

REVIEW: EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE AND IMPROVE ESL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

There has been a great demand for learning foreign languages throughout the world and to acquire these languages teachers are trying their best to introduce interesting, effective and innovative techniques to improve learning in ESL classrooms. Language teaching has become a prominent issue in the field of education. In the process of foreign language learning, the language teacher plays a very important role. Success of the students depends on teaching skills, different teaching techniques, and strategies used by the teacher in the class to enhance their teaching and make their lessons more effective and innovative. This research papers aims to uncover some of the effective and innovative techniques on how to improve ESL classrooms. In addition, to investigate how effective these techniques are in improving students' level of English

Key Words:Effective, innovative, ESL Classrooms, Techniques, ESL Teaching

1. Introduction

The term E.S.L. is used worldwide to refer to "English as a Second Language." Students whose first language is other than English are referred to as "English Language Learners". In order to achieve support with their language acquisition goals Language Learners" are often designated as ESL. ESL means "English as a second language". The word ESL is generally used by the people to talk about teaching English to the people who do not speak English i.e. non-native speakers.

Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) offers a large number of unique challenges and problems. Teaching English to students who have a restricted understanding of the English language can be a challenging task. ESL students use a different language at home that is why it can be difficult for them to understand English. In fact, some of them do not know the meanings of simple English words and phrases, and it can be difficult for teachers to communicate with them. Whether you are teaching in a classroom or in one of the many ESL

programs around the world or right in an English speaking country like the United States, teaching speakers of other languages means that you will be dealing with an range of cultures, learning styles, educational circumstances and, of course, the challenge of working through a potentially problematic language barrier.

Regardless of these challenges (or perhaps partly due to them), demand for ESL teachers is currently at an all-time high. With the English language continuously growing in global importance. Competent, knowledgeable and experienced teachers are needed to provide a well-adjusted and complete ESL education.

As all educational institutions specialize- in preparing students to be school and career ready, the accomplishment of English learners may be a vital issue. It is widely acknowledged that English as a second language programs alone cannot adequately serve the massive and growing numbers of English learners in U.S. schools (Brisk, 2010). These students additionally benefit- from the course and the way- different techniques are used by the teacher to build comprehensible subject material while constantly developing students' English language proficiency.

Teachers must always work hard to ensure that students are interested and motivated during their lessons. Effective teaching includes planned activities in content categories in order that students understand both formal and informal usage of the language Alexander & Wade (2000) and McWhaw&Abrami (2001) explained in their study that the interest will greatly affect students' learning process and learning activity. The student who is not interested in the learning process and learning activity, perhaps would have a tendency to not fulfil their full potential as a learner, and this would eventually influence the quality of learning. This is because when students are interested, they will prepare themselves for learning (Alexander & Wade, 2000; McWhaw&Abrami, 2001). So, when a student is interested in learning activities, they will engage in more appropriate behavior such as paying attention, being an active participant, and more becoming more involved in activities that support the learning process.

A student's interest is based on the relationship between the individual purpose of learning and environmental factors. Therefore, it is important to create a good environment so that the student will be involved, enjoy and gain knowledge based on the topic, object or activity that they are interested in.

ESL teachers can exercise more patience and try to find the right ways to help their students become more proficient in the language .To adequately assist ELs in learning both content concepts and English simultaneously all educators need to view themselves as language teachers. Several research studies have been completed around this area and a lot of teaching methods have been discussed previously by language experts. There follows a few important tips for effective and successful ESL teaching in the classrooms.

Know your students

Increase your understanding about your students by finding out more about who they are, their backgrounds and educational experiences and their language needs. It is important to know whether your students have been in a US English medium school for many years or were educated in their country of origin, and whether they know their native language or not. If a teacher knows these things, this could be of great help in understanding and supporting student's educational needs.

Understand the Individual Needs of Students

English language proficiency and academic experience among students can vary greatly in ESL classrooms. In order to assist each student in language improvement and learning, teachers have to understand every individual student's level of language proficiency and educational history. Exchanging a challenging text with a simpler one using simple sentences instead of complex ones is the best way to build lessons comprehensible to all students. Simple actions like saying the student's names properly and showing interest in their cultures can go a long way to giving students an additional pleasant and positive learning experience.

