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**‘Making the English Classroom in India More Inclusive’**

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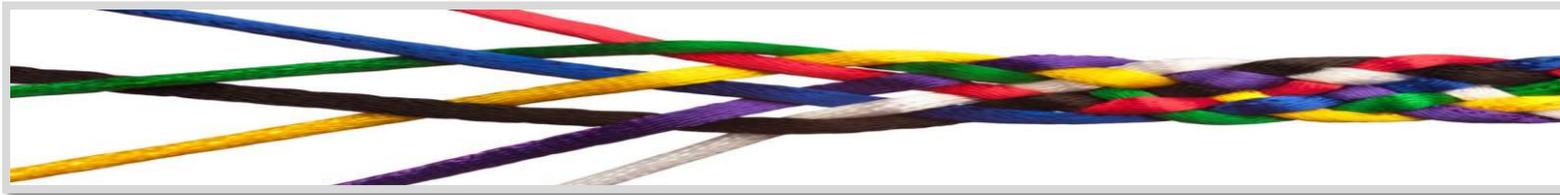
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## Editorial

This IJELLS Special issue on “Making the English Classroom in India More Inclusive” has its locus in the inspiration drawn by some of the Teachers of English – an inspiration drawn from the extremely positive response generated by the January 2014 National Seminar conducted by the Dept. of English at Nizam College, Osmania University under the UGC SAP DRS I on the theme of Inclusiveness.

An average English classroom in India today is never homogeneous. The learners come from varied socio-cultural and presently even national backgrounds. However, the language teaching resources in the classroom quite often continue to be inappropriate or sometimes sketchily appropriate. They exclude very substantial groups of students in many ways. Sometimes, the content or context of language teaching curriculum addresses itself to a limited section of students and at times the resources used in the teaching context deny access to a majority of students. The near absence of multicultural and divergent ideological inputs within the teaching material again is a major factor responsible for exclusion of many students.

What are the dynamics underlying a successfully inclusive English Classroom in India? It is generally felt that these dynamics relate themselves to such factors among many other vital ones that include *active learners; empathetic teachers; tolerance to errors; parental involvement; accommodating and alternative assessment strategies; specific, attainable, and measurable learning goals; friendly look of a classroom, teacher, material, and of assessment; teachers who are encouraging, prompting, interacting, and probing with good questioning techniques etc.*

This IJELLS Special Issue is a collection of addresses and articles written by practicing teachers and researchers intending to examine some of these issues critically and discuss some vital ways in which more inclusiveness can be brought into today’s English classroom in India. The areas covered by the writers include Teaching material, methods, Teacher attitude, Infrastructure, Policies, Testing and evaluation practices among others. We hope this collection of articles will contribute substantially to this field of enquiry and pedagogy.

Prof. C. Muralikrishna  
Dr. C. Sharada  
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## Teaching English: My Journey to the Very Roots

*Prof. Alladi Uma*

I have been a teacher of English for very long and I have always felt that this divide between language and literature is unfortunate. I have often wondered how anyone could teach literature without language. How does one teach values in life without the use of words? And to me literature does just that. But when Prof. Muralikrishna and Dr. Sharada asked me to give the Keynote at this seminar, **Making the English Classroom in India More Inclusive**, where scholars of English language teaching have assembled together, I accepted with a lot of trepidation. I know no theories of English language teaching. So I don't use a particular theoretical framework. But I have the desire to teach and to teach those who have not been as fortunate as me. This was what made me resign my job at the University and work with young school children, young children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

What I intend to do in the time given to me is to narrate my experiences and allow you scholars to glean out a theory, if at all that is possible or else ask you too to meander your way about just like me.

Let me start with my first teaching assignment—M. A. at Padmavathi Mahila University, Tirupati. Most of the students who joined the University had not got admission in any other University. We had an hour of “Remedial English” for students who did their Masters degree in subjects other than English. But the English students too wanted this. So I taught the English M. A. students an hour of “Remedial English” every week. Ironic as this may sound, it was the first of many eye openers for me. There was such enthusiasm. They admitted they had no exposure to English other than at the University. My aim was simple (or so I thought)—expose them to as much English, create an uninhibited environment and try to make them speak. As these were the same students to whom I taught the M. A. syllabus, I was a familiar face and I tried to draw them out. I can only say that they were willing to take the challenge but my time with them was too short (only an academic year). But I had learnt my first lesson—that for many, the class was the only place where English “happened”.

My next teaching assignment was at Osmania University College for Women. Teaching General English to Telugu Medium Students at the Undergraduate level was challenging in many ways. I was often told by my ELT friends that we should not bring mother tongue into the classroom. I myself was taught French by my teachers speaking not a word of English. Context



and exposure was supposed to teach us the language. So what was I to do when I was confronted by Shakespeare's "Seven Ages of Man" in this Telugu medium classroom? I read out the poem as slowly and as clearly as I could. I dramatized the words. Yet incomprehension was writ all over their face. One of them asked, "Satchel?" Some of them could not even articulate a full sentence. But they were all so eager to know. What was I to do? As one says, "I threw caution to the winds" and started to give some meanings in Telugu. For the next class, I wrote down the meanings of the words in Telugu. So I spoke in Telugu sometimes, combining it with English, urging them to speak even if it was in a mixture of English and Telugu. I saw the fear on their faces slowly disappearing, some sense of understanding appearing on their faces. Even as some problems of understanding disappeared to a certain extent, questions of cultural relevance still lingered on. Together we tried to iron them out by bringing in things nearer home. By the end of the year, English was no longer a "feared" subject for them but something they wished to learn.

When I moved to the University of Hyderabad, the problems M. A. and research students experienced in understanding language, the subtleties of it, the usage etc., made me question myself and the English teaching community as to what created this problem. Language and culture are inextricably linked. For instance, when we read the retelling of "Red Riding Hood" in Suniti Namjoshi's *Feminist Fables*, while some from elite backgrounds knew the fairy tale, there were others who had no clue about it. So I wondered how to get the students to think about children's stories, about rethinking children's stories, about cultural relevance. I thought of introducing the students to children's stories from various "Indian" backgrounds that Anveshi had translated into English. I found this evoked a more involved response, including a condescending one by the elite students.

Sridhar, Sunita Mishra and I (all from the Department of English, University of Hyderabad) were asked to help improve the writing and reading skills of students (mostly first generation learners) of Vasavi Polytechnic College from Banaganapalli. They came all the way from a small town to live in Hyderabad for three weeks and learn English. Such was their passion. Our task was an onerous one. We mulled over it and decided to use material from various sources including Osmania University, Nizam College, and Engineering College text books. But we realized that the students could not speak English and sometimes could not even comprehend. Very often we had to abandon the chosen text and come up with material to suit the class. All this led me to feel that we need to begin at the basic stage at the school level. I have got myself involved with teaching at the primary school level. Let me share some of my experiences with you.

I began to teach at a bridge school, under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan scheme in Madhapur. Here were teachers and children who had almost no exposure to the sounds of English. I thought



rhymes should work. The students were repeating some known English rhymes without either knowing the pronunciation or the meaning properly. I tried out “Teddy bear, teddy bear turn around...” thinking it would be easy as they danced/acted to the rhyme. But I was humbled. They knew a bear but did not know a teddy bear. I promised to take one with me the next class. I did and teaching did turn out easier. I realized that I can’t use such rhymes and had to find some to suit their situation.

I had been to the training place where Anganwadi teachers from Andhra Pradesh were sent. Dr. P. D. K Rao of the Sodhana Charitable Trust who started Bala Badis (literally, children’s schools) in Cheepurupalli and neighbouring area of Vijayanagaram district and his group had brought out material from the very location of the learners. The teachers too were from the same location. Seemingly simple—song and dance involving the teacher and the taught—but how effective! Of course the main language taught was Telugu. But I took a leaf out of it and tried to make up material to suit the needs of the students.

I began to teach at Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, Malkajgiri where most of the students are from a disadvantaged background, and most are first generation learners. Keeping my exposure to the Bala Badi concept, I thought I would use a location familiar to the students. They were Class VIII students. There was a railway track close to the school. The students were keen to learn to speak. I told them they could speak about going to a railway station and buying a ticket to board a train. I was taught a lesson once again, for many of them had seen the track but not a station. Those who had seen a station had no clue about boarding a train. Those who had seen some family leave by train had no idea that trains had different classes. So how do I proceed with this experience? I told them a bit about stations, trains etc. and we tried to weave our way through this and have a conversation.

I will share an exercise I did taking Class II students from two schools—Sarvodaya Vidyalaya and Vasavi Public School, a school catering to mostly middle class students in an upper middle class locality, Himayatnagar. I picked up pictures related to unity is strength. These pictures were of an Indian farmer, young Indian boys including one from an Islamic background. My idea was to teach not only the language but also values. The students have a lesson on religious harmony in their EVS. If only teachers acquaint themselves with subject texts, they can make the language learning of students meaningful. In Vasavi most of the students were able to respond to the pictures. But surprisingly they did not know what bullocks were neither did they know the word, ploughing. But otherwise many were quite articulate, perhaps not grammatically perfect.



On the other hand, the students of Sarvodaya were very enthusiastic, trying desperately to say something. I told them they could use Telugu and Hindi too along with English and I slowly drew them out. There was no problem with their understanding. Writing was a problem for children from both schools but the Vasavi students were better at that too. As for attention span of children in both schools, it was not more than twenty minutes. Of course we must keep in mind the fact that there were only 28 students in Vasavi compared to 45 in Sarvodaya.

I have often used small songs as relief and I find them very effective. I feel this gives them a feel of the language and makes them feel good that they have learnt something. The meaning comes later. In this case, I used

*If there's any trouble just you SMILE  
If there's any trouble just you SMILE  
If there's any trouble it will vanish like a bubble  
If you only take the trouble just you SMILE*

*If there's any trouble just you LAUGH  
If there's any trouble just you LAUGH  
If there's any trouble it will vanish like a bubble  
If you only take the trouble just you LAUGH*

*If there's any trouble just you GRIN, grin  
If there's any trouble just you GRIN, grin  
If there's any trouble it will vanish like a bubble  
If you only take the trouble just you GRIN, grin*

*If there's any trouble just you HA, HA, HA  
If there's any trouble just you HA, HA, HA  
If there's any trouble it will vanish like a bubble  
If you only take the trouble just you HA, HA, HA*

I feel I can teach spelling, synonyms, rhyming words etc. Isn't it worth the effort? I have used stories they know, like "The Dog and the Bone" or "The Crow and the Pot of Water". I give them Xeroxed copies of the pictures of the story and ask them to write what the pictures mean in simple present tense. Of course, in Vasavi, the teacher uses an e-board. The students had a lesson on a robot. She showed a robot on the board and drew the students out on how a robot can help us. They were really imaginative. In fact, some even connected the robot with a Rajnikant film. There was a free flowing interaction where the teacher also told them how to pronounce the words. It finally led to their writing a para on the robot.

Telling a story with action helps immensely. We, as teachers, need to let go our inhibitions and become one with the children. While telling a story, we can teach them related words. We can then move on to word building. Or even sentence building. So I sometimes use this:



*This is the house that Jack built.*

*This is the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.*

*This is the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.*

*This is the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.*

*This is the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.*

*This is the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.*

*This is the maid all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built*

*This is the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maid all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built*

*This is the priest that married the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maid all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built*

My friend, Sridhar, trained at CIEFL asks me what the purpose of the repetitions of such rhymes is.

One, the children love it. They always ask me, “Amma, shall we recite Jack built?” Two, it teaches words, how to use word, how to construct sentences. For a higher class, we can even demonstrate that sentences are never-ending. Yes, one may have to modify the rhyme. Maybe the children will understand panner and not malt. We may not want a man to kiss the maid etc. But this is where the teacher’s innovative capacity and commitment come in. If children feel more comfortable with names like Jawahar or Osman or Isaiah we may change Jack to one of these. If we want to make it gender sensitive, it could be Rosy or Rani or Rehana who built the house and the man who milks the cow etc. We can do wonders if only we want to be one with the students, empathise with them and not be an elitist.

We need to remember that not all schools have e-boards or computers or sophisticated accessories. We need to make up the material. Use Xeroxes, purse permitting. Draw even if our horses look like cows. Use the classroom as a theatre, act and become a child again. Trust me, animation, song and dance work really well.

I have tried to deal with teaching material, the attitude of the teacher and the infrastructure available in the school. I would not like to comment on policies and Testing and Evaluation at this juncture.

**To end my talk, I do feel strongly what is well spelt out in the concept note of the seminar:** The language teaching resources in the classroom mostly continue to be inappropriate. They exclude very large groups of students in many ways. Sometimes, the content or context of language teaching curriculum addresses itself to a limited section of students and at times the



resources used in the teaching context deny access to a majority of students. The near absence of multicultural and divergent ideological inputs within the teaching material again is a major factor responsible for exclusion of most students.

I hope I have tried to show how all the valid problems cited above can be overcome if only we, as teachers, are willing to become learners. I would like to thank all the children including those who come home to learn from me every day in the evening for making me understand the very meaning of “education”.



# **Blending the Oral with the Digital: Technology for Learners from Oral Traditions**

*Dr. Anand Mahanand & Mr. Harichandan Kar*

## **The Problem**

The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of bringing learners' home language and oral tradition blended with technology into classroom for the learners who have a very rich oral tradition. More specifically, the environment where second language is taught, the text books which are designed for them and the language which is used for classroom instructions and the teachers who teach them will be observed. By means of this study, the aim of the study is to suggest relevant adaption and to contribute to the improvement of the Juang learners' reading skills of English which is their second language.

It is a known fact that tribal society is multilingual and multicultural. Their oral tradition is very rich and prevalent in their day to day life. But when it comes to class room, their oral tradition does not get a scope in the curriculum. Moreover English is taught to them through Odia language which is again an unfamiliar language to them and does not correspond to their home language both linguistically and culturally.

## **Specific context**

The learners of the present study belonged to a large group of tribe called Juang, one of the primitive tribes of Odisha. The total population of Juangs in Odisha as per Census, 2001 is 41, 339. According to Dash (1996), they are found in only two districts of Odisha, Keonjhar and Dhenkanal, most of them in the former. They live very close to nature and they have no artificiality to the life style. Their language belongs to the Munda family. They are very rich in culture and tradition. They have their own Juang Language, culture and learning style, which are quite different from others. The Juang community has a storehouse of folktales and songs. They pass their different stories, riddle, epics, songs, myths, God or Goddess, supernatural power on to each other while performing different jobs in their day to day life. But none of these are accounted when they confront with the text book, which is the only resource of comprehensible language input. Their text book contains some pieces of unfamiliar prose and poem followed by some comprehension questions and grammar exercises dealt in isolation. English is taught through Odiya language, which is not their home language and does not include their Oral traditions even in translation.



## Research Questions

1. How far are their forms of oral traditions and Home Language used in second language classroom?
2. How far would the use of culture through technology help the learners?
3. How much can the learners derive such resources from their environment and contribute to teaching learning process?

## Hypotheses of the study

The study assumed that tribal learners encounter many problems with the textbook prescribed to them; the topics in the textbook are unfamiliar to them, they have no scope to use their prior knowledge and home language when they read a text. As the result they find the class uninteresting. The study hypothesized that technological forms such as internet, YouTube and multimedia can offer a lot of resources in oral and visual form. These can also be integrated into their own recourses and facilitate English Language Education. Developing multilingual materials, integrating them with multimedia, and teaching these learners would bring positive outcome.

## Literature review

Mother tongue is the expression of both primary identity and later of group Identity. One is identified with a 'linguistic, ethnic, religious or a cultural group through one's mother tongue'. It is the language that forms our concept in early phase of life. "The designation or normal function of language, which names objects, events and stages, is a crucial function on which the superstructure of further learning is built"(Pattanayak, 1990).

The concept making functions such as 'the early socialization function, identity function, and psychic function' are deep rooted only in the mother tongue. Our first language very naturally transmits Myths and symbols, system of beliefs and practices. First language always anchors the child to its culture, the loss of which does not allow the 'intellectual and aesthetic creativity'. It also results in 'intellectual impoverishment, emotional sterility and cultural perception blind sport'. (Pattanayak,1990). According to Krashen (2003), "if there are no cultural elements in the second language classroom, the learners feel alienated from the class room".

According to Kundu (1982), tribal learners have a different concept of learning. Their preoccupation with pleasure- activity such as singing, dancing and drinking contributes a lot to their learning. In fact they love to learn when these activities are associated with their learning. Effective language learning takes place when the learners are exposed to L2 through the culture of their L1.



So, forms of culture take an important role for second language learning (Mahanand, 2013). Kamhi-Stein states that readers mentally translate the given target-language text into their home language as a successful reading strategy to get the meaning (Kamhi-Stein 2003).

### **Site, Learner and Teachers**

The research was carried out in Gonasika Govt. High school which is 40 km away from Keonjhar, one of the districts of Odisha. The target population of the study consisted of all the Juang learners of class VIII of Govt.(SSD) High School, Gonasika, Keonjhar. The sample composed of twenty students of class VIII. Analysis of class room observation and interpretation of the data of teacher questionnaire revealed that all the second language teachers belonged to non Juang community. They had a great difficulty in understanding Juang language and culture. Analysis of the data of teacher questionnaire also revealed that they had a negative attitude for Juang language and culture. They were not even given any special training to teach Juang learners. In the second language class room, teachers, using a method much similar to Grammar translation method, taught English and explained in Oriya. None of the four basic skills were even focused. Under this circumstance it was quite obvious for both teachers and learners to understand each other.

### **The Study**

Questionnaires, semi structured interviews, classroom observation, pre-tests and periodic-tests during intervention and check list were used for data collection in this study. The data collected throughout the study were compiled and analyzed descriptively.

Three second language teachers responded to teacher's questionnaires. The analysis of the teacher's questionnaires states that their mother tongue is not Juang and they don't know the Juang Language. As the result they are not able to use Juang language in the class room. No special training is given to them for teaching these Juang learners. As the teachers are not from Juang community and not exposed to their culture, they are not able to use forms of culture in the class room. When learners are not able to understand a concept, they explain it in Odiya language which is not their home language and it is the language frequently used in the class room. The teachers are of the opinion that exposing the learners to their forms of culture and home language would facilitate second language teaching learning better.

Fifty-two Juang learners responded to learner's questionnaire. The analysis of the learner's questionnaire states the same discussed above in teacher's questionnaire. In addition it also shows that all the learners don't find their English text interesting as the topics are not familiar to them.



They were not able to read a text from their prescribed text and answer the comprehension question because it is quite difficult for them to understand. They preferred to have some chapters from their rich oral tradition.

Three language teachers along with the head master participated in semi structured interview. The analysis of the interview states that they have a very negative attitude towards the culture and language of learners. They even hesitate to be in a place like Gonasika.

Ten classes of different second language teachers were observed during this study. The analysis of the classroom observation states that all the teachers used grammar translation method. No motivation was given before teaching the subject. Teachers never made use of learners' L1 resources neither they gave importance to learners' background and contexts. Hardly did the learners participate in classroom activity. No pair or group work was done during the classroom.

### **Intervention**

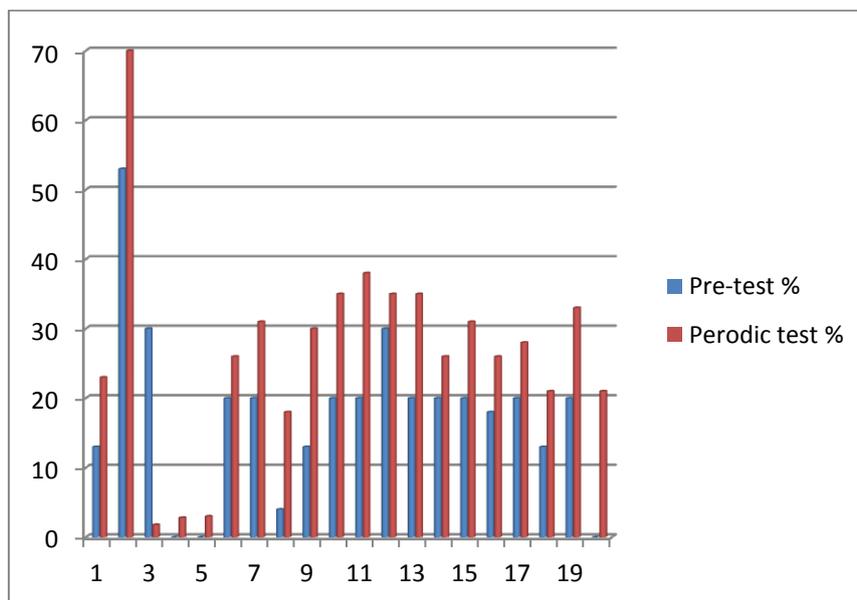
Taking a topic from their text book, a pre-test was conducted to see their proficiency in reading skills. The result of the proficiency test was much unexpected; all most all the learners failed to pass the test.

The intervention was of eighty hours' classroom instructions. Multilingual materials from their oral traditions blended with technology were developed and they were taught in a way much similar to the concept of *Pleasure Learning*. In addition, bilingual glossary along with bilingual instructions was prepared and given to the learners for each lesson during the intervention.

Technological forms such as internet, YouTube, animation films and multimedia offered a lot of resources in oral and visual forms. Some visuals which were not available in the internet were painted and were presented through video and power point presentation. The visuals (picture and video) were used during pre-reading stage and the reading texts were taken from their oral traditions.

To our satisfaction, we found that Learners picked up the materials in no time with much interest. To ensure that the materials had been working well, periodic tests were conducted during the intervention. A comparison of pre-test and periodic-tests is presented below.





## Findings

Stated below are some of the major findings which have clearly emerged from the study. The study shows that Juang learners feel comfortable when their teacher uses Juang language while teaching English. They feel that it makes their lesson interesting and motivating. Teachers find their Juang learners comfortable when Juang language is used in the classroom and they firmly believe that using Oral traditions integrated with technology will definitely develop the reading skills of their learners. The study signifies that home language of the learners play a significant role in the understanding and comprehension of the target language. Input with the help of Multimedia also helped them tremendously as a pre-reading activity to motivate them in reading the texts used as materials.

The study has proved that using Oral tradition and home language of Juang learners in second language class room is very much helpful to develop reading skills of Juang learner. Learners have responded very positively to their cultural text compared to the text prescribed to them. They do not feel a sense of alienation in the classroom when their forms of culture and language are used in the second language classroom.

After the experiment, it proves the hypothesis that when the methods and contents of ELT are related to the life, culture and environment of the Juang learners, the learners are more motivated to learn English. The study has also shown that using forms of culture and home language of learners in second language class room will retain their culture and language. They will develop love for their people, culture and language.



