

Review

Modern Strategies in English Language Pedagogy

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The modern strategies in English Language Pedagogy require students not to depend on their teacher all the time, waiting for instructions, words of approval, correction, advice, or praise. They value each other's participations; they work together, and learn from each other. When in difficulty or in doubt, they do ask the teacher for help or advice but only after they have tried to solve the problem among themselves. The emphasis is on working together, in pairs, in groups, and as a whole class. Their teacher assists them to improve their language skills. The classroom is a place where we consider the needs of the students, as a group and as individuals, and encourage them to participate in the learning process all the time. In this study, the researcher defend the role of the teacher as more than just an instructor and learners are active participants in the learning process. The researcher tackled some modern pedagogical strategies, such as the internet discussion sites, student-centred classroom and the integrated approach strategies which have been designed to develop the levels of the students, manage their activities, and direct their learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning is very important factor which affects life, and is a continuous experience. This is mainly right for those who are members in the scientific fields worldwide. Keeping away from the continuous learning and training is not a choice for most people who work in domains where fast change is a feature of how people work, what the other people expect them to achieve, and the tools and data with which they perform their task .People, who are working in the medical field for example, have to continuously obtain latest information and skills. Also, People may change their jobs many times before retirement, so they have to learn the new job

requirements.

Balli (2009) argues that when teaching is done well, it is not a mechanical skill. Teachers can prepare perfectly organized lessons with different learning activities. Teachers' candress professionally, attains advanced degrees, and design attractive classrooms. As important as these things are, they are not enough. Excellent teaching is still an individual art with no two teaching styles alike in every respect. There is something about a unique artisan teacher who draws students in. Performers call it stage presence. It involves the essence of who teachers are: the way they carry themselves and

their enthusiasm, passion, sense of purpose, and confidence. Teachers may be unaware that their daily character and actions are powerful examples for those students who have adopted the teacher as a professional role model. Whatever their gender, teachers would do well to seriously consider how student gender relates to learning. Male and female students differ in their interests and ways for learning. So, teachers should discern and use gender-based interests and learning styles to optimize student learning in all subject areas. Teachers have to recognize and acknowledge certain gender differences and not to put boys and girls into similar learning strategies to be applied in the classroom. Girls will be content to quietly organize words and punctuation in a notebook, and more boys will thrive on spacing word cards in the correct order on the classroom floor. Both genders learn the words, meeting the objective through different ways. While girls may enjoy literature circles with other girls to discuss a fantasy book on unicorns, boys might prefer literature circles with other boys to discuss a book about car racing. Both genders will read but engage in different topics. While girls may write a story about friends, boys might enjoy writing about an adventure.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study aims at exploring the modern English language teaching strategies that are widely being used nowadays in the classrooms.

Student –centred Classroom Strategies

Richards and Schmidt (2010) define classroom management in language teaching as: "the ways in which student behaviour, movement and interaction during a lesson are organized and controlled by the teacher or sometimes by the learners by themselves to enable teaching to take place most effectively. Classroom management includes procedures for grouping students for different types of classroom activities, use of lesson plans, handling of equipment, aids, etc., and the direction and management of student behaviour and activity". (Richards and Schmidt .2010,p.81)

Jones (2007) mentions that in a student-centered class, students don't depend on their teacher all the time, waiting for instructions, words of approval, correction, advice, or praise. They don't ignore each other, but look at each other and communicate with each other. They value each other's contributions; they cooperate, learn from each other, and help each other. When in difficulty or in doubt, they do ask the Teacher for help or advice but only after they have tried to solve the problem among themselves. The emphasis is on working together, in

pairs, in groups, and as a whole class. Their teacher helps them to develop their language skills. A student-centered classroom isn't a place where the students decide what they want to learn and what they want to do. It's a place where we consider the needs of the students, as a group and as individuals, and encourage them to participate in the learning process all the time. The teacher's role is more that of a facilitator than instructor; the students are active participants in the learning process. The teacher and the textbook help to guide the students, manage their activities, and direct their learning. Being a teacher means helping people to learn – and, in a student-centered class, the teacher is a member of the class as a participant in the learning process.

