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Innovative and Activity—Based Teaching in ELT

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Abstract

Language is one of the effective tools for socialization. Socialization is a process in which one shares, transfers or communicates ideas, thoughts and perceptions in a society through communication. Happy living with good understanding is possible only through mastering the language and its skills. The purpose of teaching a language is not just making a student know about the language, but enabling him/her to manage and master a language unconsciously. Attempts to teach a language consciously with all its grammatical elements will definitely make learners view language as their greatest enemy. When there is a willingness to change, there is hope for progress in any field as Heraclitus, a presocratic Greek philosopher, puts it “there is nothing permanent except change.” Creativity and innovation benefits both students and teachers. In today's globalized scenario, English language plays a major role. English is considered to be the universal language. It can be equated to air as air sustains life. English is life. Likewise, English language has become the source of living. English teachers are highly responsible for determining the future of the students' learning language. Post modern era is characterized by creativity, innovation and novelty. In this post post-modern era, tradition and traditional methods of teaching language have become archaic. As India is globalized and is competing with other countries through innovation and creativity, the need of the hour recommends innovation in teaching English language too. This paper enumerates various innovative and activity based techniques involved in teaching English language apart from technology oriented language teaching. Innovative and activity based language teaching comes very handy for the learners to experientially learn a language without bogging themselves with the nitty-gritty of English grammar.

Keywords: Creativity, Innovation, Activity-Based, English Language, Globalization.

English is a universal language meant for global uses. English is known to a baby language. Though it sounds very simple teaching English as a second language is always a challenge. When the demand for knowing English language increases, more is the challenge faced by the teachers of English. Generally, English as a subject is boring and painful whereas when English is taught as a language using real time situations through activity – learning can take place unconsciously and interestingly. Learner's mind will never be static it is ever growing and ever changing. Whatever the teaching methodology can be, but teaching must be learner-centered. This is a humble attempt thought, implemented and practiced to achieve the set goal to a greater extent. This paper enumerates various innovative and activity based techniques involved in teaching English Language apart from technological oriented language teaching. Innovative and activity based language teaching comes very handy for the learners to experientially learn a language without bogging themselves with the nitty-gritty of English Grammar.

It will be worthwhile to explore this concern and identify the factors responsible for it, preparatory to finding some possible means of 'seeing...teaching differently' (Fanselow 1988: 114) Innovation is earmarked to attain expected results in terms of absolute concentration and unaltered interest levels as for as English Language teaching is concerned. Innovative methods unlike traditional or orthodox methods tend to draw in students into a kind of healthy, competitive involvement in the process of learning a language. Creative activities and innovative way of teaching language come in handy for the teachers of English as a second language. Some of the activities are enumerated to highlight the status of the English teachers in teaching English as a second language. English teachers are no more teachers, but are facilitators, facilitating students with an avenue to act through activities.

The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative... since it provides a purpose for the classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake. (Richards, et al. 1986 : 289 cited in Nunan 1988)

INTERVIEW TO INTRODUCE :

Objective : This strategy serves as an important element to start with collaborative Learning. This was introduced with an aim to provide a situation to introduce and to get introduced to develop the practice of socializing.

Task : The Learners were asked to collect the details of as many Learners as Possible within a stipulated time and were asked to introduce them to the whole class until everyone in the class come to know about everybody.

Outcome : The outcome was as expected in the objective. The Learners get to know each other before they get into the serious act of learning in group. Every Learner in the group felt familiar with the other.

1. STORM TO ANSWER:

Objective: This round table structures were introduced to create a platform to make learners realize that they are put in group and no more stand alones. The setting symbolizes group learning environment. The aim of this strategy was to provide an avenue for the Learners to Storm ideas and generate responses for the questions.

Task: The group was given an issue to storm ideas from which they will be posed with one question or many for which the Learners are given opportunity to generate responses.

Outcome: It proved effective because the Learners were able to contribute and at the same time gather ideas through which they were able to generate responses apt to the question or questions posed within the stipulated time frame.

2. GROUP ROLE PLAYS :

Objective : This strategy was initiated to enable Learners to indulge in team work to make everyone learns through group roles.

