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BEST PRACTICES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

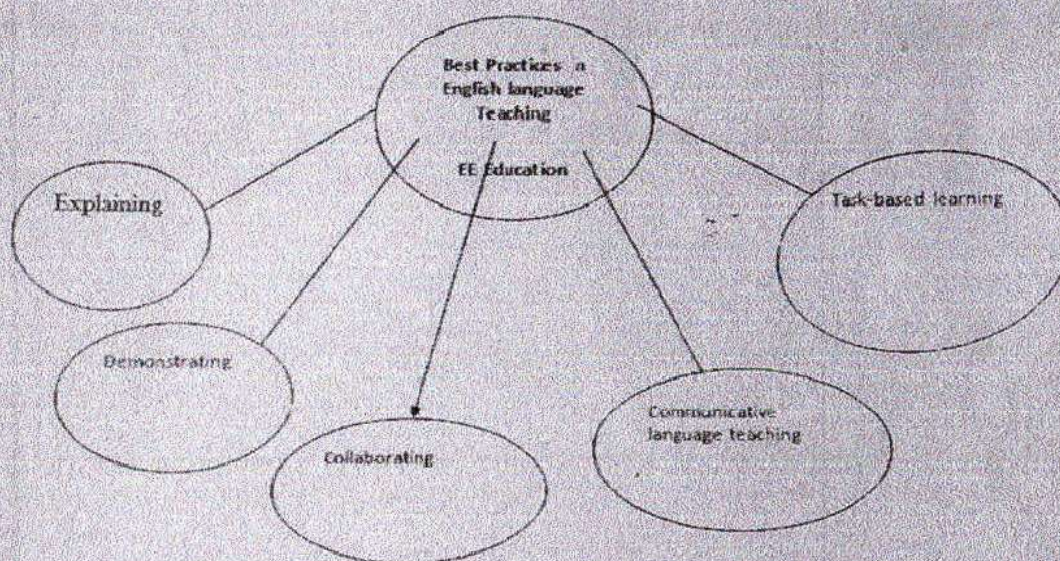
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Abstract

The paper describes some of the best practices in English language teaching in order to make teaching and learning more efficient and practical. These practices are explaining, demonstrating, collaborating, communicative language teaching, task-based learning etc. are discussed. All these practices can help students learn actively as well as improve their learning skills. These practices can change teacher-centered teaching into student-centered teaching and learning actively.



Best Practices in English Language Teaching

1. **Explaining** Explaining, or lecturing, is one of the most used method for teaching English. It includes spoken explanations of the topic to be taught. Lecturing is often accompanied by visual aids to help students visualize an object or problem.
2. **Demonstrating** Demonstrating is the process of teaching English through examples or experiments. A demonstration may be used to prove a fact through a combination of visual evidence and associated reasoning. Demonstrations are similar to written storytelling and examples in that they allow students to personally relate to the presented information. Memorization of a list of facts is a detached and impersonal experience, whereas the same information, conveyed through demonstration, becomes personally relatable. Demonstrations help to raise student interest and reinforce memory retention because they provide connections between facts and real-world applications of those facts. Lectures, on the other hand, are often geared more towards factual presentation than connective learning.
4. In teaching through demonstration, students are set up to potentially conceptualize class material more effectively as shown in a study. Teachers not only demonstrate specific learning concepts within the classroom, they can also participate in demonstration classrooms to help improve their own teaching strategies, which may or may not be demonstrative in nature. Students can also

communicate values and ideas through demonstrations. This is often done in plays, movies, and film. Pictures without words can show or demonstrate various types of actions and consequences.

• **Collaborating** Collaboration is also a good method of teaching English. It allows students to actively participate in the learning process by talking with each other and listening to other points of view. Skills of speaking and listening are best taught by this way. Collaboration establishes a personal connection between students and the topic of study and it helps students think in a less personally biased way. Group projects and discussions are examples of this teaching method. Teachers may employ collaboration to assess student's abilities to work as a team, leadership skills, or presentation abilities. Collaborative discussions can take a variety of forms, such as formal discussions. After some preparation and with clearly defined roles, a discussion may constitute most of a lesson, with the teacher only giving short feedback at the end or in the following lesson.

Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes the importance of language functions (rather than focuses on grammar and vocabulary). CLT aims to train students to use language forms appropriately in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes (Harmer, 2001, 84). The top major principles of CLT are communicative interaction, meaningful practice, active involvement, positive reinforcement, choice of suitable materials, changes of pace and activity, making the teaching process enjoyable, teaching English in English, realization that mistakes are natural and that even beginners can understand when taught in the target language.

Activities in CLT involve students in real and realistic communication, where the accuracy of the language is less important than successful achievement of the communicative purpose. Therefore, such activities as role-play and simulation are very popular in CLT. According to Harmer (2001, 85), in CLT students should have a purpose for communication (e.g. to write a letter of complaint, to make reservation of a table at the restaurant, etc.), they should be focused on the content of what they are saying and writing rather than on a particular language form. They should use a variety of language rather than just one language structure. In short, all such activities should attempt to replicate real communication. The key principles of effective CLT that teachers have to take into consideration are as follows: be aware of students' needs, develop learner independence, be a facilitator rather than a controller, motivate your students by verbal encouragement (praising, good mark, awards, body language), use variety of activities, and encourage students' active involvement.

Active involvement can be achieved by a variety of means such as varied modes of interaction, changes of activity, changes of pace, changes of intensity, changes of mood/atmosphere, changes of beginnings and endings, balanced use of settlers and stirrers, balancing the familiar and the unfamiliar, presence and absence of correction, varying the modes of correction, offering positive reinforcement in varied ways, and employing principled use of elicitation and nomination. One way of ensuring students' active involvement in the classroom is the use of appropriately chosen teaching materials. While choosing materials teachers have to be certain that the materials are appropriate to age group and language level, are appropriate with regard to students' cultural and religious background, complying with lesson's objectives, time scale and intensity.

Task-Based Learning

According to the key principles of TBL, learning is fostered through performing a series of activities as steps towards successful task realization. The focus is on language use for authentic, real-world needs. TBL relies heavily on learners' knowledge of the world, on learners' using skills of deduction and independent language analysis to exploit the situation fully. Motivation for communication becomes the

primary driving force. The emphasis is on communicative fluency rather than the accuracy. The target language is used in a naturally occurring context. The materials are selected and adopted from authentic sources.

According to Daiva Verikaite analysis of the key principles of the Task-Based Learning demonstrates the apparent similarity between the Task-Based Learning and the Communicative Language Teaching. A basic distinction between TBL and CLT is that CLT is a philosophy or orientation whereas TBL represents a body of principles and procedures for making communicative language teaching work in the classroom.

The basic principles of the Task-Based Teaching (TBT) are: meaning is primary, grammar and form are not ignored, the task is a complete unit and there is a systematic relationship between pedagogical tasks and target/real-world tasks. According to Ellis (2003, 16), a task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. Nunan (2004, 4) defines a task as "a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning. The task should also have sense of completeness, being able to stand alone with a beginning, a middle and an end".

Willis (1996) explains three basic stages in the framework of the Task-Based Learning: the Pre-task, the Task cycle, and Language focus. In the Pre-task the teacher explores the topic with the class and highlights useful words and phrases, helping students to understand the task instructions. During the Task cycle, the students perform the task in pairs or small groups while the teacher monitors from the distance. The students plan how they are going to report to the class on what they do. In the language focus stage the students examine and practice specific language features which the task has provoked.

Conclusion

Each of the practices can be successfully adopted in the English language classroom either in combination or separately. Students' needs determined by students' psychological characteristics as well as other factors influencing the learning/ teaching process should be decisive in an approach selection.

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