

TYPES OF ESSENTIAL ESL TEACHING METHODS IN PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION

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Abstract: The present study contributes to the field of English as a Second Language education by examining the effectiveness of different teaching methods, including interactive techniques, technology integration, and culturally responsive teaching strategies. By relying on a mixed methods research methodology that relied on a triangulation of classroom observations, literature review, and ESL teacher surveys, this study identified several strategies that may have a positive impact on language learning. In particular, the results suggested that interactive activities improve student engagement and promote hands-on practical language application, technology use in classrooms ensures inclusivity and supports the diverse needs of learners via multimedia supports, and culturally responsive teaching that integrates students' social and cultural backgrounds into the learning process increases relevance and motivation. The current paper also addresses the implications of these findings for ESL practitioners and lists potential avenues for further studies that could help advance ESL pedagogy in the future. The results of the study serve as a call to ESL teachers to employ these methods in their classrooms and modify them to fit their specific teaching and learning context to promote the effectiveness of this type of language instruction and inclusivity within classrooms.

Keywords: ESL Teaching Methods, learning process, English, interactive material, technology, education.

Introduction

English as a Second Language (ESL) is an academic discipline that pertains to the instruction and acquisition of English by individuals whose native language is not English. ESL teaching provides these students with the necessary linguistic, cultural, and academic tools to effectively communicate and engage with English-speaking communities in and out of the classroom.

Teaching ESL involves employing various pedagogical strategies and techniques to ensure that non-native English speakers develop proficiency in the language. This encompasses four main skill areas of language learning: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Moreover, ESL teaching includes integrating appropriate materials, techniques, and assessment methods to optimize learning and monitor student progress.

ESL programs are often implemented in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions and adult learning centers to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Additionally, ESL teachers may adapt their teaching methods to cater to different age groups, proficiency levels, and cultural backgrounds, fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments.

ESL teaching methods include diverse pedagogical approaches to facilitate the acquisition of English language skills for non-native speakers. These methods of teaching English aim to create engaging, effective, and inclusive learning that caters to the unique needs and backgrounds of ESL students. Some common English teaching methods include:

- **Total Physical Response (TPR):** This method involves using physical actions and movements with verbal input, enabling students to associate language with kinesthetic experiences. TPR



encourages active participation and helps learners internalize new vocabulary and grammatical structures more effectively.

- Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): CLT prioritizes the development of student ability to communicate by focusing on meaningful interactions and authentic language use. This method encourages learners to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing through engaging activities emphasizing real-world communication.
- Task-based learning: This approach involves designing activities that require students to use their language skills to complete real-world tasks or solve authentic problems. Task-based learning promotes active engagement, collaboration, and the practice of application of language in context.
- Including cultural items in lessons: Integrating cultural elements into the curriculum fosters a deeper understanding of the target language and promotes cross-cultural awareness. By exploring various cultural items such as literature, art, music, and traditions, students can develop their linguistic competencies within a meaningful social context.
- Language scaffolding: This method provides appropriate support, guidance, and resources to enable students to build their language skills progressively. Teachers can use scaffolding techniques such as modeling, prompting, and questioning to help learners navigate increasingly complex linguistic tasks.
- Displaying visuals: Visual aids, such as images, videos, graphic organizers, and realia — objects from everyday life — can significantly enhance language comprehension and retention. Teachers can provide context, clarify meaning, and support diverse learning styles by incorporating visuals into lessons.

There's no single way to teach English and, in fact, there have been many popular approaches over the years. These are a few of the top ESL teaching methods, including communicative language teaching (CLT) and total physical response (TPR), used in the classroom today. Learn more about these and other methods and how you can apply them to a real-life classroom in Bridge's Professional Certificate courses.

Whether you're new to the different teaching methods or you need a refresher, download this guide to popular ESL methodologies to brush up on the definition and applications of the latest approaches developed by industry experts.

Literature review

The landscape of English as a Second Language is never static and has been changing through the decades. This field's exigency is being catalyzed by the significant dynamism of ESL students' backgrounds, and they are growing progressively individual. Therefore, educators may need to propose more flexible, evidence-based, innovative, and effective teaching methodologies. This paper is trying to explore, describe, and promote essential ESL teaching methods that have been supporting students' language acquisition most effectively. There is a necessity to enhance the critical role of dynamic teaching approaches in ESL environments. The relevant research from Ambruster et al. demonstrated that active learning discipline-focused activity and student-centered pedagogies could not only be used to impact students' attitudes and affectivity positively; they can also significantly contribute to better student performance in introductory college courses. In addition to that, McCarthy and Anderson proved that active learning had positive impacts on students' engagement and retention compared to traditional teaching methods in the field of political science and history. These two works can be foundational to the topic of current research. Furthermore, the concept of qualitative differences in learning, as explored by Marton and Säljö (1976), is particularly



