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Task Based Language Learning – An Efficient Learning Method

Abstract

The traditional or conventional pattern of examination oriented system focuses on passing English as a subject and not as a language. Innovative methodologies are adopted for a pleasant teaching-learning experience to meet the challenging task. The activity-based learning methods have great advantages as it is appealing to a wide range of different senses and also appeal to individual's varied learning styles. Different activities can be identified and can be tried in the skills thereby increasing the students' interest in learning process. The Activity Based Learning plays a key role in developing the critical and creative mind of students.

Key Words: conventional teaching, task based language learning, analytical skills

Introduction

In the modern education system, there have been revolutionary changes. Technology has changed the overall outlook of schooling. Now the teacher is acting as a resource person rather than as traditional classroom teachers with chalk and blackboard. The traditional or conventional pattern of examination oriented system focuses on passing English as a subject and not as a language. Innovative methodologies are adopted for a pleasant teaching-learning experience to meet the challenging task.

The activity-based learning methods have great advantages as it is appealing to a wide range of different senses and also appeal to individual's varied learning styles. The main factor that makes activity-based method more appealing is that it paves way for the learners to enjoy and learn in a relaxed, in groups of teams which is considered an optimum environment which is almost a prerequisite of effective learning. As Nunan (1995) has described Activity Based Learning as "a range of work plans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning from the simple or brief exercise to more complex or lengthy activities." (Breen 1987) There are many activities which a language teacher could exploit in the classroom, which could create a free, frank and interactive atmosphere and there the teaching and learning of language of language will become very easy and spontaneous. This is supported by eighteenth century philosopher Giambattista Vico as he says that humans can understand only what they have themselves constructed and knowledge is acquired through interaction with the text and the environment.

In ABL method the learners have the opportunity to construct their own conceptualization and finds solutions to problems. The learner is exposed to a problem solving situation and meaningful learning takes place when the learner is able to identify,

justify and defend their ideas. Also here teacher acts as a facilitator of learning who creates an environment for students to question, exchange personal views and critically evaluate others' views and ideas. Normally, students tend to learn by rote the answers dictated to them either by their teachers or from a guidebook due to a lack of the use of interactive teaching/learning methodologies.

In today's language classrooms, considerable emphasis is given to speaking activities in which learners use the language they have learned to communicate with each other. Hence, improving speaking skills becomes important to challenge the needs and demands of this technology enhanced society. The student is expected to develop such skills and be ready to deliver extempore skills which will help him in pursuing courses of advanced proficiency without much support from the teacher.

Different activities can be identified and can be exposed to speaking skills thereby developing their confidence levels, independent learning, enhance creativity, flexibility, assertiveness, leadership, team work and demonstrate a practical integration of knowledge, skills and aptitude.

Brainstorming activities give students the confidence to believe in themselves and their ability to speak English independently.

Word/ Sentence Building

In this activity the teacher can divide the class into two groups and ask them to come prepared with synonyms; the word has to be given by one group and the other has to give the synonyms and vice versa to get points. The teacher conducts the activity and keeps the score. The same game can be played using antonyms, prefixes, suffixes etc., Activity based teaching paves the way for effective learning. Teaching should be student-centered and students must be motivated to participate in class activities. A word like 'enhance' ends with the letter 'e' and the next person should say a word starting with 'e.' A word may be picked out which lists

the related words. For example when the 'college' is written on the board and students are asked to enlist the pertinent words, the related ideas that might come up are: students, classrooms, teachers, books, bags, trees etc., A complete sentence may be given to a student and ask him/her to add a sentence related to the particular sentence to form a story. For example, A farmer survives by his wife and two children.

Just a Minute

The teacher has to help the students to frame sentences with--- errors and this will give them confidence and enthusiasm. The teacher can give some words and ask the students to talk something on that word. The students may commit mistakes but by practice the errors could be rectified. The teacher should always remember to appreciate their courage and willingness to participate in the class activities. At last, the teacher can recap what each student said and appreciate their presence of mind and creativity. The teacher can guide the students to choose right words without hurting, pointing to anyone in particular. This session will not only make the participant concentrate on minor details while speaking become an effective extempore speaker but also involves the listeners' with utmost concentration and attentiveness.

Twenty Questions Game

This is another activity to make the students ask questions. In this activity the teacher may divide the class into two groups and decide the genre of their discussion. From the first group anyone can represent the group and they want to think a thing in their mind and they should not reveal their thinking to another group. By asking questions another group should find out the answers. The questions should be limited within twenty, Thus the students can develop the thinking and questioning skills. Through carrying out the activity, students discover things for themselves and are likely to become more motivated to learn than you require them to respond in the more passive mode of listening, copying or taking notes.

Working on problems or tasks leads to greater independence among students in their work and can act as appropriate pre-activity to instruct or input, preparing students to engage with – but at the same time the material adopted should possess a more critical and analytical attitude.

Conclusion

Thus, this paper emphasis on the activity-based learning methods which have have great return as it is interesting to a wide range of different senses and also appeal to individual's different learning styles. The most important factor that makes activity-based method more attractive is that it paves way for the young learners to get pleasure from and learn in a relaxed, in groups of teams which is considered the most favorable environment which is almost a prerequisite of successful learning.

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