

ELTWeekly

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Word of the Week: Mechanical activities

Mechanical activities are activities learners do which are not meaningful but which may be necessary in order to have the tools to use language. The move away from mechanical to communicative activity has been emphasized and prioritized for many years.

Example

Learners thinking about the position of the tongue in the pronunciation of certain sounds, or learning how to write in Roman script are doing mechanical but necessary activities.

In the classroom

Drills, substitution exercises, and using prompts to produce structures are common mechanical activities.

[retrieved from <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>]

Video: Teaching English Language Learners Across the Curriculum Course Preview

This video includes snippets from the following segments: * Components of Effective Instructional Delivery in ESL/ELD and Sheltered Instruction/SDAIE Featuring a classroom scene that demonstrates best practices from the English Learners Scaffolding Strategies Checklist * Contextual Factors in Second Language Acquisition Featuring a panel discussion, How is it that some English Learners acquire English more quickly than others? * Culturally Relevant Instruction: When Teachers and Students Bring Different Cultural Experiences to the Classroom Featuring an anecdote about name-changing.

For a full course profile, please visit: <http://www.kdsi.org/English-Language-Learner.aspx>

Watch the video at <http://www.eltweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/09/69-video-teaching-english-language-learners-across-the-curriculum-course-preview/>

Article: ‘Teaching English As A Foreign Language – 7 Tips For Using Popular Movies’ by Larry M. Lynch

Movies and Videos in the EFL Classroom

If you’re looking to expand the role of movies and videos in your EFL classroom, what better way to expand the learners’ communicative skills, grammar and vocabulary than by using clips from popular movies? Try using these seven tips for stimulating learner motivation while enjoying a favored pastime of children and adults alike, watching short scenes or clips from popular movies.

1. Use pre-viewing activities

Before the video, warm up your learners to the theme and grammar using pre-viewing activities. A variety of these might include puzzles, photos and images, short games like “concentration” or TPR activities, a story or anecdote, or activating the schema of the learners’ in a number of other ways.

2. Have learners complete a chart while viewing

While they are watching a short video or movie segment you might have the learners fill in key information in a chart. Items like names of characters, occupations, family relationships, clothing and settings can be easily recorded this way. This allows the learners to focus more on the communicative aspects and less on actually writing.

3. Select a grammar point repeatedly demonstrated in the movie clip

There's no need to leave grammar out of a video-based lesson or stage. If a useable grammar point or structure is repeated or prominent during the movie clip you plan to use, all the better. Just remember to pre-teach that grammar or structural element, even a class or two before the video, so that it will be recognizable in context.

4. Have a list of six to eight lexis

Select a list of from six to eight or ten vocabulary words, idioms and expressions from the movie clip or video you plan to use. Pre-teach these during the pre-viewing stage of the lesson. When the learners then hear them used in context during the video viewing session, the lexis will have added impact.

5. Make use of visual input

A popular movie clip is an audio-visual experience, so use it as such. While learners are watching and listening for general and detailed spoken information, include visual aspects for them to skim and scan for as well. How many? How much? When? Where? Who? How and why are good starters for capturing visually-presented information from the movie clip or video segment.

6. Allow learners to select their preferred movie clip

It can be quite a dilemma. There you have perhaps two or three or more movies from which to choose, but you're not sure which your learners would prefer. So I have an idea, do you choose, let them do it. Take three movies for example, show the learners only the first five minutes of each, and then let them choose which they'd like to work with. If you have a clip in mind from each of the movies, show

each clip and give them a choice. You can work up your activities and lesson stage plans confident in having your learners' interest and motivation.

7. For post-viewing discussion:

If not addressed during pre-viewing activities, now is the time to talk about favorite actors, actresses, similar plots and stories from other movies, and what might be different or better outcomes for what as seen. Stage re-enactments, altered dialogues and plot twists your learners might come up with. Be imaginative, be creative, be bold or even funny, but get them communicating about their experience.

Prepare a Worksheet

You can prepare a one or two page worksheet to be photocopied and used by the learners for the video session. Alternatively, learners can copy the format into their notebooks. Just be sure to plan your pre-viewing, while-viewing and post-viewing activities well and your English language video clip-based lesson is sure to be an award-winner.

