



ESL TEACHING METHODS EVERY TEACHER SHOULD KNOW

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Abstract

The article focuses on an assumption of using interactive methods, which can be applied for students. Therefore, the researcher discusses outcomes of interactive methods, conducted lessons, and offers not only suggestions for organizing effective classes, but also presents a variety of activities for success of teaching to students.

Keywords: ESL teaching, methods communicative language teaching, direct method, task-/project-/inquiry-based learning, total physical response, an eclectic approach.

There's no single way to teach English and, in fact, there have been many popular approaches over the years. These are a few of the top ESL teaching methods used in the classroom today, including communicative language teaching (CLT) and total physical response (TPR).

Why learn ESL teaching methods?

There are many reasons why learning a few basic ESL teaching methods is a must for both new and experienced teachers. Here are some ways that learning the most popular methods of teaching ESL can help you as an English teacher:

- Demonstrating knowledge of these ESL teaching methods and strategies makes you more marketable.
- Discussing these strategies for teaching ESL students and using TEFL/TESOL buzzwords during an interview can improve your chances of getting hired.
- Using a variety of methods in the ESL classroom makes you a more effective and engaging teacher.
- Understanding pedagogy helps you design better ESL materials and lessons, as you can strategically select activities and use learning objectives that will benefit your students.



If you're new to teaching, you'll want to get initial training and qualification with a TEFL certificate. You can explore online TEFL courses to get started! What are some popular ESL teaching methods?

Method 1: Direct method

For the direct method, all teaching is done in the target language, translations are not allowed in class, and the focus lies heavily on speaking instead of grammar. This makes the direct method a very student-centered strategy that has gained popularity in recent years. Students are supposed to learn the target language naturally and instinctively, which is why the direct method is also called the "natural approach." Mistakes are corrected as they happen in class, and teachers reinforce the correct usage of the language with praise. This method is frequently used when teaching English online, as many virtual ESL companies require teachers to only speak English during class.

Method 2: Communicative language teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching is perhaps the most popular approach among the methods of teaching ESL today. CLT emphasizes the students' ability to communicate in real-life contexts, and students learn to make requests, accept offers, explain things, and express their feelings and preferences. Since CLT focuses on teaching language through real-world assignments and problem-solving, it's less concerned with grammar accuracy and instead focuses on fluency.

Method 3: Task-/project-/inquiry-based learning

This teaching strategy for ESL students can sometimes be considered a part of CLT, but it heavily emphasizes the students' independence and individuality. Inquiry-based learning is a modern approach that is becoming widely popular in schools all over the world. By asking questions and solving problems, with the teacher as a mere learning facilitator, student motivation and participation in tasks and projects are thought to increase.

Method 4: Total physical response (TPR)

You may have heard of this teaching strategy for ESL before, but what exactly is TPR? Total physical response has become a very popular approach in which students react to the teacher with movement, such as miming, gesturing, or



acting out the language. For example, the teacher and students might make an exaggerated frown and pretend to cry when learning the word “sad.” TPR suggests that students learn the target language best through physical response rather than by analysis. TPR is often used when teaching English online and when teaching young learners, as it not only helps students remember vocabulary but also provides an outlet for their energy and helps them stay focused when sitting for long periods of time.

Method 5: An eclectic approach

Many teachers choose from the collection of humanistic approaches (TPR, for example) and communicative approaches (the direct method and CLT), as well as many other teaching strategies for ESL learners, and use what works best for them.

For example, a teacher who uses mostly the direct method may occasionally do a lot of grammar explanation when teaching a test preparation class, or a CLT advocate may borrow some aspects of the direct method or use TPR.

Pro Tip: A great way to combine or develop teaching methods is to frequently reflect on your teaching style by using a journal where you write down comments, note adjustments, and brainstorm how you can change certain methods or procedures if necessary.

Depending on the grade level taught and the type of material assigned based on the curriculum plan, English teachers will have to try one or more of the above strategies to make their classroom work. The same strategy may not work from year to year, and teachers may find that while one strategy works for one teacher, it does not work in their classroom. English teachers who are flexible and willing to experiment with teaching strategies are sure to find a winning formula.

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