
Reflection on Learning New Trends of Learning English Language

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Abstract

Now-a-days traditional techniques have lost their way and new techniques tend to be more effective in teaching English grammar. Computers and language teaching have been walked to hand for a long time and contributed as teaching tools in the classroom. Vocabulary plays an important part of learning and understanding the English language. Conversation skill and drills are effective ways to learn English language. Listening also adds colours to our learning of language. Reflective Learning is an excellent method for assessing students' communication strengths and weaknesses. "Action speaks louder than words", which tells us that body language, speed, articulation and pauses, play the important role in learning English language.

Key Words - Reflective Teaching, Techniques, Grammar, Vocabulary, Body language

Introduction

Generally learners of English language feel that learning grammar is often a challenge for them. Verb tenses and all its forms - simple present, present continuous, simple past, past continuous, simple future, future continuous and future perfect continuous can be difficult for English language learners to comprehend and to effectively use in real world situations. Now, traditional techniques have lost their way and new techniques tend to be more effective in teaching English grammar. Computers and language teaching have been walked to hand for a long time and contributed as teaching tools in the classroom. Computer applies to language teaching such as specialized websites, blogs, journals, language teaching methodology etc. To impart clear and effective knowledge we should provide the proper educational process in every classroom: that is word processor, digital camera, digital video, internet, web page, email, video conferencing, presentation, software based on grammar skills etc.

Rationale

All development begins with education and education of course stems from language. It is of paramount importance in India as all modern devices, equipment and machines have their

instructions written in English only. Most of the learning resources online are in English only. It is incomprehensible that majority of people in India are being oppressed by the mere lack of knowledge of a language. English is inevitable for students, jobseekers and employees as English is a medium of instructions in all academic areas in universities and workplaces.

Methods for Teaching/Learning

Traditional teaching involves text books and other written material for learning. But if we use real world situations, enacting drama giving situation related to formal and informal situations that can enhance their grammar skills.

Vocabulary plays an important part of learning and understanding the English language. Language can be learnt without burden by using teaching techniques such as vocabulary exercises, word searches, quizzes and games.

Conversation skill and drills are effective ways to learn English language. Effective learning can be through class discussions, presentations, pair work, group work, task –oriented assignments etc. Effective communication includes a give and take exchange that audio books to apps. This can help to improve communication skills. Students can listen to or read along with audio books to hear how the speaker pronounces and enunciates different words or phrases.

Listening can add colours to our learning of language - listening of audio in English, listening to native English speakers, watching videos with native English speakers, listening and watching news programs in English, responding to questions in English and reviewing English grammar concepts. Teachers can help their students develop listening skills by reading a selection of text aloud and then having the classroom discussions and reflect on the content.

Team-Building Exercises

Learners should be assisted providing Team-building exercises to sharpen both oral and written communication skills. In this way students get the chance to work in small groups, thereby reducing some of the pressure, but it also an opportunity for them to debate their opinions, take turns, and work together towards a common goal. They can also be provided with Open-ended questions which are vital for inspiring discussion and demonstrating.

Critical thinking exercises may be used, for improving student communication skills, by verbally or through written assignments that give students the chance to answer questions creatively using their learned vocabulary and expressions.

Reflective Learning Opportunities

Reflective Learning is an excellent method for assessing their communication strengths and weaknesses. It is recording students reading selected text or videotaping group presentations. Students can reflect on their oral performance in small groups. Then, they know themselves their status of learning and they can get used to receiving constructive criticism. So reflective teaching plays wonders in learning. This is about the teachers questioning and exploring their own practice of teaching. It is a kind of teaching that is going beyond the edges of what we know and how we could do things differently or better.

The Elements of Reflective Teaching

Body language- “Action speaks louder than words.”

In a face to face interaction a person does not communicate only through words. His whole personality – his general bearing, facial expression, posture and gestures – is involved in the process. A neatly dressed man with a pleasant expression will find it easier to establish a rapport with others. Once you are able to secure the attention of the audience, more than half work is done.

Posture – While speaking we should use our hands for appropriate gestures but there should be no peculiar flourishes. If a microphone is being used, keep ourselves eight to ten inches away from the microphone, to ensure a proper transmission. We should keep our hands on the sides and the note cards on the podium.

