

INNOVATIVE IDEAS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Introduction

English is rapidly becoming the world's lingua franca, a truly international language. Language teaching program and curriculum are central aspects of the teaching of English as a vibrant and rapidly growing area of education worldwide. Management and curriculum in English language teaching operate within a rapidly changing, global environment with multiple and diverse expectations and clientele that require innovative approaches as well as effective and diverse leadership skills.

The general goal of every English class is the same; to instruct students in reading and writing. This task, however, can be accomplished in a variety of ways. In most of the English classes, students read texts and demonstrate their understanding by responding to the texts in writing. While this practice is generally effective, students can be taught the same skills but in a more engaging and innovative way.

By employing innovative English teaching strategies, teachers can increase students' overall enjoyment of the subject and encourage them to become lifelong learners, continuing their education long after they leave the classroom.

This article analyzes the various innovative ideas in English Language Teaching.

Teaching with Graphic Novels

Many teachers of English hold a disdain for graphic novels and view them as some lesser type of literature. While there are graphic novel forms that do not contain the rich text and interwoven plot of other literary types, the genre should not be abandoned all together as it can be effectively used to engage students and encourage reading practice. Integrating graphic novels into a traditional English class can benefit slow readers, who are likely to rely heavily upon the pictures to build an understanding of the written words, as well as high level readers, who will be able to infer wider meaning of the simple text.

For instance one can explore some contemporary graphic novels like the highly praised fantasy work "Bone" by Jeff Smith, or the Holocaust work "Maus" by Art Spiegelman. Both of these literary works provide the added draw of accompanying pictures, while still containing an enriched literary narrative and complex plot structure for learners to explore.

Media Literacy

While it is important for students to be able to read and comprehend basic written texts, students of twenty-first-century are confronted with information in a variety of forms. The Centre for Media Literacy, and education advocacy groups, encourages teachers of English to be cognizant of the variety of forms of information that students encounter on a regular basis. It is believed that teachers should teach with an overall media literacy approach. This means that teachers should engage their students in "reading" advertisements, music and even popular TV shows and movies, as all of these media form impart information to students.

By integrating a variety of media forms into a traditional English class, teachers can increase the relevancy of the lessons and allow students to develop their ability to understand information presented through an array of formats.

Watch movies

Watching movies make learning English an entertaining exercise. One has to choose the type of movie that suits the age group of your students. This will allow them to hear native English used by native speakers in everyday situations. This funny way of learning will prepare students for the future life. Many movies have teaching worksheets that go along with them. These can be found online.

English as a Second Language

English is the third most spoken language in the world. It is a useful language to learn, especially when travelling to America, Europe and parts of Asia and helpful when communicating with more than 500 million speakers around the globe. Some strategies to teach English as a second language are given below.

Materials

Worksheets and quizzes are useful classroom materials that students can use to learn English as a second language. ESL publishers have a variety of worksheets, drills and flash cards that are interactive to help students become more active in their English language learning. Simple exercises such as translating paragraphs in their original language to English will help them with their English comprehension. Reading materials in English that will be useful for those learning the language include English poems and short stories. Vocabulary cards can be used to learn words quickly, while fill-in-the-blanks exercises help students to complete sentences.

Curriculum

English as a Second Language classes should emphasize a curriculum that will help students acquire and practice necessary communication skills in the language. The curriculum may have lessons in listening, reading, and speaking English, such as in the Side by Side series by

Longman Publishers. In addition to lessons in vocabulary and grammar, proper pronunciation lessons should also be incorporated. Preparation for English as a Second Language Test (TOEFL) should also be included in the curriculum, to help students prepare for getting English language credentials.

Interaction

It is important for students to interact with the language through several avenues. Showing them films and television shows will help immerse them in the language in an enjoyable way. Teachers can also help students interact foreigners by bringing native English speakers to the classroom and conversing with the students. Multimedia tools such as videos and audio clips will help in listening comprehension. After each lesson, ask students to analyze what they have learned by explaining the context in English.

Strategies That Would Best Teach English to Second Language Learners

Teachers are the most important members of society because their profession affects the fate of the earth.. Trained teachers and volunteers can help English learners using constructive strategies to teach English to second language learners in the class room.

Understanding Cultural Differences

The teacher must be careful not to misinterpret communication styles. Japanese students, for example, value pauses and time for mental reflection before answering questions. In cases such as this, the teacher should respect the student's communication style. Introducing classroom projects that highlight cultural traditions can help students and teachers better understand the others' cultural while increasing the quantum of English learned. Having students share a favorite family recipe increases cultural understanding.

