

How to Change Things When Change is Hard: Beyond Teaching Facts, How Can English Language Teachers Train Students to Use the 21st Century Skills

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Abstract : In today's world, knowledge and information are increasing in a way that no one can learn everything about every subject and the jobs that students will get after graduation may not yet exist. Therefore, teaching them just facts without teaching them how to use the facts in real life, how to work in a team and how to think critically is no longer enough. In Libya, a country characterized by using traditional methods of teaching, how can English language teachers train students to use such skills? And what type of activities and adaptations to classroom teaching methods will be necessary to do this? Using action research and classroom research gathered data, this study adjusts Heath's (2010) model of change that includes giving students clear directions, sufficient motivation and supportive environment. These steps were applied by encouraging students to participate actively in the classroom by using group work and variety of activities to train them how to find, interpret and use information. The findings of the study showed that following the suggested model can broaden students' perspectives on studying in their environment starting with their classroom and ending with their country. In conclusion, although this was a small scale study, the students' participation in the classroom shows that they gained self confidence in using practices such as group work, critical thinking, time management, creativity and how to present their ideas and accepting different opinions. What was remarkable is that most students were aware that is what we need in Libya nowadays.

Keywords : change, classroom practice, skills, Libya, group work

Conference Title : ICLL 2015 : International Conference on Language Learning

Conference Location : Istanbul, Türkiye

Conference Dates : August 17-18, 2015