

Approach, Method and Technique

The three concepts: approach, method and technique are hierarchically organized from general to specific and the organizational key as established by **Anthony (1965:94)** is that: “techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach”. A survey that describes best the three notions is presented as follows:

- ✓ **Approach:** “Approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith-something which one believes but cannot necessarily prove. It is often unarguable except in terms of effectiveness of the methods which grow out of it”.
- ✓ **Method:** “... An overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach, there can be many methods”.
- ✓ **Technique:** “A technique is implementational-that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well. Techniques depend on the teacher, his individual artistry, and on the composition of the class”

(ibid: 94-96).

In the same token, a distinction between method and methodology is worth mentioning. **Mackey (1965:155-156)** states that: “Method means different things to different people .For some; it means a set of teaching procedures; for others, the avoidance of teaching procedures. For some, it is the primacy of a language skill, for others, it is the type and amount of vocabulary and structure”. Methodology is defined by **Carter (1992:50)** as:

The range of teaching methods, procedures and strategies adopted by a teacher in order to help learners to acquire a language. Methodologies do not have to be influenced by applied linguistics but they are likely to be sounder and more successful if they draw on insights into processes of language development provided by applied linguistic research. It is also likely that the more teachers understand about the structure and organization of language, the more principled and systematic can be their choices and design of language learning activities.

To mention, but a few of them, the Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method, The Audio-Lingual Method, the Functional Communicative Approach and the Competency-Based Approach are the most popular approaches and methods advocated for the teaching/learning of foreign languages in general and EFL in particular.

References:

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