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## Practical and Theoretical Aspects of the Developing Language Skills

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### ANNOTATION

In the given article the theoretical aspects of the language learning skills development and the importance of stories in learning a language is outlined.

**KEYWORDS:** a foreign language, a story, a subject, a text, glossary, exercises, to encourage and skill.

### Introduction

Education and foreign language teaching should focus on not storing the information to the student and demand for output by asking them to answer some grammar and reading multiple choice test questions, but on the use of language so that they can imply in daily life cases what they have learned. We think language education should focus on competence based approach and paradigm for the use of target language. The diversity found in language teaching today makes it necessary to take a look at some methods and approaches which have been used at various times. Although each method corresponds to some period of language teaching development. As a matter of fact, all methods have survived intact and are still being used by some teachers somewhere in the world. Moreover, the methods have been modified by teachers and textbook writers. Probably most English teachers today, if asked what method they use, would reply that they do not follow any single method, but rather that they use a selection of techniques. Its biggest advantage is that a teacher is less likely to become fixed in one single method and more likely to keep an eye open for new techniques and approaches.

**Main part.** As Ann Newton, editor of the “English teaching Forum” journal, says, “Scientific breakthroughs have come from a willingness to “think the unthinkable” with the recognition that the most convincingly established theory may be discredited. This is how science advances, however painful the process may seem to the exponents of a popular theory”. Language teachers have the responsibility to mediate changes in pedagogic practice so as to increase the effectiveness of language teaching.

One of the ways the developing language skills is storytelling. Stories are very important for children in learning their mother tongue, and they are important in learning any foreign language as well. Many stories contain natural repetition of key vocabulary and structures. This helps children to remember every detail, so they can gradually learn to anticipate what is about to happen next in the story. Repetition also encourages

participation in the narrative. Stories are very motivating, challenging and great fun for children. They can help develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language, culture and language learning. Using stories allows the teacher to introduce or revise new vocabulary and sentence structures by exposing the children to language in varied, memorable and familiar contexts, which will enrich their thinking and gradually enter their own speech. Listening to stories helps children become aware of the rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of language. They can link English with other subject areas across the curriculum. When learners listen to stories in class they share social experience, it “provokes a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation which is not only enjoyable but can help to build up the child’s confidence and encourage social and emotional development”. Stories are a useful tool in linking fantasy and the imagination with the child’s real world. They provide a way of enabling children to make sense of their everyday life and forge links between home and school. Children exercise their imagination through stories. They can become personally involved in a story as they identify with the characters and try to interpret the narrative and illustrations. This imaginative experience helps, students develop their own creative potential.

Stories also develop the different types of ‘intelligences’ that contribute to language learning, including emotional intelligence. Stories develop children’s learning strategies such as listening for general meaning, predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing. Stories address universal themes which go beyond the useful level of basic dialogues and daily activities. They allow children to play with ideas and feelings and to think about issues which are important and relevant to them. They also provide “ideal opportunities for presenting cultural information and encouraging cross-cultural comparison. For teachers stories allow to use an acquisition-based methodology by providing optimal input. It is great to use real storybooks because they “add variety and provide a springboard for creating complete units of work that constitute mini-syllabuses and involve pupils personally, creatively and actively in an all-round whole curriculum approach. They thereby provide a novel alternative to the course book”.

It is obvious that we should choose different types of stories and different topics for learners. Also the sources of stories are different. Students are able to create their own stories if they have the right input. We can use many sources when we look for stories to be used in lessons. Firstly, we are all storytellers and all the time we tell someone about missing a train or losing our watch, about our family life - we are telling a story. We cannot tell all the facts, we must select. We have to decide what to say first and then next - we sequence for effect and understanding, we decide what words to choose and how to move our body and use our voice for expression. So, the best source is our everyday life, our experiences.

We, teachers, are real people and we can choose to share some or many of our experiences with the students. Telling stories from our life can give something personal to our students. The students are more likely to really use English in order to communicate than just mechanically practice it. They will probably do this because they begin to see us as people and not just teachers. And they realize that we think of them as people and not only students of English. Personal stories can help to bring about this shift of perception. The main skills we teach here are speaking and listening. Storytelling encourages empathy and a respect for different points of view as well.

Secondly, there is a lot of English children’s fiction or original texts (like newspaper’s articles, anecdotes, folktales, etc.). Real books give us the feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction, such richness and magic of language no course book can ever offer. They are also exposed to such issues as loss, death, friendship, responsibility, power and domination which can heighten their sensitivity and help them in the task of

growing up. Furthermore the varied illustrations, which provide clues to the story, stimulate interest and pave the way for the text, in themselves develop children's artistic perception and imagination. Students can listen to or read folktales from other times and places. They can evaluate a folktale from its historical context. Listening to or reading about ancient times and places, about different customs. Folktales usually have a moral too, which could be important for students. Next, we can bring pictures or we can use a short video extract to illustrate the topic we want to work. Pictures provoke students' imagination and video may be used to show an authentic language. Songs are other alternative. Adolescents love listening to songs and using real songs can encourage children in other learning of English. Usual activity is gap filling. Another activity is retelling the story in the song in students' own words. Stories are an ideal tool in learning language as they guide us through our whole life.

### Conclusion

So not only learning our mother tongue, but also other foreign languages through stories can make our effort more interesting, amusing and memorable. Students have an amazing ability to absorb language when activities are familiar and enjoyable to them. Teaching foreign language on the base of storytelling is exactly the activity which is both familiar and it is fun. Stories are for all of us, not just for children, that is why using them in teaching adolescents is as important as using them in teaching young children. Stories can attract students' attention, because they provide challenging topics based on their everyday interests such as love and friendship. Consequently, it is natural learn a foreign language with the help of stories.

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