

MODERN APPROACHES TO TEACHING ENGLISH TO PRESCHOOLERS

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Abstract: This article explores innovative methods for introducing English to preschool-aged children. With English evolving into a global language, early exposure is crucial for children to adapt in a multilingual and multicultural environment. The piece highlights contemporary techniques that make language learning engaging and effective.

Keywords: foreign language, phonetics, Shexter method, games, methodology, cartoons, riddles.

In today's rapidly progressing world, the role of modern education in shaping young individuals is vital. Children are the foundation of future society, and developing well-rounded, knowledgeable personalities is the primary goal of education. Teaching a foreign language to preschoolers not only boosts their intellectual growth but also helps them adjust to a multicultural world. Language learning at this early age provides an essential bridge to understanding new perspectives and cultures.

English is now considered a fundamental part of the curriculum in many educational settings, including preschools. Society's growing demand for English has led parents to start language instruction early. Previously, language education was mostly limited to older students, but today's parents and educators increasingly recognize the value of early exposure.

Objectives in Teaching English to Preschoolers.

The main objectives of introducing English at this young age include:

Developing basic conversational skills in a foreign language.

Building the confidence to express ideas and emotions using a new language.

Creating a positive attitude toward language learning.

Encouraging curiosity about other cultures and ways of life.

Early childhood is ideal for language learning because young children are particularly sensitive to phonetics and intonation, making them quick to grasp pronunciation and sound distinctions. Through a series of carefully designed exercises, they can practice correct pronunciation and build foundational language skills, aided by sensory games that develop auditory and speech coordination.

Advantages of Early Language Exposure

Early language instruction benefits young children because it allows for natural, play-based learning methods. Unlike older students who rely on textbooks and structured exercises, young learners thrive on creativity and hands-on activities that align with their developmental needs.

In preschool, English language instruction focuses on gradually developing communication skills. For example, children learn to repeat sounds, words, and sentences, helping them practice accurate pronunciation. As they progress, they begin to build a vocabulary and understand simple grammatical structures.

Effective Techniques for Teaching English to Preschoolers

Games and Role-Playing: Games provide a natural way for children to engage with the language. Simple, interactive games introduce basic vocabulary, such as colors, animals, and greetings. Role-playing further enhances their interest, allowing children to connect words with actions in a fun setting. An example of this method includes role-playing activities where children mimic animal sounds to learn names, fostering active engagement.

Sensory Learning: Using sensory-based learning engages multiple senses—such as sight, sound, and movement. For instance, visual aids like pictures and toys, along with auditory stimuli like songs, reinforce language concepts through a multi-sensory approach.

The Shexter Method: Unlike the traditional “theory-to-practice” model, the Shexter Method adopts a reverse approach, introducing words and phrases first and slowly building towards grammar. This method closely mirrors how children learn their first language and allows them to acquire English naturally. The method’s initial stages focus on conversational phrases like greetings and instructions, which gradually expand into more complex structures.

Songs, Rhymes, and Cartoons: Integrating songs, rhymes, and cartoons into lessons makes learning enjoyable and memorable. Children can learn the alphabet or simple words through songs, which strengthens their retention. Cartoons, even without full comprehension of dialogue, encourage children to associate visuals with spoken language.

Riddles and Problem-Solving: Riddles capture children’s curiosity and motivate them to learn new words and concepts in English. By posing simple questions related to familiar topics like fruits, animals, or toys, teachers encourage children to answer in English, making learning feel like a game.

Creating a Themed Environment: Teachers can create themed learning environments that immerse children in specific topics. For example, a lesson on animals might involve setting up pictures, props, or sounds that transport children to a “zoo” setting. This thematic approach enhances language retention by connecting words to a lively context.

Non-Verbal Cues and Gestures: Young children are highly receptive to body language, which can enhance language comprehension. Teachers can use gestures or expressions to support instructions, such as pointing while saying “come here” or showing a book when saying “open the book.”

In conclusion, these modern methods aim to introduce English to preschoolers in a way that fosters creativity, self-expression, and cultural awareness. By using interactive, visually engaging, and sensory-rich techniques, educators can nurture a child’s enthusiasm for language learning, making it an exciting part of their educational journey.

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