

Free reflections on the teaching of a second language term paper example

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Introduction

There are many approaches and methodologies that can be used to teach English to speakers of foreign language. Each approach and method comes with its own strengths and weaknesses. In this paper, the writer will outline the main approaches and methods that he has adapted to and finds to be the most appropriate for the teaching of English to people who are learning English as a second language. To this end, the paper will provide a reflective analysis of important course readers that have been utilized in the duration of the course and provide an adaptation of what could be the best and most ideal system through which English can be taught to speakers of other languages.

PART 1: REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

General Framework of Teaching a Foreign Language

Shrum and Glisa identify in their opening discussions that the main and fundamental essence of language is about defining the language in the national and state cultural context in order to identify important stakeholders (1). Aside this context, there is the need to define the career limits and professional requirements of the professional body that a given foreign language instructor belongs to. This leads to discussion on the identification of the architecture of the profession or the career requirement. The architecture defines the resources, academic materials, events and other features that makes a person a teacher of the second language. This varies across the professional body a person belongs to. This includes entities like MLA, TESOL and others.

Architecture of the Profession & the FL Teacher Expectations

“ The foreign language profession has been shaped by the contribution of many organizations, conferences, resources and journals that constitute the architecture of our profession”. Therefore, the implication I get is that carving an identity as a foreign language teacher is important. This is because there are either regulatory or quasi-regulatory systems through which a teacher can be assessed and evaluated in a given foreign language mission. Therefore there is the need for a professional to identify where he belongs and get an idea and understanding of what is required of him or her.

The national language learning entities give way to regional bodies that regulate and oversee these teaching processes and systems. They all have their own unique resources and systems that guide practice standards and requirements. Thus, as an instructor, you have to obligation of working within the educational policy and requirements within which the tuition is to be carried out.

Second Language Acquisition

The discussions of regulations lead to the conceptual and philosophical debates on SLA (Second Language Acquisition). This shows links to many theories and concepts that are necessary for the learning of a foreign language. These concepts are from different authorities and different sources. They are presented in a practical manner in this book and evaluated to provide important guidance for instructors.

Strategic Competency

Strategic competency is “ set of skills that enables people to communicate and compensate for deficiencies in other competencies.”. This implies that the learning and teaching environment for Foreign Language instructors is one that is strategic in outlook and the instructor is required to combine three main variables namely:

- Linguistic Competence;
- Sociocultural Competence &
- Actional Competence

This should be done in an atmosphere of discourse competence that brings together important capabilities in all these three areas. Through this, the instructor is more than just a person who imparts knowledge. Rather, s/he gains an important ability to bring together important variables that helps the learners to understand the way the language is used and how this process is enhanced to attain the best results in communication.

The teaching of a foreign language must also be done in such a way that these three pointers must be combined in acting as a monitor who guides the students in using their natural competency to understand and ingest some components of the foreign language into their memory. This guides input-output relationships and enables students to understand ideas and improve their abilities in the language in question.

Structured Teaching & Learning

The central theme in Shrum and Glisan’s book is that a good foreign language training system is one that matches the specific student needs with program goals (14). In other words, the tuition provide has an obligation

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to ensure that they measure up the actual needs of the class of students in question and try to set up objectives and targets that are most relevant to the students.

Utilization of Theories

Proper teachings involve the utilization of models from Linguistics. This generally leads to input-output models and interaction variables that are important in defining the way foreign languages are taught and understood and mastered. The different models include the way students can build on previous knowledge and ideas in the best way and manner possible. This shows the best way and approach through which the students can evaluate and understand important ideas and theories and make the best of it in order to always remember the ideas and concepts. These are ways and manners through which people can understand and appreciate new ideas and new concepts in a foreign language.

Implementation and Goal Setting

Therefore, in ensuring that the input-output and interactive elements of SLA are instituted appropriately, the most appropriate methods defined in the teaching system must be implemented. During the implementation, there is the need for the teacher to set up the right goals and objectives and ensure that they are met in the process. In a review of Shrum and Glisan's work, a critical analysis indicated that they imply that once an appropriate assessment criteria is defined, there should be a critical review and evaluation of the students to ascertain how well they are during in building competency in the foreign language.

Personalization of the Learning Process

It is also identified that it is important for an instructor to personalize the process for every student. This must be done by the creation of more personalized systems and processes that will be applied to every student identify the best way an individual's feelings and sentiments are engaged in the study of the foreign language. This way, the instructor gets to understand the values of each student and how the student is reacting to the process. This can also help to build strong and personalized models for the examination of all the students. This is done in the practical sense by creating exercises that focus on personal writings and creating writings in order to unearth the inner sentiments and feelings of a person studying a foreign language.