The experiment has proved that with proper orientation, the teachers of Juang learners can teach the text incorporating the forms of culture and home language of Juang learners in the classroom which will be very effective to develop their reading skills. All these findings of study can be generalized not only to the Juang learners of Odisha from which group the sample was drawn out but also to the learners of other tribes in Odisha.

### **Limitation of the study**

Although the research has reached its aim, there are few limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed regarding the present study. The first limitation concerns the time. The study was conducted in a month and a month is not adequate for such a big study. Secondly, learners have very poor linguistic competence and most importantly, being influenced by the dominant language and culture (Odia), they have started developing a negative attitude to their own culture and language.

### **Suggestions**

The study concludes with suggesting the use of learners' Oral traditions and home language in school while teaching second language and it firmly believes that this change will facilitate better learning of English.

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## **“I want my classroom to be about me too!” Towards an Inclusive Curriculum**

*Dr. Sunita Mishra*

The historicity of a language in a country has an important role in determining the way it establishes and perpetuates itself. In India, English was never the language of common men. It came as the language of traders in 1603 and with the growing strength of the East India Company it got established as the language of the elite (Mukherjee, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. Later, in Independent India, it got established as the gateway to world knowledge. In major ways, English shaped the thinking and the consciousness of the elite masses. Interpolated by the ideology that had come with English in its early days of its arrival, it got entrenched into the education system with minor cosmetic changes and continued into the decades of independent changing India. A lot has been said of the purpose of introduction of English in India <sup>2</sup> (Vishwanath, 1990; Pennycook, 1998; Philipson, 1992). Allister Pennycook (1998) lucidly sums up a lot of these arguments when he says,

*It can be seen that education was seen as a means to enlighten the Indian population and to make them aware of the system and benefits of colonial rule. It was a means to produce a well-ordered, docile and co-operative population, but it was also a moral and imperial duty to bring to the Indian population the benefits of European knowledge. (p. 73)*

Since knowledge of English was accompanied by opportunities of financial gain and social mobility, all along it either remained with the elite or was consumed by a population that aspired to become like the elite – culturally and ideologically. There was therefore no need to ever challenge the hegemony inscribed in English education – language or literature. To stress this point I would like to quote from Alok Mukherjee’s *This Gift of English*. Talking about the people who traditionally wanted to learn English he says,

*“(for them) English was a tool of power and domination – individually for them and collectively for the group to which they belonged. It provided them and other members of the group the social, cultural and economic capital with which they maintained that domination. In a country characterized by extreme social and economic stratification, ... of caste, religion, language and culture, with each group seeking access to power, efforts to control the tools of power can be understood.” (Mukherjee, p. 22-23)*

The need for inclusiveness has come up acutely in the recent years with the changing demography of English language classrooms, all of whom consider “English to be the gateway to knowledge, power, development and progress”. Most governments of the states, due to the



increased demand of English, have now introduced English from class one. Reflecting on this situation the National Curriculum Framework 2005 records:

*The level of introduction of English has now become a matter of political response to people's aspirations rendering almost irrelevant an academic debate on the merits of very early introduction of English. (Position paper – Teaching of English 2005, p.1)*

In spite of these policy positions, the divide remains between the urban and the rural, the privileged few who get adequate exposure and hence easily develop English fluency and the students from rural and sometimes underprivileged India whose access to opportunities gets seriously affected because of English lack<sup>3</sup>. This is also one of the chief concerns of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC 2007) stressing on the need to provide equal access to English and opportunity it says:

*English has been part of our education system for more than a century. Yet, English is beyond the reach of most of our young people, which make for highly unequal access. Indeed, even now, more than one percent of our people use it as a second language, let alone a first language... but NKC believes that time has come for us to teach our people, ordinary people, English as a language in schools. Early action in this sphere would help us build an inclusive society and transform India into a knowledge society.” (NKC, 2007, p. 47)*

In a way, this is where the problem begins. A study published by CRY (Child Rights and You) in November 2013 says that even today at the elementary school level, India has a drop out level of 40%. Another study gives the following statistics of dropout levels for 2008-09. (I have here indicated only the states with very high or low scores)

	Primary school (2008-9)	Middle school(2008-9)
Bihar	51%	76%
West Bengal	30.1%	61.4%
Andhra Pradesh	24%	56%
Tamil Nadu	8.0%	00%
Kerala	00%	00%
<b>All States</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	<b>46.0%</b>

Our school and college teachers would agree that even many of the students who stay back in the system, especially from the disadvantaged backgrounds whose family circumstances are not



conducive for adequate exposure to English, find it extremely difficult to cope with the English needs.

This situation is definitely a complex of multiple factors. And one of the more important among them is the ideological framework English teaching operates within. In India, English teaching – language or literature, functional or civilizational—is still Anglo-American centric. This largely continues to be so irrespective of the changing social, cultural and economic needs of the majority.

Language learning and the context it is learnt in, as has been pointed out time and again, is not a process limited to learning language only. It is deeply connected to the process of identity formation of the learners, making of their self-image and the value they ascribe to life around them. These factors become more imposing when the language being learnt is a second or third language, a privileged language in the society and being learnt as part of the curriculum. It is an accepted fact, that similar to all other classrooms language learning classrooms are sites of struggle. They are socially, culturally, politically and historically located choices like the language to be taught, the staffing; timetabling, pedagogy and above all curriculum content are definitely ideological. These choices impact the manner in which identities are negotiated in second language classrooms. Language learning, in this context, becomes much more than language literacy skills. It becomes an important site for inclusion and exclusion, advantage and disadvantage, and the working out of power relations. To quote Pennycook,

*.....all education is political and second, that all knowledge is "interested." To say that language teaching is in some sense political would seem uncontroversial since it is clear that many decisions about what gets taught, to whom, how, when, and where, are made at high levels of the political hierarchy. (Pennycook, 1989, p.590)*

The rest of this paper looks at the CBSE teaching material used for teaching English in class IX to see how these dynamics work out in the syllabus. Here, I have chosen the CBSE curriculum because apart from the State boards, this is the system followed in many schools that cater to the needs of children from middle class common households. I mean here the Navodaya schools and the Kendriya Vidyalayas. And according to a report published by Srinivas Rao, there are hundreds of State Board schools in Andhra Pradesh alone which have requested to be changed to the CBSE system.

The CBSE board has three books prescribed for English –

1. The literature Reader, meant to familiarize students with works of literature



2. The Main Course Book for developing various language skills like reading, writing, etc.
3. The Work book for practice of the language structure.

Briefly, this paper looks at the Literature Reader and the Main Course Book to study how the material ideologically positions itself and the implicit messages it has for the learner.

The following are the lessons prescribed in the Literature Reader for class IX.

### **Interact in English -- The Literature Reader**

1. How I taught My Grand Mother to Read – Sudha Murthy
2. A dog Named Duke – William D. Ellis
3. The Man who Knew Too much – Alexander Baron
4. Keeping it from Harold – P.G. Woodhouse
5. Best Seller – O. Henry
6. The Brook – Alfred Lord Tennyson
7. The Road not taken – Robert Frost
8. The Solitary Reaper – William Wordsworth
9. Lord Ullin’s Daughter – Thomas Campbell
10. The Seven Ages – William Shakespeare
11. Oh, I wish I’d Looked after my teeth – Pam Ayres
12. Song of the Rain – Kahlil Gibran
13. Villa for Sale—Sacha Guitry
14. The Bishops Candlesticks – Norman Mckinnell

In the selection we find that except for Sudha Murthy’s “How I taught My Grand Mother to Read”, all the poems, prose and drama extracts are from what can be called the Anglo-American centric canon. Along with their literary value, they are also proven carriers of a value system, a belief structure that can be generalized as liberal humanistic, framed in the Western middle class socio- cultural context. It has assumptions about what is “nature”, “beauty”, “old age”, “youth”, which need not coincide with students in India, especially rural students, sometimes from tribal belts, who come with very different culturally received ideas about what constitutes “old age”, “youth”, or “beauty in nature” . Old age, for example, is respected and celebrated in many traditional Indian cultures. It is seen not as a time of debilitating weakness and infirmity but as a time when one imparts wisdom, strength and courage to the younger generation. Similarly, in a country where reaping and harvesting is seen and represented as a social, group activity, the beauty of the solitary reaper might even seem strange to young learners. For them, to accept these as universal truths would mean a denial of their traditionally held beliefs and images. It would require them to either transform themselves or reject the value system offered in the curriculum. It is important to emphasize here that my argument is not to entirely remove such literary pieces because they do expose students to some of the finest expressions that can be had in the English language. The problem, rather, is that, firstly the students have no other viewpoint to compare and contrast such belief structure with and secondly, the comprehension questions do not, in any manner,



provide space for the students to bring in their different perceptions, or critique the author. Canagaraja points at some of these factors when he says,

*The partisan nature of these practices become evident when we consider the alternative set of values the lesson chooses not to present – particularly the traditional rural values based on collective living and a relatively slow pace of life. In presenting the former set of values through its curriculum and pedagogy, the school is making a statement on the communities and cultures it considers as normative. (Canagaraja, 1999, p.23)*

The other text to be described here --The Main Course Book -- is a well-structured text with very clear objectives about the language skills to be learnt. The exercises are very well conceived. They try to inculcate the structures, vocabulary and usage effectively, creatively and interactively. The following is the structure of one unit (unit-6) of the Main Course Book and the unit objectives spelt out in the textbook.

### **Interact in English -- Main Course Book. Unit- 6**

**Children:** Tom Sawyer  
 Children of India  
 Children and Computers  
 Life skills  
 We are the World

**Unit objectives--** Introduction - have a brief discussion about the joys and sorrows of childhood.

- (A) Read about Tom Sawyer, a mischievous boy
- (B) Read about two different children and their experiences and then compare and contrast their lifestyles, dreams and aspirations.
- (C) Conduct a survey on the use of computers, discuss the results and prepare a report.
- (D) Learn about Life Skills to realize your potential and see how others view you.

The following are some of the exercises we find in this section:

I. Divide yourself into groups and collect information on the use of computers from five students each of classes VI, IX and XI. Compile and summarize your answers to the question above in the following table



Class	Name Girl/boy	Hours per week				If you reduce your computer time, how will you spend your leisure time	Why do you like to spend time at the computer
		At the Computer	Studying at home	Internet	leisure		
XI							
IX							
VI							

Exchange information with other members and record it. Then in groups of four discuss the following:

1. Do boys and girls spend the same amount of time at the computer?
  2. Do their tastes and preferences change as they grow older?
  3. Are the number of hours spent at the computer/studying at home/leisure/ internet different between boys and girls?
  4. Do the numbers of hours per week spent at the computer/studying at home/ internet/ leisure activities change as students get older?
- II. You are on the editorial board for the column 'Your Problems' in The Teenager magazine. You have received these two letters asking for your advice. (They appear to have come from the same family.)

Dear Helpful Avanti

My fifteen year old son is crazy about film music. He seems to be wasting all his pocket money on these meaningless CDs. He cannot even study without this noise. Though he is good at studies, I remain disturbed about this new obsession. There are all kinds of strange-looking posters on the walls of his study and he always wears those gaudy T-shirts and faded patched jeans. Also, he is very fond of Junk-food. I fear he is breaking all links with our culture. What shall I do?

A bewildered father

Dear Helpful Avanti

I love film music and I have bought a lot of CDs from my pocket-money allowance. But whenever I switch on my CD-player, my father frowns and orders me to switch off the 'jarring noise'. He calls it 'cheap' and 'uncivilized' stuff. It is not that I do not like classical music, but when I am with my friends, we listen to film music. I like Indian clothes and food too. But I also like to wear western clothes sometimes and to eat western food occasionally. I do not like to disobey my parents, but I do not want to give up my music etc. What shall I do?

A Hurt Son



In pairs, decide what advice to give to each of them. Then write one letter each, so that both father and son get a reply from The Teenager.

Clearly, the exercises are centered on middle class values, setting up their life styles and habits as the norm. They have very defined notions about 'work', 'leisure', 'likes' 'dislikes' of teenagers. And in the absence of alternative viewpoints they get normativised. These examples go on to illustrate how, despite language policies to reach out and build a knowledge society, despite strong demands being made from the disadvantaged classes, the language learning curriculum remains stubbornly Anglo-American, or at the most, middle class/upper middle class Indian. What gets excluded in the process is the culture capital, the knowledge capital, the social capital and the value system of the vast majority of school children. The damage here is not simply one of having to deal with alien cultures. The projection of certain life style, socio-cultural norms as ideal, legitimate – and the school text books have enormous power over the child's mind to do so – makes judgment on other norms, probably the home culture of most students. It privileges, legitimizes, establishes certain view points as 'commonsensical', 'natural'. As the result, other styles of living or thinking become 'aberrant', 'deviant' or at the least 'undesirable' or 'objectionable'.

This is not to say that any text book can include every socio-cultural norm. But there is definitely danger in privileging certain norms over others. And many text books do this (maybe unintentionally) when they show adorable children as fair skinned, an ideal home as one with a mother waiting for children to get back from school or even giving facts of nutrition, showing apples, oranges, dal and rice and vegetables as ideal food and breakfast as essential. These projections definitely become problematic for the self-esteem of thousands who come from various backgrounds and sometimes even start and end the day with one square meal.

The next exercise to be discussed here is a variation of the Johari window. Although a complex exercise in itself, the text book presents it in a fairly simple form that can be attempted by most students in class IX.

III. Complete the following worksheet in your notebooks and work in pairs to complete the worksheet to know all about yourself. This will help you discover your hidden strength, work on your weakness and develop your personality.



A	B	C
How I describe Myself	How I describe my friend	How my friend describes me
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favourites (food, colour, etc)</li> <li>• Feelings related to important issues</li> <li>• Experiences (achievements, failures)</li> <li>• Attitudes</li> <li>• Aims</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Fears</li> <li>• Strength</li> <li>• Weakness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favourites (food, colour, etc)</li> <li>• Feelings related to important issues</li> <li>• Experiences (achievements, failures)</li> <li>• Attitudes</li> <li>• Aims</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Fears</li> <li>• Strength</li> <li>• Weakness</li> </ul>	

In the next section, students are encouraged to analyse their own response, what their partners say of them and transfer these points to the Johari Window given below.

Open self	Blind self
Hidden self	Unknown self

This is an exercise that encourages the “subjects” to know more about themselves by analyzing what they think about themselves and what others think about them. It is a popular exercise in the corporate setup and is vastly believed to improve interpersonal and team behavior and enhance self-awareness. The exercise however has certain assumptions about the life and belief structure of the subjects. It assumes that trust and openness among team members is advantageous. It also makes a value judgment on individuals where openness among peers about one’s hopes and fears is healthier and desirable. An exercise like this that involves confessional elements might be a good for a group of fairly homogeneous adults who share a fair level of comfort with one another – personally and culturally. In a heterogeneous classroom where some of the students might be uncomfortable with their backgrounds and homes, especially in a mixed surrounding, such exercises can either force students to lie and camouflage, make them uneasy with the rest of the students, or even increase the already existing gaps among themselves in the class.

A language does not come in a vacuum with rules for correct usage or sentence formation. In a classroom especially, it also goes a long way in determining the self image and self esteem of children. It determines how comfortable they are in the teaching/learning surrounding and how they place themselves vis-à-vis their home culture for a life time. Little wonder in our schools today, we still have over 40% drop out. I have here an extract from an interview conducted by David Faust and Richa Nagar in the mid 1990’s. These were a series of interviews conducted to explore the



compulsions of middle class /lower middle class families to send their children to English medium schools. This is an interview with a girl called Sujata:

*For me that school was a prison. Nothing could provide a more shocking contrast to my home and familial relationships, my neighborhood, the kids I played with and the people I was attached to. As soon as I started going there, I lost my voice. Yet ironically, when I grew up it gave me choices that I would have never dreamt of had I not been educated in that school. (Faust and Richa, 2001, p. 2881)*

In spite of the demand for English from all sections of the society, it is true that the English language classroom in India still remains largely hegemonic, projecting the world of the upper caste, urban upper middleclass. But it is also true that as part of the post NCF 2005 revisions there have been substantial changes in the English syllabus of some of the State Boards<sup>4</sup>. There has been a conscious effort in these textbooks to bring in inclusivity, open up the classroom space to viewpoints and knowledge systems it was closed to hitherto. I would like to conclude this paper with a poem on Inclusivity we find in the class VI English text of the TN State Board.

### **Inclusion**

To be a part and not stand apart  
 To belong and not to be isolated  
 To have friends and not just companions  
 To feel needed and not just a person which needs  
 To participate and not just be a spectator  
 To have responsibilities and not just enjoy rights  
 To have opportunities and not favours  
 Is to be really “included”.

*-Dipti Bhatia*

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> This was true in a certain context after English education got institutionalized around the late Nineteenth, early Twentieth century. But, Shreesh Choudhary in his *Foreigners and Foreign Languages in India* (2009) points out how in the very initial days of English in India around the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was the common men who learnt and benefitted from English. Here is an interesting event he quotes from Wilson’s *The early annals of the English in Bengal, Vol-1* (1895)  
*It is said that when the English first came to Bengal, they asked for a dobash, i.e an interpreter between two languages, which was heard as dhobie, a washerman. Accordingly, Rattan Sarkar, a washer man, was sent to the English. Luckily, he could understand some English and was so intelligent that that his employers were satisfied with him. (Choudhary 2009, p.320)*

He further says,

*Initially, elite among both the Hindus and Muslims avoided any social or personal contact with the British. Upper caste Hindus feared that learning the language of the feringhees would pollute their caste. Muslims feared that learning English would be the first step to conversion to Christianity. But Hindus and Muslims, particularly those belonging to the lower castes and classes, did not mind*



*working with the British, so long as they got better and regular pay and relatively good treatment. They seem to be among the first in India to have taken to any English. It gave them a better livelihood. (Choudhary 2009,p. 397)*

<sup>2</sup> The Bureau of education 1920 has the record of the following letter written by W. Fraser to the Chief Secretary, W.B.Bayley, on 25 September 1823:

*It would be extremely ridiculous in me to sit down to write to the Government or to you a sentence even upon the benefit of teaching the children of the Peasantry of this country to read and write. I shall merely observe that the greatest difficulty this Government suffers, in its endeavors to govern well, springs from the immorality and ignorance of the mass of the people, their disregard of knowledge not connected with agriculture and cattle and particularly their ignorance of the spirit, principles and system of the British Government. (Pennycook, 1998, p. 72)*

<sup>3</sup> Madhu Kishwar- one of the leading journalists comments on this saying:

*By retaining English as the medium of elite education,... we have ensured that the schism that was deliberately created by our colonial rulers between the English educated elite and the rest of the society has grown even further and acquired deadly dimensions.(Mukherjee, 2001, p.48 )*

<sup>4</sup> The State board of the Tamil Nadu, for example, has brought in very different kind of English text books after the 2009 revisions. We find in these textbooks tales of assertive independent young girls, who become active agents of change in themselves and their surroundings; stories of single mothers successfully bringing up their children, sometimes in difficult circumstances; children who are differently abled learning to fight, accept and even come to terms with themselves – sometimes amicably, sometimes after a struggle. Significantly, many of these lessons very consciously try to break the myth of childhood as innocent, happy or uncomplicated. They strongly bring in “conflict” as an important factor in the lives of the characters and shows ways in which they negotiate and at times resolve the conflict.

***These are not stories taken from canonized texts. They were written by a group of teachers and later edited/moderated by an expert committee.***

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# 'Inclusivity Challenges' for a Foreign English Undergraduate Learner

*Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju*

## **Introduction:**

As the world economy continues to become more global, and educational institutions have grown increasingly diverse, the awareness of the strengths and advantages a diverse educational ambience offers is also gaining momentum. Not only does diversity foster creativity; awareness of diverse perceptions and points of view is crucial to avoiding cultural slights and blunders. Embracing diversity means creating a place in which people of all backgrounds and cultures feel included, welcomed, and valued. Inclusion involves respecting individual differences and capturing the advantages they provide. "Mere membership in a diverse group is sufficient to motivate enhanced information sharing and processing and thereby improve group performance." (Forbes)

The Universities all over the world are opening their doors to foreign students, as we all are brought close by the global mindset. "To be an inclusive campus is to respect and value differences and to encourage and create opportunities to capitalize on those differences."(Michigan State University). The Universities all over the world are opening their doors to foreign students, as we are all brought close by the global mindset. Many of the students prefer India as an educational destination because of its cultural affinity and affordability. Countries which have close cultural affinities like the Middle East countries, countries of the African continent and the countries of Asia choose India for their educational needs. The near neutral accent of India is far easier to understand than the UK, US or Australian. The opting for the courses in India offers these students a hope of learning English and improving their employment opportunities. Hence, for the reasons stated, the educational module seems more manageable in the Indian context for the foreign students. The rules of this land, having the traditional cultural affinity are easily adaptable and are acceptable. Foreign students willingly try to blend in with the native students mutually influencing each other. Living in a foreign country is not an easy task, so have we understood from the many books we have read, whose central theme is 'alienation'.

The parameters in the framework of this paper are: (1) the general English classroom (2) at the undergraduate level for (3) the foreign students. The inside classroom academic challenges, are based heavily on the comprehension of English and the interpretation of other subjects through this medium of English. The prime idea on which the paper is based is the analysis of the challenges towards fulfilling the promised inclusivity to the multicultural students in an average English classroom. The paper does not promise to offer easy solutions because there are not any. But if the



English teacher can empathise with these challenges his/her student faces, in their struggle to be inclusive, some indigenous and makeshift solutions can be derived, to help the student partially deal with these issues.

### **Challenges:**

Inclusivity in education works into reality at five levels, i.e., the home, the classroom, the school, the society and the country. If the framed educational policy, in Indian university education is aimed to achieve the estimated success rate, inclusivity at these levels has to be realised and reworked. For the paper I have considered all these levels and zeroed in on the English undergraduate classroom. My understanding of the challenges the foreign student faces are as follows.

#### ***Clear Overview:***

The students who walk into the Indian system of education do not have a clear overview regarding the actual working model on the ground. The bits and pieces that are gathered from the reluctant sources of information and from their peers who do not understand the picture completely, further fog the English text situation. The teachers at the beginning of the semester do brief the students about this one time. The teaching/learning process should have reminders at regular intervals with built in analysis with respect to each lesson. The intention in designing the book with components of poetry, prose, drama, autobiography and short story is not discussed with the students. If the students understand the overview of the components of the book, the design of the curriculum, the text book maker's intent, the exam pattern, and the allocation of marks, then it would give them a fair insight into the course and the importance of reading the English text. The foreign students in one interaction with the teachers have confessed to the feeling of shock about reading such a lengthy text book for a few marks. These barriers are only distancing the multicultural English learner who does not share the cultural comfort of rapport with the teachers as a native student would naturally have.

