

Improving the Learning Environment

N. Raja Meena, I M. A. English

Abstract

Knowledge of English has become a requirement in a number of fields, occupations and professions. In order to make students enjoy learning English, a unique approach should be taken rather than the usual. Learning environment should kindle enthusiasm and creativity within them and it should be a zero-distraction zone. Every learner should have interest to express their own thoughts before others with confidence. Learners should be engaged with different activities according to the trends of the present scenario. This paper deals with the improvement of the learning environment through the creation of the classroom as a learner-centered one.

Key words: English language learning, learning environment, unique approaches, learner enthusiasm, zero-distraction, learner activities, learner enthusiasm, learning improvement.

Introduction

English has attained global status. Good teaching happens when competent teachers with encouraging personalities use non-defensive approaches to language teaching and cherish their students. Language learning should be encouraged among all children. Children have a natural curiosity to investigate the environment in a greater detail. Children learn English as a second language or foreign language much faster than adults. They imitate the teacher's pronunciation, sentences, phrases and words more easily. So that the teacher should be conscious in her/his teaching. The teacher should be pleasant and sweet-natured, able to communicate at the level of the children. Teacher provides the models for language use and facilitates students' development of language skills. With this learner-centered motive, both student and the teacher are active participants who share responsibility for the student's learning. The active, joint engagement of students and teacher leads to a dynamic classroom environment in which teaching and learning become rewarding and enjoyable.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective is improving the learning environment through activities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were frames to focus on the topic:

1. What is learning and its importance?
2. How to keep classroom a learner-centered one?
3. What are the methods to improve students learning environment?
4. How to design activities to make students indulge in learning?
5. Do activities really help the learners?

Hypotheses

The following are the hypotheses of the study:

1. Learning environment should be interesting enough to kindle the enthusiasm amidst learners to gain good language skills.
2. Proper environment can be provided to inspire and motivate the learners to develop their language skills through activities.

Discussion

Learning can be defined as the act or process of acquiring knowledge or skill. Students must be prepared for all aspects of work, and it provides practical knowledge for teachers and professors who should recognize and identify them. Learning is not something done to students, rather they do it. It is the direct result of how students should interpret and respond to their experiences. Assessing the quality of education is incredibly important in ensuring that students acquire practical skills. Assessment must not only measure the effects of learning of individual students, but the sum of student experiences defined in a meaningful system of ‘performance indicators’. It is difficult to measure the consequences of education because many of its outcome can only be seen much later in the professional and social activities of former students. However, this is just another reason for measuring the quality of education.

In language classrooms, instruction focuses on the learner and the learning process. The teacher creates a learner-centered environment that resembles as much as possible the one in which students learned their first language. Students participate in the learning process by establishing learning goals, developing and choosing learning strategies and evaluating their own progress. In classroom, students attend to models provided by the instructor (input) and to build on those models as they use language themselves (output). Classroom activities incorporate real-world situations.

Learner-centered instruction encourages the students to take responsibility for their own language skill development and helps them in gaining confidence in their ability to learn and to use the language. Teachers support students by devoting some class time to non-traditional activities, including teaching learners to use learning strategies, to use available tools and resources, and to reflect on their own learning.

Overcome Resistance Against Learner-centred Model

Students who are accustomed with more traditional teacher-centered instruction may resist the learner-centered model at first, because it expects them to be more involved in the

learning process. However, when they discover that learner-centered instruction enables them to develop real-world language skills while having fun, they usually become enthusiastic. In order to keep the classroom a learner-centered one, the following will help make communicative language teaching a learner-centered one:

- Use language in authentic ways.
- Design activities with a purpose.
- Use task-based activities.
- Encourage collaboration.

Learners feel boredom in doing assignments on their own. In order to induce the interest, they should be put in a group of 3-4 members. Use of audio-visuals is more important than the printed text. The printed text should be colorful, full of pictures, and should have only few language elements such as words, phrases and sentences. Students see the pictures, listen to the reading and will reproduce in their own language, the utterances of the characters in the book as much as they can. Let the students act out the story. They can easily develop their listening and speaking skills. Reading and writing will take deliberate effort on the part of the students. Reading and writing should be less in quantum than speaking and listening in English. Offering assignments topic of their interest to show as presentation or a research will make the students to show their personal interest as well as make them to learn more than the subject. Permitting the students to show their expertise plays a vital role in sparking students' interest in learning.

To Simulate Communication Outside the Classroom

Activities in the language classroom simulate communication outside the classroom when they are structured with such a purpose. In these classroom activities, students use the language to fill an information gap by getting answers or expanding a partial understanding. For example, students work in pairs and each is given half of a map, grid or list needed to complete a task. The pair then talks to each other until they both have all the information. Whenever possible, ask students to work in pairs or small groups. This structure allows the students to collaborate and to develop the work plan, discuss the substance of the task, and report the outcome. They will thus use language in a variety of ways and learn from each other. Effective collaborative activities have three characteristics.

- Communication gap: Each student has relevant information that the others don't have.
- Task orientation: Activity has a definite outcome, such as solving a problem or drawing a map.
- Time limit: students have a pre-set amount of time to complete the task.

Students enjoy indulging in activities. Collaboration with other students encourages learning and friendship amidst the students. Activities can make the students think more laterally than usual and helps them come up with their own thoughts.

Summation

Learning environment can be enhanced in the way of making the learners to get improvised learning. It can also be achieved by group activities. Devising group work which aim at accomplishing some language related task such as presentation or research, or debates enrich students' interest and language games such as word whiz, chop talk, cruncher, scramble, anagram etc. If the text book lessons are not activity based, surely students will get distracted. In order to make them prevail in zero-distraction zone, activities remain the only hope for the teachers.

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N. Raja Meena, I M. A. English
Ayya Nadar Janaki Ammal College
Sivakasi
Tamilnadu
India
rajameenanarayanan47@gmail.com