Prof. Larry M. Lynch is an EFL Teacher Trainer, Intellectual Development Specialist, author and speaker. He has written ESP, foreign language learning, English language teaching texts and hundreds of articles used in more than 80 countries. Get your FREE E-books, English language teaching and learning information at: <http://betterefteacher.blogspot.com>

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Article Source: [<http://EzineArticles.com/?Teaching-English-As-A-Foreign-Language---7-Tips-For-Using-Popular-Movies&id=1086046>]

Article: ‘Am I ready to be a teacher trainer?’ by Tessa Woodward

“Experienced teachers sometimes ask themselves the question, ‘Am I ready to be a teacher trainer?’ They may ask in response to a request from a boss to run a workshop, in response to seeing a job advertisement, or in response to their own desire to keep developing and moving on in their professional field.

Each individual needs to answer the question for themselves, of course. But in this article, I’ll provide a few areas you might like to think about when turning the question over in your mind. These are:

What do you need in order to be any kind of teacher?

Do you need anything more in order to train, educate or mentor other teachers?

How can I judge if I’m ready to be a teacher trainer?

What do you need in order to be any kind of teacher?

It seems to me that in any kind of teaching, whether you teach a modern foreign language to someone who doesn’t speak it, or teach tennis or physics, you need the following.”

Read the complete article at <http://www.elweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/09/69-article-am-i-ready-to-be-a-teacher-trainer-by-tessa-woodward/>

Article: 'ELT in India – Past and Present' by Dawane Chandrashekhar Ashokrao

** Dawane Chandrashekhar Ashokrao works with Dept. of English, Yeshwant Mahavidyalaya, Nanded.*

English due to its international importance is a language to be aspired for. N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy have rightly said:

Much like oil or the microchip, English, today, is used globally. Life will become paralyzed if petrol and computers are not available anymore similarly, we may find it difficult to function if we don't understand or speak English.¹

There are various factors which contribute to the importance of English language. They make it one of the most important languages in the world. It is for this reason that English occupies an important place in our educational system. In this short paper, we shall focus upon the historical background of ELT in India.

ELT before 1947

The English language came to India in the 17th century with the East India Company. It was formed to conduct trade with India and other countries in the east. Initially the Britishers tried to learn Indian languages to communicate with Indians. They started special colleges for this purpose. They also took the help of the translators. But when their political powers increased, they created the British Indian provinces like Bengal, Madras and Bombay. So the English traders gave more importance to English rather than to Indian languages. Some missionary institutions taught English to Indians.

The East India Company took the responsibility of the education of the Indians. The Indians were also realizing the importance of the English language. As A.P.R. Howatt notes:

By the 1830s the Indian middle classes were becoming very demanding. They realized that English was the language required for a secure future in a government job, so why was English not taught in the secondary school? Private schools offering this service were already doing good business, particularly in Calcutta.

The state was set for the first 'big moment' in the imperial history of English language teaching.²

Meanwhile some movements were started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to introduce western scientific education through English. He wanted to replace traditional Sanskrit and Persian teaching. To take a decision on the issue, a committee was formed. Lord Macaulay was the chairman of this committee. He advocated English as the medium of instruction in the place of Sanskrit and Persian.

Lord Macaulay wanted to make the people Indian in blood and colour but English in taste and opinion. He thought the members of this class would spread their knowledge through English. Macaulay's purposes were: i) to create the dominance of British culture over the Indians and to have the control over the minds of the Indian people through English. ii) To train Indians and make them fit for the employment. The British Government gave preference in jobs to the Indians who had the knowledge of English.

The type of English education was similar to the type followed in Britain. British students studied English literature as part of their cultural and literary heritage. It was believed that education was for training the mind and teaching the morals. English was the mother tongue of the British. So they did not feel the need to teach the English. But this was not the situation in India. Indian people gave the emphasis on learning English literature. So they lacked the communication skills. The English of Indian people was ridiculed as 'Babu English'. But some of the Indians acquired fluency in English by studying in England through their hard work. But they were small in number. But the study of English helped the Indians in their struggle for freedom. It helped them to enrich Indian languages and literature.

A number of Indian students found poetry, drama and other writings difficult to get their degrees. Meanwhile many new colleges and universities were formed. The system of English education founded on English literature continued till the independence.