#### ***Transparent Teaching Methodologies***

Every component of the text book can be taught in a myriad different ways. The only method we still use in the classroom is teacher-centric. The teaching methodologies need to be varied with the details clearly discussed with the student in the classroom, holding room for change if necessary based on the students' recommendation. We still are wary of transferring the power of learning into the student's hands. Empowering the student is just a theory leftover for erudite discussions, instead of creating the infrastructural and attitudinal ambience to put it in practice. If the small details are not spelled out for them the gap would be glaring. To be able to discuss these varied teaching methods, the teacher needs to put in extra efforts in planning for a class.



### ***Objective Learner Assessment***

“The undergraduate students have reached this stage with a certain level of understanding of English” is the common assumption for most of the English teachers. The text book is also based on this premise. The foreign student has trouble with pronunciation and fluency. Reading the text book is a luxury not many of them can afford. They do not have the continuous guidance that they need for reading the text. The African students are better at reading the text when compared to the Asian learners and the Middle East learners. The latter two need to be considered as students with very little knowledge of English and to providing them learning assistance. They are learners, paced differently and hence this understanding should be included in the teacher’s preparation.

### ***Supplementary Material Support***

The English text book is a beginning and an end in itself. The experience in dealing with the text is a learning experience for the student. Most teachers refrain from providing any supplementary material forcing the student to base his understanding on the text itself or any other easy substandard supplementary material available! How can we try and capture the student in the text itself or if there is a diversion, how can we ensure that it is a reliable source? Can a seemingly, additional supplementary text be designed by the teachers, a workbook model, which forces the student to go back to the text for answers and also make him exam ready? The foreign student influenced by the easy way out from his Indian counterparts is also seeking supplementary material that’s available in the market. Can the CD attachment carry the audio version of the text? If it can correlate the word and pronunciation, help imbibe the Intonation and improve fluency, then a ready reference and a 24 x 7 study support is generated!

### ***Creating Internet Access***

The internet has a great potential and can increase the students learning capacities many fold. But the accessibility is limited because most of the college campuses are not Wi-Fi internet enabled and do not have minimal access to computers. The foreign students should be allowed to use their smart phones to aid their understanding of English. Phones need not be scorned upon. The smart phones under the supervision of the teacher can help them in dealing with the text. There are innumerable learning applications that are released into the market which would help them learn English. The Internet accessibility is not very student friendly, in the market. The empowerment of the student comes in training them to use their resources to the best. Many traditional teachers would raise an eyebrow with skepticism “What about the book reading habit which is going extinct?” Answer to that is “we have many books in the e-book format.” Food for thought!



### ***Different People, Different Learning Styles***

The foreign student who looks different, sports a different way of dress and follows a different set of customs and traditions brings unwanted attention from the local students and teachers. There have been instances where unaware of the student's reaction; he/she is showered with so much of attention that it borders on voyeurism. It unsettles the student. I have seen teachers peering closely at the little braids in the hair of African students. Are we not balanced enough to treat them as one of our own? Why the special treatment? This special treatment excludes the student. If the teacher cannot deal with the heterogeneity of an English classroom where would the inclusiveness come in from? Most African students use a lot of gestures as part of their communication, most Asian students do not make adequate eye contact readily and many of the Middle East students have strong tonal voices. Intertwining the English lessons around these cultural differences will bring in more inclusiveness into the classroom and leads to an effectively taught session.

### **Conclusion**

The sum of the analysis can be concisely put into the following points. The challenges faced by the foreign students in the English classroom are:

- Their inability to understand the importance of reading the English text in view of the exam and the marks
- Orientation with the teaching methodologies adapted by the English teacher
- The treatment of students as self learners, instead of dependent learners
- The race against time and syllabus completion pushes them towards secondary material
- Not many of them have the time, intention for and access to the internet
- The heterogeneity of the class requires a different approach and a more inclusive English teacher attitude.

What we have with us are a group of majorly 18-20 year old young people, who look up to us with a lot of hope to learn in each class. The class time, or the period of instruction can be packed with the best teaching intention to optimise their learning. Teacher and Student orientation, where they can learn to interact with one another on a personal level can go a long way in fostering Inclusiveness in the English classroom. Upholding a lofty motive is insufficient if it cannot be translated into the everyday grappling of the syllabus. Though these points have a wider implications and applications, but they are adequately pragmatic and sufficiently valid in the English classroom.

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## **Managing Differently- Proficient Learners and Mixed-Ability Classes: The First Priority in Making an English Class Inclusive in Our Country**

*Dr. Manmatha Kundu*

In India there is a wide gap between what we achieve and what we wish to achieve; between what we preach and what we practice; between what we say and what we do. This gap is evident more so in education than in anything else. Let's examine the objectives set by a given syllabus for any subject and then evaluate the outcomes. For the survival of the system, we normally cook up the results through many means that include lenient evaluation and providing of grace (or disgrace) marks to the students, contributing to false statistics that cover-up the real problem. Just as the Bhagavadh Gita sets high standards that are unachievable for us mortals, the NCF (National Curriculum Framework) sets similar standards for our education. While we have failed to manage a simple evaluation system well, we talk of CCE (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation). While we have not been able to manage an average exclusive class in comfortable circumstances, we talk about inclusive classrooms in an exclusive culture in difficult circumstances. The result is always disastrous. In order to achieve some results, it is therefore imperative to prioritize our objectives in making our classroom inclusive. The first objective is to accommodate low-proficient learners of English into the classroom before even thinking of engaging with differently able learners. This article, therefore, stresses on managing low- proficient and mixed—ability classes to make the English class more inclusive.

### **Differently- proficient Learners and Mixed Ability Classes**

Our problems of education in Third World countries are unique and special, arising out of our socio-economic and cultural make up. For instance, poverty and over-population are the reasons behind the problem of large classes and large classes, in turn, produce differently proficient learners and mixed ability classes. These problems are pan Third World phenomenon (not merely confined to English but to all subjects of study). Therefore, we cannot expect western experts to solve our typical problems primarily due to the fact that they teach in comfortable circumstances and we teach in difficult circumstances. The problems can be solved only through some indigenous attempts.

### **The current explosive state of the problems**

Let me first state how aggravated are these two problems at present and their seriously harmful consequences. To start with maybe four or five decades back, these problems were there but were not that serious. With the great increase in the number of students, the classes became larger and the quantity negatively affected the quality. To make the matters worse, there has been deterioration in our work culture. Teachers in the past were neither highly educated, nor



professionally trained but the school and their students were uppermost in their minds. Our minds in the present time, by contrast seem to be more preoccupied with a lot of other things not related to our profession. Our minds have little space for our school and our learners. To start with, the low proficient learners were always there but their number was negligible. But their number kept on increasing with years and currently in most of the classes their number is about 80% to 90%, more so in English classes. With the increase of years the classes have become more mixed in the sense that the range of abilities across individual learners in a class has increased gradually.

### **An Example**

Suppose I am currently engaging class XII and the number of students in the class is 100. About 90% of them, so far as the English language skills are concerned, are below the class level. Only the 10% of the students have the English language skills of class XII. And those 90% who are below the level of their class (class XII) are not at the same level so far as their English skills are concerned they are at different levels. May be 15% are in class VI, 20% in class XI, 10% are in class VII, 12% are in class VIII, 10% are in class IX and the like so far as their English Language skills are concerned. There are also two or three students whose level of English is good, above their level. Thus, although I am teaching class XII, yet in reality I am taking a class VII to class XIV. Is it possible to do justice to such a class in which 90% of the students are below their level (low proficient) and their levels range from class VII to class XIV? What kind of material, method and test suit them?

Currently this basic fact makes teaching very difficult and teaching has failed to produce learning. But our expert educationists fail to notice this problem and plug wrong holes. Some of them seem to be aware of this problem, but probably they do not have any solutions to offer as far as this problem is concerned and, therefore, pretend not to talk about it. Our seminars, meetings, and conferences do not adequately address themselves to this problem. Our teacher-training, both pre- and in-service, are silent about this problem. Two or three decades back one international conference on Third World Education at Jomtien was devoted to the problem of low proficiency in the third world countries and the conference yielded the concept of MLL (Minimal Level of Learning). The view that emerged made the third world countries see that when their students pass from one class to another the stress should be given on achieving the minimum level of learning of the specific curriculum. But nothing happened in reality. The number of low proficient learners increased by leaps and bounds. Things have reached a point of no return. It has really reached an explosive state.



## **Some harmful consequences**

The harmful effects of low proficient learners and mixed ability classes are all pervasive. I will mention here only three very important effects arising out of this.

### **1- Effects on Teaching/Learning System.**

It has already been stated that these problems make the teaching/learning dysfunctional. (The four important aspects of any teaching/learning system are the objectives of a course, the materials and methods used to achieve these objectives and the evaluation or test to testify whether the objectives set are achieved or not at the end of the course). All these are prepared keeping in view the level of the class but when 90% of the learners are found to be much below this level, all of these become dysfunctional - the materials do not work. The methods used do not produce any result and the tests are done as ritual (as we are forced to be too liberal to allow the majority of the testees get through even though their performance is disappointing). Thus all these means of producing learning become futile exercise and we have been engaged in this kind of futile exercise in the Third World without ever introspecting ourselves.

### **2-Effects on the Teacher**

First, the teacher fails to handle such classes and develops a negative attitude to his/her own capabilities as a teacher. This s/he does not disclose to others and adopts some survival strategies. S/he pretends to know a lot or do a lot while in fact, doing very little. S/he picks up some rules of grammar, for example, and shows off his/her knowledge of English while his/her English language competence is very low. The gap between what s/he says and what s/he actually does increase, making them psychotic. Other survival strategies include making oneself part of several syndromes. For example, she falls prey to the making-it-difficult and then making-it-easy syndrome. S/he selects a difficult topic and then explains 'in English or in the mother tongue of the learners to make it easy. S/he sets difficult questions in examinations and then passes students through 'grace marks'. S/he also falls prey to the syndrome of passing-the buck. When the students of the college are found to be very low proficient, the college teachers pass the buck or responsibility to the secondary school teachers, the secondary school teachers to the preparatory school teacher and the preparatory school teachers to the primary and so on. No one takes the responsibility. Besides, the teachers develop negative attitude to their learners and when learning does not take place, all blames are heaped on the learners - they are not writing, not motivated, not willing to put in effort to learn etc. Currently of course the teachers' negative attitude to students is a great obstacle to learning in the third World countries.



### 3-Effects on the Learners

The worst victims of low proficiency are, obviously, the learners. The differently proficient learners know that they are low proficient, that they do not belong to the class so far as their proficiency is concerned. This very fact negatively affects their self-concept. Some of them become totally dependent on their classmates. Some of them drop out of the school because staying in a class with the feeling that one does not belong to the class is really difficult. Some just hang on without participating in the activities of the class. They are the ones who may be termed ‘in-school dropouts’. Whose condition is more pitiable than the dropouts?

The long-term effect of this is all pervasive. The education system does not have any provision to take care of these differently- proficient learners. The teachers fail to take care of them. If the parents are rich and educated they take care of their low proficient wards themselves or send them to private tutors or coaching classes. But poor and uneducated parents fail to help their wards. This adds to the already existing divide between the rich and the poor in the Third World countries.

#### Major causes

Some of the major causes of the differently- proficient learners and mixed ability classes in the Third World countries can be grouped under the following heads:

##### *a) Social Factors:*

Poverty and overpopulation, as stated before, cause large class and large class, in turn, produces low proficiency and mixed abilities. Mixed abilities are also often a reflection of the social stratification based on class or caste.

##### *b) Defective System of Education:*

The best-planned and organized system of education can turn out to be the worst if it does not take into account its learners, particularly their level of proficiency. Our syllabus, materials, methods of teaching, and evaluation are planned and designed taking into account the level of the best of our learners who constitute only 5-10% of our student population. Thus 80-90% of learners actually fail to get any benefit out of this system.

##### *c) Principles of no Detention:*

Currently the world trend in education is not to detain or fail anyone. Failure is wastage. In western countries, although, they pass everyone, they ensure that those who pass have achieved the minimum level of competency. But in Third World countries we pass everyone, even those who have not achieved this level. This aggravates the problem of low proficiency and mixed ability.



**d) No Remedial Measures:**

These are our indigenous problems and we should find some solutions to these problems. But none of us seems to bother about them. We pretend as if these problems do not exist. German system of education has a built-in system of remediation for low proficient learners. In every two years the differently- proficient learners are spotted and put to special classes to make up for the loss. The causes of their low proficiency are identified and suitable remediation provided. In other countries the teachers do so through informal evaluation and class remediation.

**Some Possible Solutions:**

The current problem of low proficiency and mixed ability has reached an explosive state, because of our not taking measures to set them right for long. With such an explosive state, easy solutions seem impossible. The rich, powerful, and the educated people have found a way out by creating their own private and expensive educational institutions. But the poor, who constitute 80% of our population whose children attend government institutions, suffer. Many of them have stopped sending their children to schools and some send with little hope.

A remedial measure should be implemented from the very first year learning, introducing bridge courses in all the levels of the schools (The first month of the academic year) and providing special treatment to the final year of schooling. And all these should be done on a war footing.

**1- Change your Attitude to Differently Proficient Learners:**

High academic achievement and high marks/grades do not always go with high intelligence and greatness. More than 80% of the great people of the world are not academic achievers. Many of them either have not gone to schools or were school drop –outs. I have written a book (in my mother tongue) the English translation of the title is “Wise Tips from Low Proficient Learners” Most of our high proficient learners are selfish. But the differently-proficient are gregarious, sociable, helping by nature. But unfortunately, we teachers are always full of praise for the best students of the class and are negatively prejudiced against the low-achievers.

**2. Understand Low-Proficient Learners:**

Examine the following real life interaction from a Math classroom.

*Teacher: Two persons can do a work in four days. But after two days work, one person left. How many days the other person will now take to complete the work?*

*Student: Can one person do a work meant for two persons, Sir?*

*Teacher: Why not?*

*Student: How can one Sir? Will it not be too difficult for him working alone? (Expressing real concern for that person)*

*Teacher: You fool. Math by you? Impossible.*



Why does the Math teacher consider her a fool? Obviously, because she failed to work out a simple sum. The gravity of her foolishness increased with the increase of her concern and feeling for the lone worker. If she would have persisted with her concern repeating what she said with greater feeling and concerns she would have been considered mad by her teacher and by those who know little bit of Math.

But why did she say so instead of straight giving the answer “four days”? Why did she think the job meant for two impossible by one? May be the nature of the job is such that one person cannot do that job, as for example, lifting heavy articles. May be when two work together the job becomes less boring and painful than one working alone. May be if one completes the job meant for two persons, it may negatively affect his health. But in order to do a sum and to get his/her answer right straightway one should not be disturbed by these silly thoughts. One should not show concern and feeling. It’s a matter of the mind and not of heart. To get your answer straight, you are feeling concern for other, should we not appreciate the Olympics athlete’s concern for the baby duck that came in his way winning the Olympic Gold Medal in rowing? Should we not appreciate the concern of that girl for the lone worker doing the job of two?

Are these two things showing concern for the baby duck and winning Olympic Gold medal or showing concern for the lone worker and getting the sum correct-mutually incompatible? Apparently they are which is why perhaps almost all our good students who score high marks are selfish. They lack feeling and concern for the other. Uppermost in their mind are their own study and good marks. Everything else is secondary in contrast; our low proficient learners are gregarious, friendly, hospitable and selfless. It is common experience with teachers that we mostly employ these low proficient learners to do the extracurricular activities of the school. They run errands for us and do all our odd jobs. But unfortunately all our praises go to the students who are academically good. We are unduly prejudiced in their favour. Why we alone?

Even the parents and the society as a whole are prejudiced in their favour. We tend to ignore their follies and foibles but magnify that of our low proficient learners. We also show undue favours to them. The good students are therefore a pampered lot. This pampering helps them set their sum right but everything else goes wrong with them. Afterward they can never be good husbands, wives, parents, brothers, and sisters. They even cannot be good citizens because they have been trained to look only to their interests and not to the interest of others or even the interest of their motherland. This is why our IIT graduates on whom this poor country has spent so much (Education is 98% subsidized in this country) do not mind settling in the USA and serving that country. And the highly educated who stay here get richer day by at the cost of others or even at the cost of the nation. Spread of education has therefore, not made the world a better place to live in.



In the USA, the highly educated and specialized technocrats particularly who have to deal with common people (the doctors, for example) are given courses on how to be human. It is strongly believed (Which is also a fact) that higher education dehumanizes the recipients. Education takes away from us our ‘milk of human kindnesses and teaches us how to ‘smile and smile and be a villain’. Hence there is a need for a reorientation through a course on how to be human.

Are all educated people inhuman and all those not educated, human? Are all efficient learners selfish and all low –proficient ones gregarious and friendly? The answer is not a categorical ‘yes’. But, there is some, (why some?), a lot of truth in them. The moment you show concern and helping others is uppermost on your mind you are bound to lose the Olympic medal like the great Olympian or your marks in math like that girl. All of us know the examples of Newton. The moment he showed undue concern for his cats and wanted to have two holes, one for the big and another for the small instead of one, he appeared so foolish! If this be the truth, who is better – highly efficient learner without the milk of human kindness or a less efficient learner full of it? I am always in favour of the second.

Let us put a break to the education that dehumanizes us, at least at the point where it has the tendency to do so. Our pampering of the efficient learners has done us and them great harms. So also our blind prejudice against the low proficient ones. This change of attitudes to both will go a long way-low proficient to become proficient and the efficient to become less selfish. Let’s encourage the efficient learners help their less proficient friends in their studies and in return learn to be human. It does not matter, if this reduces their marks by a percent or two.

### ***3- Manage Well the Large Class***

We know large classes are products of societal factors as poverty and overpopulation over which we as teachers have very little control. But we can manage large classes well. Stated below are some tips.

- Make your voice clear and audible even to the last benchers. Speak slow, plan your teaching well (mentally) and manage your blackboard work skillfully.
- Make large classes appear small making horizontal and vertical roads in between students where possible. So the class is divided into small subsections. And you can come near almost all the students.
- Don't always stick to the teacher's place. Move around and teach. Don't always lecture and talk. At times give them tasks to do and you move around and help them individually to do the task.
- Take the help of your students to manage the class. Take them into confidence. Tell them how it is difficult to help everyone in a large class and they have to cooperate to get benefit from this difficult situation.



#### **4. Let your focus be on the majority of the learners of the class (70% - 80%)**

The majority of the learners are often differently proficient learners. In such classes you have to adopt your textbook to their level and then slowly take them to a higher level. You may have to, at times: prepare your own materials if their level is very low. But unfortunately we focus on the best learners whose proficiency level suits the class level. These best learners who only constitute 5%-10% can be helped outside the class through special help. Inside the class they can be asked to help their low proficient brothers and sisters through peer help and peer-corrections

#### **5- Adopt the process approach (not product approach) -**

Process approach lays stress on the steps of processes to reach the product helping the learners at every step to reach the final product. But the product approach only wants the finished product, not the process. For example, a teacher following a product approach gives a task (writing an essay for example) and expects them to come up with the finished product. But the teacher following a process approach on the other hand helps learners step by step to reach the product. S/he helps the learners to generate ideas through brain storming, collect necessary vocabulary and structures and helps them to write paragraphs and finally order these paragraphs to write an essay. Even tests can be based on the process approach where the mixed range ability groups have something to do at their level and get reward for their work.

All these tips are in fact one. Each one is related to the other. If all of us do something in this regard in our classes the change will come and our differently-proficient learners will be benefited from our teaching and our English class will be more inclusive.

#### **A Sample Lesson**

I provide below a sample lesson that I took for low-proficient learners in a mixed-ability class at Bhadrak College. My first lesson was as follows:

I wrote "Rain" on the blackboard and asked the students to recall as many English words as they could relate to rain. They came up with words like-cloud, cold, flood, mud, umbrella, rainy-day, rainy shoe, Rain coat, thunder, lightening , peacock, fever, boot, paper boat, etc. I wrote them on the blackboard in a web-chart and asked them to make a list of all these words in good handwriting. Next, I provided them a model three word sentence: 'Rain causes flood.' and asked them to write as many sentences as possible using some of the words from their lists. Each one of them came up with 9 to 10 sentences. I asked them to read aloud the sentences they have written. One of them read aloud. 'Rain causes umbrella.' Many of them rejected this sentence as incorrect. But most of them had the taste of writing correct sentences in English. Next, I asked them to write a



small poem of four lines on 'rain' using some of the sentences they have written. I helped them with tips on rhyming words like 'flood', 'mud' or 'thunder' and 'water'. Some of the poems they wrote looked like this:

*Rain Causes cloud*  
*Rain Causes flood*  
*Rain Causes lightning*  
*Rain Causes mud.*

From simple correct sentences they straight jumped to writing poems. This gave them tremendous satisfaction. Next, I gave eight words and asked them to order the words serially. The words were: rain, medicine, cold, cloud, cure, fever, prescription, doctor. Almost all of them ordered them correctly as follows Cloud-rain-cold-fever doctor-prescription-medicine—cure. Next I asked them to write chain-sentences using these words and provided them the model sentences to begin with. If there is cloud there is rain.....'

Finally we ended the class singing aloud two lines of a nursery rhyme on rain:

*'Rain, rain go away*  
*Little Johnny wants to play.'*

This lesson may seem very simplistic at first sight. But a lot of thoughts have gone into it. First, the method of brainstorming is used to elicit from the students words on rain. The writing task was carefully designed not to allow the students to go wrong. There was little scope for committing mistake because the writing tasks are controlled. But in normal classes we give them uncontrolled tasks and they commit plenty of errors. We then correct these errors with red ink and often followed by verbal abuse. This de-motivates them and ruins their self- confidence. Again because they are +2 students, we cannot stop just at writing words and three-word sentences. We must take them beyond this. This was done by helping them write a small poem on rain using these very simple and short sentences. Thus just in one class they had the satisfaction of writing correct sentences and a poem which years of learning of English had not given them.

A remedial lesson should be like this. With such lessons the skills of our students can drastically be improved in a very short span of time. This was my experience with these students. Initially I thought it will take six months to help them speak and write correct English. But we could achieve this in just two months. Once they are able to do this I started teaching them the lesson from their text which was most easy and interesting following a learner-centered and activity-oriented approach. I call these activities as quick-rising activities. The quick –rising activities are immensely useful for low-proficient learners in a mixed – ability class for the following reasons:



- First, these are multi-tiered activities which suit the multi-leveled class.
- Second, the students begin from words, move to simple sentences, then to a poem. Next they write a poem and finally complex sentences. This they do just in a class of one hour. This gives them a sense of satisfaction that they can write poems.
- Third the activities are carefully planned and there is little scope for the students to commit errors.