SWRL Everyday

The domains of language acquisition, Speaking, Writing, Reading and Listening need to be equally exercised across content areas on a daily basis. This will ensure that students are practicing and using all the areas of language acquisition to support their English Language Learning.

There are several ways to create an atmosphere in the classroom which is conducive to learning English. For example, if activities are structured to support student-to-student or group interaction, then students will be required to use English to explain concepts and contribute to the work.

Practicing the four skills through activities in the language classroom serves many valuable purposes: it gives learners scaffold support, opportunities to create contexts in which to use the language for exchanges of real information, evidence of their own ability (proof of learning) and, most important confidence.

Keep your Schedule Set.

Following your own rules is key to exhibiting timeliness and productivity. If the teachers are organized there will be more opportunity to focus on teaching and learning. This will encourage your students to respect schedules and work within the allotted time frames.

Develop classroom management techniques and be consistent in following them. When students know what to expect from you, and what you expect from them, they're more likely to be productive learners. Put these effective classroom management tips to use to manage disruptive behaviour with confidence.

Provide Flexible Learning Goals

Just as teachers communicate applicable levels of dominance by providing clear learning goals, they can also convey appropriate levels of cooperation by providing flexible learning goals. Giving students the chance to outline their own objectives at the beginning of a lesson or asking students what they might prefer to learn conveys a way of cooperation. Giving students this sort of selection, in addition to increasing their understanding of the topic, conveys the message that the teacher cares about and tries to accommodate students' interests.

Establish Clear Learning Goals

Teachers may exhibit applicable levels of dominance by providing clarity regarding the content and expectations of any forthcoming teaching unit. To achieve this end important teacher actions include:

- Establishing and communicating learning goals at the beginning of a unit of instruction.

- Providing feedback on those goals.
- Continually and systematically re-visiting the goals.
- Providing summative feedback regarding the goals.

Interactive Teaching Methods

Interactive teaching techniques is one of the great technique which helps the learner to develop their creative thinking and thinking ability creating an atmosphere where students participate more rather than just merely sitting and listening. The instructor should apply interactive teaching methods in their classroom and motivate the students to learn. Through active participation students will learn to gather information, processing it and solving it. Students enrich their knowledge by applying ideas and concepts to discover the horizon of new knowledge.

“Interaction is the cooperative exchange of thoughts, feeling or concepts between two or more individuals, leading to reciprocal effects on one another. Theories of communicative competency emphasize the importance of interaction as human use language in numerous contexts to,, negotiate” that simply means to get a thought out of one person’s head and into the head of another person and vice-versa” (Brown ,2010)

Elicit Background Knowledge

Eliciting background knowledge from English language learners is done through a variety of activities. Learning new things is like stacking building blocks one on top of the other. If there is a language barrier (or a missing block) it can prevent students from connecting their previous experience with the lesson currently being taught. Here the teacher's ability at drawing on background knowledge becomes vital.

To overcome this obstacle, teachers can work creatively to elicit background knowledge from students on content topics so as to extend understanding of the course material. This may be as straightforward as taking the time to try and do a "K/W/L" (Know, Want to Know, and Learned) chart, or as individualized as asking questions about the topic: "Has anyone ever visited the museum? A museum is a place where old things are kept. What do you see in the museum?" Students will share their knowledge of understanding and see how it's connected to any new information.

Verbal and Non-verbal Feedback

As language teachers one of the most important tasks is to motivate their students. This is particularly vital when giving feedback. Therefore, while giving feedback, instead of starting with criticizing students’ work the teacher should always start by giving positive feedback and then move on to illustrate ways in which they can improve it. This will be motivating and demonstrate that improvement is within their reach.

It’s important to note that Non Verbal Feedback is as important as verbal feedback for an effective teacher and he/she should therefore watch attentively for signs of comprehension in the facial expressions of the students. Such feedback can be seen in nods or shakes of their head, eye contact, smiles (of confidence or hesitancy), as well as silence etc.

