

METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN CONTEMPORARY CLASSROOMS

A practical approach to communicative, task-based, and learner-centered instruction

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Abstract

Teaching English today requires more than the presentation of grammar rules and vocabulary lists. In multilingual and mixed-ability classrooms, effective methodology must combine clear language input, meaningful interaction, purposeful practice, and sensitive assessment. This article discusses the main principles of modern English language teaching with particular attention to communicative language teaching, task-based learning, lexical development, scaffolding, and formative assessment. It argues that successful instruction depends not on one fixed method, but on the teacher's ability to select and adapt techniques in response to learners' needs, goals, and proficiency levels. The article also highlights the role of motivation, feedback, classroom atmosphere, and reflective practice in sustaining progress. The discussion concludes that an effective methodology for teaching English should be flexible, student-centered, and grounded in both theory and classroom reality.

Keywords: English language teaching, communicative approach, task-based learning, methodology, classroom practice, assessment

Introduction

English has become a global medium of education, business, science, and digital communication. As a result, the question of how to teach English effectively has gained practical and theoretical importance in almost every educational context. Teachers are no longer expected to simply explain rules; they are expected to help learners use English meaningfully, confidently, and appropriately in real situations. This shift has changed the nature of methodology in English language teaching.

In the past, many classrooms were dominated by grammar translation and mechanical drills. Although such practices may still have a limited place in certain contexts, they do not fully prepare learners for communication. Modern methodology emphasizes purposeful language use, interaction, learner autonomy, and continuous assessment. At the same time, teachers must work with real classroom constraints such

as large groups, limited time, uneven language proficiency, and varying levels of motivation. For this reason, a strong methodology is not a rigid formula. It is a set of informed choices that help the teacher respond to learners and achieve clear learning outcomes.

Theoretical Foundations of Effective English Teaching

A productive methodology begins with an understanding of how language is learned. Communicative language teaching views language as a tool for interaction rather than as a collection of isolated forms. From this perspective, learners need opportunities to negotiate meaning, ask questions, clarify ideas, and respond to others. When students use language for a genuine purpose, they are more likely to retain it and transfer it to new contexts.

Task-based learning develops this idea further by organizing lessons around activities that require learners to solve problems, exchange information, or complete a practical outcome. In such lessons, language is not presented only as content to memorize; it becomes the means through which a task is achieved. This helps learners notice gaps in their knowledge and use language more actively. It also creates a stronger connection between classroom work and real-life communication.

Another important principle is the lexical view of language. Research has shown that fluent communication depends not only on grammar, but also on the ability to recognize and use common words, phrases, and collocations. For learners, this means that vocabulary should be taught in meaningful chunks and revised regularly in different contexts. A teacher who combines grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and discourse patterns will usually produce more balanced progress than one who focuses on only a single component.

Core Principles in Classroom Practice

The first principle is learner-centeredness. Students learn more effectively when they are active participants rather than passive listeners. Pair work, group discussions, problem-solving tasks, and peer feedback all encourage participation. In a learner-centered classroom, the teacher acts as a guide, organizer, and language model instead of the sole source of knowledge.

The second principle is scaffolding. Many learners cannot immediately perform complex language tasks independently. They need support in the form of examples, model answers, useful phrases, visual prompts, and guided stages. Scaffolding allows

students to move gradually from dependence to independence. As confidence grows, support can be reduced while task difficulty increases.

The third principle is balance. A lesson should not focus only on speaking and ignore reading, writing, listening, or grammar. Skills are interrelated, and learners benefit when they see these connections. For example, a listening text can introduce vocabulary that later appears in speaking or writing. Likewise, a reading passage can provide a model for sentence structure and organization.

The fourth principle is consistency with flexibility. A teacher may enter a lesson with a plan, but effective teaching also requires adaptation. If students struggle with a concept, the teacher may need to slow down, provide more examples, or simplify the task. If students already understand a point, the lesson can move forward more quickly. Good methodology is therefore responsive rather than mechanical.

Useful Techniques for Teaching English

A wide range of techniques can support English teaching when used purposefully. Warm-up activities are valuable because they prepare learners psychologically and linguistically for the lesson. A short question, picture, quotation, or prediction task can focus attention and create interest. Similarly, brainstorming helps activate prior knowledge and encourages students to contribute ideas without fear of making mistakes.

Presentation should be brief and clear. Instead of long explanations, teachers can use short examples, comparison, and guided questioning. Visual aids, charts, and real objects are often more effective than lengthy verbal descriptions, especially for beginners. Pronunciation work also benefits from focused practice, particularly when students need help with stress, rhythm, and intonation.

Practice activities should move from controlled to freer use. Controlled exercises help learners notice patterns and build confidence, while freer tasks encourage real communication. For instance, students may first complete sentence transformations, then practice the target language in pairs, and finally use it in a role play or discussion. This sequence supports accuracy and fluency at the same time.

Feedback should be timely and constructive. Overcorrection can discourage learners, while no correction at all may allow errors to become habitual. The most effective feedback is selective: the teacher chooses the most important errors to address and offers clear alternatives. Peer correction and self-correction can also be valuable because they develop learner awareness and responsibility.

Motivation and Assessment

Motivation is one of the strongest predictors of success in language learning. Students who see a clear purpose for English are more likely to invest effort, persist through difficulty, and practice outside class. Teachers can strengthen motivation by selecting relevant topics, using authentic materials, and connecting lessons to students' academic or professional needs. Even small improvements are more meaningful when learners can see how English relates to their future goals.

Assessment should support learning rather than simply judge it. Formative assessment is especially useful because it gives both teacher and student information about progress during the learning process. Short quizzes, exit tickets, oral checks, reflections, and portfolio tasks can reveal what learners have understood and where they still need support. Summative assessment remains important, but it should be consistent with classroom objectives and should test what has actually been taught.

In modern methodology, assessment also includes self-evaluation. When students reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, and strategies, they become more independent. A simple checklist or learning journal can help them notice patterns in their errors and successes. This reflective dimension is particularly important in higher education, where students are expected to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Challenges in Real Classrooms

Although modern methodology offers many promising ideas, teachers often face practical challenges. Large classes may limit individual speaking time. Mixed proficiency levels can make it difficult to design one task for all learners. Limited lesson hours may reduce the amount of practice available. In some institutions, access to technology, audio materials, or updated textbooks may also be restricted.

These challenges do not make good methodology impossible; they simply require careful planning. A teacher working with a large class can use pair work and group roles to maximize participation. In mixed-ability groups, stronger students can support weaker ones through collaborative tasks. When resources are limited, teachers can still create communicative activities using the board, paper, short texts, and simple prompts. Good teaching often depends less on expensive materials than on thoughtful organization.

Conclusion

The methodology of teaching English has moved far beyond the idea of repeating grammar rules or translating isolated sentences. Today, effective English teaching

combines communication, interaction, vocabulary development, scaffolding, balanced skill work, and meaningful assessment. It also recognizes that learners are different, classroom conditions vary, and no single method fits every situation.

For this reason, the best methodology is one that is principled but adaptable. Teachers need a clear understanding of language learning, but they also need creativity, patience, and classroom sensitivity. When English teaching is built on purpose, support, and reflection, learners are more likely to become confident users of the language rather than simple memorers of forms. In this sense, methodology is not only a professional skill; it is the foundation of successful language education.

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