Low-proficient students get de-motivated by committing errors and their correction, at times overcorrection by teachers in red link. This negatively affects their self-concept. The quick-rising activities minimize their errors and raise their self –concept and self –confidence by moving very fast from words to poem in a short time with little or no errors.



## **Pedagogy and Its (Dis) Contents: Being Inclusively Exclusive**

*Dr. Asma Rasheed*

As is generally known, a popular notion of “education” is that it enables students to learn skills (doctors, drivers, plumbers, teachers, etc.) as well as patterns of behavior (manners, etc.) that help them survive in society. Education, we are told, also sorts out people to do the correct work for their ability (meritocracy) so that society can survive: students undergo education, they are trained, tested, and thereafter encouraged to take up jobs suited to what they are able to do. Thus, education is popularly understood as geared for the greater good of society at large.

Towards this end, we have specialists at various levels who try to incorporate and inculcate the “best” of teaching materials and practices in textbooks and among teachers. Generally speaking, we all agree (sometimes, “regretfully”) that an average classroom is far from homogenous and the ELT experts try their best to design inclusive curricula. (Think, for example, of the changes in the role of genders over the last decade or so and how this has been “accommodated” in our textbooks.) We lay emphases on teaching practices that we believe will involve our students more and more in the learning-teaching process: pair or group work, presentations and seminars, tests that try to avoid rote-learning, etc. Of course, we also concur that in terms of infrastructure or resources, we are far from ideal and that students in “remote” or rural areas suffer more from different kinds of institutional and related deficiencies. But if all of these aspects are being factored in, and inculcated, albeit not perfectly, where more can we look for solutions, since we clearly need to do more.

As some of the presentations during seminars relating to inclusive education point out, there are more and more diverse claimants to a share of the educational pie, and English in particular enjoys a privileged position in this scheme. Various studies have established some of the reasons for the introduction of English education by the colonial state: one, to introduce and instill a scientific rationality that, it was believed, could not be taught through a vernacular language. Two, it was held that the language could institute a culture of values, morals, etc. which was ‘sorely required’ to civilize the natives. That Indians themselves desired, indeed demanded, the establishment of English education both for reasons of employment and as a means of accessing Western sciences is also a well-documented and discussed factor.<sup>1</sup> The imperialist imperatives for education, in conjunction with Indian aspirations, impacted educational policy-making. Governmental support shifted, slowly but decisively, from instruction in the vernacular media to English language (Viswanathan 1990). So, for instance, the English Education Act of 1835 ended all funding for imparting English language training in Sanskrit colleges and madrasas; henceforth, English could be the medium of Indian education for higher class only in non-denominational, English-medium schools.<sup>2</sup>



The Education Dispatch of 1854 much more explicitly linked the advancement of European knowledge to the economic developments in the sub-continent, which in turn was instrumental in setting up a coordinated system of education, a Department of Education, and the establishment of Universities. Since admission to these higher institutions required knowledge of English which could only be acquired in a fee-paying school, access was restricted by and large to an urban, upper class and caste group. Responses to these developments were varied, including the anxieties about the loss of a self, one's culture and tradition and an accompanying reconstitution that sifted the world into an "outer domain" of material economy and English, and an "inner domain" of tradition, culture and the vernaculars.<sup>3</sup> With the struggles for independence, English was cast as language of nationalism, of modernity as well as colonization, and used to subvert claims of power. To paraphrase Kachru, the "alchemy" of English provided a space of "neutral" identities by dissociating relationships and categories from traditional, cultural and emotional connotations.<sup>4</sup>

The role of English continued to be debated in the post-colonial state, including anxieties about the elitist, undemocratic nature of the language on the one hand and the fear that giving up English would shut India off to development and turn the clock back on the other. Nonetheless, the powerful economic consolidation of English, influenced by factors beyond state logic and policies, linked to the politics of access and power, has led to a virtually unchallenged consolidation of English as an international language. As a result, it is rather obsolete today to debate whether English should be taught; once an urban, upper class and caste character, English is now very much a part and parcel of education across the socio-economic spectrum.<sup>5</sup> The most recent National Curricular Framework (NCF) of 2005 recognizes the dramatic growth in the service industry in India, and the unprecedented expansion in English-speaking employment opportunities. Noting the market demands for English and the poor state of pedagogy, it states

*The current demands for teaching of English as a subject from Class I is not only a reflection of new aspirations, and a changing political scenario. It is linked to the current poor status of the curriculum and pedagogy being employed for the teaching of English and the failure of our research and development institutes to address this area of curriculum research.*<sup>6</sup>

Hence, given the weight of expectations and sheer numbers, is it simply that we as English language teachers, experts, are unable to catch up or keep up with the demands and pressures that are being made of us? That may well be so. However, an equally important, even critical aspect, are the assumptions underlying some of our pedagogic practices—not so much in terms of contents or more effective techniques of teaching—that draw on criteria of suitability, even ability, and achievement to exclude students. Several studies have already documented and commented on this



aspect.<sup>7</sup> Let me make my case by way of examining a course titled “Academic Reading and Writing” (henceforth, “ARW”) that is part of the post-graduate masters’ programme in English through the distance mode at the EFL University, Hyderabad.

A distance mode course is by definition meant to be inclusive: to offer opportunities to those so interested in learning or upgrading their skills. With this idea in mind, the masters’ programme is open to any student who has studied some English at their graduate level, whichever the area of their specialization. So, for instance, a graduate in nutrition or journalism or business administration or from any branch of humanities is eligible for admission. The ARW course is one of the four courses in the first year; of the other three, one is in linguistics and two are literature based. The ARW course has four Blocks, or textbooks students have to study and prepare from. Briefly, Block I introduces a student to the basics of academic reading and writing, Block II develops study skills, Block III introduces and practices some basic rhetorical functions in English and Block IV examines language functions in different types of texts and their features.

As a textbook, especially a distance-mode textbook, each of the Blocks explains the functions or features of linguistic and critical devices, provides exercises for adequate practice, assignments for students to test out their learning graph and various modalities for students to communicate with the teachers at the University from their respective locations. The primary aim of the ARW course is to give a foundation in critical, academic reading and writing, so as to equip a student to deal with the rest of the courses in literature, in the programme. Let me illustrate this by going over Block I in some detail: there are four Units (chunks of study material or textbooks).

Unit 1 deals with reading for academic purposes vis-à-vis general purposes and the processes of writing for academic purposes; it draws on varied examples from literary and non-literary texts to illustrate the differences from an academic approach as opposed to a non-academic approach to a text. Unit 2 works out how to identify the features that hold together sentences and ideas in a paragraph; it gives practice in identifying a topic sentence from the rest of the sentences in a paragraph and takes a student through the steps of writing a topic sentence, adding sentences through supporting details, examples, illustrations, etc. Unit 3 looks at the grammatical tools that link sentences and paragraphs grammatically and lexically—sequence linkers, reason/cause linkers, discourse markers—and at principles of cohesion and coherence. Unit 4 elaborates on this by laying out the connections between various text types and their features: so, for instance, expository, or narrative, or descriptive, writing and the ways in which these are crucial to understanding and appreciating literature. Each teaching point is laid out, explained by way of examples, activities or exercises are worked out, etc. all in relation to the other literary courses and texts that students have to deal with.



The problems of this carefully designed Course are revealed in its examination and results. Unlike other courses, and given the very nature of the contents, the question papers of the ARW course do not have any “content” questions and do not require a student to suffer rote-learning. So, for instance, the question paper may give a paragraph and ask the learner to identify a topic sentence: ideally speaking, they ought to have learnt the mechanics of identifying a topic sentence and should be able to complete the task. The rest of the question is somewhat similar in nature: there is no fall back on content, but emphasis is rather on the language skills that a learner ought to have acquired and is being tested for.

Our success or lack of it in this course is rather graphically illustrated in the results that we began to collate about a year back. A quick study of the number of students who were able to sit for the final exams (after completing the required number of assignments for each of the courses), with reference to their socio-economic background, the rural-urban breakdown, the percentage that cleared the examinations reveals interesting data.

For instance, after being on the rolls for the maximum allowed period of three years (two years of registration plus one year of re-registration) and writing the Part I exams, less than a quarter of students enrolled in 2009 had appeared for the exams. A clear majority of those who wrote the exams were from an urban background, and a major part was also from Andhra Pradesh. The failure rate was the highest in the ARW course; roughly, one-third of those who failed the ARW course had passed the two other literature courses, one-third of those who failed the ARW course had failed in one or both of the two other literature courses and one-third of those who passed ARW had failed in one or both the literature courses. Of the 2010 batch, less than twenty percent (across each socio-economic category) were able to write the Part I exams after being on the rolls for two years; over sixty percent of those appearing failed in one or more courses. Of these failures, nearly ninety percent could not clear the ARW course, whereas the ten percent who had passed ARW did fail in one or both the literature courses. Of those who were unable to pass the ARW course, about half had failed in only ARW and passed in the other two literature courses and the other half had failed in both ARW and one or more of the two literature courses. For the 2010 batch students appearing for exams as well, a clear majority was from an urban background and a major part of the students was from Andhra Pradesh.

Statistics, while stark, can also be misleading. Nonetheless, it is disturbing that an overwhelmingly large chunk of students who did make it to the examination hall were unable to clear the ARW paper, whilst they appear to manage the literature courses better. A course at the Masters’ level, with one assumes highly-motivated students who have opted to acquire this degree



and are also paying for it, has its constraints. But results indicate we need to take a closer look at the programme and find a correction, if required; how do we do this? There are, I would suggest, two ways to consider these results.

One way, the more straight-forward way, would be to re-examine the ARW course itself. We could think of ways to ensure the ARW contents are more broad and inclusive, perhaps in terms of the instances we use. We can re-do the examples, we can re-visit the evaluation. Perhaps we can add more practice tasks, or even prepare a hand-book or study-aid that has comprehensively worked out examples and exercises.

A second way would be to look at a language course such as ARW in conjunction with the literature courses that are part of this programme. What are the texts that go into the making of these literature courses? Why or how is it that students were able to “manage” these courses more effectively? A quick look at the literature courses shows that the texts chosen for study are those which have plenty of support material (study guides or secondary materials) and hence students have relatively less difficulty in (re)producing the required responses to the examination questions. So, the level of challenge or amount of work expected in these literature courses is clearly of a different order altogether, one which students are able to cope with not because they can marshal their linguistic resources and produce well-argued responses during the exam, but because the world around provides convenient aids. The ARW language course is thus in service of certain teaching-learning paradigms of “literature,” which remain unquestioned. Any attempt to see academic reading and writing as a set of isolated language skills is bound to end up with throwing our hands in the air and shaking our heads in despair. It is this embedding in broader paradigms of education which constrains, indeed contains, the language skills that we as teachers are able to deliver on.

To sum up, I have tried to use the example of a language course that is part of a Masters in English Literature programme to suggest that it is not just the transactions in a language classroom/textbooks or the contents of our textbooks which play out relations of power and inequality. We are also working with assumptions about what level or kind of language is necessary to make sense of or respond to a particular academic text/course (in this case, a “literature” text), and the contents/framework of that text/course itself remains unquestioned. Such texts and frameworks (cultural, economic, and social) in turn operate in complex combinations of power and inequality, which urge us to analyze “education” for its role as a means of social control.

## Notes

**1** See, for more on this, M. Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990); Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990);



Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *The History of Education in Modern India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995).

**2** For a detailed discussion of this, see, for instance, Krishna Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas* (New Delhi: Sage, 1991); Shalini Advani, *Schooling the National Imagination: Education, English, and the Indian Modern* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

**3** A detailed analysis can be found in, for example, Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

**4** Braj Kachru, *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-Native Englishes* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986).

**5** See, Peggy Mohan, "Postponing to Save Time" *Seminar* 231 (May 1986); Krishna Kumar, *Learning from Conflict* Tracts for the Times/10 (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1996), Badri Raina, "Language and the Politics of English in India in Svati Joshi, ed., *Rethinking English* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), Ajit Pathak, *Social Implications of Schooling: Knowledge, Pedagogy and Consciousness* (Delhi: Rainbow Publishers, 2002), Anne Waldrop, "The Meaning of the Old School Tie: Private Schools, Admission Procedures and Class Segmentation in New Delhi" in Anne Vaugier-Chatterjee, ed., *Education and Democracy in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2004).

**6** NCERT, *National Curriculum Framework* (New Delhi, 2005), p. 37.

**7** See, Santosh Dash, *English Education and the Question of Indian Nationalism: A Perspective on the Vernacular* (Delhi: Aakar, 2009); Alok K. Mukherjee, *This Gift of English: English Education and the Formation of Alternative Hegemonies in India* (Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2009).

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## **Teaching English as a Second Language in India: Retrospective and Perspective**

*Dr. Nageshwara Rao Konda*

This paper elaborates the contemporary status of English language teaching at different levels in Andhra Pradesh. English is primarily a second language in India. A second language is any language acquired later after the native language. The study of the English language and its inclusion in the curriculum is of paramount importance today.

I want to examine the need to make English language teaching more inclusive in the context of the absence of correlation between the teaching materials and the examination pattern. Most of the textbooks of non- English medium classes do not focus on the needs of learners. The lessons given in the text books at various classes are quite burdensome and unnecessarily lengthy. Some lessons in the general English text book are quite uninteresting and not suitable to the levels of the learners. Moreover, the number of periods allotted to teach English is not adequate. Sometimes teachers of English are more interested in completing the syllabus than making the students acquire good language skills.

It is also observed that the present English language teaching in India at the college level does not talk about any kind of methodology. This indifference to methodology leaves the English teacher in a chaotic condition but also encourages the teacher to follow what appears 'good' to him. Like in the vernacular language teaching, English language teaching requires more of practical approach. This emphasizes the need for reorientation to the teachers of English to deal with an average general English classroom. The status and value of any language can be determined by its usage by the language users. Generally a language can be categorized as: 1) Mother Tongue (MT) or the first language 2) Second language ( $L_2/SL$ ), and 3) Foreign language ( $L_3/FL$ ).

In this context a second language is usually a not a native language in a country but it can be used extensively as a medium of communication. Most of the times, second language is used for social and personal purposes. People often feel it as local rather than Second or foreign language. The high demand for the English language in India gives it a vital role in almost all the fields of national life like communication, business, political relations and administration.

According to the constitution of India, English is a second language. Moreover, English language teaching (ELT) in India leads to linguistic centralism, while other Indian languages are for linguistic regionalism. Recent studies reveal there are 1650 languages and dialects spoken in India. There are no uniform languages among the states of India, the people of every state or region feel that their language is superior and must fit as the national language or second language. The growing modernization prevented us from doing away with the English language. At this juncture,



the only solution is need for co existence of English with Indian languages. Gradually the role of English has strengthened and consolidated.

Mixed ability class deals with heterogeneous group of students. The students come from different levels of background. The teachers especially teachers of English can find difficulty in dealing with mixed ability classes. There should be a platform to discuss the various possibilities to make the English class effective and lively. About 80% of the people live in villages so there should be a need for the study of English at the elementary stage itself. The secondary education commission recommended that “Our youth should acquire knowledge from all sources and contribute their share to expansion, development. In the attainment of the objective, the study of English is bound to play an important part”

In the changing global conditions, we have defined and redefined the importance of English as a second language in India and its relationship with other Indian languages. In spite of all the difficulties, there is no doubt that the English language would promote integration as it cannot be identified with any region, moreover the English language in India was recognized as the language of modernity, science and technology. The Three language use which was proposed in 1956 by the central advisory board on education clearly states that English should be an integral part of the school education in India, later the education commission 1964-66 identified English as “A Library Language”. It stressed on the importance of English as a subject, it recommended that the English teaching should begin from class V.

According to David crystal (1997) “Nearly 670 million people use English with fluency and competency and this figure is steadily growing ever since 1990”. No doubt, it has reached the greatest status today because of two main reasons: one is the need for English to the present global world and the second is the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the light of these two facts, we have to examine the phenomenon of English as a global language and the status of English as a second language in curriculum in India.

In the post independence era, English language teaching India has seen many changes. However despite the recommendations of various committees and commissions, it has not been possible to attain the anticipated standards in the use of the language by our learners. Many under graduates and post graduate students still find it difficult to speak in English. When we talk about the failure, it seems to be due to the gap between the needs of the learners and teaching objectives and disproportionate importance given to the prescribed textbooks. Apart from the traditional teaching methods, the unchanging system of evaluation which fails to test the students’ language competence in terms of communicative use is also a factor. It is appropriate to quote Kapoor.



According to him “Now the failure in teaching English as a second language stems not from the theory, training and mechanics of language teaching but from the intrinsic conceptual inappropriateness in accepting English as a second language (L<sub>2</sub>) pedagogically and linguistically”

The teaching of English as a second language in the third world countries like India is different, after the liberalization policies in 1995; the teaching of ELT has started undergoing changes. As we know, India is a multilingual country full of diversity. To make the teaching and learning effective and successful, a teacher of English should keep the aims and objectives in his/her mind while teaching. The ultimate aim of teaching English is to make the learners to get the command over the four skills of the language. It is also observed that there was no separate method to teach English as a second language is a mixed class and English teachers were left in a state of confusion to follow the methods and techniques in class room. This indifference makes the teachers to adopt the method of teaching whichever is appropriate to him/her. In this connection, there should be discussion on the problems of teaching and learning English as a second language. The following are the some of the problems in teaching English in a mixed class:

- In India, we have large classes and we don't find any language class where the students are less than sixty. Moreover, there are heterogeneous in nature. English teachers may not show concentration on each and every student while teaching.
- The methodology of language teaching is not appropriate to the average Indian class room. Teachers of English are following some traditional methods of olden days. Students are not given enough practice to use the English language. English grammar is still being taught by rules and regulations. This indifference encourages the learner's role to depend on memory techniques.
- Motivation is the first step in learning. Our teachers of English are very 'liberal' in this aspect. They do not pay any attention to make the learners to learn the skills by motivation.
- According to psychology, reward and praise are the two faces of the same coin of learning. As the learners cannot find any need for English, the interest usually goes down. If there is no immediate reward for their learning, interest decreases. The teaching of English language should go with the required psychological principles.
- Every teacher of English should be trained properly to deal with a mixed class. Lack of orientation in dealing with mixed ability general English class is also responsible for low level of learning English as L2.
- In most of the Indian schools, the teachers of English are either not trained properly or they are teachers of other subjects. We cannot find good teachers of English now-a-days. They should be trained time to time to use their best practices in the classroom.
- The materials which we are using today are out dated and inadequate and they don't cater to the needs of the learners.



- Lack of exposure to the target language (English). In place of the target language, Indian learners are exposed to their mother tongue. The students listen to English only in general English class. They hardly get a chance to speak or listen to in other classes.
- Social, economical, and cultural background of the learners also becomes a barrier in teaching English as a second language. It is only in the urban and semi-urban areas that we find English medium classes.
- Non availability of teaching materials is also one of the problems. English teachers are not showing much interest in audio- visual aids. It leaves the learners and learning becomes more abstract.
- Lack of clear cut policy of the governments about the teaching of English. Whenever the government changes, new policies come up. Moreover there is a divergent opinion among politicians and academicians on the role of English.
- There is no uniform body of teachers of English to think of new trends and inventions time to time, of course the role of ELTAI (English Language Teachers Association of India) is very nominal in this regard. Our examination system is very faculty, the whole learning of the learners and the teaching of the teachers can be tested in three hours of examination; language skills are not tested but neglected. The examination of English encourages the students to depend on rote memory by asking question and answer type questions.
- Most of the times, grammar items are tested. It is noted that every English teacher should have realistic approach to deal with functional grammar.

Many factors are affecting the teaching and learning of English as a second language. Proper care should be taken by teachers of English to teach the four language skills to the mixed ability learners. The teachers should go down to the levels of the learners in order to understand them and make them fluent speakers of the target language. Teachers especially the English teachers should create the environment in the classroom where the learners can express their opinions without shyness.

In this connection the teacher should give the scope to the average learners to take an active part in the teaching and learning processes. We have to understand the learners before we teach. This mutual understanding makes the teaching and learning activity smoother and easier.

According Sir Philip Sydney, “Teaching is very important step in learning” the primary duty of the teacher is not to teach but also to understand what the student wants and says. We can’t clap without two hands. Similarly teaching should be interactive. It should facilitate the learners to face the challenges of the world outside the classroom. In a developing country like India, family backgrounds of the learners make the teaching activity dull and monotonous. The teaching should



be carried with the target of acquiring skills but not by the ranks and marks. In the changing global scenario, English has inseparable relationship with human lives. In India, English occupies a major role in all the fields. Whatever the problems of teaching English as L2, they begin from the pre-schooling itself.

## Conclusion

In modern India, English has become one of the important tools for communication; with the help of the English language we can expose ourselves to the outer world. We cannot think of taking India into the later years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century without capitalizing on English. It can be used as a problem shooter of the existing evils of education in India. It is already said 70% of the students are from the regional medium back ground and the rural areas. The courses of English should be modified based on the levels of learners. Finally I conclude this paper by giving a couple of suggestions. One, it is necessary to discuss the existing Curriculum whether it is fulfilling the needs of the learners and how far it achieves the goals of education. Secondly, the syllabus should be designed based on the background of the learners.

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## **Inclusion in Education: The Special Position of the General English Class**

*Prof. Jacob Tharu*

Three themes run through the discussion of inclusion in this essay. One is an analysis of the concept of inclusion in education. This is viewed as a cluster of possibilities emerging from practice as distinct from a term with a clear denotation. Next is an effort to identify some of the specific issues in the complex and immense challenge that the ideal of an inclusive classroom presents. Finally, with a touch of optimism, the proposition that the General English course (the main setting for ELT in India) has the potential for significant and path breaking moves toward meaningful realization of the inclusive classrooms.

### **Ways of looking at inclusion in education**

The idea of inclusive education is one of the more recent additions to the list of reforms or improvements of public education taken up over several decades. One of the many challenges facing many so called Third World countries that gained independence from colonial rulers in the last century as they began to develop as free nations was to extend access to public education. All of them, India was no exception, began with a small set of relatively high quality institutions that provided an elitist education to the children of a narrow privileged segment of society. The journey towards a democratic system of school education has been long and arduous involving the provision of facilities and the re-designing of the curriculum. In India, we have seen numerous national commissions and various policy initiatives following them. In the early decades limited resources and expanding numbers meant that the opening of new schools was always far short of the needed number. A supplementary scheme labelled non-formal education (NFE) meant mainly for the rural masses was tried out over few decades. International discussion in fora provided by UNESCO especially has been a rich source of perspectives and ideas. The Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) international statements recorded and reiterated the commitment to make (at least) elementary education available to all children.

