

Traditional Methods of Foreign Language Teaching

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Abstract

Professional language teacher has a good grounding in the various technique. The modern teacher will in fact use a variety of methodologies. The teacher understands that a didactic program has to include not only grammar and lexis. The more common methods have a link to a separate page with more details.

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Today the professional language teacher has a good grounding in the various techniques and new approaches, and they know and understand the history and evolution of teaching methodologies. The modern teacher will in fact use a variety of methodologies and approaches, choosing techniques from each method that they consider effective and applying them according to the learning context and objectives. They prepare their lessons to facilitate the understanding of the new language being taught and do not rely on one specific «best method».

There are some examples of it:

- The teacher proposes a variety of exercises, both written and oral, to improve the learner's accuracy, fluency and communicative ability.
- The teacher corrects errors immediately if the scope of the classroom activity is accuracy, but if the scope of the activity is fluency these errors will be corrected later on.
- The teacher develops all four linguistic capabilities (reading, writing, listening and speaking).
- To improve pronunciation the teacher uses drills, where students repeat automatically the phrases spoken by the teacher.
- The teacher helps the student personalize the use of grammatical and lexical elements used in class.
- The teacher understands that a didactic program has to include not only grammar and lexis, but also linguistic functions, colloquialisms, idioms, etc.
- The teacher introduces exercises of guided discovery for new grammar rules.
- At times the teacher may translate – but only if they know both languages very well and believe it is the most efficient way to provide the meaning of a new concept in that moment, especially for abstract ideas.
- The teacher is committed to developing a wide range of resources in order to give relevant, stimulating, and productive lessons.

It is impossible to do everything if only one method is used. As a result, professional EFL teachers follow what is described as the Principled Eclecticism approach, where students are also encouraged to be autonomous in their learning.

However, some private schools and training companies still prefer to promote a specific in-house branded method or approach, though often mainly for commercial or marketing reasons rather than for didactic reasons.

Suggestopedia. This method is based on the idea that the mind has great potential and can retain information by the power of suggestion. This teaching method uses relaxation as a means of retaining new knowledge. In their initial lessons learners receive large quantities of information in the new language. The text is translated and then read aloud with classical music in the background. The scope is to supply an atmosphere of total relaxation where understanding is purely accidental and subliminal. Using large quantities of linguistic material introduces the idea that language understanding is easy and natural. In the following lesson, learners use the material in a variety of communication activities. The original learning techniques and theory developed in 1970s to 1980s by Georgi Lozanov have since developed into the Accelerated Learning movement. This method is focused on meaningful texts and vocabulary.

Total Physical Response (TPR). This method draws on the basic principles of how young children learn their first language. Developed by James Asher, this teaching method involves a wide range of physical activities and a lot of listening and comprehension, as well as an emphasis on learning as fun and stimulating. Total Physical Response has limitations, especially when teaching abstract language and tasks, but is widely considered to be effective for beginners and is still the standard approach for young learners.

The Silent Way. Another example of a method categorized under the technique the teacher is supposed to be practically silent – hence the name of the method – and avoids explaining everything to the students. This method is based on a problem solving approach to learning, whereby the students’ learning becomes autonomous and co-operative. The scope is to help students select the appropriate phrases and know how to control them, with good intonation and rhythm. The teacher does not repeat the material nor supplies the phrases that the student has to imitate, and there is no use of the learner’s native language. Patterns contain vocabulary, and coloured guides for pronunciation are used to assist the teacher in guiding the students’ understanding while saying the least amount possible. Each method has a different focus or priority, so let’s look at what this means in practical terms in the classroom. The more common methods have a link to a separate page with more details and an explanation of how they work, including the most common method currently used – Communicative Language Teaching:

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