

Activity Based Language learning in the classroom – An Effective Learning Method

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ABSTRACT

Pendergrass et al. (2001) emphasized that English is an essential tool in engineering education, and therefore "integrating English into engineering is an effective way to improve the performance of students in oral and written communication" This paper discusses the possibility of activities that can be used in Communicative English Grammar Classrooms for learners. Activities can create curiosity in learners and this will lead to an interest towards learning Communicative English Grammar.

The activity-based learning methods have advantages as it appeals 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. Activities to learn Tenses, Prepositions, Speech, and Voices etc. are discussed upon and an analysis of the feedback is also made. Activities help students to reinforce the grammar techniques in their mind and also later relate them into real life situations.

Key words: activity based learning, skills, Learners

INTRODUCTION

In the present education system, the position of English as a global language is being strengthened day by day with the advent of modern communication systems and the concept of globalization gaining ground in the recent past. Existing learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitive, and constructivism, has been in vogue before technology like computer and internet had come now. The role of the teacher now is of a facilitator. Innovative methods are employed to make learning more interesting. The activity-based learning methods allow the learners learn in an optimum environment 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.”

An overview of Activity Based Learning Methodology (ABL)

To create an interactive atmosphere a language teacher can use varied activities in the classroom and this will make teaching and learning of language easy and spontaneous. In ABL method the learners have the opportunity to construct their own conceptualization and find solutions to problems. When the learner is exposed to a problem solving situation, meaningful learning takes place and the learner is able to identify, justify and defend his ideas.

In ABL method the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning who creates an environment for learners to question, exchange personal views and critically evaluate others' views and ideas. Here the role of the teacher in activity based learning is to develop the strategy of education by:

- The planning and preparation to Identify outcomes
- Having noted the outcomes of learning using proper strategies such as the agenda: report or wish to evaluate the stairs
- Select the appropriate activities to stimulate the learners
- Mechanisms within the group
- Promote cooperation in carrying out activity

In ABL method the learners have an opportunity for interactive learning

- Participate in educational objectives
- Collaborate with others to develop good organizational skills.

- Demonstrate enthusiasm for seeking new knowledge

The need for Activity Based Method in Engineering Colleges of Telangana

In today's language classrooms, considerable emphasis is given to activities in which learners use the language they have learned to communicate with each other. Hence, improving LSRW skills becomes important to challenge the needs and demands of this technology enhanced society. The learner is expected to develop skills and be prepared to deliver extempore skills which will help him in pursuing courses of advanced proficiency without adequate help from the teacher. Different activities can be identified and can be exposed to speaking skills thereby developing their confidence levels, independent learning, enhances creativity, flexibility, assertiveness, leadership, team work which demonstrates a practical integration of knowledge, skills and aptitude. Learning through activity based teaching strategies by student's benefits because the education sector has many goals.

The Advantages ABL Methods

It helps learner to focus more and increase's attention and create an optimistic environment to respond to the educational settings for this different activities. The language activities can be identified and learners exposed to LSRW 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. The learners are guided towards the development trends and their needs this method helps to develop their talents and the direction of education is correct. Self-study method and self learning gives real opportunities where the benefits of the teaching learning situations in their future lead to the strengthening of the independence

Designing Classroom Activities

To make learning interactive and interesting, short activities should be included in the learning of language. This gives more scope for listening to English conversations, developing one's own vocabulary and skill of speaking. Teachers should have an opportunity to apply the checklist as a way of deciding whether some activities are suitable for their teaching purposes.

Checklist for selecting or creating language-learning activities

	Activity A (name of the activity /material used) Date :	Activity B
<p>Learning purpose</p> <p>Relevance to language learning /learning all language skills included? (receptive and productive?)</p>		
<p>Learners</p> <p>difficulty level</p> <p>language level</p> <p>enjoyment/interest</p>		
<p>Management</p> <p>organization</p> <p>amount of noise</p> <p>type of material needed</p> <p>length of activity</p> <p>amount of preparation needed</p> <p>space needed</p> <p>pressure to use English suitability for age group</p>		
<p>Learning principles</p> <p>Does it develop ...</p> <p>a positive atmosphere? ..</p> <p>language creativity.</p> <p>opportunities to experiment and notice language? ...</p> <p>Imagination? ...</p> <p>purposeful and varied language use? ..</p> <p>thinking skills?</p>		

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A few activates for communicative grammar classroom

Brainstorming

Brainstorming activities give students the confidence to believe in themselves and their ability to speak English independently. It can be done individually on paper or in a group, orally or on the black board. It is a fast method of gathering ideas for later connection and reflection. During a brainstorming session, learners share all the ideas that come to mind regarding the concept or topic under discussion. We can use Venn diagram, Spider Diagram, etc., to capture the ideas and facts presented by the learners. Fluency and quantity are important components of brainstorming. During a brainstorming session all ideas should be taken without criticism. Learner's s should try to build on their own and others' ideas to i.e. listen also to what their peers say.

Word/ Sentence Building

In this activity the teacher divides the class into two groups and makes use of synonyms; the word is contributed 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 'save' ends with the letter 'e' and the next person in the group should say a word starting with 'e.' A word may be picked out which lists the related words. For example when the 'hospital' is written on the board and learners are asked to enlist the pertinent words, the related ideas that might come up are: doctors, patient, consultation, prescription, and diagnosis etc., A complete sentence can be given to learners and instruct them to add sentences related to the particular sentence to form a story. For example, -The passengers were sleeping in the bus when it hit -----.

The Jigsaw Method

The Jigsaw is an active learning exercise. It is a useful strategy for studying narrative material. It helps learners and teachers effectively to cover areas of study material in a comparatively less time. In a large classroom it is a useful tool.

In this method ,(1) a general topic and learners are divided into smaller groups , (2) each member of the group is assigned to read and become an expert on a different piece of the puzzle (e.g., one person is given a Team Building Issues puzzle piece/article, another the

Team Composition & Roles piece/article, and so on); (3) then, after each person has become an expert on their piece of the puzzle, they teach the other group members about that puzzle piece; and, finally, (4) after each person has finished teaching, the puzzle has been reassembled and everyone in the group knows something important about every piece of the puzzle. At the end t he teacher may also ask groups to give a presentation to the whole class about what they have learnt together



Just a Minute

In this activity the teacher guides the learners to frame sentences with--- errors and this will give them confidence and enthusiasm. The teacher gives few words and asks the learners s to talk something on that word. The learner's may make errors but by practice the mistakes could be rectified. The teacher should always remember to appreciate their courage and willingness to participate in the class activities. At the end of the activity, the teacher should recap what each learner has contributed and appreciate his ideas, presence of mind and creativity. The teacher can guide learners to select the appropriate words without making them conscious of pointing to anyone in particular. This activity will not only make the learners concentrate on minor details while speaking but help them to become effective extempore speakers. It also involves the listeners' with utmost concentration and attentiveness.

Twenty Questions Game

This activity helps the learners develop the thinking and questioning skills. In this activity the teacher divides the class into two groups and decides the genre of their discussion. From the first group anyone group member 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 this activity, learners come out of their passive mode of listening, copying or taking notes they discover things for themselves and are likely to become more motivated to learn and respond better.

Working on problems or tasks leads to greater independence among learners 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 be appropriate for the learner's level.

Conclusion

The needs of the learner are changing day by day. Technology and traditional way of learning has to be clubbed to get desired results. The theoretical approach should not be adopted for language learning .Learners should enjoy, understand for complete learning to take place. When learners are a part of learning process the results will be good.

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