

INNOVATIVE AND CONVENTIONAL IN TEACHING LANGUAGES

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Innovative methods of teaching are a constant challenge for many educators.

In a nowadays short-attention world to keep students interested, excited and involved in the studying process is a quite challenging goal. But, nevertheless, all the efforts must be applied to fulfill this task.

“The core objective of teaching is passing on the information or knowledge to the minds of the students” [1]. Taking these words into consideration we can admit that any method either implying soft-ware application or modifying conventional practice is equally innovative if it is intended to achieve the “core objective” of teaching.

Speaking about soft-ware application we have in mind the combination of various digital media means providing interactive activity while problem-based learning i.e., learning to be creative and have critical and analytical way of thinking.

Traditionally, a teacher sends information and a student receives it. This is a common technique, which has been used for dozens of years as an educational method in all educational institutions. In fact, a teacher controls an educational process delivering information to his audience and emphasizing essential knowledge, – that is, a teacher is speaking and an audience is receiving information. For students this method is passive, and they take little part in the process of learning which is the reason for poor effectiveness.

Nowadays educational institutions tend to problem-based learning as a tool to display the inadequacies of traditional “chalk-and-talk” teaching since it is accounted that conventional methods do not encourage students to be aware of what they have learnt and what the association with previously obtained knowledge is.

A teacher uses multimedia means to modify the contents of the studying material and represent it in a more memorable way. “By incorporating digital media elements into the project, the students are able to learn better since they use multiple sensory modalities, which would make them more motivated to pay more attention to the information presented and retain the information better” [1]. Creating multimedia projects is quite fascinating for students, and the additional advantage of such activities is that while creating multimedia projects, students generally do this in groups. Working in this way, students work cooperatively using their group potential and skills to achieve the project goal. They are actually involved in the process of learning, and practical participation is a well-known best way for knowledge adoption.

Wisely managed classroom technology – computers, tablets, digital cameras, videoconferencing technology and smart boards can improve students’ learning potential [3]. This may sound strange, but even video games may be considered a possible device for teaching a foreign language. The Skype technology can be used to

communicate with speakers from around the world, or a subject matter can be investigated with the help of various multimedia projects, for example, such as films.

Teacher's special attention and control are required while applying technical devices. Practically, it presupposes to teach students, first of all, to use these tools carefully and avoiding possible damages to the equipment.

There is some necessary advice on using classroom technical equipment [3]:

- A teacher should explain that the use of technical tools is a privilege not for everyone, and in case of careless treatment, it can be disconnected.

- A teacher should control students' applying devices in a proper way. When irresponsible students are aware of such supervision if they go off-task, students know they must focus on their task.

- Some students should be appointed to act as technical monitors responsible for distributing and storing equipment and technical assistance. This creates a sense of value and responsibility for the integrity of classroom equipment.

But speaking about effectiveness and innovativeness we should not leave out of account rather effective methods which have traditional background.

For instance, the so-called **Mind Map method** of the late 60s origin teaches students making notes by using key words and images. Modern teachers can apply the Mind Map method to explain material in an innovative way, when making notes saves time, information is easy to remember, and even reviewing notes is rather effective because of their visual nature (e.g., maps for grammar structures and lexical and grammatical connotations). Reviewing Mind Maps a student links and makes cross-references of visual elements refreshing information just by one glance. While remembering Mind Maps students use more mental visual and sensory potential than memorizing conventional notes, obtaining an ability to recall information when necessary. According to the recent researches, the information presented in a form of graph charts makes considerable impression on people minds, and through this reason the Mind Map method can be of great use for teachers. So, the main advantages of the MM method are: 1) it facilitates to understanding the material, 2) improves abstract thinking, 3) can be the basis for the Power Point as an innovative method.

Conversations method has been definitely recognized as one of the most useful while teaching languages because of being natural for a human being. Plus to grammar theory and exercises practicing, situational speaking and listening as well as actual involving in a conversation are the basic grounds of studying. The topic of the conversation can be proposed to the students in various forms. It can be presented as a written text for developing opinions and conversation or it can be spoken out with the same aims. The character of conversations must be argumentative but friendly. The way of friendly talking makes the students feel comfortable and gives them a possibility to express themselves in the best possible way. Conversations sometimes tend to become long and boring, and the task of a teacher is not only to present a concrete and actual topic but also be a supervisor over the process of conversation to avoid its being overlong and aggressive. Conversations must be organized and built in an extremely proper way to be successful as one of the most efficient methods of teaching languages.

Playing Out the Stories gives students many useful habits. First of all, the inquisitive nature of students is involved and makes the process of learning more effective. Moreover, any creative work is “teaching” itself (of course, directed by a teacher) because it keeps students’ interest alive. Enacting plays or stories students are personally incorporated into a procedure, they can produce their own interpretations and understandings of characters and events, activate their imagination which is a creative method of learning languages. Such “colourful” learning gives students a chance to be creative and interactive – they can change characters and events which should be awarded by a teacher, even if these modifications are not perfectly successful, they should be corrected but praised to support motivation. Such an activity is not dull for sure, and it leads to team work skills development, personal self-development, and first and foremost it teaches a language.

Active Learning method involves instruction, working in students’ discussion groups and cooperative solving of a stated problem. The method of active learning projects is the way to make students think, discuss and share information in the classroom. The structure is the following: a teacher produces a brief of a proposed topic and gives students a challenge to compare the results at the end of the class by presenting their own solutions of the problem. The students are divided into small groups to make researches (online, if possible); they deliberate their ideas and discuss ways of meeting the challenge. At the end of the class, each group shares the results of their research with the audience.

And, to crown it all, let’s admit that teaching with a reasonable sense of humour is an ageless and always fresh method. Humour not only plays an important role in the healing process but is also very important in education [2]. Humour strengthens the relationships between a teacher and an audience, relaxes, reduces stress and can even improve a student’s ability to remember information. Humour can be a clue pervading a lesson and making it delightful and entertaining. Relax atmosphere can be created through producing jokes, discussing funny stories, watching or reading comics, etc. Even observation of reality and exaggerating it is the way of reducing tension and dullness and is effective for developing linguistic competence. Naturally, students as young people prefer animated and lively persons. An educator who teaches in entertaining way has considerable chances to achieve his goal and make the process of teaching win-win for his audience and for himself.

Application of innovative methods of teaching including modifications of conventional ones can help high school students obtain the most effective education.

References

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