ELT after 1947

India got the independence and the Indian government had to decide its policy towards English. They decided to make Hindi the official language. Regional languages were given the status of national languages. Certain states insisted to make English the associate official language. Universities and schools were increasing rapidly in India. Some of the people from the neglected society also came forward to learn English. English was not limited to a few elite schools and colleges. But there were complains about the standards of English. The government appointed many commissions to improve the standard of English in schools and colleges. All these commissions reaffirmed the importance of English. For instance, University Education Commission says:

English, however, must continue to be studied. It is a language which is rich in literature – humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we should give up English, it would cut ourselves off from the living stream of our growing knowledge.³

The Secondary Education Commission emphasized the same in a similar tone:

The present position of India in the international sphere is partly due to the command that educated Indians have acquired over English. Many eminent educationists and scientists have therefore, expressed the opinion that under no circumstances should we sacrifice the many advantages that we have gained by the study of English.⁴

In 1958 The Central Institute of English was started in Hyderabad. Regional institutes were established in Bangalore and Chandigarh. But nobody tried to change the literature based system of English. English was studied mainly for education and administration. But because of the revolutionary developments in science, technology, travel, trade, communications and entertainment, English got a new role as the international language of communication. Nowadays it is necessary to learn all the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing English. English teaching has remained unchanged for nearly 150 years, new developments are taking place worldwide in the methods of teaching and learning English. These developments have affected the English language teaching in India also. Previously, English was taught from fifth standard in the non-English

medium schools of Maharashtra. Now it is taught from the first standard even in the non-English medium schools. In the past the syllabus was literature based but now it is skill-based. Earlier the evaluation system centered on the written skill only, from the year 2006-07 the oral test is introduced in the secondary and higher secondary schools. People are aware of the importance of English. They are interested in learning the spoken English.

As a result, various courses are developed for teaching spoken English. The use of Language Laboratory and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has created new changes in the teaching of English. The audio cassettes and CDs are being used on a large scale to learn the spoken language. Various software of English teaching are developed and used by a growing number of people. There are many private institutions that run the courses of spoken English. Especially in big cities the language trainers are helping the learners to acquire the required proficiency over the communicative skills in general and the spoken skills in particular. Now Television channels are also working towards improving spoken English. NDTV Imagine is running a programme 'Angrezi Mein Kehte Hain'. All of them cannot be termed as cheap. Dr. Deepti Gupta rightly says:

The irony of situation is that while academicians label these learning centers 'shops' or 'commercial institutes' It is these establishments that are a major influence behind the changing face of the ELT paradigm in India.5

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3. Dash, B.N., Teaching of English, Dominant Publishers and Distributors, 2004, p. 9.
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Book Review of 'English and Soft Skills' by Dr.S.P.Dhanavel

'English and Soft Skills' by Dr.S.P.Dhanavel

Book reviewed by Dr.M.Renuga, Professor of English, Sona College of Technology, Salem-5, Tamilnadu.

Introduction

English and Soft Skills by Dr. S.P. Dhanavel is a one-of-its-kind book catering to the needs of youngsters, especially the college students, for developing their English language skills and soft skills in an integrated way through relevant extracts from world literature, particularly short stories.

Choice of Skill Sets

The first and foremost important feature of the book is the choice of skills. All the Soft Skills chosen are relevant to the work place. If a graduate acquires and practices these skills, he/ she will become an asset to the organization. Beginning with listening skill, the content includes team work, emotional intelligence, assertiveness, learning to learn, problem-solving, interview, adaptability, and non-verbal communication and written communication skills that are required for any workplace.

Approach

The most striking aspect of the book is its approach. With ten units dealing with ten different skills, the content is well structured. Each unit begins with a few questions to warm up, followed by a story. The set of questions given at the end of the story helps the students comprehend the story better. After this, there is a list of activities, some of which can be done by the students themselves individually or in

groups and some can be conducted by the teacher. Since the activities are coherent, simple and comprehensive, navigating through them becomes easy both for the teacher and the taught.

Story Selection

Understanding the interest of the students, the author has chosen short stories as a genre and medium to teach soft skills. The stories, which are taken from renowned collections, are very interesting and appealing to the students. The concept of teaching/imparting skills through literature has been handled with a master's touch.

