

An article review

Article's title : Materials as support; Materials as constraint

Reference

Prabhu, N.S. (2019).. Materials as support; Materials as constraint. In N. S. Prabhu, *Perceptions of Language Pedagogy*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.

Abstract

This article is mainly argumentative followed by the author's point of view. The researcher opened his article by defining the two main concepts of the article, i.e. materials as support and materials as constraint. More specifically, materials support is defined as materials that could be essential to support the classroom activities since they offer a content to be addressed; on the other hand, they could be an obstacle for the fulfillment of the activities.

Researcher's review

The author presented various arguments in this respect. The first argument states that the process of teaching is achieved through materials development and classroom teaching. In the materials development stage, the cognitive and comprehensible input is introduced and the activities and exercises are designed. To achieve the purpose of these materials, the procedures are planned and designed to achieve an effective classroom teaching. If the teachers try to work on both stages (materials development & classroom teaching) at the same time, the teachers will lose one of them or even both. Therefore, they should be addressed separately; the classroom teaching can be done individually since each teacher can teach

at his/ her ease. However, it is necessary for the materials development to be centralized and specialized. This, in turn, develops materials quality and development by more skilled people. Centralization means materials will be unified for all learners and the teachers cannot adjust the content.

On the other hand, the other argument states that learning is basically the output of the interaction between the input (materials) and the investment (what the learner brings to the classroom). Usually, the learners come to the classroom with cognitive, cultural and linguistic knowledge. To achieve this interaction, the distance between input and investment should be appropriate, not too close or too distant. This learning, to be effective, should consider the learners' differences and their various states and advance through development stages not that one which goes around the one that the learners have already achieved. This opinion contradicts the centrally prepared material, mentioned earlier, and supports the flexible and adjustable way of preparing materials since the quality of materials is connected with its flexibility and adjustability with the students' states and needs.

The opponents of the centralized material claim that one of the constraints of the materials is when they are centralized and previously and strictly structured and cannot be modified, altered and adjusted. The more the materials are altered, the more the optimal approximation is achieved, and so learning will be more effective when the gap between input and investment is appropriate.

What is needed?

There should be a compromise, which would involve materials with the best of centralized production and teacher alteration. An example of materials for global use was introduced to reduce the gap between the learner and the input; different materials for different countries and regions are designed. This global design is prepared for the sake of decentralization and to suit the different learners' states and achieve the optimal approximation. This global use of materials can be optimal and responsive to the learners' states changes. Additionally, another example of source materials that could be introduced. Source materials can be defined as a range of inputs, which are not in the form of units or lesson plans; the teacher can choose any inputs from a vast number of inputs, which are responsive to his / her learners' states. These materials definitely oppose the course materials, which are a set of units to be taught systematically and during a certain period of time.

The author concludes this article by stating that he supports the centrally prepared materials, which are responsive to the learners' states. Therefore he suggested the idea of source materials. He also clarifies that teachers' judgments and decisions are valuable for the classroom learning not for those, which are "preemptive for learners' states and preemptive teacher decisions". He also supports employing the best expertise in materials writing to develop the teachers' judgment and promote professional growth.

The researcher's opinion

In my opinion, the ideas and thoughts presented in this article are precious reference to learn from. Prabhu was able to survey certain contradicting views and then come with a compromise. Indeed, some

materials might be a double edged knife. That is, they might be supporting and at the same time constraining. Therefore, I support the compromise , which centralize materials and respond to the learners' varied states. I would also suggest involving extracurricular activities and making use of the e-learning and the world internet.