

International Journal of Scientific Research and Reviews

Innovative Methods in Teaching English Language and Communication Skills

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ABSTRACT

Man is the most intellectual among the all creatures that are born on the planet Earth. He is next to God, the almighty of this Universe, in controlling things with in his limitations. The progress of the universe can be compared to 'the water of a never drying up river'. "Innovative skill" of the human's led to the present progress of the world for which we are the real eye witness. The days are gone when the conventional and traditional methods of teaching had been everything in the classroom. It's the age of inventions and innovative methods.

The mindset of the people belonging to two generations viz. the generation of 60s and the younger generation of 16s has got a great variation. What was considered great in earlier days is common at present days. Getting 400 marks in SSC was a great task earlier but now the scenario is known to every one of us. It is not that the paper evaluators are pouring marks like anything for unanswered questions but it is the fact that the capability of all students due to changes happening in the teaching using innovative methods. The methods that were followed by the teachers of later part of 20th century have been superseded by the innovative methods of 21st century.

Now a days, 'Learning English' including its four skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing has been the top priority of any student. In Intermediate level and especially in Graduation level we can see the never dying attitude of students to get English Language and Communication skills. Every innovative thought bringing us an innovative method to learn this language by the English teachers has done a lot to all the learners of this language.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest some useful teaching methods that can be attempted in imparting knowledge to the students. Basically teaching must include two major components sending and receiving information. Ultimately, a teacher tries his best to impart knowledge as the way he understood it. So, any communication methods that serve this purpose without destroying the objective could be considered as innovative methods of teaching.

KEYWORDS : Multimedia, Sense of Humor, Learning, Technology, Innovative Methods

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INTRODUCTION

In India there is a broad spectrum of linguistic background, comprising many languages and scores of dialects. English itself continues in everyday use in large number of families but it is not the same as Standard English. The multilingual context offers a variety of problems to the teachers of English. Today's world is a world of rapid technical change. Innovations come out of an ever increasing pace. Due to tremendous progress in information and communication technology, the scenario of contemporary teaching techniques is entirely changed. The teacher of 21 century should shed traditional concepts and techniques of classroom teaching and should adopt the recent and innovative teaching techniques. English language teachers must be innovative, imaginative, and resourceful and have thorough knowledge of the subject and adopt new techniques to change socio, economic status of the country. Due to globalization the world is changing rapidly, hence a teacher has to improve and update knowledge of innovative techniques to meet the demands of changing era. Various innovative materials and strategies will assist for the betterment of students. The present paper explores the use of innovative techniques for teaching English to learners. Novel methods such audio video aids, mimicry, group discussions, dialogue construction, enactment of drama would pave way for learning the language and boost the confidence of the learners.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the traditional methods of teaching as well as multimedia teaching and to suggest other useful teaching methods that can be attempted in imparting knowledge to the students. Basically teaching must include two major components sending and receiving information. Ultimately, a teacher tries his best to impart knowledge as the way he understood it. So, any communication methods that serve this purpose without destroying the objective could be considered as innovative methods of teaching. The use of innovative methods in educational institutions has the potential not only to improve education, but also to empower people, strengthen governance and galvanize the effort to achieve the human development goal for the country.¹

USING MULTIMEDIA IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

I hear and I forget.

I see and I believe.

I do and I understand. - Confucius

Multimedia, is the combination of various digital media types such as text, images, audio and video, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey information to an audience. Traditional educational approaches have resulted in a mismatch between what is taught to the students and what the industry needs. As such, many institutions are moving towards problem based learning as a solution to producing graduates who are creative; think critically and analytically, to solve problems. In this paper, we focus on using multimedia technology as an innovative teaching and learning strategy in a problem-based learning environment by giving the students a multimedia project to train them in this skill set.²

Currently, many institutions are moving towards problem-based learning as a solution to producing graduates who are creative and can think critically, analytically, and solve problems. Since knowledge is no longer an end but a means to creating better problem solvers and encourage lifelong learning. Problem-based learning is becoming increasingly popular in educational institutions as a tool to address the inadequacies of traditional teaching. Since these traditional approaches do not encourage students to question what they have learnt or to associate with previously acquired knowledge, problem-based learning is seen as an innovative measure to encourage students to learn how to learn via real-life problems.