Improving Listening Skills

ESL teachers should speak at a slower pace, but retain natural pronunciation. Use a normal volume that does not sound unreal or imitating. Speak at a regular pace when teaching students new phrases and vocabulary words. This allows students to hear the new information spoken by a native English speaker. Short, direct sentences are easier for English learners to grasp. For example, ask "How is the weather today?" instead of "Can someone tell me how the weather has been lately?" Students should also be exposed to a variety of voices through guest speakers and audio resources.

Improving Reading and Writing Skills

Writing short compositions can help students improve their skills. Have students read each other's compositions and provide constructive feedback. When grading and correcting submitted

papers, resist the urge to fix every single mistake as this will likely discourage students. Instead, only correct major issues, and allow the student to recognize his own smaller mistakes as his skills progress.

Ways to Make English Learners More Comfortable to Speak in the Classroom

Transitioning to a new college can be stressful, regardless of age, culture or personality type. Regardless of the difficulties, foreign students transfer to English-speaking colleges every day. Teachers who carefully consider the challenges an English learner may experience will help him adjust smoothly.

Concern

Connect with the student. Pair each non-native learner with a classroom buddy to help them out with assignments they are unsure how to manage. You can choose to group non-native learners together, or you may assign partners who can relate to each other on a different level. Helping English learners connect with their classmates prevents them from dreading class time and lessens and feelings of loneliness.

Awareness

Stay informed. Meet the English learner on a regular basis to determine whether or not her progress is sufficient and arrange for any necessary interventions. Provide encouragement by congratulating her on the positive contributions she's made to the class. Teachers who constantly affirm their students show higher success rates than those who limit communication to correction.

Interest

Be enthusiastic. The alienation English learners experience at school may cause them to feel embarrassed and diminish their sense of pride. Call positive attention to the student by showing interest in his own language and carefully including him in all classroom activities. Monitor classroom interactions to ensure that he is treated with respect and never alienated because of his differences.

Partnership

Consult outside sources. Even if you are unable to hire a full-time aide, discussing the situation with someone else allows you to address any uncertainties and regard the situation with a fresh perspective. Consider inviting visitors to conduct presentations on their personal experiences with learning a new language. Not only will this make the English learner feel comfortable, but it will raise awareness among the rest of the class and encourage them to be courteous.

Fun English Class Activities

Learning English doesn't need to be a dreary undertaking. There are a lot of activities that activate language production skills and are fun for students of any age. Some activities involve competition and others co-operation. Anything that gets students speaking and using the new English they have learned is worthwhile.

Competition

Most of us like to compete, whether for points or small prizes, and almost any review activity can be made into a game. One successful format to use is a Jeopardy-style review, with categories and questions that are worth increasing amounts as they get more difficult. You can use this format to review vocabulary: use parts of speech as your categories. Or you can review grammar structures, tricky spelling, questions forms (tag questions, interrogatives, indirect questions. Another popular competition is a version of Beat the Clock, where each team tries to find the most words of a certain type while the clock is running out. For more advanced groups, they can try creating the most accurate sentences or questions.

Chain Stories

Each individual student brings different knowledge to the class, and activities designed to pool that knowledge can really be fun. Chain stories are a great way to build confidence and get everyone involved. Chain stories involve each person in the group taking a turn adding to the story. They can be built one word at a time, 3 words at a time, or sentence by sentence, depending on the level of the students. Chain stories work best in groups of 5 - 8, if you have a bigger group, start more than one story. Ask one person in each group to record the story so that it can be read back to the whole class at the end.

Mixer

How many times can you introduce yourself to the same people? It's a lot more fun to practice talking about yourself if you can assume a new identity. Collect (or make) a set of business cards, put the cards in a hat and have students each draw one out. This will be their new identity for the mixer. Give them a few minutes to add some other details about "their" family, home, and so on. Then start the party. Since they are all 'strangers' they will get plenty of practice introducing themselves and making small talk.

Inventing

Ask students to invent a new product or service. Working in pairs or groups of threes, students will invent their product or service, decide how to 'sell' it and then present it to the class. Everyone gets to talk a lot, and the class can vote for the products and services they like the best.

Conclusion

For effective teaching to take place, an appropriate teaching method must be employed. A teacher may develop innovative methods that have been developed by other teachers. When deciding the teaching methods to use, a teacher considers the students' prior knowledge, environment, and learning goals. Students have different ways of absorbing information and of demonstrating their knowledge. Teachers often use techniques which cater to multiple learning styles to help students retain information and strengthen understanding. A variety of strategies and methods are used to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to learn.

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