

MY EXPERIENCE AS A TEACHER TO CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE METHOD FOR TEACHING IN TESOL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

“..As the teacher gains experience and knowledge, he or she will begin to develop an individual approach or personal method of teaching, one that draws on an established approach or method but that also uniquely reflects the teacher’s individual beliefs, values, principles, and experiences...” (Richards & Rogers (2001: p. 251): In the light of the above quotation, it is essential for each teacher to have his /her own special and various methods and approaches of teaching which suit constantly changing education’s demands nowadays. Discovering and improving the methods of teaching play a great role in the teacher’s success. This teaching methodology has been shaped by my personal experience. It serves to be a framework to start the job of education successfully in teaching. From my point of view, I think that learning means more than knowledge that you gain from studying, but it is a series of discoveries that last for a lifetime. Constructivist Learning Theory explains that if learners create their own know ledge instead of having somebody to create it for them, they will learn best. If everything in life is made ready for the student, learning will be meaningless. I think that the only way to make the students overcome the mistakes which they make during the process is by learning from mistakes or experience. Great efforts in teaching methodology have been made by educators and scholars in the field of teaching and learning English as a second language. Depending on the various purposes of teaching, there are appropriate methods which can be used by the teacher although each method may have pros and cons. In the field of education, there are numerous methods, approaches and techniques that aid in the profession as a teacher. To be a successful teacher, reflections should be done after each lesson to make sure that I have attempted the suitable methods for my class. Lastly, it is essential to conform to the values of Ministry of Education to accomplish the desired outcomes from students.

Keywords: Methods, Approaches, Teaching, Foreign language, Learning, Classroom, Students.

1. INTRODUCTION

“..As the teacher gains experience and knowledge, he or she will begin to develop an individual approach or personal method of teaching, one that draws on an established approach or method but that also uniquely reflects the teacher’s individual beliefs, values, principles, and experiences...” (Richards & Rogers (2001: p. 251):

In the light of the above quotation, it is essential for each teacher to have his /her own special and various methods and approaches of teaching which suit constantly changing education’s demands nowadays. Discovering and improving the methods of teaching play a great role in the teacher’s success. This teaching methodology has been shaped by my personal experience. It serves to be a framework to start the job of education successfully in teaching. From my point of view, I think that learning means more than knowledge that you gain from studying, but it is a series of discoveries that last for a lifetime. Constructivist Learning Theory explains that if learners create their own know ledge instead of having somebody to create it for them, they will learn best. If everything in life is made ready for the student, learning will be meaningless. I think that the only way to make the students overcome the mistakes which they make during the process is by learning from mistakes or experience.

2. OBJECTIVES AS A TEACHER

My objective in teaching my students is more than achieving high scores in the aspect of academics; it is rather to teach them the critical skills of survival when they deal with the “real world” outside the classroom. One of the crucial aspects in preparing my students to deal with the real world is boosting their confidence and improving their useful skills of communication which can be achieved by providing a supportive classroom environment. I must offer more opportunities for the students to speak up and share their experiences. One of my “house rules”, which I imposed in my classroom, was that after any form of participation offered by any student, I allowed the rest of students to clap and cheer enthusiastically. The concept of this method is giving the student who participated a sense of satisfaction and achievement and gradually she will be more confident as a person. Moreover, I never neglected some simple encouragement words or praises such as “Great!, Well done, you’ve done us proud” in the course of building students’ self-confidence. From my experience, I believe that this technique is very useful and important because I noticed that my students would be able to communicate more with me, thus learning by using such techniques becomes much more meaningful and effective.

3. CLASSROOM’S METHODS

3.1 Grammar Translation Method

The different methods and approaches which can be used by the teacher are too many to mention. Along my job as a teacher during eight years ago for both secondary and intermediate

stages, I tried to choose the appropriate method, according to the skill aimed to be taught in the lesson, which would help me to ensure that what is being taught is understood by my students. For example, if the skill to be learned in the lesson is reading or writing, I sometimes use the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) because I think that it is helpful for my students to read English texts, as students need to learn grammar rules and vocabulary. I can evaluate my student either by written tests (students translate from L1 to L2 or L2 to L1) or by questions about L2 and applying grammar rules. I normally used to use different techniques such as reading comprehension questions (making inference) about their own experience, antonyms-synonyms, etc. Although most instructors now acknowledge that this method is ineffective by itself, from my experience I find that it helps my students to understand the meaning and the use of grammar rules in L2 and then they would be able use them in their writing and to read passages with full understanding.

3.2 Direct Method

Sometimes, I use the Direct Method (also known as both the natural method and the conversational method), in which the L2 is the only language used in the class by me and my student. At the beginning, my students faced some difficulties to speak English in the class because they shied away and were afraid to make mistakes; my role was to encourage them in many ways such as gifts given to the student who tried to speak English even while making mistakes. I told my students that we are not native speakers but we try to speak English like the natives. I used this method because my students will learn the language itself and not about the language, and it lays great emphasis on speaking, the most important skill for many learners. I can teach my students grammar by using an inductive approach i.e. having my students find out rules through the presentation of linguistic forms in the target language. In addition, I teach my students concrete vocabulary through demonstration, objects, and pictures; whereas abstract vocabulary is taught by association of ideas.

3.3 Audio-lingual Method

In order to teach my students the correct pronunciation of English words, I use the Audio-lingual method ,which is considered to be the first scientific method since has its roots in both psychology and linguistics as it is illustrated by Diana Larsen in her book “ Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching”, (Second Edition). My students suffered from pronunciation difficulty and to solve this problem I could use many techniques. One of these techniques is repeating the new words even the students do not know their meanings. Also, listening to a tape-recording is a sufficient way because I could train my students to listen to the foreign language and therefore they would be able to imitate it. Sometimes, I asked my students to complete missing information in a given dialogue.

3.4 Communicative Language Teaching Method

To be a successful teacher, I should constantly help my students to interact in real life. This can be achieved by using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). One of the experts in the field of Communicative Language Teaching, Margie S. Berns, states that "language is interaction; it is interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)" (Berns, 1984, p. 5). In the classroom, I use some techniques such as role playing, picture strip story, scrambled sentences, etc. In fact, I noticed an improvement in my students' speaking, and they became more self-confident and as a result of that their participation increased.

3.5 Combining different methods

Sometimes I attempted to combine between different teaching methods in English study in order to become aware of the problems of some methods. For example, there would be some activities to do in class and the students could work either in groups or in pairs. Students will be free to do the activities although my role as an instructor remains and the students can do the assignment orally. By using a Task-based teaching method, I encourage my students to talk about a choosing topic, freely without restrictions.

"..foreign language learning under classroom conditions seems to partially follow the same set of natural processes that characterize other types of language acquisition...there seems to be a universal and common set of principles which are flexible enough and adaptable to the large number of conditions under which language learning may take place." (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991:,p, 301)

This quotation emphasizes the concept of integrating different methods of teaching English language and I think that the advantages of one method would complete the disadvantages of the other.

4. CONCLUSION

Great efforts in teaching methodology have been made by educators and scholars in the field of teaching and learning English as a second language. Depending on the various purposes of teaching, there are appropriate methods which can be used by the teacher although each method may have pros and cons. In the field of education, there are numerous methods, approaches and techniques that aid in the profession as a teacher. To be a successful teacher, reflections should be done after each lesson to make sure that I have attempted the suitable methods for my class.

Lastly, it is essential to conform to the values of Ministry of Education to accomplish the desired outcomes from students.

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