

MODERN APPROACHES TO TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES ACCORDING TO DEWEY'S IDEAS

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ANNOTATION

This article is dedicated to the role and effectiveness of learning English with usage of specific teaching methods and in this article we investigated the compatibility of the concept of foreign language environment that helps individuals and groups become more effective in work to introduce ways of presenting theoretical view with practical part and construct a good lexical base for the learners who study English.

Keywords: interactive method, content-based learning, teacher-centered, learner-centered, illustrate, stimulate.

INTRODUCTION

Every pupil should feel free and be active during the lesson. Many scientists have done researches on this topic as well as John Dewey, one of the most talented researchers in the history of modern educational theory. All the life he supported progressive education where a child-centered approach to education places the emphasis of learning on the needs and interests of the child. In addition, according to his points of view generating professional learning and knowledge reflection can help teachers to become lifelong learners as they can continuously generate and store personal knowledge through engaging in the reflective process. Since reflective process puts teachers at the heart of the learning process, teachers have the responsibility for their own growth and learning. In order to demonstrate how reflection facilitates teachers' professional learning and generates professional knowledge, experiential learning theory will be used as a base for the argument of this paper. It is believed that as a critical step in professional development, reflection is as an important part of this learning theory.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The theoretical conceptualization of experiential learning theory involves Dewey's ideas. Dewey states that growth comes from a "reconstruction of experience". Therefore, experiential learning theory holds the idea that learning is dependent on the integration of experience with reflection. It puts reflection at the center of learning process[1]. Based on this theory, it can be argued that by reflecting on their own experience, teachers as learners can construct their own educational perspectives and gain new insights from that experience and develop new strategies to use in subsequent teaching. Experiential learning theory is based on a four-stage dialectic and cyclical process experience, observation and reflection, abstract reconceptualization, and experimentation.

This is the fact that, the learning begins with a problem, unexpected event or a troublesome complicated experience. Then, the reflective teachers step back to examine their experience and describe the problem by asking themselves “What was the nature of the problem? What were my intentions?” or “What did I do?” The process of observation and reflection requires the teacher to act as a researcher[4]. Teachers are the first monitors and observe the problem and then, collect data about it including beliefs, values, intentions, attitudes, feelings, ideas and actions of both themselves and the students. Then, critically analyses and evaluates this data in order to make decisions and judgements on them. In the third stage of the learning cycle, the teacher considers alternative ways of thinking and acting. It includes an active search for new information, techniques or process to address the problem.

People aim at developing alternative hypothesis to explain the events and guide for her/his action. In the final stage of the learning cycle, the teacher makes a conscious decision to act in a certain way to test these new theories, assumptions and knowledge through experimentation[10]. This stage completes the cycle and starts another. The next cycle starts and profits from the earlier cycle whether it focuses in a more detailed way on the same problem or another[5]. Therefore, learning and professional development become a progressive and continuing process. This makes teachers lifelong learners. In short, in the process of experiential learning, experience is transferred into improved knowledge and skills, and teachers might become aware of not only what was successful, but also why it was successful. A teacher can gain at least three competencies: empirical competencies which refer planning a research and collecting data; analytical competencies which is about how to interpret the data and evaluative competencies which include making judgements about the educational consequences of the results of a practical inquiry. By using the data, the teacher can analyze the sequence of events to confirm or disconfirm the new hypothesis[6].

Reflection and developing theory the process of reflection can be considered as a form of educational theorizing because in reflective process, teachers make more conscious and articulate their implicit, practical theories explicit in and subject them to the other’s criticism[9]. As a result of engaging in reflective teaching, teachers can gain inquiry skills. They might also become effective teachers because effective teaching requires teachers to have not only a knowledge of subject matter, students and their learning needs, and the use of a variety of teaching techniques but also the investigative or inquiry skills in order to examine continuously their practice, their students’ learning problems, and to respond immediate problems occurred while teaching to improve teaching. Otherwise, it seems a little inappropriate to suggest that teachers who have not experienced inquiry in their lives will be able to create classroom settings in order to educate students who are able to question, to pose and solve problems, and self-directed learners[7]. Having inquiry skills can help teachers enhance the understanding and awareness of their practices, beliefs and values. Since teaching often reflects an unquestioned acceptance of values, norms, and practices defined by others about what is in the best interest of students and teachers, and a lack of awareness of alternative practices, teachers mostly act without knowing why they do what they have been doing. In Dewey's view, the teacher should observe the interest of the students, observe the directions they naturally take, and then serve as someone who helps develop problem-solving skills[8].

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, teachers may not be aware of the reasons behind their actions. In order to be an effective teacher, teachers should be aware of their values, norms and practices. In addition, reflection and modern approaches demand them to describe specific experiences in their teaching, and subject their own actions to critical assessment while identifying and framing issues of classroom practice.

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