

Farewell to Orator-Listener Mode of Teaching and Welcome to The Role as Language Engineers

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Abstract: In the present scenario, the inclination towards orator-listener mode of teaching has become obsolete among public, and taken diverse practices among students. The reasons for this may be the development of technology and usage of electronic gadgets. This paper focuses mainly on activity based teaching methodology that is to be practised in the ESL (English as a second language) class rooms. The main difficulty for the teachers of English in the present scenario is to make the students shine in every aspects of their academic performance and also to give liberty in their academic thoughts and deeds. The objective of this paper is to execute activity oriented methodology and exercise to enhance communication skills among the selective informants by interactive learning atmosphere.

Key words: Communication Skills, Activity based teaching, interactive learning atmosphere

I. INTRODUCTION

One communal bonding factor across the world, among most of the individuals, is English which is assisting them to operational communications and sharing information at will and in a free flowing way. If we check the smooth coat of the world, the engine of the universal machine, English has been acting as the significant representative for appropriate functioning and optimal development. On the other hand, when the micro level is checked, though we can argue the effectiveness by using English language remains undamaged, the disbelief always linger around the demand over the language. So, there begins the requirement to teach the language innovatively and creatively, which is never diminutive of headwinds. By being innovative and creative, it would facilitate in generating curiosity among the learners by extending out pioneering ideas and techniques thus making the progression of learning trouble-free, uncomplicated to comprehend and excitement crammed. One strong restrictive factor for reluctance to perk up communication skills is the lack of interest in reading and listening and also the hesitation to communicate in English. The best medication to cure this is being creative, innovative, interesting and effective. The creative and interesting elements in teaching will smash the boring patterns and it can fetch in the flexibility to acclimatize to the newest trend in the system and the culture. The innovative approach will facilitate to broaden the teaching extremity to any level by minor change according to the recipient. If the students are given liberty in their academic learning through activities, learning becomes more meaningful and effective.

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Therefore liberty helps the students in overcoming the stage fear, interaction with the fellow students and facilitator, discussions on the topic and decision making, team work with positive attitude helps the students gradually transform from basic level of understanding to the creamy layer of understanding. Since the students as well as the parents are expecting high level of competency among the students, it raised the responsibilities of teachers to conduct courses effectively and interestingly.

II. RESULTS

A. Selection of Students

60 Engineering students were the experimental group who were given English language practice through activity based teaching methodology. Other 60 students were the control group students who have not been given training through this method. The following were the activities that were followed in the classroom in order to have effective, interactive and innovative teaching and learning.

B. Methodology Practised in the students

“Teaching English to Engineers is a delicate and demanding matter in terms of content, methods and techniques and deciding which is appropriate for this particular area of Engineering and English.” Reimer (2002). Vocabulary and Grammar are two major parts of any language. Students who are knowledgeable in these two will be good in using the language meaningfully and effectively. The key distinguishing factor between the English medium and the non-English medium students is the exposure level. The English medium students would have undergone a systematic unwinding in learning the language by having more listening opportunity and using the language and hence the platform is relatively strong whereas the non-English would have expressed themselves and their knowledge more in their native language comparing to English. The major prerequisite is to expose and strengthen the basics of an individual by helping and choosing relevant books and providing necessary guidance. It is not that the non-English medium students have no idea about the language but rather it is lesser usage and hence brushing and enriching the knowledge and confidence is necessary.

One can have a systematic plan and methodology to fast track the learning. “Workplace environment demands effective communication, and as more jobs these days are done through team work, ability to communicate effectively through a common language among a multilingual workforce becomes very significant”. (Malathy, P. 2010).



The Class of 60 students was divided into 10 groups of 6 members each. Each group were assigned with the below mentioned activities to improve their logical thinking, relative understanding and improve vocabulary usage effectively.

C. Essence of the Methodology

The different methodologies that were implemented in order to enhance English communication were mainly based on the following ideas.

- Strengthening the Basics
- Improve Context Thinking.
- Improve Personal Expressions.
- Relating known and unknown.
- Presentation.
- Match the Original.
- Historic Techniques.
- Internet Usage.

The different concepts that were taught to the students through class room activities and games are as follows:

D. Strengthening the Basics

Strengthening the basics would be the ideal way and it acts as the backbone for further development in the future. The students were trained on the following to enhance their language proficiency and communication skills.

The students were taught the following:

- Antonyms.
- Synonyms.
- Idioms and phrases.
- Word formation.
- Transcoding graphics.
- Picture perception.
- Sentence structures.
- Framing of sentences.
- Odd man out.
- Scrambled words.
- Missing words.
- Fixing the phrases and Identification of its meaning.
- Framing sentence.
- Matching the phrases.
- Filling the blanks.
- Answering the questions for the given passage.
- Transcoding the given paragraph into picture.
- Transcoding the given pictorial representation into paragraph and summarizing.
- Interpretation of ideas through games and class room activities.

E. Improve Context Thinking

- Each group was provided with a card containing proverb on it. One person from the group was asked to act out the words of the proverb and the remaining five members of the group were asked to find out the proverb.