Evaluation and Assessments

Once the input is established, there is the need for the output competencies of the students to be checked. This includes the conduct of various forms of examinations and assessments in order to evaluate and ascertain whether the students and the respondents are getting a good and fair understanding of the important grammatical rules and structures of the foreign language.

PART 2: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Professional Principles in Teaching a Foreign Language

There are two main approaches that can be used in teaching and imparting knowledge to students of a foreign language. They are:

- Effective Instructional Sequence (EIS);
- The 5Cs of Foreign Language Education.

Both of them have their own inherent merits and this can be used to create and maintain an appropriate learning environment where students can be made to learn from the known to the unknown. This involves the use of various tools and techniques that helps to create a connection and linkage between the teacher and the students.

The EIS creates a structured approach and methodology through which students and teachers bond to create an ideal setting through which learning could occur. It provides a sequence that has been used for many years for the best results and helps the teacher to construct a lesson. The method provides a systematic process through which the learner gets basic knowledge and builds on that basic knowledge.

The initial stage involves a process through which the learners and the teacher identify with each other and the topic at hand. This provides some kind of familiarity and bond between the teacher and students and the topic is put together into a form that can aid appropriate comprehension and understanding.

The second stage is a point where the teacher provides realistic contexts and utilizes important tools like grammar, lexis and structure and other cultural information to provide a functional understanding. This way, language use is the priority and comprehension and production limits are set.

The third phase is known as the “ guided practice” phase where the student is allowed to utilize the ideas and concepts thought to practice the concepts. This way, the learner is able to work within certain frameworks and practice in an open environment where nothing is really wrong. This way, familiarity and practical knowledge is grown and enhanced.

This gives way for the fourth phase which is the Independent Practice stage. This includes moving out of a guided zone into a process where a learner is allowed to practice and carry out various project works that are similar to the final assessment. This way, the learner gets a chance to utilize the core ideas and come up with solutions to problems and build self-confidence. Finally, the last phase involves the Application, Extension and Assessment. This is about taking more difficult and longer-range forms of assessments or actual assessments conducted by the teacher. The main end is to assess them according to the complete rubrics of the course in order to get a fair view and idea of what actually happens in the process and procedure. The 5Cs framework provides a more technical and an in-depth examination of the best way through which learners can be prepared and participate well in class activities and procedures. This includes the identification of the most ideal forms of interactions to acquire and consolidate language in a foreign-language context.

In the first stage, there is a communication and a discussion that lays the foundation for the topic. This is typically done in a language other than English and it puts in place the basics for the interactions that will follow. Students are to engage in a conversation that is normally unstructured and informal. This allows the students to interact with their feelings and emotions and conduct thorough discussions in the process.

The second stage is cultural in nature. And the students are to acquire information about the culture of the language that they are learning. This will be done to lay the foundation for them to grasp an idea of how the second language is unique and different from the language being studied and

reviewed. This means that the students will be introduced to diverse methods and approaches and this will allow the students to grasp a fair idea of the cultural element of the foreign language being taught to them.

Connections are to be made in the third phase. This is to be done by linking the idea that is being taught to practical and normal issues that the students are familiar with. This will help the learners to identify with the concepts and theories and get a better command over the idea and process.

The fourth phase is about comparing the different aspects of the language and its usages in order to get a command and a grasp of the way the language operates in the normal sense. Through this, the student gets a broader and a stronger view of the concepts and ideas relating to the main elements of the language and develops his or her competency in the utilization of the language and its components.

Finally, the 5Cs model indicates that students must be put on a path whereby they are able to connect with the wider community of more advanced speakers of the language in question. This includes joining communities where practice will be a norm rather than an exception. This kind of immersion system will aid practice and application of important concepts and features of the language for the best results to be achieved.

Conclusion

Different approaches and methods exist in the teaching of foreign languages to students. However, a proactive method of encouraging students to actively learn and participate in activities is the best way and manner through which students can learn and understand the foreign language. This culminates in the two models, the 5Cs and the EIS. They both promote

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approaches that help to make the instructor a strategic leader who combines action, linguistic competencies and social contexts to optimize the teaching of language to people who do not speak it.

The EIS allows the students to build a familiarity and get realistic methods of analyzing things. From there, there is guidance in practice and independent practice that is to be carried out by the students. Finally, students are encouraged to learn new things on their own. The 5Cs is a system of promoting active discourse between the students and their teacher. This helps in providing culturally-based communication that ensures connections and strong linkages between the different students in a course.

Works Cited

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