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Didactics of English Language Teaching in the current Scenario

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Abstract

The paper focusses on the necessity of the role theory of teachers in the process of teaching and learning English language. The teachers cannot go on with teaching the same old material several times. But they have to design their teaching strategies according to the need of the day. Many of the present generation learners are unemployable because of the lack of life skills and speaking skill in English. The active involvement of the teachers in the process could definitely bring transformation to the trend. Today's learners choose to spend much of their time in social networking sites. Lot of effort is needed to divert their attention from other distractions to learning. One single approach can turn out to be fruitless in such a situation. Language learning through literature would become natural only in the absence of stress for the learners. It should occur at the stress-free environment which should be the class room. The paper focuses on charting one week's strategic development to teach literary theory and thereby the language, using a blend of various methods. Careful execution of such plan would work out, which in turn make them successful in the job market and in life itself.

Keywords: *Employability, Reinforcement, Task based learning, Natural method, Community language learning, Direct method, Bilingual method, Working class Subalternity, Marxism, Anthropocentrism, Cultural studies, Post colonialism.*

The unemployability of the current generation is not the sole responsibility of the learners. The teachers who mould them have an equally important role in making them unproductive. The society in which they live including the technological advancement partially pave the way for the unsuccessful outcome.

In the present-day scenario, the learners cannot focus their attention in their lessons, since they have various sources to divert their attention. They are not able to spend much time for their curriculum, because they are so much immersed in various digital medium. When the digital advancement has far reaching benefits, it is deteriorating the quality of the people, especially the younger generation.

In the present-day world teaching of literature is equally challenging as teaching of language. Language usage has reached such a level that the learners can hardly distinguish the digital language being used from the standard variety. At this juncture, effective teaching of literature using suitable methods and techniques, is the only effective means of English language teaching. Class room activities should be so attuned to life situations that they get a real feeling of life. The atmosphere should be made conducive that they get through the situations, so naturally as to engage themselves without knowing the passage of an hour. The reason is that the attention span of modern-day learners is very less and easily divertible.

The objectives of the paper are to demonstrate how a blend of various methods of teaching will help to overcome the difficulties in acquiring the social skills and softskills of the learners and thereby make them employable. It also focuses on critically analysing, how learner centered activities which include more practice and active involvement of the learners will help to bridge the widening gap between class room and real-life situations. Timely reinforcement to learners should also be ensured. "Reinforcement is a vital element in the learning process, because it increases the likelihood that the behaviour will occur again and eventually become a habit." (Richards 56)

The teachers must use the language of the learners and stand on their shoes to identify the real obstacles in learning a foreign language like English. A fusion of various methods is ideal rather than using the Grammar Translation method and Lecture method throughout the semester. Such a single usage will make the process of teaching learning monotonous. Here the workplan for a week is illustrated to demonstrate such a blend of methods. Literary theory class of five hours for final year B A. English students is taken into account here.

During the first day, after giving a brief introduction on subalternity, comparative working class subalternity is focused with special reference to Alan Sillitoe's *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Breast Giver*. The analysis can be made deeper by focusing on comparisons made by various learner groups. Task-based language learning can be used where the comparative analysis is to be done as a pair work. The learners come up with the plight of the harsh reality of working class pictured by both the writers. The working class comes under the marginalized lot where the struggle is to overcome the harsh realities of life which are inflicted upon their life by the high-class people. The de notified class of the society's voice is focused by the learners. Learners identify both the characters Jashoda and Smith who are moved to the peripheral levels of the society. The legacy of violence affected upon the working class is being taken as a topic of discussion where they actively involve. The protagonists' reprise against this subjugation are highlighted and the dismal conditions in which the working class are forced to withstand degradation: individual and societal.

In the former narrative, 'the breasts' of the protagonist are her only means for sustenance. Gestation and lactation have been made a profession, only out of necessity. The transaction of product exchange

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happened not from domestic to social medium but from domestic to domestic medium. So, the role of family in the process of transformation is distorted. The learners come up with the labour theory and subalternity through self-learning, reflection and brainstorming.

On the next day, the nuances of Marxism are explained using theoretical terminologies. Then, for practice Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountain's Echoed* is given for analysis. Here the natural method is utilised where the outcome of the group presentation is taken as such by considering evident mistakes only. The learners come up with the Marxist elements like human behaviour and life of low-class people through the narrative of Baba Ayub and his children Abdullah and Pari. "Sauveur and other believers in the Natural Method argued that a foreign language could be taught without, translation or the use of the learners native language if meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and action." (Richards 11) Here the spontaneous use of the language is focused rather than their arguments based on the work.

In order to teach Anthropocentrism, the community language learning method is used where the link between the teacher and the learners is made very strong. The topic is so attuned to the method adopted since anthropocentrism places man at the centre. Yann Martel's novel *Life of Pi* is narrated as an example. It is very difficult for a sixteen year old boy to overcome the problems he encountered in the sea. The narration is emphasised in Pi, who is an exceptional character whose perseverance, strong determination and survival instinct make him succeed his mission to survive the sea. The learners are asked to come up with stories from their own lives or others to show that man's will power could win over harsh life situations. They narrate real life stories or imaginary ones.

