

Philosophy of education essay

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No doubts that the demand for English language proficiency is high as Malaysians enter the international arena. Ergo, the purpose of this paper is to discuss on one of the hottest issues that perturbs the nation – low English language proficiency among Malaysian students.

In order to understand more about the issue, we sought to dig the root causes of the issue and in doing so we discovered that the teaching methods applied by teachers because of the factors are contributing to the issue as well. In other words, the factors are interrelated to the reasons why such ill teaching methods are being applied and all these are resulting in low production of good English speakers in Malaysia. First of all, low English language proficiency is the unsatisfactory ability of an individual to speak or perform in English. The overriding concern with this issue is not unreasonable as we need the language to thrive in this 21st century.

On the other hand, teaching methodology refers to a set of different principles and methods that are used to instruct students in a teaching and learning environment. In the educational settings, it is rather important to induce the peak performance from the students. This simply means that, we have to conquer the deterrent (i. e. the factors of the issue), whether we modify them or we eliminate them.

Like any other issues, there is no such theory as “ one-size-fits-all” solution to handle it. Therefore, we, as the future English teachers want to bring forth several possible recommendations as ways to overcome this issue in hopes that these approaches can truly be implemented and make a difference in the history of English Education in Malaysia. Issue The pressing issue with

low English language proficiency among Malaysian students has been revolving in the ministry of Education.

Most students had no problem coping English Language during preschool whereby they were only exposed to the alphabet and very simple words. The real problem began to exist in the elementary level when most of the students were unable to follow the lessons. Students who cannot master English basic skills in this elementary level will breed more problems during the secondary and tertiary level in schools. In primary education, students are not being placed in a very conducive English language learning environment in which they will be given bountiful opportunities to use the language (Ali, 2003). Students fail to use English on a daily basis and when they are forced to use English to communicate, they speak pejorative English which causes the flow of communication to be stymied. This is probably the main reason why students converse in their own mother tongue more often than they do in English. In the modern age of technology, students with low English language proficiency will not make the most out of the internet because most of the websites are in English. If they cannot understand English used in the websites, they will have a hard time attempting to utilize the device.

Not only that, the demand of high English language proficiency is around the globe. We can survive here in Malaysia with national language (i. e.

Bahasa Malaysia) and our proud dialects yet we need English Language if we want the whole world to know us. Without a good grasp of the English language, students will be deprived of many opportunities in life since

English is the international language. Hence, if we want to make a difference in this situation, we will have to start with the primary education. We believe that this issue shall no longer haunt the Malaysians once the root problems have been improvised or rather, solved.

Factors The issue with the low English language proficiency among Malaysian students has arisen because the educators are not aware of the manipulative factors behind this tragic scenario. In this section, we will explore these contributory factors. First of all, the number of students is crucial in determining the quality of teaching and learning process. In Malaysia, most of the schools place 30-40 students in one class. In spite of the level of English standard of each student is different, teacher attempts to teach students in the same way. Due to this large number of students in one class, the teacher often has no choice but to apply the boring method – lecture method. To a certain extent, lecture method is appropriate but if that is the only method the teacher is going to apply in class, it will result in dullness and inefficiency.

In addition, the large number of students inhibits the teacher to give attention to every single student thus passive learning ensues. Another factor of impeding the students' ability in English language is that students themselves fall short of initiative and participation in the classroom (Juhana, 2012). Students show no interest in a so-called foreign language and hence very reluctant to get involved with the teaching and learning session. They are inactive to put their own effort in seeking knowledge. For instance, when a student does not understand a certain word in an essay, he or she expects the teacher to provide the meaning. So, instead of waiting for the students to

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take the initiative to check on the dictionary (which takes time), teacher simply resorts to spoon-feeding method (i.

e. providing every material for the students). In the end, only the teacher is learning and the students will merely passively wait on the teacher for answers.

In an English class, the reason students failed to use English effectively also attributes to the Eastern philosophy whereby a teacher has the tendency to criticize students' mistakes very harshly. It demotivates students, making them fearful of speaking the next time and in the worst scenario, students hate the subject and pass up the opportunity of learning. Teachers are impatient with the students' slips of tongue and they consider such mistakes as a sign of failure. When the students do speak correctly, the teachers think it is how it should be done and they rarely give any words of encouragement or compliments (Hassan & Jamaludin, n. d.).

This tendency indirectly renders the teacher to apply autocratic teaching style which is not helpful for English language learning. This method emphasizes on the teacher's authoritative identity hence it is very hard for such strict-and-powerful autocratic image to smile and give compliments. Furthermore, due to the exam-oriented platform, many teachers rush through the year in order to push the students to sit for the examination (Ali, 2003). In the English classroom, many teachers have no time to concern with the understanding of students regarding to the rules of grammar, the structures of the sentences and whatnot. For example, they give students essays and require them to copy and memorize.

