INVESTIGATING THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND USEFUL TECHNIQUES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract. Conventional notions of method are based on training models which very often take teachers away from the classroom. The current paper is examined to present the recent and popular innovations in ELT that have been used practically in recent years in the entire world reviewing the past trends. Moreover, this is also an endeavor to encourage the ELT trainer to modernize their classroom arrangements. The present study aims at evaluating and suggesting some useful teaching techniques that can be attempted in imparting knowledge to the students. It analyses the innovative and quite interesting methods we have in teaching English language. Everybody has their own understanding and conclusions on teaching English language. Basically teaching must include two major components sending and receiving information. Ultimately, ateacher tries his best to impart knowledge as the way he understood it. So, any communication methods that serve this purpose without destroying the objective could be considered as innovative methods of teaching. There has been a misunderstanding between traditional methods and practical methods always. Somehow teachers and learners should agree each other in order to fill the gap between the generations of these methods. The use of innovative methods in educational institutions has the potential not only to improve education, but also to empower people, strengthen governance and stimulate the effort to achieve the human development goal for the country.

Key words: innovative; method; teaching; learner.

Introduction. Education is a light that shows the mankind the right direction to surge. The purpose of education is not just making a student literate but adds rationale thinking, knowledgeability and self-sufficiency. When there is a willingness to change, there is hope for progress in any field. Creativity can be developed and innovation benefits both students and teachers. English, the official language of the world is a very tricky language to teach. In fact, every language varies to teach. English is a very old language and has undergone many forms changes from Proto English derived from the Latin and the German culture to the Modern English which was established after in the post Renaissance period. Each version was simpler than it's previous. Present day English is the simplest adaptation of a very old Language and yet it is still difficult to teach this language effectively especially to those who speak English as a foreign language. There are a variety of teaching strategies that teachers learn from numerous sources. Many strategies focus on teaching content to students in the early childhood classroom. Some strategies work the same as another, but simply are labeled differently. The key phrase noted in a study conducted regarding effective teaching strategies states, "Providing teachers with adequate tools and techniques to support these learners is essential" (Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005). Reality is that it takes an ELL student two to three years to become proficient in a communicative language.

Problems with current methodologies. Nowadays, English is taught in a very orthodox manner in almost all over the world. The basic teaching is needed. Teaching the alphabets and the formation of the words is essential and a must. But there is something that is even more important. The children must be able to speak the words and understand their meaning before writing them down. The foundation to teach English can only be taught using the orthodox methods of teaching the alphabets and the words and the rules. But then, teaching only the rules is found to be boring by most students and it is because of this that they lose interest in learning the language. Although there is no way other than the traditional one to teach the basics of the language, these methods must be tweaked a bit so as to appeal to the students. When it comes to teaching English to students of higher classes who already know the basics traditional methods, generally tend to yield poorer results that innovative methods. This has already been proven by methods employed like use of stories, poems, movies, books, newspapers, and etc. These methods help the students learn the language better and also enjoyable. Therefore, the present paper attempts to address some interesting methods especially for second language teachers to consider in teaching.

The most interesting techniques among English language teaching

- Teaching through Conversations

Undoubtedly, conversations are the most valuable ways of teaching the language. When a child learns his or her mother tongue, it is by the conversations that takes place between them and others or by listening to the conversations made by the others. The child is never taught the language but is still able to percept the meaning and learns it automatically to use it in day to day life. No one ever teaches the kid the characters of the language or how to make sentences or the grammar of that language. The conversations alone teach the children. Conversations shape a very important part of the teaching process. The sentence construction and the grammar is not something that can be completely taught by rules. They have to be taught intuitively. That can only happen through a lot of reading and a lot of listening. This can be taken care of easily as every conversation needs a topic. The topic can be given to the students in form of written documents which they have to first read then form an opinion and then have a conversation about it or it can be spoken out and then they can listen, understand and also take part in the conversation. The participation and other aspects of the conversation can always be evaluated through points which will also drive the students to take part in the conversation. These conversations have to be general. They have to happen as if friends are talking to each other.

