

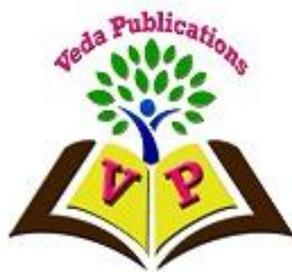


EXPLORING AND EXPLOITING THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM FOR RURAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT



Indian Technology has massively improved and as a result there are numerous technical institutions but still English language in India is not on par with that of the foreign countries, it is still a language of the so called urban elites. Numerous English Medium schools, the arrival of many multinational companies, and the omnipresent usage of English starting from coffee houses to colleges cannot make all Indian students to speak in the second language better. The reason for the gap that exists among rural Indian students is that the second language has not been acquired for needs but for comforts. Even in informal situations, if there is a need to speak the second language, the acquisition of second language could have been faster. Today's students particularly the rural engineering students imagine even engineering as a means of earning a high status and so the thirst for engineering inventions and solving problems seem to be very minimal. Their use of second language too is not up to the mark. So to make such an unwilling student to work towards the language progress is definitely a back-breaking task for the English teacher who is rigid, emotional and syllabus conscious but extraordinarily intelligent. So, there comes a dire need to explore and exploit the English classroom which is already undergoing innumerable changes.



Today's classrooms are real wrestling dais of yesterday. Always there exists an indirect fight between the knowledgeable persons and the to be knowledgeable one. Surely it becomes a question as to whether it is for the sake of power or knowledge. Digital era has given immense gifts to the learners. Some use it for learning, some use it for real-time utilization and skill, some use it for the sake of testing, testing not himself but the teacher. So, the teacher is expected to be the Mr. Know-all. It is not enough if a teacher is well versed in her subject, she must be good in her expression too. The expression becomes incomplete if it is too short and it becomes boring if it is too long. So, the art of delivering the things in an appropriate manner in enough quantities is the need of the hour. There arises a question in my mind always as to who is a successful English teacher? All efforts to find an answer become a waste because the moment I come to a conclusion, the idea either becomes a redundancy or a partially correct one. So, I myself concluded that till there is a search on language learning, second language learning will be a challenging task for the pursuer, researcher, and progressor.

Today's students are the bundles of emotions. Their rational brain goes back once their emotional brain works faster. The amygdale is being used most of the time and as a result, there is a dire need to introduce affective teaching which took cognitive and meta-cognitive teaching as its predecessors. The need for introducing affective teaching is that the students, their thought process, their environment, their dressing sense, their usage of language, their habits and et all are decided by the media, social media, peer group and what not. Media is yet another name for emotions because one stops his thinking when he sits in front of a media. Usually, it is assumed that a person listens to his emotions first than his reason. So media and mobile phones are the primary needs of the learner. Education, learning and language are considered as a comfort. If this is the scenario, then bringing the students inside the second language classroom itself is a challenging task in rural areas and if the teacher has to get the attention of the students, then it is really a herculean task.

Games with papers and pens could be the first choice. The reason for introducing paper and pen is that only it is available to the students. Through these games, they are in the classroom physically and mentally and once that is achieved 80 %, then there may be some chances for the learning to take place. When the teacher is ready with book and chalk and turns towards the board, then the rural students' mind automatically goes back to mobiles and networking sites. There may be some projectors in few classes but still, all classes cannot have that facility. Even if there is a class with projectors, the teacher can then get 15 minutes attention. The rural student may not know as to how to convert the ppt into a paragraph or passage, so there comes a need to teach the basic structure.

The art of teaching structure without insisting on the structure is not accepted by many, is not followed by many and is not the cup of tea of many. But still, it is needed in rural areas. Mini Dramas, songs, speech, and the movie can be used effectively for teaching the structure. Though it seems like informal, it is actually an unconscious way of teaching the structure. Once there is no compulsion, and there is enough competition among the learners, then, there is umpteen number of chances for the learning to take place. The drama which is shown in the first week must be enacted in the second week by the students without the use of the script. So, once they use the language, they become accustomed to the language. Once they are accustomed, that familiarity is more than enough to learn the language.

