

Principles of language teaching

The English teacher should teach English language in such a way that the desired goal of learning may be achieved. Different principles of teaching language are:

Purpose related: -

People may learn a second or third language for different reasons, commercial, social, scientific, academic, and literary purpose. If the purpose is decided in the beginning it becomes a simple affair to design a course suitable for that purpose. In the absence of any specific purpose they simply drag on.

Habit Formation: -

Language teaching is an art. Like all other arts its needs sustained practice and drill. The language skills are acquired through activity with the language under proper guidance of the teacher. The steps taken by the teacher in the class should be followed by the child's practice activities involving his feeling and willingness. According to H. E. palmer, "language learning is essentially a habit forming process, a process during which we acquire new habits." This involves plenty of practice of contextualized speech designed to incorporate each new item into the learners developing systems: The principle of: (a) of practice and drill, and (b) of learning by doing, are to be followed by the teacher and learner of English. For healthy language habits the pupils must pay attention to:

• Habit of listening to the sounds of English words,

• Habit of speaking English with proper accent and intonation,

• Habit of spelling.

Motivation: -

"Motivation is the super highway to learning." It is in fact the principle of interest. Learning English is a painful process and gives considerable mental strain to the learner. Therefore, the teacher should try his best to reduce the strain by making use of pictures, models and objects in the class. The conversational approach and the play way can effectively diminish the dullness and monotony that is likely to fall on the pupils. At the introductory stage the class should be properly motivated to receive the new knowledge in the light of previous knowledge and experience. The pupils should feel that they are acquiring knowledge with their own efforts. The pupils should constantly feel that their knowledge of English is increasing and that they can readily use it. The other ways of arousing interest are:

- (i) Linguistic games,
- (ii) Use of gramophone record, and

- (iii) Use of flash cards and other audiovisual aids, etc.

Multiple line of Approach: -

According to this principle the teacher has to proceed simultaneously from many different points of view towards the goals to be realised by him. He has to select and reject judiciously without favour or prejudice, the material to be presented and the method of its presentation. Some of the common approaches to the teaching of English are the cultural approach, the social approach, the conversational approach, the functional approach, the situational approach etc.

Interest: -

Children learn easily and quickly things in which they are interested. In the learning of English as a foreign language the principle of interest is to be kept in mind by the teacher especially because the children do not have an innate interest in the learning of this language. The teacher, who creates interest among his pupils, not only wins over his own difficulties but also wins the young hearts of his-pupils. Language thus learnt will necessarily help the children in expressing their needs, desires and feelings.

Concreteness: -

Often we hear the maxim 'Proceed from concrete to the abstract.' This implies that all knowledge and all experience which the child gains in his practical life should be re-lived in the process of teaching. Thus, the knowledge and experience of the child will be established permanently in his mental store. It enables the child to understand the vague and abstract part of the knowledge. But it requires, on the part of the teacher, to transfer the vague and abstract part into concrete experience. For this, he has to take resort to the various aids so that his lessons become more interesting. He can proceed by presenting 'objects' before words. While teaching verbs, the teacher can begin with such 'actions' that can be performed in the class e.g., sit, stand, come, go, shut, open, walk, read, write, bring, etc. The teaching of adjectives, prepositions and adverbs may also be carried in the same manner.

Accuracy and Correctness: -

This principle will enable the pupils to use accurate or 'exact' word. That is, their minds shall function in an accurate selection of the 'right' words. A right or 'exact' word is that which is used to impart its meaning in the context we desire to use it. At a later stage it enables one to develop a compact style. The mind of the growing child will not wander if the principle of accuracy is practised. Hence, the linguistic habits we desire to be formed by our children should be accurate. It can be practised by giving all the possible meanings of a particular word or all the synonyms together with their context in which meaning or synonyms can be possibly used.



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Selection and Gradation: -

Selection and gradation is another important principle to be kept in mind by the teachers of English. In fact, selection leads to gradation and gradation precedes selection. The teacher, before making a start in his process of teaching and in order to achieve the required results, has to select material for his teaching. Here the material taught and the aids which he desires to use, should be in accordance with the physical and mental age and health of the children.

Linking with life: -

Linking of the subject matter with life is one of the important principles of any teaching. In teaching of English as a second language the teacher can easily do so because language is used in everyday life whether it in a classroom, home, play field or market. The students come in contact with their teachers, head master, classmates, school-mates, play-mates and get opportunities to express their ideas with them. All these school experience are part of life experiences. The job of an English teacher should be to encourage his students to use the learned structures of English language in their daily life situations.

Proportion: -

Language is a system. The system of language is an organic whole. Just as the system of our body is composed of the senses of hearing, seeing, heart, lungs and brain, etc., so is the system of language composed of sounds, words and structures. The system of our body functions properly and effectively when all our organs work inter connectedly and co-ordinately. So, does the system of language function properly and effectively when an inter-connection and coordination is maintained among the various organs. This can be achieved when due proportion is maintained in the functioning of these organs. These are the principles which should be kept by language teachers.