Didactics 3rd Year English

Lesson One : The Nature of Didactics

1. Didactics

Didactics is an adjective which has to do with all what is specific to teaching. It is the science that is interested in studying the interrelation of the components of the teaching process and whether the teacher has accurate and comprehensive knowledge about it.

Dolch defined didactics as the science of learning and teaching in general. It deals with learning in all possible forms and with teaching of all kinds at all level.

Chevallard (2003) defined it as the science of dissemination an non-dissemination or even the retention of knowledge and practices in a determined group of human, a school classroom, the society, institutions, etc.

To investigate the core of didactics, there are some questions which are often addressed by various didactic approaches: who should learn what? From whom? When? Where? With what? And for what purpose?

1. The Evolution of the Concept Didactics

Didactics goes back to the seventeenth century; the first use of the term was by Wolfgang Ratke (1571-1635) who presented a reform program. At those days, didactics was known as ‘the art of teaching’. For Johan Amos Comenius (1592- 1670), didactics was an art. It was the art of teaching everything to everybody. Comenius wrote the Didactica Magna in Latin meaning ‘Great Didactics’ (1940) expecting that using both a new method and more effective teaching media would make it possible to teach everyone everything both quickly and effectively.

Didactics originates from Greek word Didaskein which means to teach or to educate. Recently the term means the ability to teach, the content taught, teaching aids including methods, schools, and the classroom where learning takes place.

1. Didactic Object

Every teaching and learning process at any level consists of three basic factors (teacher, learner, and content). These factors interact to form the ‘the didactic triangle’. Every teaching situation can be described as a triangle consisting of three poles: knowledge, teacher, and learner. The relationship between the poles of didactics triangle determines the learning situation which takes place through taking into account the balance between these two poles when planning and implementing according to each teaching- learning situation.

1. Branches of Didactics

Didactics is divided into:

* 1. General Didactics: is a unified body of knowledge about teaching and learning that can be applied in all different disciplines. It is concerned with the theory of both decision making and the process of teaching/learning in societal institutions.
  2. Specific Subject: is a type of a subject related didactics that studies the condition for transmission of culture specific to an institution as well as conditions for the acquisition of knowledge by a learner. This type of didactics allows teachers for a certain discipline or a subject to help their learners grasp the content with efficacy. It is considered as a part of general didactics, it is concerned with one academic subject and uses particular teaching technique.

1. Basic Concepts of Didactics

Didactics is a science that relies on linguistics, epistemology, pedagogy, and psychology. It has rapidly established and developed special theoretical concepts for it.

* 1. Didactic Contract

It concerns with the modification of knowledge. It is a system of rules, mostly implicit associating the students and the teacher for a given piece of knowledge, the relationship between the teacher and the learner for a given piece of knowledge. The relationship between the teacher and the learner is tied by a set of reciprocal obligations in a didactic situation that appear in the form of behaviors based on a clear rules explicitly or implicitly expressed. The teacher expects a particular set of behavior from learners, and in turn the learners expect a particular set of behavior from the teacher.

The didactic contract differs from the pedagogical contract in the way that it is not limited to teaching strategies, but it goes beyond it to reaching the contents, and their methods of teaching. The corner stone of didactic contract is the students’ acquisition of abilities, skills, and knowledge.

* 1. Didactic Transposition

The term was introduced in the field of didactics of mathematics. It refers to the transformation of an object or a body of knowledge undergoes from the moment is produced, put into use, selected, and designed to be taught until it is taught in a given educational situation. Didactic transposition is the process by which a content knowledge is modified to adapt it to its teaching to less technical level, to be accessible to non-specialized students. Knowledge is transformed into taught knowledge, appropriate to students’ level.

Didactic transposition involves series of stages in which the scientific knowledge is progressively adapted to the level of learners. This knowledge is shaped by the objectives of the curriculum proposed by educational authorities. Both the authors of the school books and the teachers themselves are involved in this process, making the knowledge useful for learners. When one wishes to transpose a body of knowledge from its original habitat to school, specific work should be carried out to rebuild an appropriate environment with activities aimed at making knowledge teachable, meaningful and useful. There are three types of knowledge: scholarly knowledge, knowledge to be taught and learned knowledge.

* 1. Didactic Obstacles

It refers to the obstacles that prevent access to building knowledge in good conditions, hinder the process of teaching and learning in the desired manner, and prevents from acquiring knowledge, skills, and experiences is appropriate conditions. Obstacles can be positive or negative.

* 1. Didactic Representations

They are a set of common concepts and practical rules established by individuals based on their experience, knowledge, and research results. These representations are considered as cornerstone in interacting with learners, and planning for lesson to make learning happens. The teacher’s correct perception of the students’ situations, their prior knowledge, personal characteristics, and their way of thinking are some of the most important factors for success in developing curricula, planning for lessons, and achieving the goals of the teaching process.

* 1. Didactic Situations

A situation refers to a system of interaction between the three poles: students, teachers, and knowledge. First introduced by Brousseu, to him knowledge is a property of a system constituted by a subject and a milieu in interaction. Learning occurs through interaction: the subject acts within and receives feedback from the milieu and the important role of the teacher is to establish an environment that facilitates learning.