

What Is The Best Teaching Method for Learning English?

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Abstract: Many linguists have proved that there is not one single best method for everyone in all contexts, and that no one's teaching method is inherently superior to the others. Also, it is not always possible or appropriate to apply the same methodology to all learners, who have different objectives, different environments and different learning needs. A good experienced professional language teacher always adopts approaches and methods, deciding on the most suitable techniques and applying the most appropriate methodology for his/her learner's specific objectives, learning style and context. This article discusses the methods of teaching English as a foreign language.

Key words: Methods and approaches, teaching English, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-based language teaching

INTRODUCTION

Once William A. Ward mentioned "The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates and the great teacher inspires". This means that a good experienced professional language teacher always adopts approaches and methods, deciding on the most suitable techniques and applying the most appropriate methodology for his/her learner's specific objectives, learning style and context. Because, many linguists have proved that there is not one single best method for everyone in all contexts, and that no one's teaching method is inherently superior to the others. Also, it is not always possible or appropriate to apply the same methodology to all learners, who have different objectives, different environments and different learning needs.

Materials and Methods

As we are currently living in an era of information technology, so today we are being drowned in the deluge of information. A gale of changes has blown in the pedagogy of English Language Teaching (ELT). ICT (video cameras, computers, LCD projectors and etc.) has initiated new possibilities into the classroom. Methods and approaches of teaching English have developed rapidly, especially in the last 50 years in both general education and language teaching.

The main methodologies are listed below in the chronological order of their development:

- Grammar Translation – the classical method
- Direct Method – discovering the importance of speaking
- Audio-lingualism – the first modern methodology
- Humanistic Approaches – a range of holistic methods applied to language learning
- Communicative Language Teaching – the modern standard method
- Principled Eclecticism – fitting the method to the learner, not the learner to the method.

Each method has a different focus or priority, so let's look at what this means in practical terms in the classroom. The more common methods have a link to a separate page with more details and an explanation of how they work, including the most common method currently used – Communicative Language Teaching:

Method	Focus	Characteristics
<u>Grammar Translation</u>	Written literary texts	Translate from English into your native language
<u>Direct Method</u> (also called Natural Method)	Everyday spoken language	Student learns by associating meaning directly in English
<u>Audio-Lingual Method</u>	Sentence and sound patterns	Listening and speaking drills and pattern practice only in English
Cognitive Code Approach	Grammar rules	English grammar rules deduced and then understood in context
<u>Humanistic Approaches</u> – 4 popular examples:		
– The Silent Way	Student interaction rather than teacher	Teacher is silent to allow student awareness of how English works
– Suggestopedia	Meaningful texts and vocabulary	Relaxed atmosphere, with music; encourages subliminal learning of English
– Community Language Learning	Student interaction	Understanding of English through active student interaction
– Comprehension Approach (Natural Approach, the Learnables, and Total Physical Response)	Listening comprehension	English speaking delayed until students are ready; meaning clarified through actions and visuals
<u>Communicative Language Teaching</u>	Interaction, authentic communication and negotiating meaning	Understanding of English through active student interaction; role play, games, information gaps

Content-based, Task-based, and Participatory Approaches	What is being communicated, not structure of English	Content based on relevance to students' lives: topics, tasks, problem-solving
Learning Strategy Training, Cooperative Learning, and Multiple Intelligences	How to learn	Teach learning strategies, cooperation; activities vary according to different intelligences

[1, *Based on Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching (Oxford University Press)*

Recent discussions of language teaching methodology have emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for learners to communicate. Communicative language teaching (CLT) has been put forth around the world as the “new “, or “innovative” way to teach English as a second or foreign language. The essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication in order to allow them to develop their communicative competence. By definition, CLT puts the focus on the learner. [2, Savignon, 2001].

Results and Discussions

In CLT, the following sequence of activities is often used [3, Littlewood,1986].

Writing

1. *Pre-writing activities.* Activities designed to generate ideas for writing or focus the writers' attention on a particular topic.
2. *Drafting activities.* Activities in which students produce a draft of their composition, considering audience and purpose.
3. *Revising activities.* Activities in which students focus on rereading, analyzing, editing, and revising their own writing.

Reading

1. *Pre-reading activities.* Activities which prepare the students for reading the text. Such activities could include providing a reason for reading, introducing the text, breaking up the text, dealing with new language, and asking signpost questions.
2. *While-reading activities.* Activities which students complete as they read and which may be either individual, group, or whole class
3. *Post-reading activities.* Activities which are designed to provide a global understanding of the text in terms of evaluation and personal response. Such activities could include eliciting a personal response from the students, linking the content with the student's personal experience, establishing relationship between the text and others, and evaluating characters, incidents, ideas, and arguments.

As one can notice here that there is a general acceptance of the complexity and interrelatedness of skills in both written and oral communication and of the need for learners to have the experience of communication, to participate in the negotiation of meaning. It is clear that the principles of CLT apply not only to speaking and listening activities but to reading and writing activities as well which involves interpretation and negotiation of meaning between writers and readers. Speaking and listening activities also go through the same stages namely preparation stage or pre-activity,

during -activity where the teacher presents the material of the lesson and post –activity stage where students practice the new concepts and apply them in a new situation.

Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that as being language teachers, we always need to choose the techniques and activities that are appropriate for each particular task, context and learner, with a focus on motivation and helping learners become independent and inspired to learn more.

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