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# FIVE MOST POPULAR ESL TEACHING METHODS

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There is no denying the fact that all the teachers, firstly, are individuals. And, of course, there's no single way to teach English. Recently, there have been many popular approaches over the years to meet any need and any taste, and using the variety of methods gives a teacher the opportunity to be more effective and flexible. We introduce a few of the top ESL teaching methods used in the classrooms nowadays.

## ***Method 1. Direct Method***

The direct method of teaching was developed as a response to the Grammar-Translation method. The idea is that all the teaching is done in the target language, grammar is taught inductively, there is a focus on speaking and listening, and only useful 'everyday' language is taught. This makes the direct method a very student-centered strategy that has gained popularity in recent years. Students are supposed to learn the target language naturally and instinctively, which is why the direct method is also called the "natural approach". Mistakes are corrected as they happen in class, and teachers reinforce the correct usage of the language with praise.

The weakness in the Direct Method is its assumption that a second language can be learnt in exactly the same way as a first, when in fact the conditions under which a second language is learnt are very different.

## ***Method 2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)***

Communicative language teaching emerged in the 1980s as a response to the growing demand for a language curriculum that would enable learners to use the second language in real-life situations. Previously, foreign language teaching has predominantly had its emphasis on grammatical competence, rather than actually focusing on developing students' communication and interaction skills. CLT method is considered one of the most popular approaches among other methods of teaching ESL. This method CLT emphasizes the students' ability to communicate in real-life contexts, and students learn to make requests, accept offers, explain things, and express their feelings and preferences.

Since CLT focuses on teaching language through real-world assignments and problem-solving, it's less concerned with grammar accuracy and instead focuses on fluency. CLT methods primarily focus on the interaction during a classroom-based foreign language class or online language learning session, in which students actually produce speech and conversation for most of the classroom time using the target language. In CLT, communication is the end and the means of the teaching method.

## ***Method 3. Task-/project-/inquiry-based Learning***

This teaching strategy for ESL students can sometimes be considered a part of CLT, but it heavily emphasizes the students' independence and individuality. Inquiry-based learning is a modern approach that is becoming widely popular at schools all over the world. By asking questions and solving problems with the teacher as a mere learning facilitator, student motivation and participation in tasks and projects is thought to increase.

*Inquiry-based* learning describes educational approaches that are driven more by learners' questions than by a teacher's lesson. Teachers act as guides and facilitators in helping students formulate questions

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and pursue the answers.

Both *inquiry-based* and *project-based* learning are student-centered. Inquiry more closely resembles how we actually pursue knowledge. Inquiry and project based learning can be used across disciplines and multiple skills or knowledge areas can be reinforced in different parts of the same project. These learning experiences provide students with the opportunity to learn, develop and use a range of skills important to become lifelong learners including information processing skills (research and information literacy); critical and creative thinking skills; communication skills and reflective and metacognitive skills.

#### ***Method 4. Total Physical Response (TPR)***

TPR stands for Total Physical Response and was created by Dr. James J Asher. It is based upon the way that children learn their mother tongue. Parents have 'language-body conversations' with their children, the parent instructs and the child physically responds to this. These conversations continue for many months before the child actually starts to speak itself. Even though it can't speak during this time, the child is taking in all of the language; the sounds and the patterns. Eventually when it has decoded enough, the child reproduces the language quite spontaneously. TPR attempts to mirror this effect in the language classroom.

In the classroom the teacher plays the role of parent. She starts by saying a word ('jump') or a phrase ('look at the board') and demonstrating an action. The teacher then says the command and the students all do the action. After repeating a few times it is possible to extend this by asking the students to repeat the word as they do the action. When they feel confident with the word or phrase you can then ask the students to direct each other or the whole class.

Total physical response has become a very popular approach as the students can react to the teacher with movement, such as miming, gesturing, or acting out the language. TPR suggests that students learn the target language best through physical response rather than by analysis.

#### ***Method 5. An Eclectic Approach***

In the move away from teachers following one specific methodology, the eclectic approach is the label given to a teacher's use of techniques and activities from a range of language teaching approaches and methodologies. The teacher decides what methodology or approach to use depending on the aims of the lesson and the learners in the group. Almost all modern course books have a mixture of approaches and methodologies. Many teachers choose from the collection of humanistic approaches (TPR, for example) and communicative approaches (the direct method and CLT), as well as many other teaching strategies for ESL learners, and use what works best for them.

It is a problem-based approach to teaching that is based on the following principles:

1. What particular problem do my learners encounter in mastering this aspect of language or language use?
2. What procedures can I make use of from available methods and approaches that could be used to address this problem?

#### **REFERENCES**

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