A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ELT
(ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING) METHODOLOGY

Ender Velasco Tovar

A Brief Introduction to ELT (English Language Teaching) Methodology
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Preface

In this book entitled *A Brief Introduction to ELT Methodology* I aim to provide the reader with an abridged overview of past and current methodology within the English Language Teaching profession.

There are already a number of excellent ELT methodology resources out there, ranging from general courses in language teaching to specialised books that explain in detail how to teach particular areas of the subject matter. Therefore, I have taken a different approach here. *A Brief Introduction to ELT Methodology* aims to give a snapshot of ELT methodology from both theoretical and practical viewpoints. While it gives background theory of areas of methodology, the book also provides readers with actual examples of applications of these concepts in the classroom, constantly drawing on pros and cons of particular methodologies so readers can make up their minds as to what suits their teaching contexts best.

This book is not intended to be prescriptive. Instead, it should be seen as an informative resource for ELT practitioners who, as a principle of good practice, ought to have a wealth of teaching tools available to their disposal so these can be implemented and adapted to their teaching contexts. An interesting feature in this book is the self-study activities at the end of chapters, which aim to test the reader's understanding as he/she reads along.

A Brief Introduction to ELT Methodology does what it says on the tin. It is not an extensive volume that covers every single aspect or area of ELT methodology, after all, the book is just a brief introduction. For example, topics not covered in the book include methodology around: teaching lexis, phonology and discourse; teaching speaking; teaching in different contexts such as ESP, EAP, Business English, Young Learners, one-to-one teaching, and ICT in ELT. Other topics not covered here are differentiated learning, lesson planning and staging, learners' motivation and autonomy, reflective teaching and continuous professional development.

For this reason, *A Brief Introduction to ELT Methodology* may not appeal to the experienced ELT professional who has years of experience and who perhaps holds a Diploma or MA in Language Teaching. Rather, the book may appeal more to those readers who are at the beginning of their teaching

careers, who perhaps are currently enrolled on initial teacher training courses, or who have recently graduated from them and would like to dig deeper into the area of methodology. In Latin-American contexts, the book may appeal to those readers enrolled on language-teaching-related undergraduate courses such as 'Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Idiomas' or 'Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas Especialidad Inglés', who wish to be introduced to the field of ELT and its methodology. Lecturers and teacher trainers on these courses may also use this book as an introductory volume to ELT methodology, before referring students to more detailed and specialised textbooks.

A Brief Introduction to ELT Methodology begins with an overview of ELT history before moving onto a brief outline of developmental, communicative and alternative approaches and methods in ELT. An important aspect I felt should be included are the sections on ELT Curriculum and Syllabus, and Assessment in ELT. After ELT is looked at from a general theoretical viewpoint, the book then provides an introduction to the way ELT works in the classroom through sections on classroom techniques, teaching language systems (grammar), teaching receptive language skills, and teaching productive language skills (writing). Finally, the book suggests a number of ways to exploit content texts in CLIL.

The key innovative features of *A Brief Introduction to ELT Methodology* include:

- a take on ELT methodology from both theoretical and practical viewpoints in one volume
- examples of practical applications of theoretical issues discussed in the book
- self-study activities at the end of each chapter (with answers)
- 'Food for thought boxes' within chapters which aim to generate discussion and get readers thinking about various issues (with commentaries included at the back)
- links to carefully selected YouTube® videos throughout the book, which help the reader gain deeper understanding of topics discussed
- a bibliography and suggestions for further reading at the end of chapters
- a glossary and abbreviations section at the back of the book

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Chapter 1. Overview of ELT history

1.1 Aims

By the end of this chapter you should have (better) understanding of:

- important developments in ELT throughout history
- events that have brought changes to ELT practices throughout history
- key people that have influenced ELT

1.2 Content

Early in history, Latin was the lingua franca in Europe (i.e. the common language of communication), mainly used in the fields of trading, commerce and education. In 14th and 15th century Latin was taught through the 'grammar-translation method', a teaching methodology concerned with translation of grammar rules and vocabulary items from L2 to L1 and vice versa which were then memorised. Grammar was taught deductively, that is, rules were explained prior to the introduction of marker sentences and examples. Oral practice was neglected and a main focus was given to reading and writing.

Latin as a lingua franca started to decay at the beginning of 16th century as a result of political changes and the rise in popularity of modern languages such as English, French and Italian. However, 'grammar-translation' remained the main method to teach these emerging languages.

In the mid 19th century a greater need for oral communication arose as the opportunities for communication between Europeans increased. An attempt to develop new approaches to language teaching was made by individual language teachers/linguists. For instance, Francois Gouin studied the language acquisition process of children as the model to teach languages. He treated language learning as a series of connected activities taking place in real life situations. Imitation, association and memorisation underpinned his teaching techniques and ideology.

The Reform Movement became the start of the development of new methods to improve oral proficiency and overcome the shortfalls of the 'grammar-translation method'. The systematic study of languages flourished towards the