In India, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) involve the provision of additional funds and technical resources to support the programmes of school directorates of the states. The RTE Act (2010) has gone a significant step further and made education of quality a right of all children. These are some examples of policy level moves towards extending access to proper formal education to segments of society that were in the last century and earlier excluded for economic, social and geographical (remote locations) reasons. The educational needs and opportunities of children with 'special needs' or the differently abled have also received attention over recent decades. The Salamanca Statement (1994) called on governments of signatory states to give "high policy and budgetary priority to educational services



...to include all children regardless of differences or difficulties.” A scheme for placing mildly disabled students in regular schools labelled Integrated Education was introduced in India in 1992. Over the years various revisions and extensions of this basic objective have occurred. The idea of inclusive education emerged out of these programmes. This admittedly very sketchy survey is to show that the need for including more children in its embrace has always been present in the discourse on modern public education, given it’s highly exclusivist origins. What we try to do today needs to be informed by a sense of this history.

There are different and quite valid perceptions of the scope of inclusive education. The interpretation I choose is one that emphasizes the social dimension. This takes the issue beyond the essentially individual focused attention given to children with identifiable ‘special needs’ under the labels diagnosis and remediation. This is not to deny the value of the pioneering work done by special educators dealing with differently able children. They have given us the base from which we can move forward. A critical element in the social perspective is the firm recognition of the inherent non-accessibility of the curriculum-in-transaction to a range of socially-culturally different segments of society. The mainstream curriculum almost inevitably has children from a certain class and culture as its addressees. This implicit and unexamined point of reference comes from those who dominated the exclusive schools of an earlier era and established the norm of quality --- set the ‘standards’ we are always so anxious to uphold.

It is useful to note that the social segments not in tune with the culture of the mainstream curriculum are from a categorization scheme different from those yielding aggregations of children with identifiable specific special needs. All of them serve to reinforce the urgency of efforts towards inclusion. The important concept emerging here is existence of a *mismatch* between the relatively narrow assumptions about the nature of learners (‘addressees’) in the design of the curriculum and who actual learners in classrooms are: persons with diverse experiences, attitudes, interests, motivation, and hence varying levels of readiness and capability. The neutral term mismatch is significant here. It *does not* prejudge which party (if any) is inadequate and so must carry the burden of changing so as to achieve a better match. On the contrary, it points to the need for negotiation and adjustment on both sides. The idea that as a rule the curriculum (designed by experts) should be adaptable to serve diverse categories of learners is a powerful one. A group of researchers working in the US came up with the notion of a Universal Design for Learning (Bacon 2014). From this came out an attempt to engage with the notion that often when learning difficulties are found “the problem was not with the students but with school curriculums and the barriers they placed in front of anyone who didn’t learn in a certain way.” Rather than ask students whatever kinds of students they were “to adjust themselves to a rigid system [we] wanted the system to be elastic enough to fit all the kids.” Such ideas are needed to help realize inclusion.



But they are also problematic as discussed below. They undermine a deep rooted tradition founded on the sanctity of what is given in prescribed textbooks and certainty about what is to be taught and tested.

Within the wider frame of inclusive education when we talk of the *inclusive English classroom* (the theme of this seminar) we are moving to the level of educational transactions in actual schools and classrooms—what is encountered or experienced by particular real children. This an altogether different sphere from that in which policy makers, administrators, inspectors, experts and consultants do their planning work-- on paper. Changes in classroom processes are of course dependent in large measure on the enabling conditions represented by material and organizational resources provided via such planning. But substance of these changes lies in new understandings, attitudes, values and capabilities on the part of teachers and other school staff and children, and also of officials, parents and members of the community. This new culture and the changes in *mind sets* called for comprise the major challenge, we as practitioners of ‘teaching’ need to address in pursuing the vision of inclusion.

I take the strong position that *inclusion* as a real time process involving individuals is meaningful only in the social setting of classroom *based group instruction*. Other modes undoubtedly ensure that the appropriate planned instructional inputs are received by individual learners. In fact, they might be more effective and efficient in terms of sheer delivery. The possibilities lying in them must be pursued vigorously and full advantage taken of them. However, they essentially provide access to inputs. What the classroom potentially offers to all learners is something different and valuable – the opportunity to participate in the social process of the classroom lesson. The images of the old style language laboratory with students wearing headphones sitting in separate booths and of the classroom with movable furniture allowing face to face interaction helps to capture the contrast. Interestingly, the policy moves relating to integrated education (placing the differently-able in mainstream schools), and now the wider commitment to inclusion (targeting the socially and culturally different learners also) pin hope essentially on the *classroom process*. The claimed special advantage of the classroom is the *possibility* (only the possibility, but surely an attractive one) that individuals will learn *with and from one another* in a social setting. But there is a crucial assumption here relating to the nature of the classroom process. This needs to be highly flexible/adaptable and marked by active participation in a range of activities on the part of many learners. It is such classrooms that provide an appropriate setting for considering and exploring ways of achieving inclusion.

**Some impediments on the way to inclusive schools and classrooms: locating the main challenges to address**



Since I argue that a learner centred and participatory classroom process is a precondition for achieving inclusion, the first task clearly is to address factors that operate to keep classrooms traditional and ‘closed’. The need for changed mind sets has already been noted. What are the features of the older that need to change? It is worth recalling some of key features of the new (more ‘learner centred’) vision of education and the culture it represents. One strong and well articulated endorsement of this orientation has come from the NCF2005— a main document accompanied by a set of nearly twenty detailed position papers, and the NCERT syllabus based on it. Further discussion and debate over the last several years has taken many of these ideas and suggestions more forward. Perhaps there were no specific ideas that were absolutely new in the NCF2005. It draws on the wisdom of various older thinkers and practitioners, which of course is no flaw.

What makes it unique and significant is that it brings hitherto scattered ideas together into a coherent framework, and so allows interplay and cross-fertilization. Perhaps the most striking among the main guiding principles of the NCF is the argument that the child is a *co-constructor* of the new knowledge she/he gains from instruction at school. This does not reject or devalue the planned inputs represented by the textbook, but asserts that what the child *brings to* the transaction process (cultural experience, knowledge, talents, interests, attitudes, and beliefs) is also an input. It is the interaction between them primarily in the classroom setting that leads to ‘new knowledge.’ And, importantly, this is personalized. A complementary principle states that knowledge should not be text-book centric but should go beyond it and be related to life outside school.

There are various signs that at a rhetorical level this vision is generally accepted. However, evidence relating to substantial changes in day to day practice in thousands of classrooms across the country is far less encouraging. Much instructional practice in school and college classrooms remains teacher centred and largely devoid of active participation by students. There is thus a wide gap between the acceptance of the general ideas of NCF 2005 and the practice found in classrooms. How can we understand this confusion and conflict? I submit that the main cause of this resistance to change in curriculum transaction stems from the deeply entrenched pattern of evaluation in education, which is founded crucially on a long standing and unaltered view of knowledge (what is to be learnt) as pre-definable and fixed. I suggest that the NCF approach or vision by its very nature can be interpreted at different levels. It is possible to accept (with some degree of honesty) its orientation at the *level of methodology* – leading to classrooms-lessons where students talk and student activities are at a relatively high level. Such a transaction mode is certainly a step forward.



However, this ‘easily acceptable’ interpretation ignores the significant epistemic implications of principles such as going beyond the textbook to relate to life outside and co-construction of knowledge by each child. They entail a drastically altered view of knowledge – of what is (to be) gained by learners from instruction at school. This new knowledge (the learning gained) *goes beyond* what was pre-selected for inclusion in the textbook. This means that the conventional end of unit or term examination cannot be based entirely on the topics specified in the syllabus. Such an achievement test focuses by definition on the extent to which a student has learnt what was given as objectives (requirements) in the syllabus. The criterion of content validity mandates this close alignment. The new approach requires the recognition and acceptance of the fact that the components of learning are unpredictable, i.e., *cannot be* pre-specified.

This is where a massive roadblock has come up. It is not some mysterious aspect of vague and amorphous ‘system’ out there. It is very simply and clearly a matter of mind sets --what we believe is appropriate regarding the knowledge to be gained by children at school. One of unchanging certainties of the older approach to the curriculum was that whatever the techniques used by the teacher in class, the examination scheme was) fixed. What was to be tested was always (reassuringly) clear. The link or collusion between this structural element and the tuition and guidebook industry and the (understandable) fixation of children and parents on ‘high marks’ is well known. This is where the root of resistance to genuine curricular change lies. We need as teachers (at all levels of education) to be severely honest on this issue. We too find it convenient when what is to be taught and tested is spelt out clearly. Exploring new areas of possible learning beyond the textbook in *partnership* with learners (as against virtuoso performances of our own to hold them in awe) is a large responsibility, and requires strenuous effort. But this is what gives us the opportunity to grow professionally as teachers; to extend what Schulman (1987) called our ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ as we go along.

There is no preaching mode moral injunction on my part here. What is shared is a view of the crucial challenge of making classrooms more flexible and participatory as a step towards meaningful inclusion that we need to understand. The ambitious ideal of inclusion upheld here is the outcome of what those working in special education have shown us. More than their inspiring commitment is the truth that they have forcefully demonstrated: the different *can learn successfully* both in scholastic and non-scholastic areas. The disability when there is one is very specific and *not* a sign of compromised general capacity to learn. They have helped us to believe that all children can learn, and this is not a ‘default setting’ we all come with. The more technical-professional lesson is that the curriculum should and can be adapted in various ways to foster learning. The false equation of quality and high standards with ‘covering portions as given and testing only that’ is what needs to be questioned. Without the fundamental level playing field -- a curriculum plan seen



as a negotiable and adaptable *starting resource* for learning in diverse ways – we remain trapped in an apologetic stance. We feel that what we do for those who are different may be good enough for ‘them’, but not really the best.

### **The favourable conditions for inclusion in the curriculum framework of General English**

I turn now to the setting of the General English course, where I argue for favourable conditions for flexible curriculum transaction and in turn an inclusive learning space. The nature of language learning, which is the foundation for language education, is the topic in focus. One intriguing aspect of language learning is that it occurs in substantial measure both within and outside planned instruction. Of course it is known that some learning relating in fields of knowledge constantly takes place outside class. For many school subjects (like mathematics, biology, history) this is usually further learning building on a base provided at school stimulated by homework and project activities.

In the case of language we have the amazing fact that all children learn the spoken form of their home language informally (i.e., *without* planned instruction) through natural socialization. During this process spread over about five years a major part of the rule system (grammar, lexis, phonology) of the home language is also learnt in some *effective manner*. The fact that these resources are deployed effortlessly in real communication demonstrates this. In pre-literate societies (which do not have a written script and so use only spoken language) all language development including mastery of all communicative functions takes place outside school. (Since in many cases the school does not even exist, the preposition ‘outside’ is problematic. But the point should be clear.)

With regard to formal language instruction, a close analysis shows that unlike most school subjects, the essential curriculum for language is not based on (burdened by) a given and unavoidable *body of knowledge*. A distinction is made between content subjects and skill subjects. Language is treated as a skill subject when the primary and major aim is to develop the ability to use the language (apply its rules and resources) for communication, rather learn these rules formally or learn literature and culture associated with it. The essential focus and mandate of General English especially when it is compulsory for students of all faculties is to develop the ability to use English for academic and social purposes. In such a curriculum written and spoken texts are invariably used as a resource in lessons. However, there is *no essential* pre-selected subject matter or content embodied in them. Any text found in the course book (story, essay, poem, drama...) can be substituted by a range of others. What is relevant is that they help to stimulate language use, and to the extent feasible are interesting to students.



The concept of need based instructional support is applicable to the design of GE. This perspective has been invoked with varying degrees of seriousness in formulating such courses across the country. My argument here is that the design principles applicable to GE provide for a framework of learning objectives along with sample content. These can be modified or replaced to suit local situations, especially their relevance to learners' abilities and preferences. The objectives need not –indeed cannot --be tied to particular content (portions). They should indicate *further* development of various sub-skills. This model allows progress from where one starts –along one's unique trajectory -- to be recognized and valued in assessment. Pre-set examination requirements become far less relevant. It can be argued responsibly that the momentum flowing from genuine progress (however small), is what sustains effort to continue learning. The external reward that comes from a high grade on a standard test carries no such promise.

This then is the challenge and opportunity – the privileged space – that teachers of General English have. The syllabus framework does allow a flexible and classroom culture to be created that is open to participation of diverse learners with their diverse styles and speeds. Those whom we feel responsible for since they are seen as candidates for inclusion need only the opportunity to participate with their heads held high. It is not fanciful to expect that they will demonstrate many things they can do and reveal where they need support. That is when what we should be providing becomes clearer. In this cooperative and dialogic setting we will be stimulated to ponder how best we can prepare ourselves for the **inclusive classroom**. As mentioned earlier addressing the challenge of inclusion offers opportunities for professional growth as a bonus.

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## **Inclusiveness with Learning Style**

*Dr. Joy Anuradha Muthyala*

This paper tries to look at learning styles of various individuals and discusses how teachers could take a cue from these different preferences or styles of learning and accommodate all kinds of learners by using diverse kinds of teaching activities in the classroom.

### **What is a learning Style?**

Each of us differs in the way we learn, understand and process the world around us. We have our individual preferences regarding the time, place, subject that we learn best. Keefe (1979) defines learning styles as “characteristic cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment.” Based on such assumptions, psychologists and educational practitioners have been trying to understand how and why we differ in the way we learn. This led to the much-talked about concept, the learning styles.

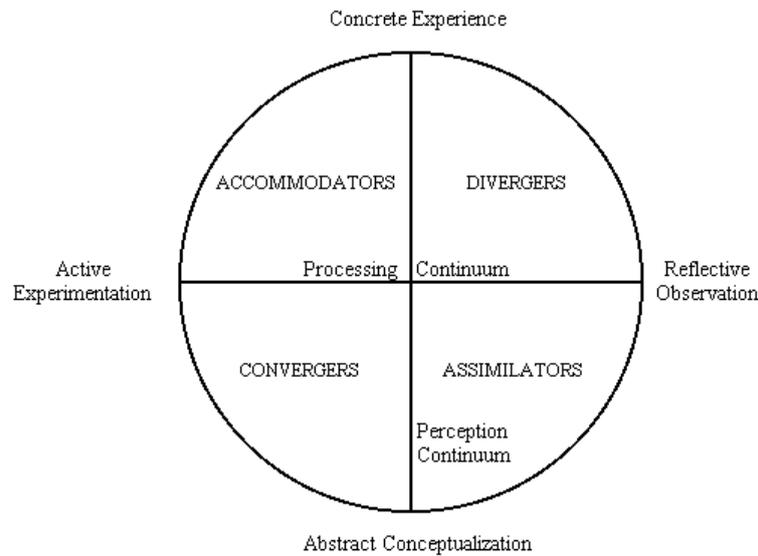
### **Learning Style Model**

There are several ways in which learning styles are understood and discussed by various psychologists. Although there are many models proposed to classify learning styles, for this paper let us consider just a few popular models of Learning Style to understand some distinctions in learner preferences.

### **David A Kolb’s Model of Experiential Learning Theory:**

Kolb published his learning style model in 1984 which later gave rise to Kolb’s Experiential Theory. Kolb's theory distinguishes four learning styles and also explains the cycle of experiential learning. The stages in the learning cycle are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation which also represent feeling, watching, thinking and doing respectively. The cycle begins with the actual experiences of an individual which makes him/her reflect based on the observations of the experience. These observations or reflections are internalized as abstract concepts which lead to action or active experimentation. These actions then become the sources of new experiences. According to Kolb, this cyclical process represents a learning cycle as shown in the figure below.





### Kolb's Learning Styles

Based on this learning cycle, Kolb distinguishes four-types of learning styles. Each learning style is a combination of two preferred styles, namely, Divergers (who feel and watch), Assimilators (who think and watch), Convergents (who think and do), and Accommodators (who feel and do). According to Kolb, each learning style is dependent on how an individual perceives an experience and processes a task.

The way individuals perceive an experience and respond either as 'thinkers' or 'feelers' places them at different points on the perception continuum. Similarly, the way someone approaches or processes a task either by watching or doing places him/her on the processing continuum. Whenever an individual comes across a new learning situation, one has to decide or choose whether one wishes to do or watch and simultaneously choose to think or feel. These two decisions together generate the preferred learning style of the individual, according to Kolb.

**Divergers** (feeling and watching): They are sensitive and prefer to watch rather than do, tending to gather information and use imagination to solve problems. Kolb called this style 'diverging' because these people are creative and perform better in situations that require ideas-generation. People with the diverging style prefer to work in groups, to listen with an open mind and to receive personal feedback.

**Assimilators** (watching and thinking): The Assimilating learning preference is for a concise, logical approach. These people require good clear explanation rather than practical opportunity. They excel at understanding wide-ranging information and organizing it in a clear logical format. People with this style are more attracted to logically sound theories than approaches based on practical value. In formal learning situations, people with this style prefer readings, lectures, exploring analytical models, and having time to think things through.



**Convergers** (doing and thinking): People with a converging learning style can solve problems and will use their learning to find solutions to practical issues. They prefer technical tasks, and are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. They can solve problems and make decisions by finding solutions to questions and problems. People with a converging style like to experiment with new ideas, to simulate, and to work with practical applications.

**Accommodators** (doing and feeling): The Accommodating learning style is 'hands-on', and relies on intuition rather than logic. These people prefer to take a practical, experiential approach. They commonly act on 'gut' instinct rather than logical analysis. People with an accommodating learning style will tend to rely on others for information than carry out their own analysis. This learning style is widespread within the general population.

### **VAK/VARK Model**

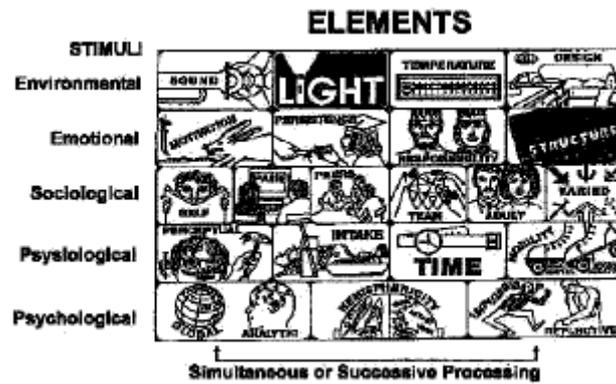
Another common and widely used learning style model is Neil Fleming's (1987) Visual Auditory Read/Write Kinesthetic (VARK) Model. According to Fleming, learners are identified according to their preference to learn better with the help of visual, auditory, kinesthetic or writing cues.

- **Visual Learners:** Individuals who learn better by looking at pictures, movies or videos, diagrams are called visual learners. They are somewhat similar to Kolb's assimilators.
- **Auditory learners:** Individuals who prefer to learn by listening to a lecture or a discussion, or even through music are termed as auditory learners.
- **Read/Write Learners:** Individuals who learn while reading, making notes or those who like to make lists in order to learn are called Read/write learners.
- **Kinesthetic learners:** Individuals who learn through moving, touching and doing more often and express themselves better through action are called kinesthetic learners. They are somewhat similar to Kolb's accommodators.

### **Dunn Model**

Rita Dunn and Kenneth Dunn have identified five dimensions of stimuli which influence a learner to achieve which are represented as different strands. They are environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological and psychological dimensions. Each strand has a few elements that characterize an individual's learning preferences. Around twenty one elements are identified by the Duns out of which some are biological and some others are developmental as shown in the figure below. In this model the learning style is an individual's preference or aversion to the elements in each strand. This is one of the most popular models used especially in schools to assess the learning styles.





### Dunn and Dunn Model of Learning Style

#### Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory

Howard Gardner has identified seven different kinds of intelligences. His theory is based on the fact that learners have different minds and therefore understand, learn, remember and perform in different ways. Gardner says “all human beings are capable of at least seven different ways of knowing the world... we are all able to know the world through language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical thinking, and the use of the body to solve problems or to make things, an understanding of other individuals, and an understanding of ourselves.” (Gardner 1991, p12) According to him individuals differ in the strength of intelligences and the ways in which such intelligences are employed to carry out various tasks, solve problems, and make progress.

Even Gardner’s theory supports that there are different ways or styles of learning.

#### Why mesh? Research

There have been several questions raised about learning styles. There has been considerable amount of research done on learning styles. Several researchers in the field of ESL Education feel that matching teaching to the learning style would benefit the learners. Several empirical research studies confirmed that “congruence between teaching strategies and learning styles has had a positive impact on the academic achievement (Arthurs, 2007; Beck, 2001; Felder & Brent, 2005; Ford & Chen, 2001; Rogers, 2009; Shaugnessy, 1998), motivation (Bell, 2007; Tulbure, 2010; Zhang, 2006) and attitudes toward learning (Beck, 2001; Felder, 1993; Marshall, 1991).” Tulbure 2012. It must also be mentioned that there are a few studies that reject this by saying that the student performance or learning has not been affected in any way by matching the teaching strategies to the preferred learning styles. Massa & Mayer’s study published in 2006 as well as Akdemir and Koszalka’s study published in 2008 admits this opinion.



There are also other research studies which show that a mismatch between the teaching strategies and the learning styles also had benefited the learners since it challenged the learners to use a style other than their preferred learning style. Two significant studies that support this view are Baker & Cooke, 1988 and Kowoser & Berman, 1996.

In the light of these studies, it is difficult to say whether meshing teaching strategies to learner's learning styles would be the best solution to enhance learning and academic performance. Proponents of learning style would still say that optimal instruction is possible only when a teacher is aware of the learning styles of his/her students. Harold Pashler and his colleagues conducted a meta-research on learning style research and concluded that "there's no adequate evidence base to justify incorporating learning style assessments into general educational practice" and recommended further research. So the question of whether teachers should match their teaching strategies to learning styles is still inconclusive.

### **Why is an awareness of learning styles important for a teacher?**

Diversity is part of every classroom; there are regional, socio-cultural, gender differences apart from the background knowledge and specific abilities they bring into the classroom. The pace at which each individual learns may also be different. It includes diversity in the learning styles as well. An awareness of the different learning styles certainly could help teachers in planning, communicating with the learners in the classroom and also in assessing what has been learnt. It can help one adapt, not match exactly, one's teaching style based on their learning styles or preferences. It is not possible for any teacher to individually customize teaching based on each student's style of learning. Yet, trying to include a variety of activities can help learners in maximizing their learning potential and also in challenging them to try out new ways of learning.