- The groups were asked to select a video and play it by mute mode and were asked to speak the dialogues of the characters in the video.
- Blip- One student was sent out of the class and a verb was given to the class. The student who was outside the class was asked to find out the given word by asking yes or no questions by using the word blip in place of the particular verb given to class.
Example: The verb given to class was “writing”. The question by the student outside class can be “Do I blip? Do I blip while eating? Do I blip while driving?” and so on.
- One student from each group was given a picture. The other members of the group were instructed to ask yes or no questions to the person with picture and the members were given time of five minutes to find out what is indicated in the picture.

The students were trained focusing on how to frame questions and to seek information through listening. Supporting this of interaction, an audio-visual was given. After listening and watching the audio visual component, the students learnt how to frame questions and seek information to build an effective conversation among the peers. The activity entitled the candidates to frame different types of questions such as “WH” questions, “Yes / No” questions and questions tags, and thereby seek information on various topics. The more they raise questions the more the information was gathered. Asking questions served as the key skill for an effective conversation without which any conversation would come to an end. Hence, it was assured that the students developed strong interactive skills through this listening and watching activity.

F. Improve Personal Expressions

- “Students have difficulty in fully comprehending the technical terms as the relationship between the components of a technical term may not be easy to identify” (Malathy, P. 2010). After teaching the basics of vocabulary building through games and activities, the teams were asked to create a short story using vocabulary and idioms they had learnt. It was observed that the students discussed with their peers for idea generation and thereby brought the best in them.
- For transcoding graphics and picture perception, each individual in the team exhibited varied ideas and perceptions. Critical thinking skills were induced in each individual in the team. Each individual was engaged in the team work and healthy swap of thoughts and ideas were noticeable.
- Two Pictures with slight differences were given and the students were asked to find the difference and speak on that in front of the class.
- Picture perception – looking at a given picture and interpreting what was seen in the picture was done by each student.
- A bunch of Cards containing words, idioms and phrases were given to each group. The team members were expected to arrange the jumbled words, idioms and phrases and find out the implied story within the stipulated time of 7 minutes. The team was then asked to narrate the story with coherence.

G. Relating Known and Unknown

Though the students have lesser exposure to English language and usage, they generally would be good with their native language. So if they could correlate the English usage with their native language there will be much more effective learning since they can grasp the concepts easily.

Exercises like writing word by word translation of a read article by the students helped in improving their knowledge. The written documents could be used for future reference and revision. Guidance was provided to make necessary correction and update on areas where the students failed to understand the actual message.

- Instantaneous verbal translation of an article by sound reading: This was in better exposure to more number of words. This method helped in saving a lot of time and thus greater utilization of it. Students with some knowledge got into the second stage directly.
- Reading books that have a native language translation to it: At places of doubt and that needed clarification, students referred directly to the translation and understood the usage contextually. This method was substituted with dictionary usage over the longer term.
- Translation of an article in mother tongue to English: Under proper guidance students were given necessary feedbacks and support and were helped in improving their knowledge. “Technical English is not part of the learner's general cognitive development. It is associated with conscious learning of a variety of subjects in school. It is also associated with the acquisition and learning of mother tongue, which, often, is acquired first in the Indian context. Mother tongue directs this experience and thus become a major gateway to the concept of technical language. This inevitable situation in India challenges the English language teacher, especially those who teach English in engineering colleges, to devise ways and strategies to help their students overcome the influence of mother tongue and focus on newer concepts and the jargon attached to such concepts” (Malathy, P. 2009).

H. Presentation

- In order to become proficient in their second language, young children will need to acquire familiarity with the phonology to the second language, its vocabulary (typical everyday discourse as well as academic vocabulary), its morphology and grammar (Geva, 2006). Further, to become literate in a second language, it is important to have an adequate level of oral proficiency in that language (Bialystok, 2007).
- Within the closed loop of students who were in need of guidance for improving their English and communication skill, presentations were encouraged.
- Students were asked to choose a topic of their own interest. Within a prescribed time students had to prepare and present on their research and learning.

I. Match the Original

- News reading was given and the students were asked to do role play for the particular news. The students were given advertisements and asked were asked to enact advertisements matching the original.

J. Historic Techniques

The following Techniques that were encouraged and effectively practiced over years were encouraged:

- A Word a Day
- Newspaper and Magazine reading
- Regular Usage of Library
- Reading Comic Books
- Communicating only in English
- Watching English Movies with Subtitles.

K. Internet

In internet, there are numerous articles and learning materials available. These days Internet is a very commonly accessible source for learning. Resources like Games, articles with simple conversations, source of word, making words, exercises on grammar and usage are all available in the internet. In the class room, students were given opportunity to access internet for finding out the given topic and along with enriching their knowledge on the given subject, they were also able to improve their language skill.

III. FINDING

It has been noted that the experimental group students excelled more than that of the control group students in their academic performance. The benefits of the activities were comprehension of the subjects, better correlation of the sequence and grasping the message, improving the self confidence level in addressing their knowledge and learning from it, improving questioning skill to understand any subject. The key challenges that were faced during the activities were limited vocabulary, inducing the confidence level to open up and aligning students to the right thinking mode.

IV. CONCLUSION

Winning attitude of the students in each activity helped the students to have successful and effective language learning. Activity oriented methodology therefore acted as an effective way to make the students learn English language easily. If the teachers of English intend to improve the English communication skills of the students, then the approaches recommended in this study will prove to be a reminiscent curative measure. It is in the hands of the teachers of English to bid farewell to listener-orator mode of teaching and welcome activity based teaching and act as language Engineers.

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