TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH THROUGH STUDENT CENTERED ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

Student-centered instruction has recently attracted the focus of many schools and universities due to the fact that this approach motivates the students and also provide interactive learning environment. This paper puts forward the significance of student-centered approach in studying a target language. For centuries, Teacher-centered approach has been practiced in second language teaching but the things seem to have gradually altered in the last two or three decades due to the fact that the learning becomes more interesting, meaningful and also democratic. Implementation of this method makes a huge difference in target learners. The paper also aims to point out the ways to generate a Student-centered Classroom and also the characteristics of this approach. Also, the learners are exposed to judge the corroboration, evaluate others arguments and also give rise to hypotheses. They do not assume that students grasp such skills themselves innately. Hardly are few learners able to acquire these skills in Teacher-centered instruction. Studies claim that speaking skills evolve rapidly in case that they are instruct directly together with the content

Keywords: **Student-Centered Instruction, Target Language, Speaking Skills, Approach, Implementation.**

Introduction

Learners are very skillful to utilize the knowledge beyond the lecture room in Learner- centered programs as the group activities is promoted to develop the speaking skills of the learner unlike the conventional teaching where the learners rely on teachers. Students generate a sense of learning for the teacher, students consequently will causally not feel in particular improving their studies when the learners are prepared with the school set up. In addition to that, Liu & La Mont (2005) points out that the growth of teaching process has been determined by the progress in Information Communication Technology (ICT) by establishing Student-centered teaching practices. For example: Multimedia teaching applications and Web-based studying sources. Liu & La Mont also says that successively the ICT has fabricated numerous objectives at which students are unveiled to a better Student-centered learning encounter.

Student-Centered Instruction

By using Student-centered approach, the four skills in English can be taught and developed. The four skills reading, writing, listening and speaking can be effectively taught through various activities like discussion activities, brain storming and mapping ideas. Jones, (2007) states that the communicating activities of negotiations are distinguishing features of Student-centered classroom". Such activities by all means not only limited to questions and answers (QA) activity besides encompasses tasks like role play, problem solving, pair work and group work. Active and amusing learning are required to manage to allow learners to encounter altogether teaching English.

The key motto of Student-centered classrooms is to assist students to set off self-reliantly. According to Brown (2008), "The students are able to achieve free-spirited intellect, the capacity to put together educational decisions, and value judgments through the Student-centered instruction".

Characteristics of Student-centered Approach

The Student-centered method of teaching undergoes following characteristics:

i. Occupy Learners in Learning Process

On a conventional way of learning, a target language in the majority of classes teachers are employing extreme stronger when compared to the students. Students do not generate enlightened learning skills as they did not get chance to apply the skills and almost entirely in classrooms the teacher gets a very much accomplishing when compared with the students. Apart from that, in Student-centered teaching students have the chance to carry out a genuine piece of work and obtain contemporary skills and lead capabilities through the learning process.

ii. Explicit-skill Instruction

In Student-centered teaching, many skills that are necessary to acquiring material that encompasses are explicit skill instruction. Here the learners are taught to problem solving, think independently, risk management, and collaborative learning.

iii. Promotes Inductive Learning

Inductive learning is fostered through Student-centered teaching and accordingly from the experience the students gained by utilizing second language. The students are given up on to discover or persuade rules and they are not exposed to grammatical or other types of rules directly. Like many methodologists, G.S. Murdoch (1990) also claims that teacher's job is specifically to becoming engaged in activities or working in tasks the students are engaged to create conditions in the classroom.

As stated by Blumberg (2009), Student- centered approach differs from Teacher-centered approach in the means that Student- centered activities taught in the classroom make the students aware the reason to learn content and its practicality to them on the other hand in Teacher-centered programs teach learners to be silent as they are assessed as robots to stick to in the directions as ordered by the instructor.

Advantages of Student- centered teaching

Student-centered teaching has numerous advantages in the teaching of target language. At the beginning, individual engagement, innate inspiration, trust in one's potentialities to prosper, and a insight and leadership on the top of learning guide to progressive learning and great accomplishment. Alexander and Murphy state that by comparing the previous knowledge the students are able to create with their own understanding of materials in this approach.

Secondly, as Mutlaq (2013) suggests that both learners and instructors are able to learn from one another. Also, Slavin, (1990) and Maxwell (1998) state that learners are enthusiastic, self-directed and have the advantage of the learning hence the learners are actively participated in the tasks allotted to them. Because of this towering motivation for learning and far more contentment with the school, there is distinguished scholastic accomplishment. In addition to that, Aaronsohn (1996) points out that the Student-centered learners are encountered with triumphs, acquire self- confidence and jovial about themselves. Further, McCombs (1997) claims that Student-centered teaching has become the outstanding way to enhance fraternization among learners in a society.

Activities Used in Student-centered approach

i. Role play

Incorporating role play into the classroom adds different varieties, and changes the pace of language production. The enjoyment in role play is that learners are able to enact as anyone as they wish for a short period of time. To develop language skills familiar roles are chosen by the students so they can't hunt for ideas.

ii.   Group discussion

Group discussion requires a quick presentation on the topic. Language fluency is improved through this activity. Here students are divided into groups and they are encouraged to discuss on the given topic.

iii.   Seminar

Through Seminars, the language proficiency of the students increases. It enhances the confident level of the students. In student–centered classroom, teacher allots the topic to the students based on their efficiency and they have to present the seminars in an interactive way.

iv.   Debate

Through debate activity, the students are able to communicate and give arguments in English and it makes the students more active. Here it increases critical thinking as every student analyzes the problem in a critical way.

v.   Pair work

Pair wok has a vital role in language classrooms. It motivates collaborative learning and students are very much encouraged while working in pairs. The teacher makes the seating arrangement that facilitate pair work.

vi.   Narrating stories

Story-telling is the effective method as it triggers activities that are basics in language learning process. Also, this activity keeps the classroom alive and it is vital to select stories that aids the learners to acquire new language structure especially in the view of practical use of that language.

vii.   Narrating incidents

In this activity, students are asked to narrate real life incidents. They have to narrate incidents from their memory, when they narrate, their language skill gets enhanced. The teacher has to provide the vocabulary if the student committed any mistakes and also teacher has to rectify the mistakes while narrating the incidents.

viii. Interviews

In these interviewing activities, learners can enhance their speaking skills very interestingly. Teachers have to allot two students of a turn - one student acts as a celebrity and the other one as interviewer.

ix.   Extempore speeches

In the extempore speech activity, teachers have to provide the topic for the speech without any prior knowledge of the students and the topic must be a familiar with them.

x.   Jigsaw method

In jigsaw activity, students are assembled to work in groups. Here the target learners rely on one another to succeed. This method enhances the speaking, listening and problem-solving skills of the learners.

Conclusion

Dewey (1938) noted that Student-centered learning permits learners to become self-aware of their potentialities. Students therefore are enthusiastic to gain knowledge as they set off self-assertive in their own potentialities. On the other hand as Fink (2003) states, conventional approach of learning a new language has some limitations to concentrate on lively teaching and neglects to incorporate the real motto of learning the second languages.

Also Student-centered programs permit the students to resolve difficulties. Conventional Methods turned out to be denounced for encouraging rote learning and memorization in which students almost get by heart materiality to get good marks in the examination, however, are unable to implement the mastery that they gained to rectify the troubles they come across.

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