Task : The Learners were divided into small groups to discuss on an assigned topic. Based on the topic given, they must discuss and form a small play to bring out the theme.

Outcome : This served as a motivational aspect to make the Learners learn through collaboration and each and every Learner tend to present present their roles through language.

3. GUIDED RECIPROCAL PEER QUESTIONING :

Objective : To develop an attitude to answer any question posed by their own peers after a long discussion or group activity.

Task : The Learners are provided with a handout or a cutting from the newspaper or a script highlighting a common problem for discussion. Everybody discusses on it and finally each and every Learner is questioned by their own peers critically. The facilitator guides the group and motivates Learners at the time of facing questions.

Outcome : After rigorous practice, and after repeated use of this strategy we were able to achieve good results. It is felt that even the slow learners were able to contribute their ideas and were able to face questions boldly and assertively. The team acted as a critic and at the same time motivated the slow learners to learn language.

4. ROUND ROBIN LANGUAGE GAME :

Objective : The objective of this Round Robin Language Game is to make students feel that language learning is interesting and not so complicated. Play way method of teaching and learning of language.

Task: The students are divided into three groups with 20 students in a group and every student in a group is numbered. The exercise starts this way, the student with number 1 in group A asks a simple question to student with number 1 in group B. The student in group B answers the question posed by the student in Group A. The student with number 1 in Group B asks a simple question to the student with number 1 in group C and he/she answers the question. The student in group C asks a question to student with number 2 in Group A. the round goes and goes on till the last student of Group C asks a question to student with number 1 in Group A.

Outcome : The outcome of this language game is that it instigates students to actively participate in the language learning game. Whatever a teacher

wishes to teach, can do so with this Round Robin Language Game.

5. PREDICT THE END :

Objective : The objective of this activity is to develop the imaginative and creative capability in students.

Task : The teacher tends to narrate a short story halfway and allow the students to complete the story. This gives an opportunity for the students to predict the end of the story through their imaginative and creative power.

Outcome : The students really use this opportunity to tune the end to their wish and to the extent their creativity works. This proves to be a better practice to develop creative skills.

6. LITERATURE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING:

Objective : To break monotony of teaching language through language practices, the literature can be used to serve the purpose which really motivates students in learning a language.

Task : A poem/ a piece of literature is given to students to inculcate the four language skills, i.e Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing and components of the language like pronunciation, grammar, etc.

Outcome : This method was really beneficial for the students to develop their comprehending capability and also to develop critical thinking skills.

7. REFLECT AND REACT:

Objective : To develop the reflective power in students.

Task : The teachers display a picture in the class and asks the students to react to it through responding the following questions. For Example



1. What does this picture reflect??
2. If you are the Prime Minister of the country what you will do to address this issue?

Outcome : The outcome and the participation will be excellent. Students start trying to converse in English language. Students are given an avenue to construct sentences of their own capabilities. The teachers correct if necessary and facilitate students for constructing simple sentences.

8. MALAPROPISMS :

Malapropism is the act of using an incorrect word in place of one that is similar in pronunciation. The word comes from a character named Mrs. Malaprop in the play "The Rivals" by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Malapropism is also referred to as Dogberryism, named after Officer Dogberry in Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." Both characters made these speech errors.

Rainy weather can be hard on the sciences. (sinuses)

Alice said she couldn't eat crabs or any other crushed Asians. (crustaceans)

I have no delusions to the past. (allusions)

You could have knocked me over with a fender. (feather)

You lead the way and we'll precede. (proceed)

Unfortunately, my affluence over my niece is very small. (influence)

A rolling stone gathers no moths. (moss)

Good punctuation means not to be late. (punctuality)

Having one wife is called monotony. (monogamy)

When such sentences are given for the students to read, check and correct it, it really amuses them when they gain different meaning and also the students strive hard to find the right substitute. So when they make right substitute they not only come across to know the word but also imbibe the structure of the whole sentence. This way malapropism can be used to beat new ground in language teaching.

The outcome of this innovative and activity based language teaching has been experientially realized by the author of this study and has proven beneficial for the students and at the same time it is an exciting adventure for the teachers of English to teach English for the learners of English as a second language.

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