

THE CORE EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract. *In this article, we will cover topics such as setting realistic and specific objectives, choosing the right materials and resources, using a variety of skills and strategies, and reviewing and testing your progress.*

Key words: *language teaching, methods, methodology, communicative methodology, task-based approach, process approach, language learning, foreign language, skill, techniques, learning styles, education technology.*

Learning a foreign language can be challenging and sometimes discouraging. However, the concept “method” was the bottleneck and the focus of this concept and consequently got the most attention. This concept represents *the practice of teaching as a research-based and systematic set of teaching practices*. In a simple definition, you can call it the way of linking theory with practice. Methods are the teaching systems which is usually fixed with the necessary techniques and practices. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was closer to the term approach rather than methods and considered one of the methods used innovation. Other methods have concurrent at the same time of CLT emergence, like the Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, Content-Based Teaching, and Task-Based Teaching. (Rogers, 2001). It was noticed, that the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language has become a fundamental goal of many language programs across the world. The communicative language teaching (CLT), with its emphasis on ‘what it means to know a language and to be able to put that knowledge to use in communicating with people in a variety of settings and situations’ (Hedge 2000: 45), has become increasingly central to school modern foreign language (MFL) programs, at least in Western contexts, since it first emerged in the early 1970s. (East, 2019). The word “innovation” is often used to describe a product or development that is “new” or “enhanced” in some way but only when successfully implemented. According to (De Lano et al., 1994) innovation includes four key terms: 1- Change 2- Development 3- Novelty 4- Improvement.

The total physical response method highlights aural comprehension by allowing the learner to respond to basic commands, like “open the door” or “sit down.” It combines language and physical movements for a comprehensive learning experience. In an ordinary TPR class, the teacher would give verbal commands in the target language with a physical movement. The student would respond by following the command with a physical action of their own. It helps students actively connect meaning to the language and passively recognize the language’s structure.

Language immersion

Total immersion: In total immersion, the language of instruction is the students’ new language, meaning that students spent 100% of the school day in their new language.

However, the problem with this type of language immersion is that students find it difficult to understand more abstract and complex concepts.

Partial immersion: In partial immersion programs, class-time is shared between the students' native language and new language. In most cases, it is an even split of time between the languages.

Two-way immersion: This type, which is also called bilingual immersion, is a way to integrate both students of the minority language and students of the majority language into the same classroom with the goal of academic excellence and bilingual proficiency for both student groups.

Total physical response

The model has three vital features: 1) grasping the spoken language must come prior to speaking, 2) comprehension is developed through body movement, and 3) the period of listening period helps a learner to be ready to speak. Such a model does not force the learner to speak.

The silent way

The silent way is an interesting ESL teaching method that is not that common but it does have some solid footing. After all, the goal in most language classes is to make them as student-centered as possible. In the Silent Way, the teacher talks as little as possible, with the idea that students learn best when discovering things on their own. Learners are encouraged to be independent and to discover and figure out language on their own.

Instead of talking, the teacher uses gestures and facial expressions to communicate, as well as props, including the famous Cuisenaire Rods. These are rods of different colors and lengths.

Choose the right materials and resources

Another important factor for learning a foreign language is to choose the right materials and resources that suit your level, interests, and learning style. There are many options available, such as textbooks, podcasts, apps, websites, videos, games, and more. You should look for materials that are engaging, relevant, and appropriate for your goals and needs. For example, if you want to improve your listening skills, you could listen to podcasts or videos that match your level and topic of interest, and use subtitles or transcripts if needed. You should also try to expose yourself to authentic and varied sources of language, such as news, music, movies, or blogs. Foreign language learning and teaching have undergone a significant paradigm shift as a result of the research and experiences that have expanded the scientific and theoretical knowledge base on how students learn and acquire a foreign language. Traditionally, learning a foreign language was thought to be a 'mimetic' activity, a process that involved students repeating or imitating new information. Grounded in behaviorist theories of learning and structural linguistics, the quality and quantity of language and feedback were regarded as the major determinants of language learning success.

TPR is an approach to teaching a second language, based on listening linked to physical activities which are designed to reinforce comprehension. The method relies on the assumption that when learning a second or additional language, that language is internalized through a process of code-breaking similar to first language development.

Students respond to commands that require physical movement. Successful second language learning should be a parallel process to child first language acquisition.

