers should focus on the key aspects of rhetoric such as audience, purpose, and limitations of writing when introducing the prewriting aspect of writing to students. The tools writers need to create interesting pieces are included in the rhetoric."(Cited in Russell)

• Articles and Essays –I: Did we ever imagine that articles and essays could equally be a teaching methodology? Without taking for granted reading, writing, listening skills can be tutored through writing of essays and articles. Comprehensive reading and knowing a subject in depth are the gifts of writing articles. Writing acts as a weapon in learning a language. The knowledge does not culminate into essay; instead it is the essay that gives knowledge a firm ground.

CONCLUSION

It is actually difficult to say which teaching method is effective unless used in a classroom of students with different need, learning experience, intellectual levels, cultural background and attitude towards learning English as a Second Language. Sometimes more than one method is used to bring out the desired results in the language classroom where communication becomes the key factor of teaching-learning process. Learning does not only mean, subject specific or specialization specific, instead it should be holistic in nature, bringing an all round development to the learner. Teacher and

learner should work in unison to make knowledge complete.

Theory won't help in much if not implemented through practice and application of various teaching methodologies that just gives the right nutrition for knowledge acquiring.

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