

WISDOM APPROACH TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

by
Xiaoxia We*

Abstract

This article attempts to propose an approach called a 'Wisdom Approach' for English Language Teaching (ELT). The main argument put forward is that a 'Wisdom Approach' reflects not only the communicative and instrumental role that language plays but more importantly the wider social and educational role that language plays in our life and education. It concludes by outlining the principles of the Wisdom Approach.

Introduction

The goal of English language teaching (ELT), as many scholars have pointed out, is to help learners become efficient and competent users of English. In this view, communicative competence is considered to be the major goal of ELT. Communicative competence, according to sociolinguists, (see Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983; Gumperz 1981) is made up of linguistic competence, discoursal competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Many studies have been conducted, investigating ways of promoting these various types of competence in EFL learners.

This article will argue, however, that just developing students' communicative competence is not sufficient in ELT and that it is desirable to

help students become not only efficient but also wise users of English.

In accordance with the changing views of the nature and value of language and education, the views of the goal and nature of ELT have also changed in recent years. It is nowadays widely accepted that language is a social product, and that how it is used reflects all aspects of society (see Brumfit 2001). Educationists, on the other hand, emphasize the moral value and social identities associated with language use in society.

* Miss Xiaoxia Wei holds a Master degree in English Language Teaching from Assumption University, Thailand.

Currently she is working as a Lecturer in the Bang Na Campus of Assumption University. Her research interests include language teaching methodologies, teaching materials design, and second language acquisition.