

# Integrating Language, Thinking and Learning in Discussing Music Issue

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**Abstract:** Since the new English textbook complied according to the New Curriculum Standards was put into practice in 2020, how to teach in such a new environment has become a hot topic in the education field, and even around the whole society. Class teaching would be more efficiently by the classroom discussions. In my case, making thinking visible had some special effects, especially for the students' learning. Students talk and present after logical thinking, which can reach further in learning language. Activities according to some special teaching methods would be highlighted in this essay in order to make classes more efficiently. It is supposed to help vocational school teachers and students gain more during class.

**Keywords:** New Curriculum Standards; Teaching methods; Music issue; Verbal thinking; Language in thinking and learning; Teaching strategies; Mass media teaching method; Task-based Approach; Communicative Language Approach; Mind maps

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## 1. Background

Music is a reading passage for vocational school students, which talks about a band called Monkees and introduces many kinds of music all around the world, such as light music, rock and roll, blue, jazz and so on. In current class, I would have students get the main idea of the text by scanning, and do more comprehensive exercises by skimming. After comprehensive understanding of the text, practising more by activities about the important sentence structures and grammar. All of these procedures usually take two periods for teaching.

## 2. Relationship between language and thinking:

According to Vygotsky(1962), all the higher human mental functional (including voluntary attention, logical memory, reasoning, and the formation of concepts) of a child are experienced twice. They are experienced first through engaging in dialogue with others at the social interpersonal level, and later, internalized as inner voice or verbal thought within oneself at the individual intrapersonal level (Lev Semenvorich Vygotsky, 1999). In other words, the child's verbal thought is socially mediated, influenced by the culture, knowledge, discourse, values, attitudes, expectations, practices, habits and other elements in the child's social environment.

Vygotsky believed that learning language could enhance thinking. Thinking reflects language. Verbal thinking is thinking in words.

In my current class, it can't have students practice their language skills enough although it sticks too much to the grammar learning for examination. Some modern and useful teaching methods should be used in class for learning well.

## 3. Mass Media Aid

What is Mass Media?

Mass Media have been defined in these words: "Many device which by sight or sound increase the individual's experience, beyond that acquired through reading, may be described as an audio-visual aid to learning" It is only a means of stimulating interest at a particular time, during the course of a lesson. Mass Media aids are additional means to particular ends and at times contribute valuable aids to learning a situation. They arouse curiosity and interest about the extension, application and development of the topic in hand. They provoke additional mental activity. They must be used in full context to some point in the lesson and not for the sake of entertainment.

Mass Media Teaching Aids:

- (1) Motion pictures or Films.
- (2) Filmstrips or film slides.
- (3) Television.
- (4) Radio and Broadcasting.
- (5) Tape Recorders.
- (6) Video Cassette Recorders.
- (7) Dramatization.
- (8) Newspapers Importance.
- (9) Satellite Instructional Television Experiment. (SITE).
- (10) Radio Vision. <sup>[1]</sup>

## 4. Task-based Approach

Task-based Approach is becoming a catchword in English teaching circles. The new national English Curricular Syllabus also recommends the use of the Task-based Approach in classroom teaching.

Task-based Approach has slowly emerged since the 1980's to challenge the traditional itemized form-based methodology. What

is this new Task-based Approach about? Skehan (in <http://jx.jjy.com.cn>), one of the authorities on TBL, argues for a definition of a language task in which “a communication problem is to be solved which bears some relationship to real-world activities . . . [and] that the task should mirror real-life situations and decision-making as far as possible.” While carrying out the task, learners are always active in learning. Task-based approach indeed is a development within the communicative Language Approach. Thus, there is something common in their original pedagogical thoughts and aims. Task-based Approach aims at providing opportunities for the learners to experiment with and explore both spoken and written language through learning activities which are designed to engage learners in the authentic, practical and functional use of language for meaningful purposes.

However, Task-based Approach highlights the development of students’ ability and strategies while carrying out the task. “Guide the students to learn language by finishing specific task. Students should do some action for the specific learning aims, and gain some learning experience through carrying out the communicative task. Their language ability, thus, would be improved.

## 5. Communicative Language Approach

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are to be found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Since the mid-1970s the scope of Communicative Language Teaching has expanded. Both American and British proponents now see it as an approach that aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. Its comprehensiveness thus makes it different in scope and status from any other approaches or methods.

Communicative Language Teaching is a theory of language teaching that starts from a communicative modal of language and language use, and that seeks to translate this into a design for an instructional system, for materials, for teacher and learner roles and behaviors, and for classroom activities and techniques.

Although it concerns more about comprehensiveness than accuracy in learner’s language, it doesn’t mean this approach would ignore the teaching of grammar knowledge.

“A communicative language approach properly conceived, does not involve the rejection of grammar. On the contrary, it involves a recognition of its central mediating role in the use and learning of language” .

And H.G. also claims that “grammar should be learned in content”, which accords with the aims of Communicative Language Approach.

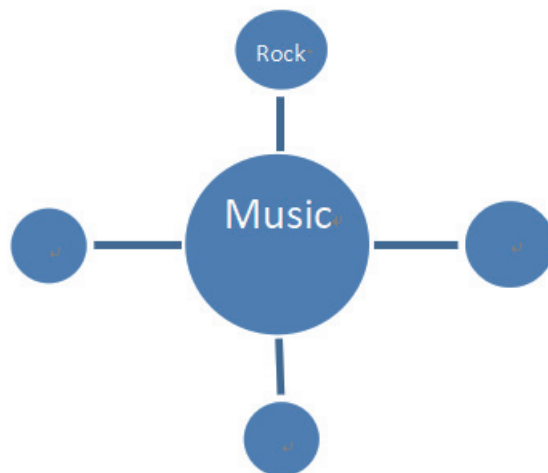
## 6. New ideas of teaching

“The English curriculum standard for vocational schools (2020 Edition) defines the core qualities of English subjects in vocational schools, including four aspects: workplace language communication, different perception of thinking, cross-cultural understanding and autonomous learning, which determines the curriculum objectives and academic quality requirements”.<sup>[2]</sup>

In order to learn efficiently, we can apply more new teaching strategies which can integrate language, thinking and learning in class. In this paper, I’d like to introduce Mass Media method, tasked-based approach and communicative language approach for teaching and also add some mind maps or forms for students to classify the information or knowledge so that they can learn better and easier.

(Example ) Mind Map

At first, we can play different styles of music to students by using tape recorder or see some videos about different music style on TV. Let students write down the name of each music style for predicting the text content. After scanning the text, we can use some mind maps for classify the information for comprehension, for example:



To extend emotional education of the students, we can relate it to more about culture. After comprehensive understanding of the text, we use other forms to summarize the characteristics between Chinese music and Foreign Music for comparison by asking “What are the different characteristics between Chinese Music and Foreign Music? Can you name out some?”

## 7. Conclusion

According to the theory of verbal thought from Vygotsky, teaching class combining with Mass Media Aid, more and more new teaching ideas will be formed for class teaching efficiently. Class teaching will become more funny and attracting for learning. Students’ language competency will be improved by their thinking validly exposed.

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