

THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHING APPROACHES, METHODS, PROCEDURES, TECHNIQUES, STYLES AND STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT:

Language teaching terminology can be sometimes confusing. This article tries to describe the differences between teaching approaches, method, procedure, technique, style and strategy. Not quite often language teachers make much use of the terms, like teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching techniques and teaching approaches. Some make reference to them when talking about pedagogical issues and seem to use them interchangeably as though meaning the same thing while others use it to explain specific concept in education. It is important, for us, i.e. language teachers, to be informed about what exactly each term means.

This paper tries to distinguish the distinct meaning of each term to enable one to clearly differentiate between their use as well as establish the relationship that exist between these educational terms.

KEYWORDS: Language teaching, teaching approaches, teaching methods, procedures, teaching styles, strategies and techniques.

INTRODUCTION:

Before we tackle the major terms, let's begin by defining their various components: teaching, methods, techniques, approach and strategies. Teaching approach is a set of principles, beliefs or ideas about the nature of learning, which is translated into the classroom.

An approach is an enlightened viewpoint toward teaching. It provides philosophy to the whole process of instruction. As presented by the diagram, the method and technique are just parts and parcels of approach. Approach gives the overall wisdom, it provides direction, and sets expectations to the entire spectrum of the teaching process. Furthermore, approach sets the general rule or general principle to make learning possible.

A method, on the other hand, is an organized, orderly, systematic, and well-planned procedure aimed at facilitating and enhancing students' learning. It is undertaken according to some rule, which is usually psychological in nature. That is, it considers primarily the abilities, needs, and interests of the learners. Method is employed to achieve certain specific aims of instruction. To make it as an effective instrument, it should be presented with certain amount of efficiency and ease. More so, the teaching method aims to

achieve greater teaching and learning output, thus saving time, efforts and even money on the part of both the teacher and the learner. It directs and guides the teacher and the students in undertaking any class lesson or activity.

To appraise that teaching method is good and effective, the following characteristics would tell if it is so:

- ✓ Good method recognizes individual differences;
- ✓ If it provides students' learning;
- ✓ If it facilitates growth and development;
- ✓ If it achieves the desired results of the teacher as reflected in her instructional objectives.

One must remember that there is no such thing as the best method. Thus, there is no single correct way to teach a class. Instead, there are many good ways of teaching the students.

The procedural variation of a method calls for the third term, technique. Technique encompasses the personal style of the teacher in carrying out specific steps of the teaching process. Through technique, teachers enable to develop, create and implement, using her distinctive way, the procedures (method) of teaching.

The Mariam Webster Dictionary (2016) defines teaching as the act of imparting or providing knowledge or skills to another. Thus, the act, occupation, or profession of a teacher. It encompass both instruction in procedures, a process to guiding pupils to the information they will need, and challenging them to engage in thinking about concepts they construct in their mind. All of these are needed in order to teach students to become fully functioning individuals with good thinking capacities.

Dictionary.com defines 'method' as a procedure, technique or way of doing something especially in accordance with a defined plan. Thus, it's a manner of logical,

orderly and systematic procedure to instruction, investigation, experimentation, presentation, etc. Example, there are several methods of farming.

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2016) defines a technique as a way of carrying out a particular task, especially in the execution of duty. For instance, new surgical techniques mean quality treatment in a shorter time. Thus, a technique is a systematic formula by which a task is accomplished.

Cambridge dictionary (2016) defines an approach as a way of considering or doing something. For instance, a person's approach to life, thus, his perspective or view of life.

The Mariam Webster Dictionary (2016) again defines a strategy as a careful plan for achieving goals usually over a long period of time. It is a plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal or series of goals. For instance, soldiers strategize ways to win a battle.

From the above definitions we can come up with the following as definitions for the various termsteaching methods, teaching techniques, teaching approach and teaching strategies.

Teaching methods are the procedure, technique or way of teaching especially in accordance with a defined plan. The term teaching method refers to the general principles, or pedagogy used for classroom instruction. Your choice of teaching method depends on what fits you — your educational philosophy, classroom demographic, subject area(s) and school mission statement. Teaching theories primarily fall into two categories or "approaches" — teacher-centered and student-centered:

1. Teacher-centered approach to learning:

Teachers are the main authority figure in this model. Students are viewed as "empty vessels" whose primary role is to passively receive information (via lectures and direct

instruction) with an end goal of testing and assessment. It is the primary role of teachers to pass knowledge and information onto their students. In this model, teaching and assessment are viewed as two separate entities. Student learning is measured through objectively scored tests and assessments. Some examples of the teacher-centered methods include: Lecture methods and whole group discussion.