Exercises and Activities

Exercises like understanding the story, people, places and events, vocabulary development and exercises on grammar are not only meaningful but also helpful in evaluating the students' strength in comprehension and grammar. They do not begin abruptly with activities on soft skills. Exercises on soft skills are gradually introduced with a section on 'Thinking about Soft Skills'. Then, light is thrown on the skills that the students are supposed to learn from the story under the title 'Skills from the Story.' The activities which follow this section are learner-centered which make them all the more interesting. The proverbs and the related exercises given at the end of each section are an eye-opener for the teachers and the students.

Next, the author brings in the application of soft skills in the work place. Everything becomes complete only when it is related to one's own life experience. Under 'Real Life experience,' we have this wonderful opportunity to relate the exhibition or practice of soft skills to our life incidents. Another important exercise is 'Self-assessment' wherein the students can assess the degree or extent to which

their skills are being utilized. This exercise adds value to the entire learning process because it helps the learners know their strength.

Conclusion

Thus, Dr S P Dhanavel's textbook on English and Soft Skills is comprehensive as far as skill sets are concerned since the book deals with skills relevant to the workplace. The approach which includes stories, exercises and activities make the book valuable and resourceful. The book is a precious tool to enhance the skills of the graduates and make them industry-ready.

Event: 'International Seminar on 21st Century Skills' organised by Waymade College of Education, October 15-16

Waymade College of Education, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat, India is organizing 'International Seminar on 21st Century Skills' on October 15-16.

About the seminar

In the fast growing world where information is ubiquitous, children refuse to be mere recipients of the information already explored by others creating an urgent need to shift the focus from knowledge-seeking to knowledge-creation. Societies aspiring for development have accepted the ever growing importance of education for quality life. Policy-makers as well as practicing educationists across the globe are striving hard to decide the content to be offered to learners at different age groups, patterns and pedagogies of interaction between learners and the teacher and modes of learner-friendly assessment so as to equip them with 21st century skills.

The new millennium learning environment is replete with choices in terms of what and when to learn, where to acquire it from, how and how much to gather information, modus operandi of applying the same, etc.

Simultaneously, there are challenges. Educational systems are challenged by young achievers as well as parents' choice for home education of their children; media-savvy young learners are victims of boredom in 'talk and chalk' class; the first generation school-goers are expected to compete with the privileged job-seekers; juvenile delinquents from broken homes are on increase; the lopsided economic growth has created deprived population falling a prey to jealousy leading to crimes, etc. The 21st C. classrooms are cauldrons of diversity, a real and immediate

challenge for teachers practicing at any level. Therefore, the 21st century demands a paradigm shift in our perception and practices vis-à-vis teaching-learning objectives and situations.

Knowledge itself is growing more specialized and simultaneously expanding exponentially. Research during the last decade has shown how new social practices have evolved due to increased use of new digital technologies, especially among young people. This has created a need to re-conceptualize key skills, concepts, work patterns not defined from a systemic level alone, but also from the everyday lives of people in our societies. This Seminar is an attempt to create a platform to deliberate on these issues and create mind-maps and scenarios for consideration in educational systems across communities and nationalities.

The sub themes of the seminar are:

- Conceptualizing 21st C Skills
- Role of Educational Institutions
- Teaching – Learning
- Educational Management
- Assessment of 21st C skills
- Research and Success Stories.

For information regarding the fees, paper submission deadlines and accommodation, kindly write to **Dr. Sulabha Natraj**, Principal, Waymade College at snwaymade@rediffmail.com.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

- 1. Papers / Articles:** All articles should be computerized using double-spacing, including tables, references and footnotes. Submission of manuscripts should be done in electronic more only. Electronic version of the article/research paper should be e-mailed to the Editor, ELTWeekly at info@eltweekly.com.
- 2. Abstracts:** An abstract in approximately 200 words should assist the article.
- 3. Abbreviations:** No stops are needed between capitals e.g. ELT, IELTS.
- 4. Figures and Tables:** Tables should be numbered sequentially with Arabic numerals.
- 5. Notes:** Notes should be consecutively numbered and presented at the foot of the page.
- 6. References:** References in the text should follow the author-date system. The complete reference list should be given at the end of the article. They should be in alphabetical order.
- 7. Book Reviews:** Book reviews must contain the name of the author and title / subtitle of the book reviewed, place of publication and publisher and date of publication.
- 8. For Event Submissions:** Please submit your event details at least 30 days prior to the event.
- 9.** For a **more detailed stylesheet**, please write to The Editor, ELTWeekly at info@eltweekly.com.