TESOL Methods: Course Supplement

Introduction

The term method is problematic. Researchers who have observed teachers teaching in the classroom such as Nunan (1987), Thornbury (1996) and Kumaravadivelu (2006) have all noticed that teachers who claim to follow a particular method rarely do so. Thus the term method actually refers to two different aspects of language teaching. Method can be used to refer to the techniques, strategies and procedures advocated by theorists and researchers, but it can also refer to what the teacher actually does in the classroom. In this book method will refer to a way or procedure for the presentation and practice of new language.

In this course I do not advocate any one particular method; however, I will introduce what some researchers call "the balanced approach" (Harmer, 1982), "enlightened eclecticism" (Brown, 1994) or "principled eclecticism" (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Each of these would be considered an approach to language teaching and not a method. An approach comprises the theoretical principals associated with successful language learning and language teaching. A method, on the other hand, is a plan for the presentation and practice of new language. Thus an approach can involve several methods.

There is no such thing as a bad method, but methods should be chosen based on their effectiveness to help rather than hinder student learning. At first you will be encouraged to use and experiment with a wide variety of methods. In time you will discover that some methods are more effective for your students than others. These experiences will become your beliefs about teaching and learning, and your beliefs form the foundation for your approach. Thus an approach evolves over time because it should be based on beliefs and principals derived from experience.

Between approaches and methods there are frameworks. Frameworks are conceptual structures that help to organize and direct a process. You will be learning about several frameworks: ones for teaching productive skills, others for receptive skills, and finally a framework that teaches language through the use of tasks. These frameworks will help you select the appropriate methods, techniques and strategies to guide your students through the learning process. Frameworks are extremely helpful for new or inexperienced teachers, because they offer a road map for the planning process. In time, as your beliefs about learning and teaching are shaped by your own experiences, you will begin to rely less on the frameworks to help you organize a lesson and you will start to rely more on your own experiences.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Teaching has been called an art and a craft by some researchers (Eisner, 1983) and an art and a science by others (Marzano, 2007). What this basically means is that teaching is a very personal and subjective activity that needs to be carried out in an organized way. The purpose of this course is to help you become more familiar with the art, the craft and the science of teaching.

Learning is a journey. To get the most out of this journey you will need to do the following things:

- ⊙ *Notice*
- ⊙ *Understand*
- ⊙ *Experiment*
- ⊙ *Reflect*
- ⊙ *Improve*
- ⊙ *Implement*

Noticing involves becoming aware; especially of the techniques and strategies used by the method being studied.

Understanding of the theoretical background and basic principles will help you to know where in the lesson to use the method or its techniques and strategies.

Experiment with the method by trying out the techniques and strategies in class with your classmates.

Reflect/Interact Reflect upon what you did and try to identify what was working and not working, and then interact with your peers and brainstorm solutions to the challenges you faced.

Improve your skills by practicing the method again so that you are comfortable with its procedures and set-up.

Finally *implement* what you have learned while teaching a lesson.

Your trainer and this course will help you through this process. Each chapter presents the theoretic background for each method, the techniques and basic principals. Each chapter will also help you to become aware of the benefits and challenges for each method. Processing questions are given in each chapter to facilitate reflection and interaction. In the experience or sample lesson common, practical activities are described, which will help you to reflect upon the strategies and techniques.

REFERENCES

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Communicative Language Teaching

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. Did you learn English this way? If so, what did you like/dislike about this way of teaching? If not, what kind of language learning experiences did you have? Did you like them? Why or why not?
2. What is the goal of CLT?
3. Do you think you have communicative competence in English? Why or why not?

The Direct Method

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. Why is this method called, "The Direct Method?"
2. What are the main principles of "The Direct Method" and which principles do you agree with? Which ones don't you agree with?
3. Have you ever been in a class where the teacher used some of the principles of "The Direct Method?" Which principles and did you find them helpful? Why/why not?

The Silent Way Method

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the method is called "The Silent Way?"
2. What are the main principles of The Silent Way?
3. Which principles do you agree with? Which ones don't you agree with? Why?

Task-based Learning

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. What is the goal of Task-based Language Learning?
2. What is the definition of task in Task-based Language Learning?
3. What are the benefits of this approach? What are the challenges/disadvantages of this approach?

Desuggestopedia

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. Why was (De)Suggestopedia developed? When was it developed? Who developed it?
2. What are the two main characteristics of (De)Suggestopedic instruction?
3. Describe your impression of (De)Suggestopedia. Would you consider using any techniques and strategies form (De)Suggestopedia in your language learning classroom? What would you use/not use? Why, or why not?

Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. What two theories underlie or support ALM? Define/describe them.
2. Have you ever experienced the techniques and strategies used in ALM in your own language learning? If so, explain (briefly) how these techniques and strategies were used.
3. What are some of the advantages/disadvantages of this method? Why?

Total Physical Response

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. What is comprehensible input?
2. What is the difference between 'acquisition' and 'learning'?
3. What is affective filter and how does it affect student learning?

Content-based Instruction

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. What is the focus of Content-based Instruction (CBI)? Why?
2. How are CLT and CBI similar and how are they different?
3. What role does prior knowledge play in CBI?