Eye contact – Eye contact is one of the most immediate and effective means of establishing rapport with an audience. Look at your audience and pause for a while before you say anything. To start speaking as soon as one reaches the podium shows lack of poise and create a poor impression on the audience. Look at the audience as often as possible. A good way is to look straight in to the eyes of a member of the audience for a few seconds and then shift one’s glance

to another person. It is better to make eye contact with as many as possible. This will help everyone feel involved and a healthy rapport will be established between the speaker and the audience. If the listeners feel that you are ignoring them, it is most likely that they would lend a deaf ear. If the listeners don't meet your eyes, they are probably not concentrating on your talk. Then it becomes necessary for you to change your approach to win their attention.

Paraphrase - involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.

Précis - A Précis is a short summary, being only about one-third to one-quarter the length of the original selection. It is not a paraphrase, and should give only the 'heart of the selection'. It should also be written from the point of view of the author and no ideas of your own should be included. In a Précis summary, you interject no emotional feelings toward the essay. All you do is take the original authors main points and turn them into your own words. Writing a Précis summary is often one of the hardest papers to do in any class or any situation.

Speed- Every speaker has a natural pace. However, she /he should make it neither too slow nor too fast. The speaker's speed of speaking should be such that the audience can understand what is being said, without any conscious effort. We should speak at the pace of 100 to 125 words per minute.

Articulation – Articulation means to express the ideas in a clear and distinct way. Every word should be pronounced without slurring over syllables or just mumbling something incoherently. Variation in pitch and tone of the voice is essential to convey the message. Speak loud enough so that everyone in the audience can listen to you. The art of clear and confident articulation generates the receptive audience, willing to act upon the ideas.

Pause – A deliberate pause is very important. It helps the audience to understand the feelings of the speaker and give them time to recapitulate and assimilate what the speaker has said so far.

Oral Presentation

Here are some significant aspects of oral presentation. They would help you remember the points you remember the points you should bear in mind in order to make your oral presentation effective.

Pronunciation

- the pronunciation of individual should sound clear and proper
- the right syllable should be stressed
- the intonation should be appropriate

Delivery

- the presenter must be poised and relaxed
- the voice is to be animated, vibrated and well modulated
- the volume of the voice should be maintained according to the size of the audience
- the pauses must be at the right places
- the rate of delivery would be normal, approximately 125 words per minute

Bartlett (1990) points out that becoming a reflective teacher involves moving beyond a primary concern with instructional techniques and “how to” questions and asking “what” and “why” questions that regard instructions and managerial techniques not as ends in themselves, but as part of broader educational purposes. Asking “what and why” questions give us a certain power over our teaching. We could claim that the degree of autonomy and responsibility we have in our work as teachers is determined by the level of control we can exercise over our actions. In reflecting on the above kind of questions, we begin to exercise control and open up the possibility of transforming our everyday classroom life. (Bartlett, 1990. 267)

For example if we play games we can make the child clear with proper knowledge of grammar learning. Who has won the lottery? (The question Quiz)

In this activity students have an opportunity to practice, using polarity- type questions to seek information, using several tense forms. This is a guessing game in which students have to guess the name of one of their classmates who has won the lottery.

The game involves students asking polarity questions (ie-the question that get the response –Yes/ No) to discover information about the lottery winner. The challenge is to find the answer by only

asking the Yes/ No question. The activity will help students practice interrogative structures in real life.

Context

First, announces to the class that one of them has just won a lottery. They will have to guess the name of the person by asking questions about him or her.

Divide the class into groups of five or six. Tell one member of each group (you can call him or her a group leader) the name of the classmate who is supposed to have won a lottery. The rules of the game are:

- Only the group leader knows the name of the “Winner”
- Each group member has to ask the group leader a question to find out who the person is and the group leader can answer only by Yes or No.
- The question should be about the persons’ appearance.
- The questions should be in format – Does he-----Is she (eg-Does she have curly hair? Is she tall?)
- Each group member takes a turn to ask one question answer try to guess the name. If the guess is wrong the next group member asks another question and so on until the group has guessed the correct name.
- This is a game and the whole class has to be involved even the person whose name is being guessed should not know that he or she is the “Winner”. Only the group leader will know and they should not share the name with their group mates beforehand.
- The game ends when one of the groups guesses the name correctly.

So, we conclude that the game is an example of reflective practice that facilitates teaching, learning and understanding of grammar among students in a joyful manner.

Conclusion

Students can understand English language, by learning all the grammar aspects. It increases their confidence level. Moreover, everyone needs to learn English language and be skilled in order to meet their academic needs and workplace requirements.

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