

Various Methods & Approaches Available in Learning English

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ABSTRACT

An infant imitates the sounds made by the people around it. Gradually it picks up phonemes, syllables, subsequently sentences. The child imbibes in good oral articulation and fluent speaking in this process. With right exposure to the alphabet, it picks up good writing skills also. It is the natural process of acquiring first language. But when it comes to a foreign language like English, acquisition takes different modes such as learning it from an instructor, dependence on texts, mugging up the grammar and composition rules etc. Teachers are actually striving hard to make the student learn the language English as naturally as possible. They are adopting various methods and approaches to put the student at ease and make the student get rid of apprehensions. To speak the truth, despite all these efforts from an English teacher, many students aren't comfortable with English. They have heaped in much fear about English. Thus my paper focusses on the available methods and approaches of English language learning with a twist of categorical implementation of those methods and approaches.

Key words: English as a foreign language, Methods, Approaches, Implementation strategy, Fluency

Introduction:

Five hundred years ago, Latin language enjoyed the status of bridge language connecting many nations together especially for exchanging scientific discoveries and inventions. Precisely, that's why many scientific names are still found in Latin. When English has pervaded the entire world as a language for Trade and Commerce, Latin language gradually faded away. Now, Latin is a dead language. English has become so popular with its systematic rules of composition that it is considered as a language of definite syntax. All the nations recognized the necessity of English for their fair stand at international affairs. As a result, most of the nations have introduced English as a second language. Though it originated on a foreign land, it's become so instrumental in many significant transactions that are taking place within India. Though it is a foreign language, most of the Indian states and union territories accepted it as a medium of primary as well as secondary education. This has been a challenge to the teachers of English since Standard English has become prima face to assess present day education. The teachers of English have to put in extra effort to make the student learn English language for both self-expression and exam preparation.

Methods:

Various theories such as Behaviorism, Nativism, Constructivism, Social Interactionism etc. help form a general foundation for language building of a learner. They help the linguists to formulate various methods of English teaching.

Grammar Translation method which was so popular in late 1800s, established language teaching as a means of providing adequate knowledge over construction of expression. It helps the student to pick up good writing and reading skills. Spoken expression is not given proper attention.

To overcome this drawback, the Direct method came into existence helping learners to think and express in English only. This method would be successful when the teacher plays an active role. In the absence of the teacher, learner cannot have any alternative to learn it from. This gap is filled with the Audio-lingual method. This method provides the learner audio tapes which contain some conversations, descriptions and presentations. By listening to these, the learner can pick up proper sentence construction as well as proper pronunciation.

All these three methods necessitate the learner to pay rapt attention to words and expressions and memorize them all in sentences. This may build up some mechanical way of learning a language. This is overcome by the Silent Way method where the learners can discover their own vocabulary and the teacher speaks asless as possible and the students can speak much. It actually allows students to identify their own errors and ways of rectifying them.

The Total Physical Response method which is similar to learning native language. In this method, total body responds to the gestures and active language learning takes place.

Approaches:

When theories and methods helped the learner to pick up language which caters to general needs but not meeting the demands of the modern trend, various approaches have come into existence. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) helped the learner to gain practical language through real-life situations created in the classroom. Active classroom activities engaged both the teacher and the student fruitfully.

Incorporating the basic principles of CLT, Task Based Teaching (TBT) and Task Based Learning (TBL) came up arousing much interest in the learner and turning the English classroom noisier and active. Students are empowered and self-motivated to complete the tasks with more creativity.

Implementation Strategy:

Though many innovative methods and approaches are brought into English teaching, yet students fail miserably in certain occasions and fumble for words. 40% of students cannot gain minimum proficiency in English and try to avoid it. Thus necessitates the English teacher to find blended approaches to teach English such as:

- Make students get rid of fear of English
- Convince students that English is an easy language
- Focus on simple and short sentences
- Encourage students to speak English regularly
- Mistakes should be rectified sensibly
- Active classroom with variety of tasks should be created
- Certain level of noise should be allowed

- Innovative expressions should be encouraged
- Teach how to achieve clarity of expression
- Assign more tasks of formal writing
- Train the students in editing texts
- Acknowledge the student's effort and reward them suitably
- Monitor the students silently and correct the errors with real-life examples

Conclusion:

With these measures incorporating in teaching methodologies, both the teacher and the learner find English classroom as a place of pleasurable learning. English teaching and learning becomes less burdensome.

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