2. Student-centered approach to learning:

While teachers are an authority figure in this model, teachers and students play an equally active role in the learning process. The teacher's primary role is to coach and facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of material. Student learning is measured through both formal and informal forms of assessment, including group projects, student portfolios, and class participation. Teaching and assessment are connected; student learning is continuously measured during teacher instruction. Some examples of the child-centred methods include: small group discussions, simulations, projects, etc.

Teaching approach is a way of going about teaching which suggests a ways that encourages good performance. Thus, according to the British Council (2015), an approach is a way of looking at teaching and learning. Underlying any language teaching approach is a theoretical view of what language is, and of how it can be learnt. An approach gives rise to methods, the way of teaching something, which use classroom activities or techniques to help learners learn. Examples of a teaching approach include the cognitive, behaviorist and constructivist approach to learning,

Teaching techniques are the unique ways of carrying out a particular task, in the teaching and learning process. Thus, it's the individual teachers' unique way of applying a strategy. For

instance, two teachers may decide to use small group discussions as their means of delivering a lesson but each may have a unique way of conducting the process of the discussion. One may decide to use two pupils to conduct the discussion; the other may decide to employ four pupils for that. Furthermore each teacher will definitely have a unique way of delivering his lesson.

Teaching strategy is a careful plan of teaching activities to be undertaken which ensures effective teaching and learning. It is a plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal or series of goals. At the planning stage of every lesson the teacher decides what method of teaching to adopt, whether teacher centered or child centered. Upon deciding which method to adopt which ensures effective teaching and learning of that specific topic, he begins to carefully plan teaching activities which can help achieve effective learning.

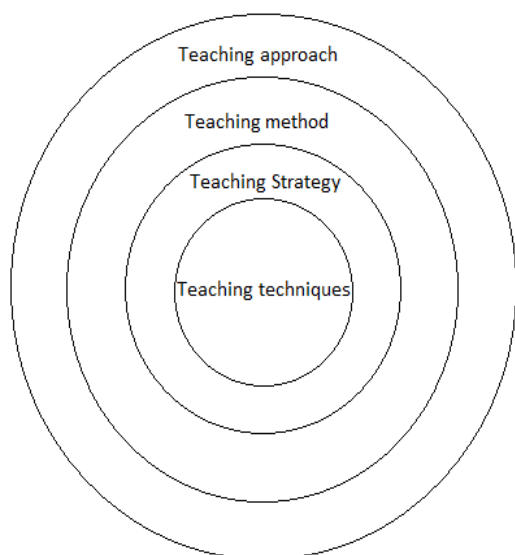
Differences and relationships:

From the definitions of the root words provided by the various dictionaries, it is clear to see that the method, approach, strategy and technique are not the same and therefore cannot be used interchangeably. While an approach is informed by ones' view or perspective on issues, a strategy is a carefully planned activities use to achieve a goal; a method becomes the procedure one adopts in solving an issues while a technique becomes ones' own unique ways of solving a situation at hand.

The definitions of the actual terms which stems out from the meaning of the root word also suggest clear differences. Therefore these words cannot be used interchangeably since doing so would to a distorted view of the terms.

These definitions, notwithstanding, depicts a clear relationship between the terms: teaching approaches provide a basis for the

development of teaching methods, teaching strategies also evolve to define the components of each teaching method and the teaching techniques provide the unique ways of going about a strategy. In other words, teaching approach becomes a universal set from which we get teaching methods. Teaching methods also give birth to teaching strategies from which we are defined by specific teaching techniques.



Below is a table giving examples which clearly depicts the differences as well as the similarity in the use of the various terms:

Teaching Approach	Teaching Method	Teaching Strategy	Teaching Technique
Constructivist and cognitivist approach to learning	Child-centred method	Small group discussion, demonstration, buzz groups, etc	Pair work, discussions, snowballing, collaborating, etc
Objectivist approach to learning	Teacher-centred method	Lecture method, whole class discussion, whole class presentations, etc	Lectures, talks, conferences, symposium, etc

Activity 1. Identify whether each sentence below suggests an

a. Approach b. Method c. Technique

1. A procedural variation of a teaching strategy.
2. A general rule or principle that guides the whole process of teaching
3. A sound philosophy and orientation, which used as bases in the process of instruction
4. Guiding students by following an established patterns/steps of teaching
5. A highly personalized style of carrying out a particular step
6. A viewpoint that suggests what teaching procedure is to be used.
7. Implementation due to its instant classroom application
8. Embracing the entire spectrum of the teaching – learning process
9. Procedural in nature since it is a series of logically arranged courses of action.
10. An overall plan for the orderly presentation of a lesson
11. Guiding teaching from planning to evaluate
12. Making teaching an organized and systematic process
13. Developing the teacher’s own distinctive way of carrying out some aspect of instruction
14. Teaching is done following a well spell-out procedure.
15. An example of which is looking at the learner as the center of the educative process.

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