In order to get such non-verbal feedback, which is, as stated above expressed not through language, but by facial expressions and body language, it is imperative that the teacher should be able to see all the students. (David, 1995a). This means that you should pay attention to the

classroom layout for each class and ensure that it allows you to see and have access to all students

DISCUSSION

English as a Second Language (ESL) is defined as the formal instruction of English to those (usually immigrants, international students or refugees) whose native language is not English, but who live in an English speaking country. Through instruction in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, ESL provides the necessary communication skills to help non-native speakers enrol in school, obtain employment, and function effectively in the host country. During our classes English is the target language and medium of communication. If we use some of the techniques and methods mentioned above they will definitely enhance learning and motivate students to work hard on their language acquisition.

Murray (1991, as cited in Bell, 2005) stated that many researchers and professionals for teacher development and evaluation have been seeking to establish criteria for assessing effective teaching. While there is little agreement regarding which specific behaviors constitute effective teaching, researchers agree at least on some dimensions that describe effective teaching in general regardless of the subject matter. These include enthusiasm or expressiveness, clarity of explanation, and rapport or interaction

In, "What Teachers Need to Know about Language" by Lily Wong Fillmore and Catherine Snow, the authors state that:

Teachers play a vital role in supporting language development. Beyond teaching, they have to assist students in learning and usage of language. They teach them to learn how to use correct language in to communicate their message. However, they also need to know how language works in different situations and how to use words which will enable students to expand their linguistic horizons. In addition they need to be able to arrange educational activities that provide students with opportunities to use the new forms and modes of expression which they have been taught. Teachers should use different activities in the classrooms to keep students engaged. They should create an atmosphere which optimizes language and skills learning and avoids linguistic obstacles to content area learning (Wong Fillmore & Snow, p. 7).

Content teachers teaching through the medium of English should begin by reviewing a content space lesson and distinguishing not simply the vocabulary that each student must recognize, but alternative vocabulary words and descriptive linguistics structures that ELL students may not be familiar with.

I additionally recommend academics use the "support group" methodology ensure successful outcomes and use the chosen strategy as a subject for knowledgeable learning community. Sharing successes and challenges with colleagues can assist educators to grow professionally, and academically benefit students.

The above discussion on using different strategies to improve ESL/ESL classrooms demonstrates how using a variety of strategies while teaching the new language will help to motivate the learners and will improve classroom atmosphere. All educators need to look positively on their roles as both an instructor and an English learning advisor. This can be achieved simply by being conscious of the effectiveness of classroom strategies and making small changes in response to each situation. It is also important to make an effort to improve the standard of teaching, enhance learning while at the same time making the classroom experience more interesting for the students.

4. Conclusion

The objective of English language teaching is not the transference of the teacher's superior understanding and appreciation of texts to students; it is rather, to help students to experience or see and learn for themselves. A teachers' style will inevitably have an impact on student's attitude and beliefs.

Brosh (1996) asked second language lecturers and students to spot the three most outstanding characteristics of a good second language teacher from a list of twenty characteristics. The results of this study revealed that both the students' and teachers' had identical 1st and second rank-ordered characteristics, which is teachers command on the subject and ability to transmit knowledge.

In general, the key characteristics of a good second language teacher that emerged from the study were knowledge and command of the target language, the ability to organize, explain and clarify, and the ability to arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students, Two additional characteristics that were considered important were fairness to students by showing neither favoritism nor prejudice, and availability for student consultations.

The aim of this paper is to explore the number of simple effective and innovative teaching techniques to improve ESL Classrooms ,there are always issues in in any given classroom scenario, but these can be dealt with if we make efforts to improve our teaching practices and by encouraging student participation in interactive teaching environment.

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[Webcast: English Language Learners and Academic Language](#)Featuring Dr. Robin Scarcella, providing an overview to academic language instruction for English language learners, as well as teaching strategies, activity ideas, and recommended resources.