pertinent to understanding how ESL methods can be tailored to address the specific learning processes of young students. This idea aligns with the inclusive educational approaches discussed by Villafuerte and Mosquera (2020), which advocate for adapting teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learner needs, thereby fostering more equitable educational outcomes. This discussion also integrates insights from my own scholarly contributions, where I have examined various aspects of ESL teaching. For instance, my work on the efficacy of cognitivelinguistic methods in understanding English phrasal verbs (Alisoy, 2023) and the exploration of emotional exclamation across languages (Alisoy, 2023) reflect a broad and nuanced understanding of language teaching. These studies, along with the practical applications of educational games in vocabulary teaching by Saleh and Althaqafi (2022), provide empirical support for the methodologies discussed herein. Moreover, the integration of technology in ESL education, as explored by Zhou and Eslami (2023), presents another layer of complexity and opportunity. Their research into the perceptions of EFL teachers on technology-based professional development underscores the importance of technological fluency in contemporary ESL teaching strategies.

By weaving together these diverse strands of research and practice, this article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of essential ESL teaching methods. It will address not only the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of these methods but also offer practical insights for educators seeking to enhance their instructional practices in diverse and dynamic learning environments. In doing so, it aspires to contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective language teaching and to equip educators with the tools necessary for fostering robust linguistic and cultural competencies in their students.

Why learn ESL teaching methods?

There are many reasons why learning a few basic ESL teaching methods is a must for ESL teachers. Here are some ways that learning the most popular methods of teaching ESL can help you as an English teacher:

- Demonstrating knowledge of these ESL teaching methods and strategies makes you more marketable.
- Using TEFL/TESOL buzzwords during an interview can improve your chances of getting hired.
- Using a variety of methods in the ESL classroom makes you a more effective and engaging teacher.
- Understanding pedagogy helps you design better ESL materials and lessons.
- Learning methodology can help you strategically use learning objectives that will benefit your students.

Direct method

For the direct method, all teaching is done in the target language. Translations are not allowed in class, and the focus lies heavily on speaking instead of grammar. As a result, the direct method is 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. This method is frequently used when teaching English online. Many virtual ESL companies require teachers to only speak English during class to encourage an immersive experience.

Communicative language teaching (CLT)



Communicative language teaching is perhaps the most popular approach among the methods of teaching ESL today. CLT emphasizes the student's ability to communicate in real-life contexts. As a result, students learn to make requests, accept offers, explain things, and express their feelings and preferences.

Additionally, 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. Promote communication and fluency in your classroom with these ESL speaking activities.

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 in 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 are thought to increase.

Total physical response (TPR)

Next is the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. You may have heard of this teaching strategy for ESL before, but what exactly is TPR? Total Physical Response has become a very popular approach in which students react to the teacher with movement. Some examples include miming, gesturing, or acting out the language.

For example, the teacher and students might make an exaggerated frown and pretend to cry when learning the word "sad." TPR suggests that students learn the target language best through physical response rather than by analysis.

Additionally, TPR is often used when teaching English online and when teaching young learners, as it not only helps students remember vocabulary but also provides an outlet for their energy and helps them stay focused when sitting for long periods.

An eclectic approach

Many teachers choose from the collection of humanistic approaches (TPR, for example) and communicative approaches (the direct method and CLT). Often, they incorporate bits and pieces of many other teaching strategies for ESL learners and use what works best for their individual students. Generally speaking, there is no one-size-fits-all methodology. Each group of learners will have varying learning styles and preferences. For that reason, conducting a needs assessment is a great starting place for teachers who aren't sure which methodology, or methodologies, to apply.

For example, a teacher who uses mostly the direct method may occasionally do a lot of grammar explanation when preparing students for English proficiency exams, such as teaching Pearson Test of English (PTE) test prep, or a CLT advocate may borrow some aspects of the direct method or use TPR.

Conclusion

English as a Second Language (ESL) focuses on teaching non-native speakers English. English Language Learners (ELL) refers to students actively acquiring English alongside cultivating skills in their native language. Since acquiring proficiency in two languages is an asset, people often apply the term Emergent Bilinguals to these students.

We have reviewed the main methods of teaching English, each of which has its own advantages and is suited to different learning objectives. No matter which method you choose, remember that the key is flexibility and adapting to the needs of your students. Sometimes it is better to combine several approaches to make your lessons both effective and engaging.

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