Accepting that there can be differences in the way each learner absorbs what is taught in the classroom is the first step towards inclusive classroom. Therefore, insights into learning styles help teachers design and execute classroom activities and assessments more inclusively. This would certainly enhance learning in a classroom and also make learning interesting for the learners.

### **What can we do as teachers of English to make our classrooms inclusive based on our awareness of different learning styles?**

While planning a lesson, teachers can include a variety of activities to provide an opportunity for different kinds of learners. Inclusion of activities like Pictionary (making learners express ideas and concepts through pictures) or dumb charades in the classroom would help the learners who prefer to actively do or participate in the learning of a topic. Of course for such activities to be successful, teachers need to plan what kind of language items could be taught



through such activities. For example, idioms can be made more interesting to learn with the help of dumb charades activity. A demonstration on a topic being covered could also be helpful to a certain section of learners who prefer doing things. Activities involving all the senses would be more inclusive than the ones involving only one sense, like listening or watching or speaking. Integrating different skills needs more planning on the part of the teacher.

Similarly, group discussions, team activities, debates could further benefit those learners who work better in pairs and groups rather than work individually. Of Course, the regular individual assignments and exercises should not be ignored. Having pair work, group work along with individual work can include various learner preferences. Teachers can also plan to balance the kind of information being provided to the student. Too much of concrete information or only abstract concepts could be difficult to digest for certain learners. In the classroom, our lectures could be interspersed with brief intervals of thinking time to enable the learners who need a little more thinking time to grasp what is being said. Asking questions or letting the learners raise questions would also help here. At times, a problem solving exercise could be more useful than a regular lecture. For every kind of task or activity explicit instructions need to be provided to facilitate students to understand what they need to do.

Encouraging students to take or make notes can help learners who prefer to learn through reading and writing. Some learners prefer to highlight main points or key words in the text. Including brief writing exercises or activities can cut down monotony and make learning more interesting.

Several other activities such as role plays and simulations which encourage learners to physically experience learning, transferring textual information into diagrams and vice versa, encouraging self-learning through internet could also be useful and cater to different learners with different preferences or learning styles

### **Assessment Planning**

Even as teachers plan their assessment, they can include different kinds of tests and tasks throughout the course in order to accommodate learners with different learning styles. While some may fare well in written tests there could be others who can present the subject better orally or might be more comfortable doing a project related to the topic. A continual evaluation throughout the course instead of one final summative assessment is more accommodative. Even in the final examination, including different types of questions instead of just one type ensures inclusiveness. It is better to choose different combinations of tests. For example a combination of oral and written



tests, individual assignments and team assignments or objective and descriptive questions can be used in assessments to give a fair opportunity to learners with different styles.

In conclusion, individuals differ in their preferences in learning and in order to make one's teaching inclusive, a teacher can choose a variety of texts and tasks to make instruction most effective.

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## **Problems of Inclusivity in an Intra-cultural and Multi-cultural ELT classroom**

*Dr. Melissa Helen*

There are drastic and unprecedented changes in the world at large, and, particularly in countries like India. We are now living with technology and the unimagined consequences of it. As we all live at a time when the size of the world has shrunk to a village- globalised village, the position of India is unique. It is both a developing/ third world nation but also it enjoys a superior position as it is far ahead of many third world countries. The Indian Diaspora's contribution and accomplishments in the developed nations is quite significant. An interesting factor that forms the crux of my paper is based on the fact that while many of our students go to other countries for higher education, India is attracting students from other third world countries for higher education.

As an erstwhile colony of the British, in one sense we have been blessed with the benefit of an early exposure to the English language that gives us an edge over other South Asians, particularly our neighbours the Chinese. But this has also proved detrimental by popularising literature from the West at the cost of Indigenous literature; and many of us grew up reading literature that was born out of a culture, a people, a land and a climate that was altogether alien. We had to depend a lot on our imagination in understanding. However, there is a world of difference today: while we had to depend on our imagination to a great extent, the world of television and cinema-both national/regional, and, Hollywood has eased the situation to a considerable extent. The students of this generation who read literature that relates to English as foreign language/culture are not altogether alien to certain things read by them; the revolution in the world of information technology has brought in a sense of familiarity of cultures, weather, food habits and life styles.

Another interesting development in ELT today lies in the status of English language in the world is quite unique. It has evolved not just as a world language, but as '*the* world language of our time'. As Bozzini and Leenerts observe, Globalisation and 'global hegemony' of English language resulted in the spawning of numerous varieties of English that in turn leads one to the question the 'ownership of English' (xi).

In India, the emergence of post-colonial studies, awareness of a neo-colonialism and the need to de-colonise has strengthened the argument to include more English texts that are written by either indigenous writers or texts translated from native languages. As a nation reeling with the burden of colonialism, we have tried to de-colonise ourselves by a slow phasing out of the Western, Eurocentric selections for ELT courses and increased the proportion of texts written by Indians in



English and also translations. However, we have other daunting tasks and challenges that need to be faced. At the college level, ELT in India faces multiple problems.

On the one hand, we have students from regional medium of instruction coming to the metropolitan cities for higher education. And on the other hand, a few cities in India attract students from other Asian and African countries for Higher education. A multi-lingual country like ours that allows state governments to implement a three-language formula till a secondary stage enables students from different regions to consolidate the position of the respective regional language. While it facilitates and promotes the cause of education particularly in the rural belt, and, to some extent in the metros by underprivileged sections of the society today, it results in a widely heterogeneous ELT classroom.

It is a peculiar situation at the college level when the heterogeneous students of our country are joined by students from Kenya, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Bhutan and other countries. It is a redeeming factor if Colleges that face this situation have the autonomy to design their own syllabus for their programs. With reference to the notion of inclusivity in the scenario described, the crux of the matter lies in answering a highly pertinent question -- whose inclusivity needs to be addressed?

Is it the regional medium students from India?

Is it the students from different nations?

Is it the few fairly competent Indian students from the privileged sections- who at times may be a minority?

These are the challenges that need to be addressed in designing the syllabus and selecting the texts/ materials used in an ELT program for the undergraduates. Whose inclusivity do we concern ourselves now? And is it possible to conceive a literature without the borders -- of language, culture and region? Societies are richly laden with customs, myths and folklore, are also heavily burdened with superstitions and various social inequalities. Language and literature that is essentially born out of a society will therefore be peculiar to the country of the writer. In the context of the multicultural classroom that was described, the possibility of materials for ELT courses appears bleak.

A major problem in choosing the material or selecting the text/s for ELT would be choosing culturally suitable texts. Culture and the notion of culture in a context leads to more than one possibility. Juliane House in her essay "What Is an Intercultural Speaker?" refers to the anthropological and the humanistic concept of culture and the various levels of the anthropological sense of it (8). Further, we need to examine the notion of culture with respect to the target language



or the target learner. If we concern ourselves with the target language then we have already discussed that English language today is no longer dominated by the British, Australian and North American nations (BANA), rather, it is a world language.( Leenerts and Bozinni).

In their introduction to the book, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, Mike Byram and Peter Grundy state that in language teaching and learning, culture is generally associated with the culture of a target language (1). If this notion is accepted as a premise to work with, then in the context of the English becoming a world language and not predominantly of the BANA nations, then determining the culture(s) of the target language as well as the culture of learner(s) is indeed a complex issue in a multi-cultural, intra-cultural, and multi-lingual Indian metropolitan classroom.

The heterogeneity of an ELT class at the higher education is due to the migration of students from their native/rural places to join a college in the urban areas. In addition to this the policy of reservation also helps many from the disadvantaged groups to join either in a good college or a University. Hence ELT at the college/ University level becomes more challenging and it calls for the greater resourcefulness of the teacher.

A major challenge in choosing suitable materials and activities for our ELT classroom is that students from a reasonably good exposure to English as well as those from the creamy layer of the society find the ELT curriculum at the college level unappealing, unchallenging and non-contributory to their existing language skills. While students from the public and elite schools may find the ELT texts and activities substandard to what they have already acquired, the disadvantaged group struggles to cope with the same.

A second challenge in our heterogeneous classrooms is the attitude and aptitude of students. Talking about this issue, Stephen Krashen says, “Language aptitude (as measured by standard tests) and attitude (affective variables) appear to be related to second language achievement but are not related to each other. It is possible to have high attitude and low aptitude, low aptitude and high attitude, or both high or both low” (19). And it is needless and time consuming to discuss the permutations and combinations of the varying degrees of aptitude and attitude that pose difficulties for a satisfying teaching learning experience in a few ELT classrooms.

In brief, it bears well to remember that on one hand we need to deal with the highly indifferent attitude of students with a fairly good aptitude- as is reflected in their absenteeism, disinterestedness and even disdain at times; and, on the other hand, we also need to deal with the highly motivated students with a low aptitude. Both extremities pose insurmountable difficulties to have meaningful activities and a successful teaching-learning process. Issues relating to gender,



generation, and ethnicity among others also need to be factored in. Globalisation seems to have created a behemoth of diversity that appears to go out of our control like the Frankenstein monster.

Factors that need to be considered in the designing of a syllabus and the selection of texts for ELT in a multicultural context are related to culture, history, traditions and gender. Balance needs to be maintained in terms of the stories, poems, essays, memoirs and plays prescribed/selected for study. Texts with an exhaustive list of activities based on the LSRW skills and the soft skills may have its own challenges. In our large classrooms the activities may fall either flat on the students from low proficiency, or be hijacked by their counterparts or lead to an unmanageable situation when both demand vociferous attention. Many times it is left to the teachers' resourcefulness to cope with the situations.

One should also remember that the element of reading for pleasure should not be inundated by philosophical and serious topics. Further, a complex lesson that requires elaborate explanation deters a student from inculcating a habit of reading and self-study. Thematically, texts which are more didactic in their theme pose challenges in engaging the attention of readers/learners who are in the early stages of their higher education.

George Bozzini and Cynthia A Leenerts, faculty at the George Washington University, USA, have compiled a book: *Literature Without Borders: International literature in English for Student Writers* that caters to a multicultural context of their country. In addition to the dominant European and North American writers, their selection encompasses literature from writers of Chinese, Malaysians, Mexican, Pakistani, Ontario, Vietnam, Caribbean, African, Sri Lankan and Indian origin. The topics range from heritage, family, community, and love, Faith, Nature, to identity, alienation, immigrant and post-colonial experience. It is a comprehensive selection as it is representative of human experience that is written by people all over the world.

Bozzini and Leenerts compiled the book exclusively for young writers in the making. In their editorial essay, Bozzini and Leenerts observe: "each type of exercise makes particular assumptions about teaching and learning literature." They assume that students have developed a "fundamental knowledge of their own world, well-defined cultural values, and a burgeoning world view".

One may attempt a compilation of similar nature. However, the efficacy of it in the multicultural and heterogeneous classrooms of the Indian higher education is indeed dubitable. In the context of the representations of students from the districts of our state, metropolitan cities,



other states, and international students from Middle East and African countries, we cannot make similar assumptions that Bozzini and Leenerts make.

While it appears to be possible to have a literature without borders that includes the entire gamut of 'World Englishes', the questions of inclusivity remain unanswered. Though we may include themes, writers and experiences that appear all-inclusive, such a text may not really include the experience of students from such widely differing backgrounds. The teachers need to keep in mind that "an intercultural approach should be applied in which general cultural patterns and structures are introduced and unfamiliar concepts are compared to the cultural environment of the students (Wandel, 74). However, the practical difficulties of time and many other constraints do not offer solutions nor simple and easy implementation of the suggestions since we need to deal with intra-cultural and multicultural students.

Hence, one is forced to accept that no single type of content is appropriate for all teaching settings. As the needs and conditions of each classroom are very peculiar, a specific recommendation for a successful combination is not possible. It becomes mandatory for the teacher to be as resourceful as possible and deal with the exigencies of the intra-cultural, multicultural and heterogeneous classrooms.

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# **Instructional Materials in Alternative Education: Pedagogic Potential and Problems**

*Dr. Revathi Srinivas*

## **Introduction**

Materials for language learning can be anything that is effective in facilitating the learning of a language, including course-books, videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, websites and mobile phone interactions, though, inevitably, much of it is taken to be printed materials. Materials can be informative (informing the learner about the target language), instructional (guiding the learner in practicing the language), experiential (providing the learner with experience of the language in use), eliciting (encouraging the learner to use the language) and exploratory (helping the learner to make discoveries about the language). Granted that different learners learn in different ways (Oxford 2002) ideal materials aim to be inclusive and provide all these ways of acquiring a language for the learners to experience and sometimes select from. However, the reality is that most commercially produced materials focus on merely informing their users about language features and on guiding them to practice these features, a fact that is highlighted by Richard's (2001: 251) comment that 'instructional materials generally serve as the basis of much of the language input that learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom'. The same point is made by Tomlinson et al. (2001) and Masuhara et al. (2008) in their reviews of currently used adult EFL coursebooks: both conclude that the emphasis in most course-books is on providing explicit teaching and practice after all these decades of materials development. The point is that most materials are still teacher-centered, and not learner-centered, being dedicated to creating what are called "teaching opportunities" in ELT circles.

Materials development refers to all the processes made use of by practitioners who produce and/or use materials for language learning, including materials evaluation, their adaptation, design, production, exploitation, and research. Ideally, all of these processes should be given consideration and should have an interface in the making of language-learning materials. Considering how important these materials are, surprisingly scant attention has been paid to them until recently in the literature on applied linguistics. It was not until the mid-1990s that materials development began to be treated seriously by academics as a field in its own right. Earlier experts tended to regard this as something that practitioners did incidentally, or under a sub-section of methodology in which materials are usually presented as examples of methods in action rather than as examples of the principles of materials development. A few books and articles in the 1970s and 1980s focused on such issues as materials evaluation and selection or on giving practical advice on writing materials. However, it has been the books of the mid-nineties onwards (e.g. McDonough & Shaw 1993, 2003;



Cunningsworth 1995; Tomlinson 1998a, 2003a, 2008a; McGrath 2002; Harwood 2010a) that have stimulated universities and teacher-training institutions to give more time to how materials can be developed and exploited to facilitate language acquisition better.

### **The Context of Evaluation**

Tomlinson (2003) defines materials evaluation as ‘a procedure that involves measuring the value (or potential value) of a set of learning materials’. No set of materials is likely to be perfect, and there does not seem as yet an agreed set of criteria or procedures for evaluation. This is inevitable ‘as the needs, objectives, background and preferred learning styles of the participants differ from context to context’ (Tomlinson, 2003c:15). As Mukundan and Ahour (2010) argue, evaluation procedures should not be too demanding in terms of time and expertise and must be realistically useful to teachers.

The criteria of these procedures can be examined in two stages: an external evaluation that offers a brief overview of materials from the outside (cover, introduction, table of contents), which is then followed by a closer and more detailed internal evaluation.

### **Context Analysis**

Cunningsworth (1979) notes that ‘course materials are not intrinsically good or bad—rather they are more or less effective in helping students to reach particular goals in specific situations’. The second part of the statement, that evaluation needs to be learner- and context-related is uncontroversial. The following **learner factors** need to be considered in materials development:

1. age range
2. proficiency level in the target language
3. first language
4. academic and educational level
5. socio-cultural background
6. attitudes to learning
7. previous language-learning experience (of the target language)
9. language-learning aptitude
10. preferred learning styles

It is also important to identify **learners’ needs** in relation to the target language. Some possible categories are listed below:

1. language-skill emphasis
2. contexts and situations of use, which may require different levels of formality
3. sub skills
4. functions
5. language system (grammar, vocabulary, phonology) emphasis
6. language forms (structures, vocabulary items, features of stress or intonation)



7. whether language systems will be used productively, receptively, or both
8. attention given to mechanics (handwriting, spelling, punctuation)

Information about a few factors related to the institution(s) and the specific programme for which material is developed is also required. This calls for a macro level analysis which takes into account such factors as the following:

1. aims of the education
2. language policy and the role of the target language within the country
3. aims of language education

### **External Evaluation**

External evaluation enables the evaluator to assess what Tomlinson (2003) calls ‘analysis’ in that ‘it asks questions about what the materials contain, what they aim to achieve and what they ask learners to do’. Littlejohn’s (1998) model for external evaluation is used here in this assessment.

### **The Context of the Study**

India’s Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009) is a radical measure guaranteeing a “justiciable legal framework entitling all children between 6-14 years a stress and anxiety free education that is equitable and non-discriminatory”. It is the origin of the country’s flagship programs, the Elementary Education Project, (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or SSA), and the Rajiv Vidya Mission (RVM) which aim to bridge gender and social gaps, reduce the number of school dropouts, and provide quality education until at least grade eight with four core aims—universal access, enrolment, retention, and achievement.

The RVM, emphasizes teacher accountability and privileges Alternative Education by making special provisions for training out-of-school children (OOSC) through personalizing learning environments for teaching and learning of English along with other subjects. The RVM conducts these programs in Residential Special Training Centres, (RSTCs). The Centres train OOSCs for three to twelve months depending upon their language competency who then join their age appropriate mainstream education.

Since the inception of the SSA program, an impressive 20 million out-of-school children have joined the age-appropriate mainstream classes on completion of the special training courses. But their proficiency in English has remained persistently low, as research indicates<sup>1</sup>. The academic issues and challenges in the teaching and learning of English on the AE program are many, and demand solutions that have professional experience and expertise. This study aims to evaluate the bridge course materials of the AE programs to arrive at a better understanding of the dynamics in English language pedagogy at the primary and upper primary level for OOSC.



## Materials

**Title:** *My English Course Book I, II and III*

**Authors:** Selected English Language Teachers of Andhra Pradesh

**Publisher:** State Council of Educational Research and Training, Andhra Pradesh

A. Book as a whole

1. Type: General, main course, class use for post beginners

2. Intended audience

Age-range 6-14

School: RSTCs

Location: specific—RSTC

3. Extent

a. Components: durable student's book

b. Total estimated time: 3-12 months

4. Design and layout

Book I—96 pages

Book II—98 pages

Book III—110 pages

5. Distribution

a. Material

Teacher

Learners

- Answer key

x

x

- Guidance on the use of material

x

x

b. Access

- index/word list

√

√

- detailed content list

√

√

- section objective

x

x

6. Subdivision

7. Overview of an extract

\* See Appendix 1

## Internal Evaluation

Based on a study of various material evaluation checklists/frameworks available, a checklist has been created focusing on four categories

a. language components

b. tasks, activities and exercises

c. language skills

d. general considerations

The comprehensive list of the categories and subcategories as well as their related items is presented below:

### I. Language Components: Pronunciation, Grammar and Vocabulary

- Completeness and appropriateness in the presentation of pronunciation activities
- Completeness and adequacy of practice in pronunciation
- Presentation of grammar exercises/activities in a logical manner and in increasing order of difficulty
- Correspondence between students' levels and the load of new words
- Systematic gradation of vocabulary from simple to complex items
- Repetition of the new vocabulary in subsequent lessons for reinforcement
- Presentation of new vocabulary words in a variety of ways (e.g. glosses, multi-glosses, appositives)



- Introduction of new vocabulary words at an appropriate rate so that learners are able to retain new vocabulary
- Repetition of new vocabulary words in subsequent lessons to reinforce their meaning and use
- Use of new lexical items in interactive and task-based activities to communicate
- Use of top-down techniques for learning new vocabulary words

## **II. Tasks, activities, and exercises**

Developing comprehension, and test knowledge of main ideas, details, and sequence of ideas

Involving vocabulary and structures which buildup the learner's repertoire

Providing practice in different types of written work

Providing a pattern of review within lessons and cumulatively testing new materials by the book

Promoting meaningful communication by referring to realistic activities and situations

## **III. Language Skills**

### **Reading**

Adequate and appropriate exercises and tasks for improving reading comprehension

Devising appropriate tasks for improving reading techniques

Using top-down and bottom-up reading strategies

Selecting authentic texts for exposure to different language styles

Selecting texts that represent the variety of literary genres

Texts containing multiple sentence structures

Promoting critical thinking skills

### **Writing**

Enough exercises to include pre-writing, writing, and post-writing

Presenting suitable patterns to improve writing

Coverage in terms of different kinds of writing

### **Listening**

Adequate and appropriate tasks to improve listening

Organizing tasks from simple to complex (adequate sequence)

Use of authentic listening excerpts

### **Speaking**

Appropriateness of individual and group speaking activities

Completeness, appropriateness and adequacy of the speaking tasks

Focus on language for social interactions

## **IV. General Considerations**

### **A: Content**

- Providing situation so that students think and act critically
- Relationship between the content of the texts and real-life situations



- Addressing social problems especially the problem of inequality in the society
- Focusing on the issues that are of immediate concern to learners/practitioners
- Focusing on the latest ELT approaches and methodology
- Providing guidance to teachers in evaluating their students
- Providing clear statement of the objectives of the course and of each unit
- Introducing self-check exercises and reviews at certain intervals
- Presentation of material either topically or functionally in a logical, organized manner
- Providing instructions clearly for the conduct of an activity

### **B: Attractiveness of the Text and Physical Make-up**

- Appeal of the cover of the book
- High aesthetic quality of visual imagery
- Appropriateness of the illustrations

### **C. Context**

- Suitability of the material for the level it is intended for
- Match between course goals and materials

### **D. Structure**

- Balance between students' level of proficiency and sentence length
- Appropriateness of the number of grammatical points as well as their sequence
- Gradually increasing of structure complexity to suit the growing reading ability of the students
- Using current everyday language by the writer
- Logical sequence of sentences and paragraphs
- Introducing linguistic items in meaningful situations to facilitate understanding

### **Findings of the evaluation**

The evaluation framework was designed with the aim of assessing the ability of the materials to promote learning in a particular context. This aim is reflected in the selected criteria. While some existing evaluation checklists provided some relevant and useful examples, many criteria were irrelevant to my purposes and context. For example, the criterion regarding the affordability of the materials are irrelevant to my context as the materials have already been designed and distributed (free of cost) to learners.

### **Materials**

The materials evaluated were the course books developed specially for students of Residential Special Training Centres (RSTCs) that function as a part of Rajiv Vidya Mission (SSA), Andhra Pradesh, meant for learners between 6-14 years for a training period of 3-12 months



depending on their language competency. Nodal officers distribute books free of cost to all the learners. The learners are also given food and shelter.

### **Learning Context**

Learners at these RSTCs are from economically marginalized groups, backward tribes, and immigrants and all of them are school drops outs. Based on their performance in a test conducted by the Headmaster/mistress, and the class teacher of the nearest government school, they are admitted to Level I or Level II or Level III of the training. These learners are trained through specially designed instruction materials, completion of which will enable admission to their age-appropriate mainstream education. Some of the learners have learnt English for a minimum of two years and have slightly differing proficiency levels. Most of the learners are absolute beginners, irrespective of their biological age.

