



INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES AND METHODS IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract:

Languages came into existence, when the Homo sapiens started cooperating with one another. Therefore, answering the question, which is the oldest language in the world, is a rather difficult task. Eventually, the use of language became an important part of the human culture. It was not only used to communicate and share information with people around, but it also had many social and cultural uses. It came to be used for identifying a group, social grooming, entertainment, etc., among other things. As time passed, many languages evolved and diversified, when people started traveling from one part of the world to another. Due to this fact, there are some languages which are spoken in different parts of the world.

Literature and Language are two faces of a coin. Literature is a pedagogic tool to learn language. Language comes next to food. We are so intimately familiar with it that we take it for granted like we do breathing or walking. Literature updates the development of the language. The present article intends to investigate the language interactions and classroom discourses that take place in 'Literature circles'. Literature can help learners to develop their understanding of other cultures, awareness of differences and to develop the process of learning and understanding in general.

Literature - written artistic works, particularly those with a high and lasting artistic value.

Language - A system of communication consisting of sounds, words and grammar, or the system of communication used by the people of a particular country

The teaching of Language is the one of the methods of efficient expression and communication, but the use of English as a means of communication has become a vital requirement. Most of the English teachers, who opt to teach English language, do not know how to teach, but thankfully

there are some teachers in our country, who brought revolution with their teaching skills in their class rooms by accommodating Innovations in English Language Teaching.

BACKGROUND

Presently, English teaching in India is carried on formalistic and ritualistic method, without much involvement on the part of the teachers towards learners. English teaching has become an Exam-oriented, Course-centered or Degree-purposed exercise and the teachers never tried to develop English Teaching that should cater to the relevance of the present day needs. Further, being in the post-independent era, the assumption is to be still living on received knowledge, partly because of the impact of Colonialism and partly because of the appreciation and admiration for the West.

Probably there is a lack of a spark, which can light the fire of skills and compel teachers to think about their own cultural requirements and situations. Several factors should be taken into account in developing, discovering and planning the system of education, particularly English Teaching Skills.

Therefore focusing on the real aims, true objectives and factual targets of teaching, the following two facts should be considered in order of its importance:

- 1) Most of the teachers cover the syllabus prescribed by the University with much difficulty
- 2) Most of the students enroll themselves only to get a certificate

These two major issues lead both the teacher and the learner to neither a true and emotional involvement nor a creative and critical thinking over English Teaching programmes or the system of Education.

CHANGE THE UN-CHANGED

A great saying goes “Change is the law of Nature”, “Change is the biggest boon of Universe”. We know that seasons change, habits change, attitudes change etc., and even every living thing would see many changes from their birth to death. So in view of this, why the education system can’t change with new methodologies, new skills or new innovations?

We the teachers believe that we are the builders of future generation and consider ourselves to bring change, but did we ever rethink as far as our curriculum is concerned? Have we ever worried about the quality of Education? Or have we ever observed, what kind of English we are imparting to our students?

So, in view of all these factors, only the teachers can evolve a model, they themselves should re-orient with new skills, innovations and methodologies to impart the accurate knowledge of English Education to the learners.

INITIATIVES IN THE REALM OF INNOVATIONS

A couple of decades ago, the teachers would ask students to read English newspapers regularly, listen to All India Radio and watch Television English news, but now-a-days it is

not possible due to advanced technology like the short messages service of Cell phones, Emails on internet and Social networking sites like face book, twitter and blogs.

Unfortunately this era force learners to modify the spelling of common words, grammar of the language and literary forms into their own innovative jargons. Such type of English users easily hide their inability and ignorance of the language behind the curtain.

There is another aspect to this phenomenon; today's children are very much familiar with the English Lexicon as they were not few decades ago. Moreover the urban children get better and richer in English language than the rural students. The post globalization era also has an impact on English language.

In this globalized scenario, there is a constant need for innovation; one of the important innovations is the "attitude of teacher in the class room" and "continuous and comprehensive evaluation". To substantiate the above-said innovation, there is one example. Some time back few of the Indian states followed the policy of teaching English which used to begin in Class VI in the Government Schools with regional language as their medium of instruction, later the policy was changed and English was introduced in Class III and currently it is being taught from Class I.

To emphasize continuous and comprehensive evaluation system, it is very essential to design the curriculum, the learning materials and time table, and the improvement of infrastructure should be in accordance with the demand of the system. Apart from this, the foremost thing is to re-orient the teachers with new methods of teaching, by conducting monthly workshops and a good number of skill development programmes.

There are many ideas for innovation but the following innovations are being considered the best

- 1) Task-Based language teaching
- 2) Using English Songs for productive language learning activities
- 3) Anecdotes and Malapropisms for language teaching
- 4) Using newspapers in the English class rooms for language development
- 5) In the class room, roles of English language teachers
- 6) Techniques of teaching critical thinking skills

So out of the six important innovations, it is advisable to lay emphasis on the last factor, that is, techniques of teaching critical thinking skills. Now the question arises, what is critical thinking?

The general definition of critical thinking is, thinking abilities in terms of applying, evaluating, reasoning, conceptualizing, observing, experiencing, experimenting and interpreting. But in the light of class room teaching, the definition of critical thinking is, any conscious thinking, which is purely goal-oriented. However these two definitions are interrelated and interdependent.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN CLASS ROOM

1. As we know, teaching is not a one-way but a two-way communication, where the teacher as well as the learner should share a mutual relationship.
2. The class room should be learner-centric; the most important part of the class room is that the learners' participation should be more and important in terms of involvement and contribution.
3. The aims, goals and objectives should be present in a learning context; this should help the learners to create a critical understanding.
4. Teaching critical skills should bring a permanent change in the process of learning habits of learners.
5. Every technique used and rehearsed in class room should be an approach to develop critical thinking among learners.
6. The class may be a mixed group of learners, where every learner should get a chance to exhibit his/her talents, abilities, capacities and capabilities.

CONCLUSION

Innovation in the teaching of English is a kind of encouragement, a motivation for all learners and also helps the learners to gear up to develop thinking and learning abilities and enable them to be more creative in their learning process. Literature indeed has a place in the language classroom. For many students, literature can provide a key to motivate them to read texts in English. For all students, literature is an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use and for introducing cultural assumptions. Our success in using literature, of course, greatly depends upon a selection of texts which will not be overtly difficult on either a linguistic or conceptual level.

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