

To the Teacher Educator (ix-xx), Introduction (Ch1)

Introduction

This first lesson in our TESOL Methodology course gets us started thinking about what teaching methods are and why it is useful to know about them. It introduces us to the discourse and vocabulary necessary for academic conversation about the complex and diverse nature of language teaching methods, techniques, and principles.

Learning Objectives

- Students will develop an appreciation of the complex and diverse nature of language teaching methods, techniques, and principles.
- Students will develop the skills necessary to evaluate their own ideas and the ideas of others about language teaching methods, techniques, and principles.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to define key vocabulary essential for discourse on language teaching method, techniques, and principles.
- Students will be able to use the discourse and vocabulary of language teacher education to describe their own experiences, beliefs, and doubts about language learning and teaching.
- Students will be able to use the discourse and vocabulary of language teacher education to evaluate criticisms of methods.
- Students will be able to represent in a drawing their conception of a language teacher teaching English.

Key Vocabulary

- Apprenticeship of observation (p. ix)
- Method (p. xvi)
- Technique (p. xvi)
- Principle (p. xvi)
- Conceptualization (p. xvi)
- Operationalization (p. xvi)
- Target language (p. xvi)
- Thought-in-action link (p. 1)
- Doubting game and believing game (pp. 6-7)

The Work of Language Teaching

1. What is apprenticeship of observation?

Language Teacher Learning

2. The textbook points out that teacher education must serve two functions. What are they?

-

-

A Study of Methods

3. The textbook on pages xi-xii outlines five reasons to study methods. What are they, in your own words?

-

-

-

-

-

Criticisms of Methods

4. The textbook on page xxi points out several criticisms of methods such as:

Teachers are encouraged by textbook publishers and academics to implement methods whether or not they are appropriate for a given context. (Pennycook, 1989)	Teachers do not think about methods when planning their lessons. (Long, 1991)
Methodological labels tell us little about what is going in the classroom. (Katz, 1996)	Teachers experience a certain fatigue concerning the constant coming and going of fashions and methods. (Rajagopalan, 2007)

Choose one criticism and express any thoughts that you might have about it.

Terminology

5. Some of the terms below are defined in the textbook, while others are not. Do your best to define each of them.

- Method
- Technique
- Principle
- Conceptualization
- Operationalization
- Target language

Thought-in-Action Links

The textbook points out that, “Many of your thoughts [about teaching] have been formed by your own experience as a language learner. [As a teacher,] it is very important for you to become aware of the thoughts that guide your actions in the classroom. With this awareness, you are able to examine why you do what you do and perhaps choose to think about or do things differently” (pp. 1-2).

- 6. How have you learned English? Which teaching **techniques** have your teachers used? Do you know the names of the teaching **methods** that your teachers might have used? Which techniques and methods do you think worked best? Have you experienced techniques or methods that didn’t work at all?

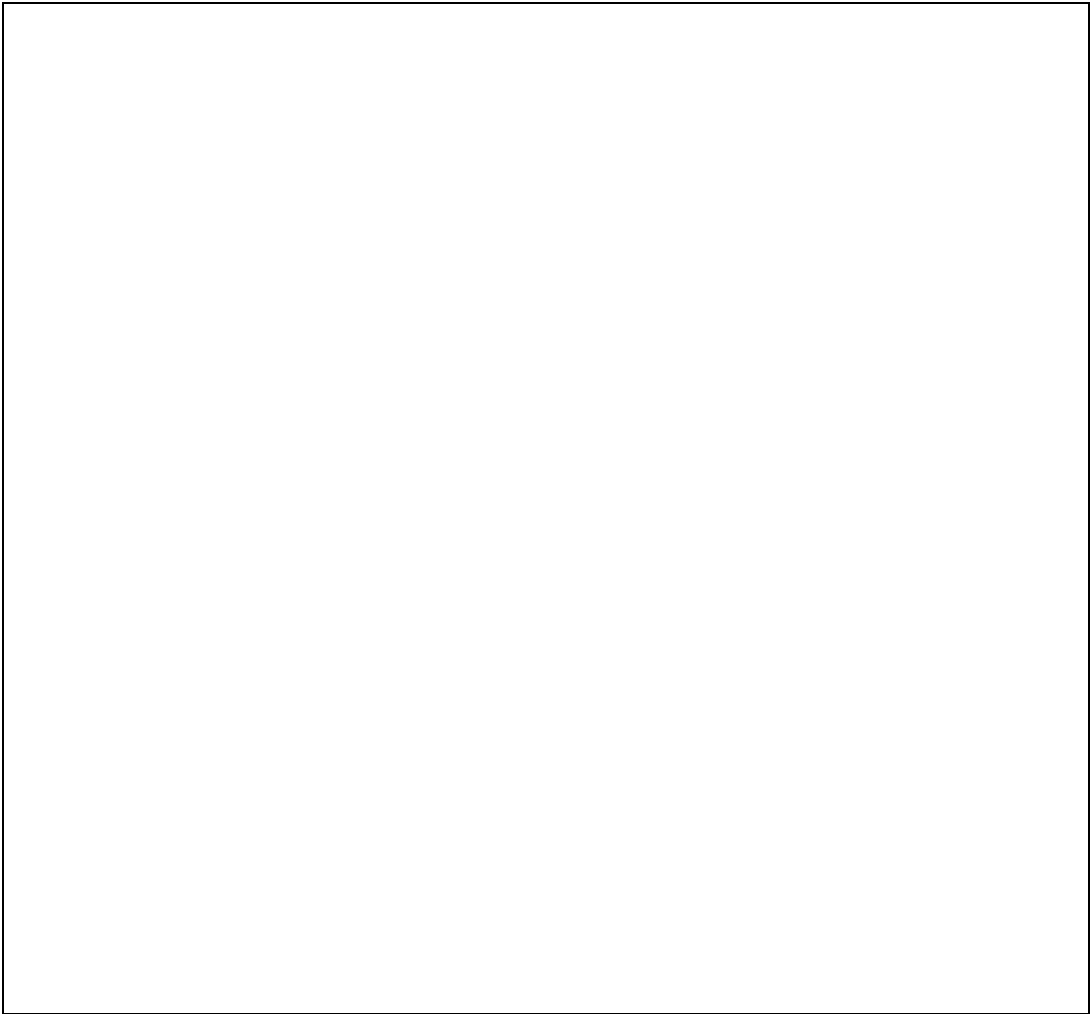
- 7. Read about **Heather** on textbook pages 2-3. What is your opinion of her experience? Can you relate to her experience?

Doubting Game and Believing Game

- 8. When we hear a statement like, “Repetition is the best way to learn a language,” we either **believe it** (because it matches our beliefs) **or doubt it** (because it doesn’t match our beliefs). Consider the statements below. Do you believe them or doubt them? Circle your answer. Then add two statements of your own about language learning, one that you believe and one that you doubt.

(a) Repetition is the best way to learn a second language.	Believe	Doubt
(b) Grammatical accuracy is acquired naturally, so it doesn’t need to be taught.	Believe	Doubt
(c) Students learn best when they are first presented with a clear explanation of grammar rules. Then they can apply the rules and use them freely.	Believe	Doubt
(d) Motivation is the most important factor for learning a second language.	Believe	Doubt
(e) _____ _____	Believe	Doubt
(f) _____ _____	Believe	Doubt

9. In the box below, draw a picture of a language teacher teaching English.



10. Explain what’s happening in your drawing.