In this way, the students are comfortable in expressing themselves in a comfortable way. This procedure may take more time but it would be the most efficient one in the end.

- Enacting the Stories

One of the most important parts of teaching a language is stories. They help teach the students about the formation of sentences and how to express their thoughts and a lot of other things in a given context. They also help the students keep interest alive as the story's end is something that every student wants to know. It appeals to the inquisitive nature of the students. Any unfinished story always keeps the mind of the reader agitated.

Although the method of using stories has been applied, the procedure of teaching the language through stories is generally not right. The evaluation procedure of testing the students in their proficiency over the language based on the story is under questions. This is generally not that effective. Due to this, the students generally tend to take up the stories as a chapter rather than looking at it as an interesting read. A story is supposed to appeal to the creative part of the brain. It helps us be more imaginative, by trying to visualize the things that are happening inside the story. It should not only teach them the language but it should also help them in extracting a lesson from the story. Keeping questions for evaluation kills, the entire idea of imagination for the students look at the story as something that they need to learn for answers.

There is a better way of using the stories to English using stories. The students can enact the stories or the plays. In this way the students are personally engaged with the stories. They can bring their own interpretation of the character to life. It is interesting for the students to understand the characters and put themselves in their positions. It engages their creativity by allowing them to create the entire set, assign the characters and play it out according to what they had imagined. It also helps them understand other people's interpretation of the story and helps them have a healthy conversation about it which again helps them in learning the language. It removes the dull aspects and makes the learning more colorful without jeopardizing the learning of the language. It may not be perfect but it will leave a deep impression on their mind.

- Teaching through Games

Obviously, vocabulary is the most important part of any language. To understand the meaning of the words and to use them in daily life is a very difficult task and games can help the students overcome this burden. Games like scrabble, housie, crosswords and wonderwords have been used in some educational institutions for this specific purpose. These games are just based on words and help the students develop their vocabulary. In addition, these very simple games can be played to help improve the word database of the students such as simple dictation competitions, synonym competitions, anagrams and hangman. All these games are very addictive and help a lot in improving our vocabulary items.

Since this is a very interesting method of teaching. Students and children generally tend to like games and want to play them more and more. Traditional methods dictated for study and games to be separate but the fact remains that the students tend to be more interested in playing games rather than sitting down to study. Any logical reasoning would dictate us to combine the two aspects to solve the problem. The games as a part of learning would help the students keep their interest as the desire to win is very strong. It keeps us going and when included with different aspects of learning, the learning process would continue almost throughout the day without the children getting tired or bored of studying.

- Role Playing and Scenario Analysis-based Teaching

Role playing and scenario analysis is mostly used in organizations that try to analyze a problem relating to the organization, and this is also used in management institutions. But the similar kind of practice can also be tried in other specialization like science and engineering. Science and engineering courses have practical but in support of those practical if students are given a scenario and other options to solve a particular issue, then the students are exposed to decision making in a given environment. For example, in teaching accounting the role of accountant can be explained by role playing technique. Invoice and bills can be given to students and asked them to assume the role of accountant. Here the real entries pertaining to transactions are made by the student and this is more practical approach to teaching where theory is supplemented by proper practical knowledge. Similar kind of technique with little differences can be applied in teaching language, management, and etc.

- Competitions

Most of the times competitions like debates and elocutions also help the students a lot in learning the language as the aspect of the competitions keep them at the best in conversations. It forces them to use the best possible construction of sentences to put forward their opinions and to use appropriate vocabulary. This is a very important tool in helping them learn the language. Also, these competitions help them address large crowds which is again is a very important part of personality development.

