

Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching: The Political Dimensions of Language Teaching and the Participatory Approach

The Principles of the Participatory Approach

- The goals of the teacher's using the Participatory Approach are to raise the political consciousness of the students to empower them to solve political problems in their lives.
- The teacher's role is to find out about student's problems in their daily lives and incorporate them in the lessons.
- The teacher talks with the student's about the problems mentioned and in doing so the students learn how to use language for real-life situations.
- The students learn how to advocate for themselves.
- The feelings of the students are taken seriously.
- Language is seen as an instrument of power, empowering students to gain control over their lives.
- At the beginning, the focus is on the correctness of form subordinate to communication.
- The student's native language is valued.
- Students evaluate their own learning.
- Students are encouraged to self-correct.

Two Special Techniques of the Participatory Approach

➤ Dialoguing

Through the established dialogue between students and teacher, the students learn to have a more critical world view. They talk about real-life issues concerning their power and the power of others.

➤ Problem Posing

Through dialoguing with the students, the teacher finds out with which problems they are preoccupied. The students are encouraged to find solutions to their problems with the help of the teacher. In learning more about how society, culture and history influenced the context in which they live, they are enabled to be operative and gain control over their lives.

Advantages

- The addressing of student's problems in their lives, be it private or concerning the language learning, might make students feel more valued and motivated to learn the language.
- Dialogues between the teacher and students are a crucial part of a good and positive rapport and in this sense the teacher should know about what is going on inside of students to be better able to help them.

Disadvantages

- The technique of the Participatory Approach may be applicable for more experienced teachers as it requires a handing over of what is being learned to the students.
- Students are normally used to learn what the teacher shows them to learn. The Participatory Approach is therefore more recommendable for students who immigrated and who have to learn a new language and be able to cope with daily problems they need to solve.