In a student-centered class, at different times, students may be working alone, in pairs, or in groups:

- (a) Working alone, preparing ideas or making notes before a discussion, doing a listening task, doing a short written assignment, or doing grammar or vocabulary exercises
- (b) Working together in pairs or groups, comparing and discussing their answers, or reading and reacting to one another's written work and suggesting improvements.

- (a) Working together in discussions or in role-plays, sharing ideas, opinions, and experiences
- (b) Interacting with the teacher and the whole class, asking questions or brainstorming ideas

Also in a student-centered class, students may be teacher-led:

- (a) Before students work together, their teacher will help them prepare to work together with explanations and pronunciation practice. While students are working together, their teacher will be available to give advice and encouragement.

- (b) After they've finished working together, and the class is reassembled, their teacher will give them feedback, offer suggestions and advice, make corrections, and answer questions.

When students are working together in English, they

- (c) Talk more
- (c) Share their ideas.
- (d) Learn from each other.
- (e) Are more involved.
- (f) Feel more secure and less anxious.
- (g) Use English in a meaningful, realistic way.
- (h) Enjoy using English to communicate.

But some of them may

- (a) Feel nervous, embarrassed, or tongue-tied.
- (b) Speak English and make a lot of mistakes.
- (c) Speak in their native language, not in English.
- (d) Not enjoy working together.

The Integrated Approach

Richards and Schmidt (2010) defined the integrated approach as 'the teaching of the language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in conjunction with each other as when a lesson involves activities that relate listening and speaking to reading and writing'. This definition is broadly accepted and used, especially in relation to various varieties of communicative language teaching.

McDonough et al (2013) believe that integrated skills may also be used to include some other kinds of skills as well as the four language skills in different contexts. For example, in the context of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), integrated skills may include cognitive skills such as doing research and problem solving. By the same token, when discussing Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), we may refer to integration of some skills deriving from Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) within language curricula, such as multi-modal literacy and navigation skills. If we look around us in our daily lives, we can see that we rarely use language skills in isolation but in conjunction, as the definition of integrated skills suggests. Even though the classroom is clearly not the same as 'real' life, it could be argued that part of its function is to recreate it. If one of the jobs of the teacher is to make the students 'communicatively competent' in the L2, then this will involve more than being able to perform in each of the four skills separately. By giving learners tasks that expose them to these skills in conjunction, it is possible that they will gain a deeper understanding of how communication works in the foreign language as well as becoming more motivated when they see the value of performing meaningful tasks and activities in the classroom. From the skills integration point of view the situations may be quite simple – such as speaking on the telephone and taking down a message or taking part in a conversation – or, alternatively, they may be much longer and involve more skills integration.

McDonough et al (2013) stated the following activities:

We may read about a film or a concert in a newspaper or magazine:

We ask a friend if they would like to go.
We search the Internet if we have easy access to it.

We phone the box office to reserve tickets.

We drive to the cinema/concert hall with the friend. We ask the clerk for the tickets.

We watch the film/concert.

We discuss the film/performance with the friend on the way home.

Some of us may write about our experience in a blog, by Twitter, on Facebook and so on to communicate with a larger number of people.

We may need to read lecture notes/articles/a paper in order to write a composition or an essay:

We discuss it with other learners/the teacher.

Some of us may do an additional search by using library facilities or by going on the Internet.

We compose a draft.

Some of us may show the draft to other learners or to the teacher for advice.

We rewrite it until we have a final version.

We read the teacher's feedback.

We speak to other learners/the teacher about the feedback.