### **Results of Evaluation**

#### **General Appearance**

The textbook cover is bright and colourful and probably looks attractive to young learners. The contents of the textbook also probably look interesting and delightful to young learners. The font size and type used are suitable for the particular learners.

#### **Layout and Design**

The layout and design of the materials reflect a very structured approach. There is a clear structure and consistency in approach and method throughout the books with each unit following the same basic pattern of presenting a rhyme, a reading text, a few language practice activities and a text for promoting extensive reading habits. This is good for learners who like the familiarity of such a structured approach, but can be straitjacketing for those who prefer more variety. The illustrations are generally realistic and functional, but some are ambiguous with children sometimes being unable to negotiate the intended meaning of some illustrations.

#### **Methodology**

The core teaching methodology is basically a Presentation-Practice-Production(PPP) approach contrary to the claim made in the foreword: 'The Basic package is based on word approach to enrich English language among the learners'. The PPP approach is reflected in the layout and design of the textbook, the types of activities it includes, as well as the instructions to the teacher.



## Activities and exercise

Reflecting the PPP-based approach, the activities in the books are designed for learners to practice language that has already been presented. There isn't an appropriate balance of activity types and sufficient scope for individual, pair, and group work. The activities allow for some individual creativity, but overall reflect the grammatical/structural approach taken as output is restricted to producing forms which have been specified in advance. While many activities are sufficiently challenging and engaging for young learners, some appear to be of little interest to them. For example, an activity (Book III- page 5), where learners repeatedly ask each other 'What is your name? Are you a boy or a girl? How old are you' and so on can, without adaptation, quickly descend into an almost robotic race to the finish. Such activities, as presented, do not engage the learners' interest or provide a sufficient linguistic or cognitive challenge. An exercise (on page 47, Book II) asks the learners to 'Sing the rhyme with action and add lines to it'.

Crow is black  
Parrot is green  
Crane is white  
Peacock is blue (sic)

The rhyme is a whimsical list of birds and colors, and is bad grammar too, since the generic is introduced without the article.

The learners and the teacher would be at a loss as the rhyme does not entail any action. By and large, the activities and exercises in the three books do not provide any opportunity to the learner to manipulate language. Another case in point is an activity on page 48 in Book II that demands the learners to draw a bird they like the most. The second part of the activity: ***What are the interesting points about it? Discuss.***

Name	Description (sic)	Usefulness

## Language Skills and Elements

The materials make an attempt to provide opportunities for developing the four skills. While the reading texts focus on developing factual/literal comprehension skills, listening is developed through practice in saying aloud a few words that occur in the text or identifying the rhyming words in a poem and repeating them after the teacher. All the lessons in the three books focus on developing writing skills—sentence and discourse level. Speaking is given a step-motherly treatment. Quite often, the children know the words, but are unaware of the meanings.



The materials provide ample scope for the learner to acquire new vocabulary. However, the exercise types are restricted to spelling (missing letters and identifying words in a maze). From the first lesson in Book II onwards, learners are expected to ‘[d]iscuss the meanings of the words/phrases which you don’t know and note them in the box given below:’

S No	Word/Phrase	Meaning	S No	Word/Phrase	Meaning

The material developers do not provide guidance to the teachers or the learners in ‘discussing’ the meaning of a word/phrase. This exercise faithfully follows the pattern of all the reading texts in Book II and III. Moreover, none of the form, meaning, and use aspects of vocabulary are addressed in any of the three books. Grammatical competence is developed through pluralization and antonyms for the most part, with some passing attention given to past tense and the use of conjunctions. One exercise is dedicated to teaching punctuation. Some of the grammatical items here are wrongly presented. For example, in Book III, page 45, in discussing the use of the words ‘as’ and ‘since’ that express reason, the material writers cite the following example:

‘Since her childhood she was a great singer.’ . . . ‘As’ and ‘since’ are used to begin a sentence to express reason.’ Similarly in one of the exercises that practices antonyms, learners are asked to give the opposite for the word ‘lip’!

### Language Content

The language presented provides models of Indian English and is unfortunately either ungrammatical or incoherent, as amply illustrated above. For example, in book I, page 15, the writers present this sentence as an input, *Milk is favourite drink to cat; Milk is in the can.*; another example from Book II, page 49, . . . *It was about to eating.*; Book III-page 17—*The king of rats asked the cat boldly, “Oh Cat Sir, why are you so quite (sic)?”*

The controlled grammatical syllabus restricts most of the language presented to short question-and-answer dialogues. Some language items are also irrelevant for the learners, for example, *That is Ms. Rekha. She is my mother* (page 9, Book II) is socio linguistically inappropriate in the Indian context.

A rhyme excerpted from Book III (page 30) will further illustrate the problem:



## Trees

*Trees are the kindest things I know,  
They do no harm, they simply grow  
And spread a shade for sleepy cows,  
And gather birds among the boughs. ... (sic)  
They are the first when day's begun  
To touch the beams of morning sun,  
They are the last to hold the light  
When evening changes to night,  
And when a moon floats on the sky  
They hum a drowsy lullaby  
Of sleepy children long ago .....(sic)  
Trees are the kindest things I know.*

## Topic Content

The topic content is generally realistic, and is likely to appeal to young learners. The materials also mostly avoid presenting negative racial, cultural, and sexual stereotypes. However, most of the topics revolve around the animal world.

## Others

One of the glaring inadequacies of the materials is the negligence of punctuation marks. None of the exercises in all the three books are free of errors either in wrong use or deletion of punctuation marks. A notable feature is bad punctuation, particularly the lack of full-stops after the sentences in all the exercises/rhymes/texts in all the three books. Rubrics of exercises/activities are wrongly worded. For example, 'You are visiting 'City' will you go to see Jimmy Jet?' (sic) (page 98, Book III). Comprehension questions that follow a text are semantically and grammatically incorrect/ inappropriate. For example, 'What do you use to see the things?' or 'What parts of body do you use to walk?' (page 25, Book II) or 'How many days is Sankranthi celebrated?' (page 63, Book III); 'What do a farmer produce from his field?' (page 80, Book I). The list is endless. The tendency seems to be the literal translation from Telugu to English.

## Summary

In sum, the evaluation of *My English Course book I, II, and III* reveals that:

- the materials are colourful and appear interesting and fun to young learners,
- the language and topic content are appropriate in a limited way, and need to be adapted or supplemented,
- the materials, while based on a particular approach to language teaching and learning, can be adapted to facilitate alternative approaches,
- there are major flaws in language use and grammar which need the immediate attention of the Board, and
- the materials do not provide any guidance to the teacher in assessing the learners.



The Course books analyzed here are thus beset with problems of all kinds, and need to be replaced. They are instructive as an index of the cavalier attitude that flows from a neglect of the poorer sections of our society, and illustrate graphically how much we need teacher training in producing materials and, quite simply, in managing a class.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Analysis of *My English Course Book I, II, and III.*

Book I Unit	Let's Interact	Let's sing	Let's read	Let's write	Let's listen and say	Let's do
<b>1. CAR</b> 6 pages	5 schema-building questions	Reciting a rhyme on car; identifying the target word.	Identifying the letters 'c' 'a' 'r' in a grid	Read, colour the word 'car' and trace 'car'	Thematic vocab-parts of a car	Colouring-motor skills
<b>2. DOG</b> 4 pages	5 questions based on visual input; 1 personal association question.	Reciting a rhyme on a pet dog; identifying the target word.	Identifying the letters 'd' 'o' 'g' in 10 words. b. identifying the 3 letters in a grid.	Read, colour and write the word 'dog'	Thematic vocab—canine parts	Drawing-colouring and naming the parts
<b>3. VAN</b> 4 pages	4 visual based question, 1 general	Singing a rhyme. identifying the target word.	Identifying 'van' in sentences. Identifying 'v' 'a' 'n' in a grid	Read, colour the word 'van'; read, trace, copy	Thematic vocab-parts of a van	Collecting pics from various sources and pasting; naming parts
<b>4. CAT</b> 5 pages	1 question on visual. 4 general	Singing a rhyme identifying the target word.	a) Identifying 'cat' in 6 different sentences, saying the word aloud. b) Identifying 'c' 'a' 't' in a grid. c) Read the word and colour it. d) matching words—car-car; dog-dog, etc	a) Read, trace and write b) letters of words in a list of letters. Identify two animals and two vehicles (revising)	Thematic vocab-feline parts	Read and copy; but rubrics say ' identify the words you know in the following sentences.
<b>5. BOX</b> 4 pages	2 questions on visual; 3 general-personalized	Reciting rhyme; identifying the target word.	Identifying a few letters of alphabet in a table.	a) Coloring a box; b) colouring the letters in 'box' c) Tracing the word and copying it	Thematic vocab-words related to 'box' (as a container)	Game—rolling a word dice and crossing the word in the grid. b) collecting different pictures of a box/bag
<b>6. JUG</b> 4 pages	5 visual input based questions	Recite; identify the word 'jug'	Identifying 'j' 'u' 'g' from a table	Read the word and colour it Read the words (previous lessons also), trace, copy	a) Thematic vocab—parts of a jug b) riddle	Draw a diagram
<b>7. TAP</b> 4 pages	2 qns on visual; 3 general-experience	Rhyme; identifying the word 'tap'.	Identifying 't' 'a' 'p' in a grid Matching two words-spelling (car-car; box-box) review	Read and colour the word 'tap'. Read the word 'tap'; trace and copy it.	Words related to tap.	Drawing pictures of water containers.
<b>8. BOY</b> 5 pages	4 visual input qns; one personal	Rhyme; identifying the target word-boy	Identifying the target letters in a grid Read; colour the word 'boy' Word building from a list of words in table (review )	Read; trace and copy the word 'boy'	Parts of body-thematic vocab b) read and write: parts of body based on clues	Pictures of different clothes we wear and paste in a grid.
<b>9. ZOO</b> 6 pages * Order of presentation changes in this unit	3 qns on visual; 1 personal opinion	Rhyme; circle the word 'zoo' in the rhyme.	Picture word association-saying aloud	Read the word 'zoo'; colour it. b) read, trace and copy the word 'zoo'	Thematic vocab related to zoo-names of animals Find the odd one out—visual discrimination-animals Visual-verbal association	Paste pics of animals and write their names.
<b>10. WATCH</b> 4 pages Order of presentation	3 qns on visual; 2 personal experience	Sing and add lines		Read the word and colour it. b) visual-verbal association—review of words in previous	Words related to watch	Draw a watch.



tion changes in this unit				units c) spelling-missing letters d) read the word, trace and copy		
11. QUILL 5 pages	5 qns on visual	Sing and add lines	Read the word; colour and copy it b) identify the letters of the word in a grid and circle c) matching birds with their quills	Read the words, trace, copy— revision of words previously introduced	Words related to birds-- peacock	Draw a quill Collect different quills and paste
12. ICE CREAM 4 pages Order of presentation changes in this unit	2 qns on visual; 3 general	Sing and add lines	Read the word, colour and copy. b) read the words, trace and copy (review of previously learnt words) c) visual-verbal association * Here reading and writing are combined	a) Identify the letters of the word in a grid. b) forming words from letters. Review of previously learnt vocab.	Words related to ice cream	
13. FISH 5 pages * Order of presentation changes	3 qns on visual; 2 personal experienc	Sing and add lines Identify the word 'fish'	Identify the letters 'f' 'l' 's' 'h' in a grid b) read and colour	a) Reading sentences related to fish. b) Filling the blanks. c) read, trace and copy (review of previously learnt lexis)	a) Words related to the parts of body of a fish b) Matching parts of sentences and saying them aloud.	a) Draw a fish, label its parts b) Say a few sentences on fish and write.
14. BOOK 4 pages *Order of presentation changes	2 qns on visual input; 3 prsnl xprn	Singing the rhyme; identifying the word 'book' circle	Read the word, colour it b) identify the letters of 'book' in a grid and circle. c) read and match upper case letters with lower case	Read the words, trace and copy (review of prev. lexis)	Words related to a book	Pictures of stationery items and paste
15. ABCD... 7 pages		Rhyme	Letters of alphabet-upper-lower; example words and pictures	Read and copy the letters—upper and lower case		Joining dots to form a picture-identification and naming-writing
16. NUMBER S 5 pages		Rhyme	Visual-verbal association (1-10) Reading phrases-visual-verbal association	a) Words from a circle—phonological identification and orthographic representation b) Matching numerals with their corresponding orthographic forms c) copying words--numbers		
17. I AM RANI 4 pages	2 qns on visual input; 2 general	Sing a rhyme—focus on verbs	Move from sentence level to discourse level reading. Read and write—ungrammatical word formation	Visual-verbal association—writing words.		
18. RAMIAH, A FARMER 6 pages	2 qns on visual input; 2 general	Singing a rhyme	Reading a text and answering T/F ques	Filling in the blanks. Writing a paragraph about one self. Plurals-verbal-visual Sentence level discourse based on discrete word practice		



19. GOOD FRIENDS 6 pages	3 qns on visual input	Singing a rhyme-words related to wild animals	a) Reading a story b) Practice in saying words aloud—text based c) answering ques. Factual	a) Writing the names of animals that live in a jungle and a village b) spelling-words with missing letters c) Identifying names of animals in a grid and writing them d) copying words		
20. WHERE I LIVE 6 pages	1 qn on visual; 4 personal expernc	Singing a rhyme	a) Reading a text. b) pronouncing words-phonological-orthographical associations c) Factual qns-5 d) Comprehension-T/F statements.	Differences between life in a village and a town. b) copying—sentences-incomplete	Matching visual with verbal-professions	Draw a mango tree and colour it.

**MY ENGLISH COURSEBOOK-II PRIMARY PACKAGE CLASS IV**

Unit	Let's sing	Let's interact	Let's read & understand	Let's do	Grammar	Let's Read and Enjoy
1. GREETING 7 pages	8 line rhyme-greeting people	1 qn on visual input; 4 qns on personal experience	a) Reading a poem; noting down unfamiliar words/expressions b) phonological and orthographical associations-reading aloud c) 3 qns based on the poem. d) filling in the blanks e) learning meanings of new words f) identifying words in a grid g) word formation-phrases h) creative writing—no verbal input i) writing sentences from a substitution table-controlled activity.	*clubbed with let's read and understand Copying sentences.	Formation of plurals	Bunny and Sunny (story of a rabbit and a dog)
2. MY FAMILY 8 pgs	8 line rhyme-family	5 qns on visual input and 5 personal expernc	Reading a description of a family.	a) Guessing the words of unfamiliar words b) Understanding a tree diagram; answering qns—4 qns—one doesn't belong to the family tree c) personalizing-writing the names of learners' family d) vocab related to family-relationship words e) Writing-copying—with blanks—personalized f) photos of one's family members-writing names g) fill in the blanks—personalized h) vocab-spelling-missing letters i) odd one out-understanding semantic relationships		The Three Rabbits
3. OUR SCHOOL 8 pgs	Singing a rhyme	5 qns on visual input; 5 personalized	a) Reading disjointed sentences. b) identifying unfamiliar lexis c) visual-verbal association at sentence level d) semantic relationship-matching e) spelling-missing letters f) odd one out g) thematic vocab-words related to school			A Lion and a Rat (Mouse?)



			h) writing a paragraph on one's school i) writing answers to qns related to one's school j) copying sentences.			
4. PARTS OF OUR BODY 9 pgs	Singing a rhyme	5 qns on visual input; 2 personalized	Reading a text on parts of body. h)	a) making a list of unfamiliar words b) identifying words related to parts of body in a grid-writing c) thematic vocab-parts of body d) writing about one's parts of body. e) Adding lines to an existing text—writing sentences f) riddle g) matching the parts to their functions h) spelling—jumbled letters—visual clues i) rhyme-parts of body j) Listening—following instructions k) filling up blanks	a) Practice in sentence structure-syntax b) forming plurals—regular& irregular	The Two Frogs
5. WHO AM I? 7 pgs	Singing the rhyme	3 qns on visual input	Descriptions of people—different professions	a) word meaning-unfamiliar word-list b) 5 factual questions c) filling in blanks d) writing different professions-context based e) writing answers to personal questions f) copying sentences	Syntax-word order	A Bad Friend
1. ANIMALS AND BIRDS	Singing a rhyme on animals and birds	1 qn on visual input; 5 personalized qns	Animal story—conversation as input	a) Meaning of unfamiliar words-in lists b) 3 wh questions c) fill ups d) description of animals-guided e) paste a pic of an animal-write about it-free writing f) description of domestic animals-guided writing (3 sentences) g) odd one out-semantic categories h) draw an animal/bird—discuss interesting 'points' i) word formation—anagrams j) making a list of animals and birds	g) compound words—matching	Wisdom
2. I AM SUMA	Song on vegs. Not related to the topic	3 qns on visual input; 2 personal-likes; 3 general	a) Reading: Introducing oneself.	b) listing unfamiliar words c) 4 factual qns d) application qn-introduce yourself-write a paragraph e) copying words f) word formation-anagram g) filling blanks-guided h) introducing others-guided-genre-model i) colouring and writing about the pics j) Miming-professions k) writing—vocab-names of birds and animals l) word formation with -er: suffixation	a) use of negative marker-'not' b) reinforcement of -ve marker in oral discourse-rhyme c) Asking yes not questions and responding. Drilling. d) practice in yes/no	Bats



					qns. Guided writing e) Reading and responding to qns— practice in responding in negatives in a guided conversation	
3. WHERE IS IT? 7 pgs	Singing a rhyme—what do you see?	4 qns on visual input; one personal expernc	Description of a house in a village.	Guessing word meaning b) fill ups based on the text c) free writing on a coconut tree d) copying sentence e) speaking-visual input-describing a pic f) spelling-missing letters g) guided composition-visual input		The Clever Rabbit
4. A LETTER 10 pages	Singing a rhyme	7 qns-personal exprnc; none on the visual input	Reading an informal letter	a) guessing word meaning b) answering text based qns—5 factual qns c) forming phrases—matching d) fill ups based on text e) composition-on any bird. f) naming 5 best friends g) writing a personal letter of invitation h) writing discrete items- words from a grid i) producing sentence level discourse based on inputs j) reciting a poem-acting k) speaking-picture description- verbs-ing forms l) riddle m) riddle	Practice in sub-verb agreement — substitution table	The Cunning Money Lender
5. GOOD HABITS	Singing the rhyme	Speaking-picture description—simple present-habitual actions	Reading a text describing a student’s routine	a) guess meaning of unknown words b) 2 personalized qns on the text and 1 text based c) Writing someone’s habits/routine d) picture description of a tree—visual and model; Ss continue—genre approach e) following instructions—Listening? f) T/F statements—not related to the text—general g) writing-sentence level discourse h) spelling-missing letters i) odd one out-categories	a) plural formation b) antonyms c) practice in simple present verbs forms—fill ups	The Proud Peacock

MY ENGLISH COURSE BOOK-III UPPER PRIMARY PACKAGE CLASS VI

Unit	Let’s Sing	Let’s interact	Let’s read and understand	Let’s do	Grammar	Let’s read and enjoy
1. THE LOST RING	---	Joke-visual; conversation	Reading the text on a lost ring	a) meaning of unfamiliar lexis-in a grid b) pronunciation- repeating after the teacher c) comprehension through circling the right answer in statements d) 4 factual qns; 1 inferential; 1 extrapolatory e) writing—sentence level discourse-substitution table f) speaking—model based discrete item utterance	a) antonyms of text based lexis b) formation of singulars from plural	The Seventh Donkey



				production about oneself g) filling in form-writing h) drawing the picture of a friend. i) paragraph writing: genre approach—replication j) vocab—identification of words in a grid (text based lexis)		
2. SWATHI 8 pgs	-----	3 qns on visual input; 1 opinion; conversation	Story	a) meaning of unfamiliar lexis in a grid b) pronunciation—repeating after the teacher c) gap filling—text based sentences d) T/F statements e) spelling-missing letters f) 3 factual comprehension qns; 1 extrapolatory; 1 inference g)writing: sentence construction h) anagram i) vocab-names of animals and birds from a grid	a) antonyms b) punctuation	The Story of The Pious Cat
3. BHAGIRATHA'S PRAYER 6 pgs		2 qns on visual input	Mythological story	a) meaning of unfamiliar lexis in a grid b) pronunciation of words-repeating after T c) T/F statements on text d) 3 txt based comprehension qns and 1 personalised qn e) sing and enjoy	a) antonyms b) tenses-past discrete words c) listing words with d and -ed forms	Appaji
4. A KIND TREE AND A LITTLE BOY 8 PGS	---	2 qns based on visual input; 1 prediction qn. Conversation as text—pre reading	2 page story  A song on trees followed by exercises b, c	a) meanings-list b) pronunciation-repeating after the T c) writing-fill ups-text based sentences d) 5 comprehension qns. Factual e) thematic vocab-parts of a tree <b>On the song</b> a) repeat of b and c with different words b) rhyming words c) names of any 5 trees d) draw a mango tree and write 5 sentences-free writing	a) antonyms-text based lexis	The First Fruit
5. A LETTER TO MY FRIEND 9pgs		1 visual input qn. 1 prediction qn, followed by a conversation (joke)	Letter as an input text—informal letter  b) Reading an invitation  c) song as input	a) meanings-list b) pronunciation—repeating after the T c) factual qns—3 d) matching national holidays with the dates (GK) <b>Based on invitation</b> 3 factual qns based on the invitation b) drafting an invitation <b>Song</b> Likes and dislikes: preparing an information card-writing		A Friend Indeed
6. (No title) 7 pgs		2 visual input; 1 prediction	Conversation as input	a) meaning-list b) pronunciation c) jumbled letters of the word—vocab--spelling d) vocab-spelling—missing words e) anagram f) 3 factual qns; 1 deep level comprehension qn-suggest a title g) writing a paragraph	a) Word-order b) Use of 'as' and 'since' as cause and result	The Clever Crow
<b>CLASS VII—PART B</b>	Let's sing	Let's interact	Let's read & understand	Let's do	Grammar	Let's read & enjoy
1. THE BAT 9 pages	----	5 qns on visual input; 1 prediction ; followed by conversation	Animal story  reading a poem	a) meanings-list b) pronunciation—repeating after the T c) 6 factual qns d) vocab-identifying birds & animals from a grid. Writing e) Young ones of animals-vocab-visual-verbal association and lexis f) riddle <b>Poem as input</b> a) meaning-list b) pronunciation c) rhyming words d) singing a rhyme	a) plurals b) conjunction	The Cap Seller and the Monkeys
2. SANKRANTHI 8 pgs		Visual: qns; followed by conversation-pre-	Descriptive text	a) meaning/phrases-list b) pronunciation c) 3 text based factual qns. d) 3 GK qns on various festivals; writing a paragraph about Sankranti; personal opinion qn-writing e) anagram	a) plurals b) past tense	Washerman's donkey





## Appendix 2: Foreword and *My English Course Book*—Details

### FOREWORD

As per the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 all children in the age group of 6-14 have the right to free and compulsory education. Accordingly, all school age children should be in a neighbourhood school till the completion of elementary education. At the same time the children who are out of school i.e. dropout and never enrolled children should be admitted in a class appropriate to their age. The RTE Act, 2009 made provision for the children admitted directly in class appropriate their age for special training to facilitate them to be at par with others. Special efforts are required to develop minimum levels of learning among these children. Special Training Centers are opened under SSA for such children to develop age appropriate learning levels so as to continue their further studies in regular schools. The AP Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2010 specified SCERT as academic authority under section 29 of the RTE Act.