- Teaching with Sense of Humor

People love a teacher with an infectious sense of humor. Looking at the lighter side of life not only fosters cordial relations between professors and students, but also provides welcome relief while trying to follow a difficult lecture on a complicated subject. When there is a willingness to change, there is hope for progress in any field. Teaching is a challenge. Learning is a challenge. Combining both effectively is a challenge. Being humorous is a challenge. However, laughing is easy. We are convinced both by experience and research that using humor in teaching is a very effective tool for both the teacher and student. Humor strengthens the relationship between student and teacher, reduces

stress, and makes a course more interesting and if relevant to the subject, may even enhance recall of the material. Humor has the ability to relax people, reduce tension, and thereby create an atmosphere conducive for learning and communication. Numerous studies in the field of advertising have noted that humor is the most effective tool for enhancing recall of advertisements. It is easy to create a humor in the classroom by reading books of jokes and to listen to professional comics. The students should be encouraged to take notes, especially to learn about the professionals' use of such techniques as exaggeration, pauses, and timing. Observe reality and exaggerate it – much humor lies in observations about real life and truthful situations. In conclusion, humor not only plays an important role in the healing process but is also very important in education.

- Help from the Multimedia

Multimedia is the combination of various digital media types such as text, images, audio and video, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey information to an audience. Since traditional approaches do not encourage students to question what they have learnt or to associate with previously acquired knowledge (Teo & Wong, 2000), problem-based learning is seen as an innovative measure to encourage students to learn how to learn via real-life problems (Boud & Feletti, 1999). Currently, many institutions are moving towards problem-based learning as a solution to producing graduates who are creative and can think critically, analytically, and solve problems. Multimedia sources can be used to help the students improve their language. But great precautions must be taken. This method should be used in the final stages of learning as that is the only place where there is no scope of damage as most of the movies and songs etc. use colloquial English most of the times which is grammatically wrong and it is very important that the students understand that fact so that they do not use that form of the language in their everyday usage.

Besides, this kind of source is very helpful as it does not feel like education. This is something that the students will do in their spare time. The songs are the best way to communicate how to use a language to express our feelings. Movies are a very common past time but apart from that most of the times they are also very instructional and educational. Also this method appeals to the students as most of the times they are able to connect with the songs and the movies which help them understand the meaning of expressions, usage of tools of the language like comparisons, personifications etc. These sources help them understand why such tools are necessary and also help them understand their usage. Hence, this method is again very effective in teaching the language. Traditional methods of reading newspapers and books, novels are also very good methods to teach the language. When the traditional methods are modified along with some innovative ideas the entire learning and the teaching process is enriched and guarantees a success in efficient learning. These are some of the innovative and creative ways of teaching the English Language.

- Creative Assignments

Up till now most of the techniques that we discussed required a greater amount of effort on the student's part. This method requires effort on the teacher's part. Assignments help the students learn something on their own and most of the times they have to research on something then write something up on it. This method although effective is most of the times very tedious. This method of approach is very appropriate for sciences and engineering although when it comes to languages the students should be given assignments in which they have to modify something that already exists.

If the students are just given assignments like "write a story or a poem or a report" then most of the students crack because not everyone can come up with a story or even if they come up with one they cannot write it down. In such case the students should be given the base knowledge and data and then ask them to modify the data for example the students can be given a base story and then ask them to modify a part of it. This engages their creativity and also helps them overcome their difficulty of writing. Above all it lifts the pressure of creating completely new. Invention is very difficult especially when we are being forced to do it. In this way, the students are not forced to complete the assignment and then they can do it whole heartedly and hence complete the learning experience that can be gained from the assignment

- Mind Map

Mind maps were developed in the late 60s by Tony Buzan as a way of helping students make notes that used only keywords and images, but mind map can be used by teachers to explain concepts in an innovative way. They are much quicker to make and much easier to remember and review because of their visual quality. The non-linear nature of mind maps makes it easy to link and cross-reference different elements of the map. Mind Maps are also very quick to review, as it is easy to refresh in formation in your mind just by glancing once. Mind Maps can also be effective mnemonics and remembering their shape and structure can provide the cues necessary to remember the information within it. They engage much more of the brain in the process of assimilating and connecting facts than conventional notes.