In order to elaborate on Cultural Studies, Direct method is used where the learners share their views on the gap between generations and the ways to bridge the gap. The teacher explains that our real culture is rooted in bondage between family members is no longer very much visible in the present-day society. It does not make a distinction based on gender or class. It is high time we make adequate measures at the proper pace to bring back things to normalcy. At this age of globalization, it will be more difficult to get it back as our children's exposure to the external world is far beyond our control. Students respect their teachers who teach them during the particular semester and parents for their need at that time. The latest generation cannot be blamed exclusively, because these are changes that were exported unknowingly. An attempt to bring to light the issues of the present generation is made and how it affects our society and culture. Janice Mirikitani's poem *Breaking Silence* which underlines the lack of bondage between family members of three generations is taken for illustration to initiate the learners to get indulged in the discussion. In the present scenario, the civilized society gives culture a different meaning. Children don't find it very necessary to earn and live on their own means. For them peer group suggestions are much more important than that of their parents or elders. In the poem *Breaking Silence* the mother feels that her daughter is turning away from her. This is the typical situation of many families in our society. Learners actively involve in contributing to the tips to patch up our lost culture. A detailed group discussion on the cultural aspects is made. Thorough monitoring is done to see that all the discussion and presentation uses English language only. Teacher talk in direct method is reduced so as to give opportunity to the learners.

Post colonialism is made clear during the last session of the week using bilingual method, with special reference to a few theoretical premises and by taking Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* as an example. Jhumpa Lahiri's short stories depict the formation and evolution of identities. The characters in the stories challenge the notion of fixity and inhabit a sort of fluidity in newly forged cultural patterns that are redrawn on the palimpsest of the previous cultural bearings. The stories challenge the idea of coherent unity though these shifting identities and subject positions are formed in what appears to be a linear historical development. The focus is on second generation Bengalis raised in the united states who find a new sense of belonging, search for it or learn to live without it as is shown in the fiction in *Unaccustomed Earth*. The texts explore human relationships that exist in the complex network of ethnicity, nationality, identity, cultural assimilation and rejections as well as hybridity in the Bengali community in the united states. Immigrant issues and other post colonial issues are focused for discussion. Even though bilingual method is used only the teacher occasionally, use the mother tongue in the class.

Work plan for a week

Day	Topic	Method
Monday	Working class Subalternity	Task Based Learning
Tuesday	Marxism	Natural Approach
Wednesday	Anthropocentrism	Community Language Learning
Thursday	Cultural studies	Direct method
Friday	Post colonialism	Bilingual method

We are living in an age of global competition. In the current scenario, soft skills, interpersonal skills and good communication skills are inevitable for making the learners eligible in the job market. Though education has other sublime goals, the learners need to get themselves equipped for jobs as well. English is a gateway to the storehouse of knowledge, since it is essentially the library language and the window to the world. One of the most important issues when the employers go through recruitment processes are the learners in our Arts and Science Colleges are lacking proficiency in English. This in turn reduces the chances of making them employable. It is ironical that after having ten or twelve years of learning experience in English the learners remain functionally illiterate, on the other hand learning a language essentially implies having the competency to speak in the language as well. Thus, efficient articulation of English speech with good accent, pronunciation, voice projection and vocabulary are essential in this competitive world.

At this juncture a change in the approach being adapted in teaching learning process of this expressive skill is a necessity. A teacher needs to be a facilitator, mentor, counselor and monitor in the process. Further the speech habits formed during the tertiary level of education may become permanent. Lack of effective speaking skill will not be tolerated in work places. Many learners have a kind of nervousness, stress and anxiety while they have to speak in English in real life. This in turn becomes an impediment in language learning. It is mandatory for learners to have proficiency in English for making them successful individually and socially. Employability is not merely associated with getting into the job, but retaining and progressing in the job as well. English Speaking proficiency is inevitable in this context as well. Teachers can know the learners and make an effective method to transform our learners into fluent and accurate users of the language, which is the corner stone of present employment opportunities. This in turn is the best practical solution for the issue, thereby making our learners employable.

The topic under investigation remains one of the most important areas and therefore will be of immense benefit to the students, teachers and the research scholars probing the case from a multi-disciplinary point of view. A study which deals with the application of the diverse problems and solution of seeking employment and fostering employability will enable the students have a better understanding of the existing situation and to act accordingly and become successful learners and teachers. In this way the study makes more fruitful outcome which essentially reflects life. It is high time we eradicate the situation of creating thousands of unemployed people because of unemployability, not unemployment. A multi-disciplinary borrowing will certainly enrich such study as well, since it becomes open for various meanings and interpretations from multiple perspectives. Achievement of communicative competence should be the major goal of each class room.

When language learning through literature become an organic and lively process, learners enjoy the process and learning becomes so natural. When the drudgery is removed, genuine interest is formed. The fusion of methods to enhance the teaching learning atmosphere will also be an acknowledgement of multiple intelligences in the classroom

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