The teacher uses multimedia to modify the contents of the material. It will help the teacher to represent in a more meaningful way, using different media elements. These media elements can be converted into digital form, modified and customized for the final presentation. By incorporating digital media elements into the project, the students are able to learn better since they use multiple sensory modalities, which would make them more motivated to pay more attention to the information presented and retain the information better.

TEACHING WITH SENSE OF HUMOUR – “HUMOUR AN EFFECTIVE MEDIUM OF TEACHING

Everyone loves a teacher with an infectious sense of humor. Looking at the lighter side of life not only fosters cordial relations between professors and students, but also provides welcome relief while trying to follow a difficult lecture on a complicated subject. When there is a willingness to change, there is hope for progress in any field. Teaching is a challenge. Learning is a challenge. Combining both effectively is a challenge. Being humorous is a challenge. However, laughing is easy. We are convinced both by experience and research that using humour in teaching is a very effective tool for both the teacher and student. Humor strengthens the relationship between student and teacher, reduces stress, makes a course more interesting and if relevant to the subject, may even

enhance recall of the material. Humor has the ability to relax people, reduce tension, and thereby create an atmosphere conducive for learning and communication. Numerous studies in the field of advertising have noted that humor is the most effective tool for enhancing recall of advertisements.³

It is easy to create a humor in the classroom by reading books of jokes and to listen to professional comics. The students should be encouraged to take notes, especially to learn about the professionals' use of such techniques as exaggeration, pauses, and timing. Observe reality and exaggerate it - much humor lies in observations about real life and truthful situations. In conclusion, humor not only plays an important role in the healing process but is also very important in education.⁴

MOBILE PHONE ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING

Mobile phones are considered as miniature computers because of its additional facilities like texting, gaming, email and recording. Mobile Phone Assisted language learning covers PDAs, iPods and wireless computing. MPALL applications consists of mini lessons of grammar points, closed ended quizzes or games testing discrete language points available through SMS, the web or downloads, the vocabulary lessons, short definitions of words with examples of use, recording lectures for better understanding, dictionary, and a communicative language learning games using actions.⁵

The most important features of Mobile Phone Assisted language learning are, social interactivity, context portability, Sensitivity, connectivity, individuality and immediacy. Due to greater opportunities of Computer Assisted Language learning, more and more language learning is likely taking place outside classroom setting.⁶

GAMES

Games which are task based and have a purpose beyond the production of speech serve as excellent communicative activities. The aim of all language games is for students to use the language; however during game play learners also use the target language to play, persuade and negotiate their way to desired results. This process involves productive and receptive skills simultaneously. Games offer students a fun filled and relaxing learning atmosphere. After learning and practicing new vocabulary, students have the opportunity to use language in a non-stressful way. While playing games, the learner's attention is on the message, not on the language. Rather than paying attention to the correctness of linguistic forms, most participants will do all they can to win. This eases the fear of negative evaluation, the concern of being negatively judged in public which is

one of the main factors inhibiting language learners from using the target language in front of other people. In a game oriented context, anxiety is reduced and speech fluency is generated thus communicative competence is achieved. Some of the games are mentioned below:

- A word game: Students should sit in a circle. The group may consist of 5 to 6 students. One student writes a word with a minimum of 5 letters. The next student should write word with the last letter of the previous word within 5 to 6 seconds. This would enable them know their vocabulary.
- A sentence game: Students should sit in a circle. The group may consist of 5 to 6 students. One student writes a sentence with a minimum of three words including subject, verb and object. The next student should write another sentence with the last word of the previous sentence within 10 to 15 seconds. This would enable them know their sentence framing capability.

CONCLUSION

The methods whichever are more congenial for the needs of student based on their knowledge of the language are always appreciable in all aspects. This paper has made a mention of a few of many innovative methods which can be very helpful for the teachers in meeting the expectations of students at intermediate and graduate level.

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