

Beyond Classroom based Language Activities: Providing interesting and real language experiences for learners

A Paper Summary

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. The demand of English instruction today requires teachers and course programmers to step out from the classroom based activities to those of more real language experiences . The needs to have English for other different purposes from pencil and paper tests to more challenging activities like participating in science Olympics or debating or story telling contests lead the teachers and the course programmers to be more creative in interpreting what it means to have good commands in English. For English classes outside the elementary or secondary school systems, the demand varies more. People learn English for more challenging purposes like public speaking or doing presentations in English.

The above needs make English teaching more challenging, therefore, it requires teachers to be more creative, resourceful, open to other knowledge not only school English. Teachers with other talents like public speaking, English literature, performing arts would be a blessing for the English programs. The understanding would help them to design teaching and learning that represents the English language mastery of today's challenges and needs.

The aim of presenting the above issue is to give the background of the problem in teaching English by employing what is called as language activities beyond the classroom area. The idea that in conducting our English teaching we should step out from the classroom activities and think beyond the confined classroom teaching is the main issue in this paper. Therefore, teachers need to have some understanding, skills and knowledge in how to do the work in the right way. One of the ways is designing language performances as part of the teachers' job.

What is a language activity which is beyond the classroom based?

It is a piece of language skill which can be performed in public. This must be a language activity which is naturally displayed for other people to see and, most importantly, to enjoy. For spoken language, it can be in the form of story telling, speech making or presentation making. While for the written language, it can be in the form of producing wall magazines in which learners can produce various types of written texts like poems, short stories, editorials etc. The performance which consists of several language activities is performed in the end of the teaching and learning process.

In the form of final project at the end of the course or performed after being learnt the language learning activities can be really performed. Those language activities then become performances because they are performed by learners at the end of the programme or the course which show the result of the learning. The performance is based on the language or the language skills being learnt. For listening and speaking the performance takes the form of story telling, presenting various programmes, plays or other speaking activities. While for written language performances, they may be in the form of writing various products like articles for wall magazines.

Why is a language performance?

The language activity which is then made performance, due to its nature has several characteristics that will improve the quality of the teaching and learning

1. It can be observed by other people so the motivation of the learners to learn is high. People want to learn when they need to show or display what they can do to other people.
2. The learning activities are focused on a very clear target for example, conducting a conference or publishing an English newsletter. Therefore, the learning tasks or activities will be done based on the needs and the learners' learning pace. It is expected that the learners will control their own learning.
3. The learning is something that people naturally do with the language, therefore learners and parents can see the relationship between what are being learned and why they have to learn them.
4. The teaching and learning activities would attract learners and other people around because they do not look like usual language classroom activities.
5. In doing the learning, learners learn other side softskills like working in a group, setting the target
6. Teachers and learners have things to display and show to other parties for example parents or those who are interested in the teaching and learning process. It must be sensational to show or display the results of a learning process.

Teachers and course programmers need to understand that language skills can be exhibited to others the way paintings, dances or singing can be enjoyed.

What this paper also attempts to inform is that English teachers should not only equip themselves with knowledge and skills on linguistic aspect of their teaching but also on public speaking, and creative writing various types of written language and how to write for wall magazines etc.

Key words : beyond, classroom, language, activities