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Andhra Pradesh in the capacity as specified Academic Authority has prepared the material titled, "My English Course Book" in three volumes with the efforts of practicing teachers. The English learning material are developed in such a way that children can easily attain the required competencies. The Basic Package is based on word approach to enrich English Language among the learners. After completion of this Basic Package the children will be in a position to follow the class IV syllabus. The second package is equal to levels of classes IV and V and the third package for the level of classes VI and VII. According to the children's age and learning levels they have to go through these packages. Once the child acquires all competencies in the three packages he/she can easily follow the class VIII syllabus. The learning material provides enough scope for day to day experiences of the children.

The material certainly enriches children experience of English by exposing them to reciting simple rhymes, interaction, reading, doing various activities and reading for enjoyment. The bilingual "My English Dictionary" in these packages will give an opportunity for improving of the learner's vocabulary.

I compliment the Teachers, the State Resource Group Members, Lecturers of DIET, officials of RVM and Curriculum & Textbook Development Department of SCERT, for bringing out this material for children of Special Training Centres in Andhra Pradesh. I hope this material will definitely be useful in developing confidence and achieving the required learning levels among the children.

Date: 12-9-2011  
Place: Hyderabad

*Seshu*  
27/9/11  
(Smt. B. Seshu Kumari)  
Director, SCERT  
A.P., Hyderabad



**My English Course Book - Details**

S.No	Name of the Course Book	Meant for.....	After completion of this next stage / Class eligible for .....	Time required for completion
1	My English Course Book - I(Basic Package)	Classes 1, 2 and 3	Class IV / Stage - II	1 to 3 Months
2	My English Course Book - II (Classes Level IV & V)	Classes 4 and 5 Part - A Class IV Part - B Classes V	Class VI / Stage - III	2 to 3 Months
3	My English Course Book - III (VI & VIII Classes Level)	Classes 6 and 7 Part - A Class VI Part - B Classes VII	Class - VIII	3 to 4 Months

Competencies	Stage - I (Basic)	Stage - II (Classes 4 and 5)	Stage - III (Classes 6 and 7)
Listening Understanding and responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children will be able to listen respond to the letters / alphabet, words, phrases and sentences.</li> <li>- Understand the words, phrases and sentences and respond appropriately.</li> <li>- Respond, appropriately to the class room instructions / directions / commands.</li> <li>- Listen to the rhymes. comprehend them and add lines to them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children will be able to listen respond to the words, phrases and sentences.</li> <li>- Understand the words, phrases and sentences and respond appropriately.</li> <li>- Respond, appropriately to the class room instructions / directions / commands.</li> <li>- Listen to the rhymes. comprehend them and add lines to them.</li> <li>- Listen and comprehend small paragraphs (3-5 lines) do an activity following the instructions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen respond to the words, phrases and sentences.</li> <li>- Understand the words, phrases and sentences and respond appropriately.</li> <li>- Respond, appropriately to the class room instructions / directions / commands.</li> <li>- Listen to the rhymes. comprehend them and add lines to them.</li> <li>- Develop higher level listening comprehension (passages)</li> <li>- Follow a series of instructions / directions / commands.</li> </ul>



Competencies	Stage - I (Basic)	Stage - II (Classes 4 and 5)	Stage - III (Classes 6 and7)
Speaking appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recite rhymes</li> <li>- Introduce themselves and their friends</li> <li>- Name things</li> <li>- Speak about a picture/ thing/ a person.</li> <li>- Talk about their likes and dislikes with simple sentences / phrases / words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recite rhymes</li> <li>- Introduce themselves and their friends</li> <li>- Name things</li> <li>- Speak about a picture / a thing / a person.</li> <li>- Talk about their likes and dislikes with simple sentences / phrases / words.</li> <li>- Describe a person / a place / a thing with simple sentences.</li> <li>- Take part in conversations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describe a person / a place / a thing.</li> <li>- Use variety of sentences in the conversations.</li> <li>- Talk about their experiences.</li> <li>- Talk about</li> <li>- Talk about their likes and dislikes and give reasons.</li> </ul>
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognise the letters in English alphabet.</li> <li>- Read words, phrases and simple sentences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read fluently.</li> <li>- Read and comprehend small paragraphs</li> <li>- Answer the factual and inferential questions.</li> <li>- Read paragraphs with proper pronunciation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read and comprehend a passage / story / tables.</li> <li>- Read and understand simple unseen texts (authentic material eg: wrappers, forms, news items letters etc) and identify their features.</li> </ul>
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trace and copy the letters and words.</li> <li>- Write simple words / phrases with the help of pictures.</li> <li>- Write simple words / phrases when dictated.</li> <li>- Draw pictures and write names to them.</li> <li>- Add lines to rhymes.</li> <li>- Prepare concept maps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write simple sentences to describe a person / a place / a thing.</li> <li>- Write letters to their friends.</li> <li>- Write parallel poems / rhymes to the given themes.</li> <li>- Write sentences / small paragraphs when dictated.</li> <li>- Prepare concept maps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write small paragraphs on certain themes following the hints.</li> <li>- Write letters to parents &amp; teachers &amp; friends etc.,</li> <li>- Write daily activities in the form of a diary.</li> <li>- Write paragraphs when dictated.</li> <li>- Write paragraphs and small essays with cohesion and coherence.</li> <li>- Collect the data and present it.</li> <li>- Description a persons / a place and a thing.</li> </ul>



## **Role of a Teacher in an Indian Classroom: A Personal Perspective**

*Dr. J. Madhavi*

Any committed teacher will make the language class more interesting when s/he is sincerely into it. Teachers play a pivotal role in manifesting and nurturing the inherent talents of the learners. The fact that one should have a vision to make use of the available sources and the ability to acquire the required skills in order to make language teaching effective is emphasized in this paper. That is through the day to day experience in the class s/he can think of implementing new methods to assess themselves as well as evaluate the learners. This paper focuses on the real teaching experience in a classroom. An Indian classroom has heterogeneous learners; some among them are beleaguered with linguistic, social, and financial problems while other learners who lack interest, who are over-confident, etc. In spite of these, the language class can be made interesting by introducing task-based activities that demand learners' participation to the utmost.

In my own English teaching experiences in the Indian classroom, many times, despite facing the problems in dealing with large classes, time constraints, first language influence, low proficiency levels of some learners, etc. I could affect very often, a remarkable improvement in the performance levels of the learners which in turn cultivated a robust attitude in the learners to acquire the second language effectively.

The teaching methods and techniques can be adopted in accordance to the students' interests and that which meets their needs. The students can be given a chance to interpret the text. They can be provided with different kinds of inputs, such as lectures, radio news, films, interviews, discussions, role plays, storytelling exercises, songs, and other similar activities. By adopting learners' interest-oriented approach, the class can be made pleasant and effective. This paper underscores the point that the language teachers have more responsibility in attaining their ultimate goal of inculcating communicative competence among a heterogeneous/ mixed group of learners, thus encouraging them. Students should be made aware of the importance of the language and the basic language skills.

Mostly language classes are noisy. Why are they noisy? Because of the interaction of the teacher with the students and among the students about the concepts discussed or taught. This indicates that some learning is taking place. This type of situation also reveals the learners' levels of motivation/ interests to acquire a foreign language. This is what happens in my class very often. As a language teacher I try to improve the four basic language skills of the learners and elicit what I want from them through various activities. Learners are being subjected to solve the exercises in a



constructive method i.e. as a team. This is only to motivate the uninterested learners as well as shy learners who do not make an attempt to learn. Making them as a part of the team which is formed with couple of interested learners I try to reduce their shyness and encourage them to improve their language skills which ultimately results in achieving the main goal of communicative competence. In this process I observed my learners who were relentlessly working on the activities and who tried to solve the same with great enthusiasm somehow. This excitement among the learners gave rise to new ways/ methods/ techniques in them and these can be termed as “Strategies”. So once they develop such a habit then they are INTO the language learning.

Referring to the teaching materials, especially the prescribed textbooks, I am comfortable in using them in a very effective way. When I was working for Gitam University and also for other JNTU affiliated colleges, I found that the texts prescribed had no poetry and no drama. Learners did complain about the same. They also complained that the lessons were not interesting. At this point I as a teacher had to think a lot to attract their attention. I knew I could not change anything; neither I could include nor exclude a lesson on my own. But then I had got an idea. The next day I went to the class. Seeing me the learners took out their textbooks as usual without any excitement. I told them that I was not taking a class that day as I was also in a dull mood and I wanted to interact with them. I could hear everyone exclaim a loud cheer for that. I asked them whether they were interested to go on a picnic and on a tour. They shouted ‘yes’. Asked them about the places they visited. I got a long list of places situated in India. One tourist place I could hear was Mahabalipuram in Tamilnadu state. When I asked about the place’s specificity once again my ears echoed with the answer- beauty of the sea shore. I immediately asked them whether they played on the shore or in the water. They shouted they did swim for a long time and enjoyed it. As a next step I divided the learners into groups of four and asked them to enact a situation where they have to plan for a tour to Mahabalipuram. I also instructed them to assign different characters to each one of them and write the dialogues for their respective characters/roles by discussing among one another. Later they had to enact the same. These activities were time bound. In the next class as soon as I entered the class the learners themselves came forward to discuss the role play they enacted. I appreciated them and questioned them about the dangers that were associated with the beach. There were many responses out of which one was that which I anticipated to hear-Tsunami. I asked them to talk about that individually and most of them came up with the most relevant information such as the loss of life, property, bereaved children and the rescue and relief operations/measures taken by the Indian government. This is what I really wanted in my class.

I asked the learners to open Unit-4—‘The Cuddalore Experience’ written by Anu George. I could gather some pictures on tsunami and the ravaged Cuddalore. Learners read the lesson



interestingly and asked the questions related to that lesson thus clarifying their doubts. I asked them to summarize the lesson and this was an assignment. As a result they gathered more information which was not included in the text. I distributed the exercise sheet which had exercises on articles, prepositions, question tags, punctuation, synonyms and antonyms. These exercises were built up on the content of the lesson. This made the teacher's work easy and enhanced learners' knowledge while understanding the lesson as a whole. Eventually they scored good marks and satisfied themselves by improving their language skills strategically. This is just one of the methods of how a teacher can make an English class room more effective and inclusive.

I may now discuss another example of effective classroom activity based on my experience. We can design an activity to improve the language skills of the learners and this activity should reinforce their levels of concentration. Before beginning the activity the teacher should motivate the learners and should instill confidence in them by asking about their interests, hobbies, and asking them when they would feel happy and excited in the process of language-acquisition. Ask what they would do in their free time (leisure). Some learners come up with answers like reading, watching, painting, chatting with friends etc. The next question asked should help the learners to 'be' in the class i.e., a situation should be created where the learners involve themselves in the class work and participate actively in the class by interacting with the teacher as well as interacting among themselves. When this stage is reached then begin the activity. In pre-reading activity, the first step is to ask the class what they would read mostly and then ask them to list out the same. While the students give the answers (respond) write them on the board. Now ask them why they would read them and write the same on the board next to the list of things they read. For example:

1. They say that they read textbooks to pass the exam
2. They read novels fiction/ non-fiction for pleasure
3. They read forms / applications / advertisements / brochures / posters to know the details of something.
4. They read newspapers / journals / magazines / maps for specific information or a report / proposal to have a general idea about something.

Secondly ask them among the listed materials which one they would read very fast or slowly and why? By doing this even the weakest (uninterested) learner is motivated and encouraged to take part in the classroom activity.

Now for the main activity select a topic or a situation. The most important point to remember at this juncture is to select the topic which interests the class and the one which is suggested by the class. This is called learner- interest oriented approach which enhances the inclusiveness of a language class by influencing the teacher, the learner and the way materials are used. For instance, if the topic is 'cricket', show the pictures pertaining to that game viz.,



playground with pitch, wickets, bat, ball, scoreboard, players, etc. Divide the learners into groups of three to four and ask them to describe the game through the pictures provided; this can be done orally and they can also be made to write the same in their books.

Now ask them to read what they have written and ask them to have a discussion among themselves (groups). Now provide a handout on the selected topic or project it on to the screen for them to read. Now ask them to rewrite that. In this situation the learners improve their reading skills, along with speaking skills and writing skills. Similarly by playing an audio recording of a session of cricket commentary, listening skills of the learners can be improved. Let them listen to the recording and answer the questions that follow. Discuss and play for the second time. They will be able to identify their mistakes and try to correct them. Similarly we can recommend them to listen to or watch some famous English movies with different accents. By doing this twice or thrice they will be able to understand to a very great extent the different accents in English.

Finally I conclude that we the teachers are responsible to turn our class into a boring one or an interestingly inclusive one. Instead of thinking about the contents included in textbooks one should try to utilize the available sources to justify one's role as teacher. Some teachers teach the textbook lessons including the exercises and say that they are done with. But this is not the end of all the teaching. Textbooks give us an idea and pave way for us to exploit them to the maximum possible extent in teaching the language skills. By default the learners innocently depend on teachers to accomplish their goal of improving the language and communication skills. And we the teachers play a very important role in the learners' lives.

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## **Making the English Classroom Effective in Open School System**

*Dr. B. Sujatha Shekar*

Education and Communication Skills are gaining importance day by day. In the present day scenario the English Language is of more importance for effective Communication. Much research went into making the English classes more effective and interesting for formal education system. Open School System is running a parallel (alternative) system to the formal system. So, to make the open School system also more effective, the language and linguistic experts must think in this aspect as the students here are inclusive unlike the formal system.

Based on my experience, I have given a brief note on the existing system and suggested few techniques which can be adopted. Before that we have to know the importance of languages, objectives of learning English and about open school system.

### **Importance of English Language**

Language is imperative for communication as it forms the basis for communication with others and to convey their thoughts. Language plays a great part in the mental, emotional and social development of a person.

When we discuss the English language, we have to focus on the fact that, the English language has exercised a great influence for the past two centuries as an instrument of social change. In India, English was introduced as trade language by East India Company. Nowadays it is introduced at all stages of education and it is the medium of instruction for all subjects. As an International language it is the medium of expression for a transcendental epic, it has been to homes, factories and offices in which language is spoken, written or read. And also it is one of the World's leading languages of scientific research and international scholarship making available a wealth of latest information on science and technology. It is also the language of world of sports, radio and T.V, Tele Communication, Travel, trade, fashion, glamour, and computers as well. But when we think about English in Indian Society, though it is not the regional language or national language; we implement the policy of learning English as third language.

English has a great role to play in today's world; we can say about it as the "Window of the World." So, Education Commissions are recommending the use of English as medium of instruction or--- 2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> language.

### **Objectives of the Learning English language**

Language learning is a skill. A language can be learnt by an individual not simply by knowing about the language but by experiencing it. In recent years, the emphasis has shifted from the teaching of language as a system to the teaching of language as a means of Communication.



Learning the English Language has the same objectives as the other languages. They are:

- Listening comprehensively
- Speaking Fluently
- Reading Comprehensively and Writing.
- Usage of language to meet daily needs.
- Use the language as Communicative instrument and use it for writing – Creative writings
- Get mastery over the language. And make the learner ready for international transactions through English.

### **Making the English Classroom Effective in Open School System**

Language is a complex system with many sub systems like the system of sound (Phonology), the system of words (morphology), the system of structure (syntax) and the system of meanings (Semantics). All these subsystems form an integral system each working in coordination with the other. Language lays down standards and functions in life. It is through language that we learn to think, feel, judge and express. Language is a means of Communication; it is an arbitrary, symbolic, and systematic. So, we should make the English classroom more useful and inclusive.

An average English classroom of formal system in India today is never homogeneous. The learners come from varied Socio-cultural and from different back grounds. But when we discuss the open distance/open schooling system and its classroom situation, it is a bit different.

#### **Open School System & A.P. Open School Society**

Open School System is a non formal system; it is an alternative system to formal system. The learners have freedom to choose the course and time.

The learners of open and distance school are above 14 years, where most of them are adults, who are never enrolled or dropouts or neo literates. And they are mostly backward in Socio economic factors. So, learning, teaching and text books, curriculum framing strategies are different from formal system. Now a days we are living in developed global society. But still we have learners who are illiterates, neo-literates. When we educate the people, we should develop them in all aspects. Education is the main instrument of social change. Which is why, our Government is encouraging the Open School system.

Open School system was introduced all over India. National Institute of open school was formed at NOIDA, New Delhi. Many states introduced open school system. In Andhra Pradesh, it was introduced in 1991 as a public society and offered VI, VII, VIII and IX classes. A total of 9 lakhs learners enrolled and out of them 4.37 lakh students passed out successfully. Later, APOSS was restructured and SSC was introduced in 2008-09. Based on the response and successful academic activities, Intermediate course was introduced in 2010-11. These two courses are



equivalent to regular courses. Today, it plays a major role as alternative education system to regular school to those who are unable to continue their education through formal system.

In all these years, nearly 5 lakh were enrolled in SSC and 3.5 Lakh in Intermediate. And APOSS has many success stories of learners who are now placed in good jobs.

The learners of APOSS are of different age groups, above 14 & 15 years, they come from different fields, enroll themselves with a hope to elevate their living standards and improve their status of employment.

But while we discuss learners' standards in open distance education, it is definitely different from formal system. When they join in Open School, their general levels would be better than their reading and writing skills. While we analyze the English classroom of Open School, learners or busy persons and most of them are not ready to spend much time on studies. And also teaching classes are called as personal contact classes (PCP) and are limited to 30. Though they are drop-outs they directly join in SSC. They know the basics of vocabulary, nouns, adjectives..... and simple sentence formation. But when they attend the exam, the evaluation is done on par with standards of knowledge, understanding, application and appreciation like in formal system.

Method of learning is based on self-learning. They are supposed to learn a lot all by themselves. They should try to learn more under the guidelines of the Tutor (teacher counselor) and with the help of material (text books) provided in self learning system. So language experts should think of how to make the English classes of Open School more effective and make learning English easy.

### **Methods to be adopted**

A.P Open School system has given opportunity to choose subjects and languages. In the present scenario, more learners have opted for English to improve their status. So the following techniques are to be followed.

- Confidence levels of the learners to be increased.
- Encourage them to use English in their daily life.
- Introduce them easy learning methods with some bridge courses to recall what they know.
- Using bilingual approach.
- Trying to learn language – known to unknown.
- Suggesting them to participate / involve in classroom learning activities.
- Trial & error method is to be encouraged.
- Learn the language by trial and correct their errors.
- Suggest them to read a few books on self learning methods like learn English easy etc.
- Using Audio Visual material is good for them.

Now in APOSS, we introduced OBE – III Class, and also introduced English as learners demanded to learn English for their better opportunities. And in this academic year, we are going to introduce OBE, V & VIII classes also.



## Our Special Issue Contributors

**Prof. Alladi Uma** taught English at the University of Hyderabad. She took voluntary retirement in August 2011 so she could do something that has been closest to her heart--teach children from underprivileged backgrounds and work for the disadvantaged.

**Prof. Jacob Tharu** has taught psychology at IIT Kanpur. He then served for 30 years in the Evaluation Department of EFLU (CIEFL) Academic specializations: educational measurement and language testing, educational research methods. He was heavily involved with in-service teacher education and support. Post retirement in 2002, he was associated with NCERT, education focused NGOs like Eklayva as a resource person in the area of evaluation. His current main interests are: (a) designing bridge rather than 'remedial' courses for students entering higher classes with backlogs (b) promoting understanding of CCE, a means of promoting teacher autonomy, and flexibility and inclusion in curriculum transaction.

**Dr. Manmath Kundu** is educated in India, UK and USA. He has published about 100 research papers and 30 books in India and abroad, and has supervised 20 PhD research scholars. He worked as visiting professor in Yemen and as director of ELTI and ATLC (Academic of Tribal Language and Culture) and as a chairperson NCTE (ERC, Bhubaneswar). He is currently running a school for the poor and tribal children in Malkangiri, Odisha. His area of interest and specialisation is teaching English to low-proficient learners in difficult circumstances.

**Dr. Asma Rasheed** teaches in the Department of ELT, School of Distance Education at the EFL University, Hyderabad. Her research interests include critical pedagogy, cultural studies and translation studies.

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**Mr. Hari Chandan Kar** did his M.A. B.Ed in English. He has also taught at the High School level. At present he is doing his PGDTE at the EFL University, Hyderabad. He is interested in teaching the Juang learners.

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**Dr. Revathi Srinivas** is an Assistant Professor, Materials Production Department, EFLU. Before joining the University in 2009, she worked at the Regional Institute of English, Chandigarh for eight years. Her wide range of teaching experience enables her to understand classroom dynamics and the teaching and learning processes effectively. She has authored seven books and has



contributed chapters to several other training manuals and books. She has presented papers at national and international seminars and has some conference proceeding papers to her credit. Her areas of interest include Program Evaluation, Curriculum Development Studies, Teaching Young Learners, and Multiple Intelligences in ESL classrooms.

**Dr. Konda Nageshwar Rao** is an Assistant Professor, Department of English, Nizam College (OU). His areas of interest are American Literature, Post-colonial Literature and ELT. He has presented several papers in India and Abroad. He is keenly interested in changing dynamics of the English classroom.

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**Dr. J. Madhavi**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Nizam College (OU) She has been an invited resource person for workshops and delivered guest lectures on communication skills, soft skills and personality development. She has contributed a lot in enhancing the communicative competence of the students. She has been an evaluator for competitive tests like GRE, TOEFL and a trainer for CAT, IELTS, GMAT, BEC, etc. Her exposure to the corporate world helped her to instil confidence in her students to secure better jobs for themselves.

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