The key notion behind mind mapping is that we learn and remember more effectively by using the full range of visual and sensory tools at our disposal. Pictures, music, color, even touch and smell play a part in our learning armory will help to recollect information for long time. The key is to build up mind maps that make the most of these things building on our own creativity, thinking and cross linking between ideas that exist in our own minds. As the recent researches support, any particular information explained with the help of graph charts make a high impact in the minds of the people and keeping this as the core aspect the teachers may try to picture the concepts and show the same to the students.

- Z to A Approach

This approach attempts to explain the application part of a particular concept first. The teacher should explain the application of a particular concept first and explain the effects of such applications. For example, in management subject-motivation is explained in a manner that the organization get extensive benefits out of using some techniques like promotions and awards. So here the use of promotion is explained first and later students would get interest in knowing what are promotions and awards. The teacher starts explaining what is promotion and explains what motivation theory in management is.

- Mnemonics Words Approach

Here the teacher is not supposed to talk on a particular concept for a quite long time. But to make it clear to the student she can just go on saying mnemonics or its associated meaning in words. Here he goes on saying only words instead of sentence, and once they come to a basic understanding of the meaning of a particular concept then the teacher will explain in sentences. For example, in teaching language courses this technique can be used as an effective medium by the teacher to develop word power.

- Role Playing and Scenario Analysis Based Teaching

Role playing and scenario analysis is mostly used in organizations that try to analyze a problem pertaining to the organization, and this is also used in management institutions. But the similar kind of practice can be tried in other specialization too like science and engineering. Science and engineering courses have practical but in support of those practical if students are given a scenario and other options to solve a particular issue, then the students are exposed to decision making in a given environment.

For example, in teaching accounting the role of accountant can be explained by role playing technique. In voice and bills can be given to students and asked them to assume the role of accountant. Here the real entries pertaining to transactions are made by the student and this is more practical approach to teaching where theory is supplemented by proper practical knowledge. Similar kind of technique can be applied in management, engineering and science courses.

Conclusion.

Since English is the official language of this world it is of utmost importance that this language has to be taught in such a way that it will help us not just to speak and write and listen but to communicate. That is the purpose of the language and that is what it must be used for. Hence innovative methods help in bringing a change and most of the times for the better. It helps the students learn faster and in an efficient, interesting and an interactive manner and it is the teacher's responsibility to leave the traditional methods and make way for new and better methods for the students benefit.

Throughout the world, information technology is significantly changing the way students, faculty and staff learn and work. Internet-ready phones, handheld computers, digital cameras, and MP3 players are revolutionizing the college life. As the demand for technology continues to rise, colleges and universities are moving all sorts of student services, from laundry monitoring to snack delivery online. Technology is also changing the classroom experience. In addition, tablet PCs, compact computers that allow you to write notes directly on to the screen with a special pen, replace the archaic projector. With the tablet technology allow professors to make notes on charts and spread sheets and send them directly to their students' PCs and he will get a feedback from each student. From the above, we can make out that the information and communication technology has made many innovations in the field of teaching and also made a drastic change from the old paradigm of teaching and learning. In the new paradigm of learning, the role of student is more important than teachers. The concepts of paperless and penless classroom are emerging as an alternative to the old teaching learning method. Nowadays there is democratization of knowledge and the role of the teacher is changing to that of facilitator. We need to have interactive teaching and this changing role of education is inevitable with the introduction of multimedia technology and the spawning of a technologically-savvy generation of youths.

The researchers recommend that the teaching would be highly effective if the teacher start to use the recent multimedia a technologies like usage of computers extensively or some modifications in the conventional mode of teaching. The use of computers may be very well practiced in the environment where the use of such technology is highly possible, but there must be some sort of innovation which can also be practiced in an environment where such use of technology is on its way to growth. In those environments use of humor, role playing, words–words approach, Z-A approach are the ideas that can very well be practiced. The researchers believe that the core objective of teaching is passing on the information or knowledge to the minds of the students. Any method using computers or modifying the existing conventional chalk-talk method are innovative if they ultimately serve the attainment of core objective of teaching.

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