

New Voices for a New World: A Review of Learner-Centered Methods of Learning English

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Abstract

English is becoming the lingua franca in an increasingly globalized world. Professionals with a sound knowledge of the language coupled with the ability to communicate in English are on high demand. English is increasingly being rewarded as the global language; it is also known as the window to the world. To make the grade in terms of the basic skills of English language, effective and technical learning is extremely important. To be above board, effective learning of English language depends on the methods of language learning and teaching. There are numerous methods that are the pathways to learn English proficiently. Learner-centered methods are always preferred by the different levels of learners of English language. Trainers or the pedagogues should use learner-centered methods based on the levels of the learners' competence in the training sessions. This paper focuses on the different learner-centered methods of learning English along with their principles, prospects, goals, and procedures that help the learners to succeed in terms of becoming competent in effective listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Keywords; Language, learners, methods, centered, hone

I. Introduction

To call a spade a spade, learner-centered methods are extremely important to learn English and to teach English either as first or second language. The expansion of the usage of learner-centered methods to learn English has become a trend in this twenty first century. Learner-centered methods are chosen based on the levels and needs of the learners. To enhance the four basic skills 'Listening', 'Speaking', 'Reading', 'Writing' (LSRW) of English language, learner-centered methods are Hobson's choice in the teaching-learning scenario because the common objective of these methods are learning by doing or participating actively that makes the learning effective. This paper examines, reviews and enucleates the most effective learner-centered methods of English learning with their goals, characteristics, principles and other features.

II. Learner-Centered Methods of English Learning

The methods that are learner-centered in terms of learning English language are – The Audi-Lingual Method, The Silent Way, Desuggestopedia, Total Physical Response, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-based Language Teaching, The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching, The Direct Method.

III. Principles, prospects, goals, and procedures of the Learner-Centered Methods of English Learning

The first learner-centered method of English learning is The Audio-Lingual Method. By applying the techniques of this method, communicative competence in the target language can be honed. The learners usually imitate their pedagogue as model along with the demo audios provided by their pedagogue. Through the different activities like dialogues, chain, backward build-up, substitution, transformation, and question-answer, effective and technical communication skills of the learners shall be developed. The Audio-Lingual Method is important for the learners to develop their etymological sense and to understand the sound system, phonetics of English language. To develop the speaking skill and its sub skills like pronunciation, accent, The Audio-Lingual Method is one of the best learner-centered methods to apply. In this method, the language trainers shall use different activities like grammar game, dialogue completion, minimal pairs, transformation drill, multiple-slot substitution drill, single-slot substitution drill, chain drill, repetition drill, dialogue memorization, backward build-up or expansion drill to enhance the speaking skill, listening skill of the learners. These activities are practiced by the learners with the guidance of their trainer.

The second effective method of learning English is The Silent Way, by using this method, the trainers used to respect the autonomy of the learners. The learners participate actively in different activities in the target language. The learners are encouraged in each and every activity and they help each other. Through the activities like peer correction, structured feedback, self-correction gestures along with the usages of Fidel charts, word chart, rods; the learning procedure becomes effective and interesting. The ‘silence’ of the trainer instigates the learners to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings regarding a particular topic in the target language according to their choice.

The next learner-centered method of learning English is The Direct Method. Though the

trainer directs the activities in the class but the relationship between the learners and the trainer are like the peers. Some of the significant techniques that are used as the principles by the trainers to train his or her learners in The Direct Method are ‘Reading aloud’, ‘Exercises on question and answer, fill in the blanks’, ‘Practicing conversation’, ‘Dictation’, ‘Drawing Map’, ‘Practicing paragraph writing’ etc. Through this method, the vocabulary development process is emphasized along with the four basic skills of English language. Inductive method of teaching is practiced in this method to train the learners, where the learners are presented first with the examples and then explanation which makes the learning process attractive and enjoyable.

Communicative Language Teaching is the next method that is learner-centered in terms of learning English, in this method the trainer facilitates and promotes professional communication in the training session. The learners are the communicators, they participate in different activities in the target language that are associated with the development of the four basic skills. The learners naturally communicate in configurations galore like pairs, small groups, triads, whole group to hone their communicative competence and linguistic proficiencies. Communicative activities like language games, role-playing, problem-solving tasks are used in this method to teach the learners the application of the English language in different situations judiciously. The other materials that are used in this method to make the learning effective and interesting are ‘Picture Strip Story’, ‘Authentic Materials’, ‘Usages of Scrambles Sentences’.

