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THE IMPORTANCE OF USING DIFFERENT METHODS DURING ENGLISH CLASSES

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Abstract. Teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) requires various instructional strategies to address the diverse needs of learners. This article examines the importance of using different methods during English classes, exploring how these techniques cater to individual learning styles, enhance engagement, and ultimately improve language acquisition. By integrating traditional and modern methods, teachers can foster a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that maximizes student outcomes.

Keywords: lingua franca, GMT, TBL, CLT

English has become the lingua franca in many parts of the world, making its acquisition crucial for academic, professional, and personal growth. However, learning a second language involves more than just understanding grammar and vocabulary; it requires the development of communication skills, cultural understanding, and confidence in using the language. To meet these multifaceted goals, it is essential to employ a variety of teaching methods that engage students, encourage interaction, and support the learning process.

Why a single method is insufficient?

Traditional methods of teaching English, such as the Grammar-Translation Method or the Direct Method, have their merits, but relying solely on one approach can limit a student's potential. Language learners come from different backgrounds, possess varying levels of prior knowledge, and have unique learning preferences. Some students may benefit from visual aids, while others might excel through auditory or kinesthetic activities. Using a single teaching method may leave certain students disengaged or struggling to grasp concepts that could have been better explained through another approach.

Catering to different learning styles

One of the major advantages of using various methods in English instruction is that it allows educators to accommodate different learning styles. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences suggests that students may learn best in different ways, whether through linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, or bodily-kinesthetic means. For example:

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- Visual learners benefit from seeing material in a written or graphical format. Incorporating diagrams, charts, and written instructions can help these students retain information.
- Auditory learners thrive when they listen to information. Techniques like language labs, audio recordings, or class discussions are effective for these students.
- Kinesthetic learners need hands-on experiences, which can be integrated into lessons through role-playing, games, or physical interaction with learning materials.

By recognizing and utilizing these learning styles, teachers can make their classes more inclusive and ensure that each student has a chance to succeed.

Enhancing Engagement with Active Learning

One of the goals of integrating different methods is to foster active learning, which encourages students to participate in their own education. Research has shown that students learn more effectively when they are actively engaged in the material rather than passively receiving information. Methods such as group discussions, peer teaching, problem-solving tasks, and interactive games can increase motivation, allowing students to take ownership of their learning.

Modern Methods in English Language Teaching

The advent of technology has introduced new methods into English language teaching, broadening the scope of what is possible in the classroom. Some of these methods include:

- 1. Task-Based Learning (TBL): This method focuses on using authentic tasks to encourage communication in English. Students are given tasks such as planning a trip, solving a problem, or conducting an interview, which require them to use English in real-world scenarios.
- 2. Flipped Classroom: In this approach, students review lecture material at home through videos or readings, and classroom time is devoted to applying that knowledge through activities and discussions. This method promotes deeper learning and allows students to work at their own pace.
- 3. Blended Learning: Combining face-to-face instruction with online components, blended learning can offer a personalized experience for students. Digital tools such as language-learning apps, online quizzes, and forums allow for continued practice outside the classroom.
- 4. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): This method emphasizes interaction as both the means and the goal of learning a language. Students are encouraged to use English in meaningful ways, such as through role-plays, debates, and real-life simulations.

The Role of Assessment in Method Selection

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Assessment plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of different teaching methods. Formative assessments, such as quizzes, peer feedback, and reflective journals, can provide immediate insights into student progress and help teachers adjust their strategies accordingly. Summative assessments, like standardized tests or final projects, allow for evaluating overall learning outcomes. By integrating both types of assessment, teachers can ensure that their use of varied methods is not only engaging but also effective.

Challenges of Implementing Multiple Methods

While the benefits of using different methods are clear, it is important to acknowledge the challenges teachers might face. For instance, time constraints in a curriculum may limit the ability to incorporate diverse activities. Teachers may also require additional training to effectively use new methods, especially those involving technology. Additionally, class sizes and the availability of resources can influence the extent to which varied methods can be implemented. Nevertheless, with careful planning and a flexible approach, these challenges can be mitigated.

The use of diverse methods in English language teaching is crucial for addressing the needs of learners with different backgrounds, learning styles, and motivations. By combining traditional approaches with innovative techniques, teachers can create a dynamic and inclusive classroom environment that fosters language acquisition. Moreover, through active engagement and the incorporation of technology, students are better equipped to meet the demands of real-world communication. As the global demand for English proficiency continues to grow, so too must the adaptability and creativity of those who teach it.

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