The two situations that have been clarified above explain how, in our everyday lives, we are continually applying tasks that include normal integration of language skills. They also show that none of these stages is completely expected. For instance, in the first situation described above, all the seats may have been sold for that particular performance or our friend may respond that she cannot go to the film or the performance on that evening for any cause. However, at each stage, there is a motive for using that particular skill. Contact with this type of normal skills integration will confidently show learners that the skills are seldom used in a separated way outside the classroom and that they are not different as such, but that there is considerable overlap and resemblance between some of the secondary skills involved.

They further added that the preparation of learners to present short oral presentation in class to the rest of the group is another practical way of achieving skills integration in the classroom. One technique to begin this activity is to take cuttings from newspapers, magazines and topics included in existing teaching materials. Sometimes, reading material can be used as first motivation, and the activity can be graded to give lower proficiency learners a chance to work with less challenging materials. The students can then take notes and try to identify aspects of what they have read that will be worth discussing. They are then given time to arrange a short talk in front of the class and are encouraged to use maps, diagrams, charts and visual equipment if these can help to make the presentation clearer to the group. During the presentation, the other learners need to take notes so that they can ask questions and/or raise relevant points after the talk has finished.

As teachers, we can sometimes experiment with student assessment at this stage by asking the students to assess each other's work (peer assessment). It is possible to plan a fairly basic evaluation sheet where small groups of students are asked to respond to questions that might cover the following: what they thought of the presentation; was it well organized and were they able to follow the main points; could they summarize the talk for someone who was not present; did the speaker make effective use of visual support material; what advice would they give to the speaker for upcoming presentations.

Internet discussion sites and English Language Learning

Eastment (1999) states that:

"The use of the internet in all aspects of ELT has grown rapidly between 1996 and 1998, and continues to accelerate. The number of the ELT sites on the web has tripled, and most UK schools now have a web presence, as does every ELT organisation or association. Internet connections are now common place in schools in the developed world, with at least one workstation connected. More prosperous private schools and virtually universities have significant numbers of networked, Internet-connected machines and are beginning to use them". (Eastment, 1999)

Hanna and Denooy (2009) mention that in terms of teaching and learning, public Internet discussion has much to offer more advanced language learners principally the opportunity for 'authentic' communication with native speakers. The public discussion forum offers learners the opportunity to move beyond the relative shelter of activities designed specifically for them. Here they can engage with native speakers who are seeking interaction on topics of mutual interest: at any time of the day or night – in whatever time zone you happen to be – there are discussions available on an immensely varied set of topics. Extraordinary opportunities exist, therefore, for students to build on their own expertise and interests to engage with wider communities of target-language users, developing linguistic and rhetorical competences while also being exposed to other cultures' 'takes' on the topic of discussion and their points of reference in the debate. Finally, it is not only the prospects for learning of useful skills which advocate for the use of Internet discussion forums.

Thorne (2006) argues that the students who are competent in second and additional language(s) may now involve Internet-mediation as often as or more often than face-to-face and non-digital forms of communication'. The focus shifts from what you can learn through discussion on Internet forums to quite simply

learning to participate in widespread and popular cultural practice in another language. Exploiting this potential is, however, not a matter of simply indicating addresses to students as if ignorance of specific URLs were the only barrier to successful participation in discussion. Differences in cultural conventions need to be intelligently negotiated for learners to make the most of the opportunities.

CONCLUSION

In the student-centered and integrated approach classrooms, students are involved in the learning process. Different learning styles can be applied, and students can help each other to improve their skills. In the student-centered and integrated skills classroom, students can find the opportunity to talk more than the chance that they can find in the teacher-led classrooms or the classes which are designed for teaching just one or two skills. If students want to improve their speaking skills, there is no alternative for pair and group work. Student-centered and integrated skills strategies are enjoyable and stimulating. They make students able to hear different points of view, share experiences, brainstorming ideas, explain things, react to other people, and express their feelings.

Public Internet discussion has much to offer to English language learners mainly the opportunity for authentic communication with native speakers.

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