The application of Communicative Language Teaching as a learner-centered method facilitates the accuracy and fluency level of the learners along the four basic skills of English language. The trainer naturally guides the learners as a co-communicator most of the times. Learning by doing approach makes the learning effective and professional as an outcome.

Total Physical Response is another name of the learner-centered method of English learning, here the trainers used to curtail the stress of the learners during the learning process. To abridge the anxiety level while learning English, the application of the method Total Physical Response is significant indeed. In terms of developing the understanding skill, non-verbal communication skill; the application of Total Physical Response is the based choice. Most of the times, through the usages of Total Physical Response, grammatical competency is developed. Vocabulary development is another objective of using Total Physical Response. The important procedures that are used to make the learning effective through Total Physical

Response are ‘Role Reversal’, ‘Action Sequence’ and ‘Using Commands to Direct Behavior’.

Desuggestopedia has hit the bulls’ eye in terms of honing visual communication and everyday communication. Another goal of using Desuggestopedia as a learner-centered method is applicable to discard the psychological barriers of the learners naturally that they have while learning English. Naturally the trainers use radiant and joyful classroom environment to apply this method of language teaching. Peripheral technique of learning is used to help the learners to perceive English language, its grammar from the present environment effortlessly in which the learners cope up and learn. Proper application of Desuggestopedia makes the learners relaxed and fine-tunes their confidence level. Multifarious creative adaptations like dancing, singing, dramatizations and language games are used to pinpoint the communicative intent. The other techniques that are used in this method to make learning effective are to arrange a decorated and bright classroom with posters, scenes in the target language, role-play, first and second concert, primary activation, choosing a new identity etc. To bring down the barriers of learning, the trainer shall give positive suggestions to the learners. This method promotes the concept named edutainment in which learners enjoy the process of learning to a tee.

Task-Based Language Teaching is one of the finest learner-centered methods of learning English. The main principle of this method is learning by engaging the learners in plethora of activities, tasks that leads to a professional outcome. Trainers used to assign some tasks to the learners based on their requirements that are associated with their level of learning, the learners try to come out with triumphant with their assigned tasks with their peers. These tasks help the learners to be proficient and professional for the real-life communication. The trainer assigns Information-gap Task, Opinion-gap Task, Reasoning-gap Task, Unfocused Tasks, Input-providing Tasks, Output-prompting Tasks to make the learners proficient in terms of learning and using English proficiently. Focused Tasks are useful to communicate efficiently with the usages of the grammatical structures. The other task that is practiced in this method of English learning is the Input-providing Task that hones the reading and receptive skill of listening. Output-prompting Task facilitates effective speaking and writing skill. The other tasks that are practiced in this method like Opinion-gap Task, Information-gap task or Reasoning-gap task enhance the technical skills of English language.

The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching is another learner-centered method of learning English. Through this method, the target language is learnt quickly as the

target language becomes the only medium of instruction in the training session. Trainers teach the new points of language and help the learners to practice the same based on the situations. Arrangement of the practice sessions on listening through language lab, choral imitation, substitution drilling, question-answer drilling, elicitation, individual imitation, correction process are the significant activities through which learning English becomes easy for the learners with the help of their trainers. The practice of pronunciation, revision, drilling, reading or written exercises are the other activities that are practiced in this method. Applying this method of learning language makes the learner proficient in terms of professional communication in the different situations. Proper application of this method enhances grammatical competency, skills of applying vocabulary in the proper context, oral and verbal communication skills etc.

IV. Conclusion

To sum up, learner-centered methods of learning English are the scientific or rational guides through which learning becomes easier, technical and professional. Most of the learner-centered methods of language learning have similar goals and objectives but their procedures, techniques are different. All these methods are used by the language trainers to teach their pupils effective and technical communication. Some of these methods are also used to reduce the nervousness, anxiety level of the learners and to learn English with ease. To hone the critical, active or comprehensive listening skill, effective reading skill, technical writing skill, professional communication, effective speaking skill along with the sub skills, communicative competence, situational communication, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, visual communication, the application of these learner-centered methods is indispensable. The trainers engage the learners through different activities, exercises that help them to learn English language appropriately. The trainers check the knowledge level of the learners through a testing and evaluation process. At the end of the evaluation process; the trainers identify the errors of the learners and make them understand their faux-pas. As English language has become the window to the world or the most common language used as the medium of communication in every nook and cranny of the professional life, learning flawless English has become a necessity these days. To come out with flying colours in terms of learning English; the roles of the learner-centered methods are paramount.

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