The way to prepare the students for examination the teachers deem best is by drilling. However, such rote learning will only result in stress instead of meaningful learning experience. Eventually, the students are drilled to become competent only on papers but failed completely in daily usage of English.

All these factors are equally pernicious in taking a toll on the second language performance among Malaysian students. As educators, we have to generate the strategies to overcome these factors and make the impossible possible. Previously, we have discovered many factors that indirectly cause the teacher to implement inappropriate teaching methods and so result in low English language proficiency.

These factors sum up in one word: teacher-centered. This explains why the teachers are hardly implementing various innovative teaching methods. Teacher-centered method applied in today's classroom is not effective anymore.

Instead of using teacher-centered method, student-centered method which derived from the Modern and Western philosophies should be implemented. Progressivists believe that education should focus on the whole child, rather than on the context or the teacher. Hence, since the number of students is large, the schools should bring in more facilitators in a class to assist the students.

This will help the facilitator pay close attention to the students. With the assistance of facilitators in a classroom, there is no reason why active learning cannot take place. For example, one leading teacher can carry out <https://assignbuster.com/philosophy-of-education-essay/>

the group discussion and enable the children to experience hands-on learning. A French philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre, suggested that for youth, the existential moment arises when young people realize for the first time that choice is theirs, that they are responsible for themselves. The nature of reality for Existentialists is subjective, and it lies within the individual. They have the freedom to take charge of their own learning as they are given the opportunity to manage their own learning process.

We as teachers are responsible to facilitate the students in their learning process rather than teaching them what to do. This indirectly helps to provide opportunity for the students to take control of their own learning process. As they are interested in what they have chosen to read or learn, they will be the ones who solve the problem (e. g. meaning of a word) instead of being spoon-fed by the teachers. In this way they will be able to make progress in their lessons and participate more. Western philosophers stress on active participation on their learners but to criticize and demotivate the students is not proper in the western philosophy.

Western education philosophy believes that providing compliments to the students is an important task for a teacher as it will motivate the students to strive hard. For example, compliments given to the students when they score well in their examination or did a good job in the task or assignments given by the teacher. However, teachers should not only provide compliment when they excel but also to give encouragement when they are not doing so well in the examination. For instance, during an English class, teacher distributes the test papers after the examination, it is not encouraged for the

teacher to read out loud the score as it will demotivate and also embarrass the student.

It is better that the teacher gives a word of encouragement so to push them to work harder next time. Furthermore, the education ministers should really abolish the exam-oriented system. Instead, the 50% coursework assessment should enter the system.

Coursework can include all kinds of fun activities that require students to apply the language learned. This is to overcome the agonizing drilling method. With that, Western philosophy that emphasizes on understanding the subject matter can be very handy in this scenario. For example, the students should learn by understanding the reasons why each part of speech in grammar has different functions.

In a nutshell, according to the Western philosophy, students learn by meaningful learning, they do not memorize what they have learnt but rather understand what they are learning. These philosophical resolutions are only useful provided the government, educators, teachers, parents and students and community at large give their best cooperation into making them a success. If we are serious about improvising the English language proficiency among Malaysian students, nothing can stop us, not even the factors of the failure in the first place. Conclusion In conclusion, teaching methodology contributes towards the effectiveness and success of the teaching and learning process. As what we have explored there are several factors that hinder the English Language proficiency among Malaysian students. Among those contributory factors discussed are the number of students, students'

shortfall of motivation, harsh criticism for students' mistakes and the exam-oriented education system.

All these factors are very much harmful in the process of second language acquisition (i. e. English Language). As such, we have provided remarkably appropriate strategies as the solutions to overcome this issue. They are the implementation of student-centered teaching which focuses on the students' – their ideas and opinions, providing more teachers as facilitators in class, hands on learning (Progressivism), place importance on individual choice (Existentialism), giving compliments instead of criticism (Western Philosophy), and learn through understanding rather than mere memorization (Western Philosophy). Hence, by utilizing all the four education philosophies in moderation which are Modern philosophies such as Progressivism and Existentialism, also the two Western approaches that focus on students rather than the teachers. We strongly agree with usage of the Modern Philosophies and the Western Philosophies according to the needs and suitability of class as what we have discussed.

We believe that we can produce an ideal education transformation to develop individual holistically and thus enhance the English Language proficiency by applying and practicing appropriate teaching methods to encounter the troublesome factors.