Language is the vehicle required for effective human to-human interactions and yields a better understanding of one's own language and culture. Studying a language provides the learner with the opportunity to gain linguistic and social knowledge and to know when, how, and why to say what to whom National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP) (2014). Language scholars distinguish between the terms acquisition and learning: 'acquisition' refers to the process of learning first and second languages naturally, without formal instruction, whereas 'learning' is reserved for the formal study of second or foreign languages in classroom settings. Second language learning classrooms are common in most high schools and even in some primary schools. Although second language has become somewhat of a norm in the high school setting to some extent, research and resources available to those who teach the subject are limited. While foreign language teachers are able to use general classroom practices to help guide their instruction, specific, content-based practices for the topic are still disputed.

Language education may take place as a general school subject or in a specialized school.

There are many methods of teaching languages. Some have fallen into relative obscurity and others are widely used: still others have a small following but offer useful insights. A teaching method comprises the principles and methods used for instruction. Commonly used teaching methods may include class participation, demonstration, recitation, or combinations of these. The choice of an appropriate teaching method depends largely on the information or skill that is being taught, it may also be influenced by the aptitude and enthusiasm of the students. For effective teaching to take place, a good method must be adopted by a teacher. A teacher has many options when choosing a style by which to teach. The teacher may write lesson plans of their own, borrow plans from other teachers, search online or within books for lesson plans.

When deciding what teaching method to use a teacher needs to consider students' background knowledge, environment, and learning goals. Teachers are aware that students learn in different ways, but almost all children will respond well to praise. Students have different ways of absorbing information and demonstrating their knowledge. Teachers often use techniques which cater to multiple learning styles to help students retain information and strengthen understanding. A variety of strategies and methods are used to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to learn. The effectiveness of teaching method varies from person to person and also from activity to activity. Teaching by making students do, read, listen all have the transfer of information as their goal, but the information is transferred in very different ways in each case. Each has its benefits. In my own opinion, teaching by letting students do is the method that works best for me. Teaching by making students do works because it gives a learner first-hand experience.

The core effective practices for foreign language learning are:

1) "use target language for learning: students and teachers speak, listen, read, write, view, and create in the target language 90% or more during classroom time: comprehensible input, contexts, and interactions;

2) use authentic cultural resources: present interactive reading and listening comprehension tasks using authentic cultural texts with appropriate scaffolding while promoting interpretation;

3) design communicative activities: teachers design and carry out interpersonal communication tasks for pairs, small groups, and whole class instruction;

4) plan with backward design model: instructors identify desired results then determine acceptable evidence then plan learning experiences and instruction;

5) teach grammar as concept and use in context: students focus on meaning before form;

6) provide appropriate feedback: oral corrective feedback in speech or writing elicits output beyond a simple yes or no response”.

Methodological changes follow each other within short periods of time. Even though the majority of educational innovations end in failure positive effects can be expected from most of them. But it is true that new methods do not appear all of a sudden or disconnected from the world into which they are born. They overlap for some time with current methodological practices. This 'incubation' period is a real test for new ideas: some of them pass the test, others do not. Many discussions, arguments and counterarguments are exhibited in the process. But sometimes what was considered a decisive gain against existing practices at a given moment, proved to be wrong a few years later, and a new theory or method replaced it in its turn. Once more? Where will the end lie? if there is to be one? The methods which prevail are usually those that are best suited to the challenges, demands and needs of the time.

Emphasis on meaning and authenticity of communication appeal to many teachers and learners of languages. After all, we use language for transmitting messages, which is content. and association of meaning and language is perceived as close to reality. The problem is that the transmission of meaning cannot be separated from the formal 'vehicle' through which it is conveyed. The role of each one of those elements in communication and their mutual relationships are at the root of a problem that has never been fully solved. Most methods are heavily rooted in linguistic theories, theories of learning or theoretical assumptions on the nature of linguistic communication. It would be unfair to study the communicative approach without linking it to such names as Vygotsky (1962; 1978), Austin (1962) or Halliday (1973; 1978), or Krashen (1983), among others. Greater use of qualitative and mixed methods investigating students in their classrooms with special attention to cultural, situational, and longitudinal contexts is needed and recommended. As foreign language research draws on related disciplines (psychology, psycholinguistics, neurobiology, neurolinguistics, sociology, and linguistics) to better explain conditions that lead to greater language proficiency and differential success among foreign language learners, a deeper understanding of how languages are acquired and consequently how they should be taught will be gained. Furthermore, as learning and teaching innovations continue to be tested and researched, new insights will be gained that will influence teaching practices globally. Best practices are a must for all teachers to educate students effectively and efficiently.

Learning a foreign language is not only a cognitive task, but also a cultural and personal adventure. You can enjoy the process by exploring the aspects of the language and culture that fascinate you, such as history, literature, art, music, food, or customs.

You can also enjoy the process by finding ways to make it fun and rewarding, such as playing games, watching movies, listening to songs, or traveling.

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