

ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY LEARNING FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF ENGLISH

C. Raghavendra Reddy

Asst. Professor of English,
Sree Vidyanikethan Engineering College,
Tirupati

Dr. R.B. Sarala

Principal,
A.P. Model School,
K. V. Palli,
Chittoor District, AP

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to address the value of active participatory learning for effective communication of English in the current scenario. Active involvement becomes a successful part of learning. It is a practically one of the valuable approach to systematize groups of learners and ask them to help each other. We can persuade fast learners to help each other. This peer learning is vital not only for those who accept assistance but also for those who facilitate others. It is an effectual approach to both teaching and learning. There is a dire need for contribution of learners towards active participatory learning for effective communication of English. This paper further vents on the tips for using participatory approach.

Learners with a range of disabilities frequently do not have adequate self-assurance for learning. We can persuade them to study but not by paying too much concentration to what they cannot do. As an alternative, we have to observe what they can do in the literacy class. One successful approach is to systematize small groups of learners and ask the learners to assist each other. We can persuade fast learners to be of assistance to others. We often learn during the course of clearing up things to others. A facilitator and learners form their own learning milieu. Our optimistic outlook will result in a good environment. Participatory learning acts as a valuable move towards both teaching and learning.

If we attend a training course on communication skills, there will be many lectures given in the classroom where the learners lay in their places and pay attention. There will be a lot of information and we have to listen attentively. In the classes like this we do not have the chance to contribute our ideas, ask some questions and tell the group and the teachers about some of our experiences. These will be reminiscent of our school days.

If we attend training course on communication skills which starts with short deliberations about the outlook of the participants, a series of short presentations followed by questions and answers, demonstrations in the field, small group discussions to explore how the participants could take on the new information for their own work, questions by the facilitator from time to

time to help the group think of things that they might have missed, concluded by each group presenting feed back from the demonstrations and individual plans on their future work using what they have learnt during training , will definitely help learners to develop effective communication.

In the first course the teachers did all the talking and learners just sat and listened. In other words it is teacher-centered learning. We will be more delighted with the second course because we are dynamically engaged in our learning. The facilitator inspires us and other learners to participate and does things. In this type of participatory learning we can know and discuss what and how we become skilled at communication. These might consist of the objectives, information, skills and attitudes or the teaching-learning methods we want to use or how we evaluate whether we have learnt anything. In traditional teaching in schools, the teacher frequently instructs the children and has complete power over learning process. In grown-up non formal education, this traditional approach is not always suitable. So learning is not about a teacher giving information. Learning is a lively process where a learner goes all the way through an experience and learns from it. There are many ways that we can think of to involve learners in their learning.

In each case such as giving instructions, advice, suggestions, summarizing, explaining something, demonstrating something, we have to think about using a participatory approach. There are some tips like, we have to take time to plan what we want to say, not talk too long. Most people can only listen closely for about 15 minutes. If we need to take longer, we may interrupt our talk and ask questions or ask our learners to make comments. We ought to write down the key points on the black board or chart so that the learners can follow the talk. We should think of interesting way to say what we want to say. Sometimes a story is good to introduce an idea and in some situations jokes may be useful to attract learners and help them to remember. We have to ensure that the language we use is appropriate for the group communication clearly, simply and loudly.

We can use learners' experiences and expectations. Learners have skills of their own. Learners know what they want to learn. We learn for the awareness and empowerment. We must generate new ideas by brain-storming. There are steps for brain-storming. It includes, identifying the issue with the learners, writing issue on the board and explaining, asking learners to think about the issue for a few minutes, inviting quick ideas on the issue without elaboration and asking the learners not to interrupt or argue.

It will give good results if we assign someone to write down ideas on the board, stop brainstorming at some point and ask learners to clarify each idea, put ideas into categories and prioritize, discuss and underline the ideas agreed upon using role plays or group discussions through learning enjoyable games, like word games, true or false etc.

The lack of interest in English language courses on the part of learners is a problem that teachers face. It is realized that they were not so motivated towards the use of English. One way of encouraging them to practice English language skills was to organize the class into small groups to develop some participatory techniques. Through useful techniques they can practice the contents by using the foreign language in cooperative situations. Cooperative learning experiences also result in positive attitudes towards the subject area and in high levels of self-esteem. The idea of involving learners in participatory techniques will really work and makes students more enthusiastic. Participatory techniques contribute not only to the development of oral expression, but also to the integration of other linguistic skills. As Byrne (1986) stated, students learn better when they develop activities that involve more than one skill.

The teacher tells the students that he or she will provide a definition of some important concepts that have been studied in class and they will name the concept. The teacher describes or defines the concept and the students have to identify the term.

For example: It is an activity that expresses our feelings, emotions and ideas that should be understandable to others (Communication). The student who first names the term will be the leader of the team. These terms have been covered previously in class, students have read about them in texts. Now the teacher forms small groups (4-5 students). A set of cards that include concepts from the course is placed and a member of each group is asked to come up and select one. The teacher shares the concept with the class (the definition). Teams must then analyze the term. The members of each team work cooperatively to prepare a written exposition including all the information they can procure according to their knowledge (They are given 20-25 minutes to do this). In this step they have to interact using English all the time. The professor supervises this. The head of each team writes down all the ideas given and discussed by the members of his/her team and then with their help he/she writes a text. The team leader or another student from each group will read the text to the whole class. Finally, the best explanation will be selected by taking into consideration the quality of the information, the most complete outline, and logical order of ideas.

Conclusion

The participatory techniques can welcome students and allow them to develop and integrate linguistic skills. These kinds of activities also make students to develop collaborative behaviours. The students can make valuations, give opinions and use the foreign language freely. Furthermore, these techniques can bring the teaching-learning process alive, since they were highly motivating. Most of these techniques lead in one way or another, to the strengthening of values, which is something quite necessary for the interaction and performance of future professionals in a global society. They, of course, could be adapted and applied in English classes for intermediate and advanced students. One of the key messages of this is the active participation of learners. In general people feel more satisfied and achieve more than when they can actively contribute to the process of learning. Active involvement becomes an effective part of learning. The participatory learning approach is in that way beneficial to the learners.

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