While enacting a play there may be some discrepancies. There may be some poor students who may commit innumerable errors unconsciously. So, it is the duty of the English teacher to record them and intimate the same to the student and then slowly correct them without anyone's knowledge. When he is enacting the drama well, even then the teacher must record the same and then compare and contrast the drama performance with the previous thereby helping the student to learn a second language effectively. Now there occurs a doubt in the minds of my evaluators and co-participants as to how can a drama could be enacted. It is you who said that OHP s are not available in all places and if that is the



case how can there be C.Ds. in all rural places? If not the management, the students can offer a CD worth 30 rupees or could download it and copy it. C.D and D.V.D s can do the task in a better manner than an effective English teacher. This was not the case in the past. Electronic gadgets attracted the people in the past but today they do rule them. When the mind is going after an illusion known as media, It couldn't be convinced by an individual person including the English Teacher. For example, to teach the vocabularies used in restaurants, one can ask a single group to come with an innovative idea that has to be demonstrated with a real-time example. It is not an easy joke to bring pans to the classroom but what about the catering students? When they can, why not an Engineering student? But for a semester, there should be only two activities for a group. There can be marks for that. Prizes and awards can be given for that. There need not be any show separately as cultural, seminar or symposium as every week is an activity week for them. The task should not be given or evaluated by the English Teacher. A rural student from a nearby school or a college can be the evaluator. Whatever is understood in an easy manner by a rural student to learn a language can be termed as a perfect drama. If needed, the teacher can add her vocabulary. So, on the one hand, the English teachers must break their head as to what task can be given to the students from the first year to final year for enhancing their Language and on the other hand the students must think the tasks as a hard nut to crack and so it would quite interesting to have a dramatic or theatric atmosphere for a language classroom as English teachers are always termed as different, English language too is a special tool to be learned in a new and fresh environment. I have just taken drama as a sample one.

Like NSS, NCC, English learning too should be a field related activity and never ever a classroom activity. Language laboratories are better than classrooms. The regular brick and mortar classrooms are ineffective in delivering a sufficient language to the students. So it is high time to teach the vocabularies through field study. The stress of teaching and learning a language, particularly a second language will become easier with this, though the time factor is a challenging one.

A second language has been introduced to a child when they are three to five years old. In spite of that, there aren't enough English Speaking men in the country. The educated parents, the English medium schools, the second language syllabus, and curriculum are but an episode in a second language learners' film named the trial and error in speaking English. Based on the questionnaire given to the English teachers and learners, an attempt to explore and exploit the English Classrooms has been made. Affective teaching and unconscious method of teaching are just a few ways to capture the amygdale in language learning. Conscious efforts create a formal atmosphere. A formal atmosphere gives education but not language. Language learning is a kind of attention seeking. It could be done again and again only in an informal situation. Whatever is learned often is restored and whatever is restored is repeated and whatever is repeated becomes accustomed to us. Though this is possible in formal education, it can be done effectively in informal situation with a formal background unlike the spoken English Centre outside. Language learning should not be estimated with marks like other subjects as language cannot be branded as a subject. There can be better versions of the same the text. One can be a better speaker but a poor listener. So, that particular person should be given extra training that is activities based on listening alone. If it is writing, instead of sentences, that particular grammar part where the mistake arises can be focused and that part which has some special features can be prized and this increases the self-esteem of a person and so the result will be positive always. Today, the emergence of Engineering colleges have reduced the literature flow and increased the language flow forgetting the fact that language is always an undercurrent and an effective tool to share one's culture, myth, tradition etc. So, it is high time to have renaissance in second language pedagogy

QUESTIONNAIRE

TO TEACHERS

1. Do you teach English effectively?
2. Why do you say so?
3. What are the obstacles faced by you while delivering the second language?
4. How do you categorize the students?



5. Can a student with high marks be branded as erudite in English?
6. Tell the mean, median and mode in language teaching.
7. Define formal and informal atmosphere.
8. How do you learn the language?
9. How do you teach your son the second language?
10. Do we need books and classroom to teach a second language?

TO STUDENTS

1. Have you learned the second language?
 2. How have you learned?
 3. Is the regular lecture interesting or boring?
 4. What is the difference between the language classes and theory classes?
 5. Peer teaching and book teaching, which is effective? Why?
 6. Why are you influenced by the media more?
 7. How do you learn a third language?
 8. Does circumstance compel you to learn better?
 9. Can an efficient teacher teach better?
 10. Which has to be modified?
 - a) The curriculum and syllabus
 - b) The methodology
 - c) The brick and mortar classes
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