Teaching Philosophy by Mardan

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Teaching Purpose: It was the last semester of the University when I started teaching. After 7 semesters of learning English and learning to teach English we were divided and sent to different schools of the city to practice teaching. It was more than 10 years ago. I was young but not so ambitious as my peers. In fact, I somewhat disliked being in front of people. But I had to start from somewhere otherwise I would fail the practice session. Then came the first time I stood alone with school children - my very first students. It just flew spontaneously, I checked the program, I checked the book. In fact, I knew very little about teaching techniques or methods even though we had Methodology and Pedagogy classes. It was completely different to read books and to be in front of real human beings. But I felt I had to take this responsibility otherwise these students would have to waste half of the term because of me. After some time teaching, I started to see the big picture – at least a small portion of the big picture and I started to apply the theory we have been taught in my lessons.

Back then my teaching purpose was different from what it is now. As I mentioned, my purpose was only about passing the practice session and getting my diploma. But, later as I encountered students my purpose changed to being able to teach those students so that I did not waste their time.

Right now my short term goal is to teach the curriculum that I am assigned. I have switched careers and have taken many online courses. I have even self-learned Data Analytics and worked as a data analyst for over a year. As I was taking those courses I noticed how my virtual teachers were enjoying their teaching. Their attitude and performances as teachers encouraged me to become a teacher myself.

My long term purpose of teaching is to help learners to have the key to communicate worldwide. This can include teammates at the office or inside remote teams. Additionally, knowing English

allows learners to acquire new skills more easily. So, my another long term goal is to give learners this tool. I feel excited when I imagine people who will be using English to learn the skills that are vital for their dream job.

Teaching Style: Each person, each student has internal desire and interest to learn. I view a language as a fire and a teacher - including myself as a candle. Without correct style and principles, a teacher might extinguish the learners' fire and desire. My teaching style is based on three elements of teaching languages, specifically English: The triangle of purpose, content and technique. I adjust the content of lessons and technique of conducting them according to my purpose and the purposes of learners. I try to effectively deploy body language, teacher talk and scaffolding. These techniques help me introduce language at the appropriate level - "the sweet spot" - where students feel challenged but not overwhelmed. I also try to move between two modes of language:

- **Focused mode** which helps me to concentrate attention on specific language features,
- **Diffuse mode** which helps learners use language in a broader, contextualized environment.

A bigger portion of my teaching style consists of the principles of Communicative Approach (1980). I prefer this approach as the materials include carefully leveled textbooks addressing high-interest themes and integrating multiple skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These materials often contain sections on pronunciation, grammar, culture, learning strategies, speech acts, and vocabulary. Main key characteristics of Communicative Approach are using authentic materials from real-world contexts, picture strips and visual supports, information gap activities (where students exchange information to complete tasks), language games, group and pair work, listener strategies, addressing diverse individual needs within classrooms.

Even though the Communicative Approach is great I think teachers might support the teaching process exploring ideas from legacy approaches. For instance, I borrow fill-in-the-blank exercises, vocabulary memorization, essay writing from Grammar Translation Approach (1880), constructing

instruction entirely or dominantly in the target language, reading aloud conversation practice, question-and-answer exchanges from Direct Approach (1910). Overall, as I mentioned above, based on the purpose, I can use activities from all 5 major approaches even though the main focus is the Communicative Approach.

I believe as I am an aspiring teacher I will teach middle school students. Because, I think I would need much more experience to work with younger learners. Also, classes of high school learners might be difficult to manage for inexperienced teachers.

By applying multiple techniques and activities from different approaches I think my lessons will be colorful and by using games, music I will be able to keep motivation high and affective filter lower.

Teaching Techniques: I try to integrate warm language, teacher talk, body language to my teaching. In the classroom, I always try to create positive, relatable, and engaging communication. This helps to build a comfortable classroom. I encourage students not to be afraid of making mistakes. Sometimes, I tell stories about my own mistakes while I was learning a language or any other skill. I tell my students that English is the second language for all of us and it is natural not to know everything. Even after so many years studying English I myself can make mistakes. I also like the idea of scaffolding as it bridges between what learners already know and what they are going to learn.

I try to design my lesson plans on the principle of 80/20. Instruction and Modeling is 20 percent of the classes. The rest of the classes are dedicated to guided, less-guided and independent practices. I conclude my lessons with a final assessment. This can be a summative or formative assessment depending on the lesson and topic.

I motivate students by reminding them about the objectives. For me, objectives are also guides. End point of a small journey. So, for example, if I am teaching Reported Speech, some of the objective might be:

- “At the end of the lesson you will be able to identify Indirect and Reported Speech immediately in written text or orally”,

- “You will be able to convert Indirect Speech to Reported Speech in 10 sentences correctly”.

Being aware of the rewards at the end might motivate students to pay attention more closely.

For warm-ups I usually use images or videos related to the topic I am going to explain. For example, If I am going to teach about friendship, I will display 4-5 images showing different types of friendship scenarios (childhood friends playing, teens studying together, adults supporting each other, intergenerational friendship). For guided practice, I will include collaborative sentence building activity. This activity consists of writing a sentence frame on the board, modeling and then asking students to work in pairs.

After completing guided practice, I will encourage students to write the introduction of the friendship related essay that is included in the lesson objectives. In order to assess student understanding I would use Metaphor Gallery Walk activity in which students will have to think of a new, authentic metaphor for friendship aside from the examples I listed. This activity includes writing a metaphor, drawing a quick sketch on half-sheet poster paper, and posting around a classroom. Students also share feedback on each other’s examples.

Overall, depending on the topic I will choose warm-up, guided, less guided and independent practice activities. Also, I will end lessons with formative and summative assessment activities.