

Role of Teaching Resources in English Language Classroom

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ABSTRACT

English has been deemed as the ‘Global Language’. The communication revolution has endowed English language with its eminence that has eclipsed other languages with time. Because of its flexibility, fluidity, adaptability and unique hybrid quality, English has acquired a prominent position in India. It is not only a language of international corporate sector but also of the cyber world that is playing a significant role in making communication highly effective. That’s why, critical selection and creative implementation of English Language Teaching is the need of the hour. The role that a teacher plays in the lives of students and the teachers’ potential to improve the quality of life for students cannot be underestimated. Scaffolding and reciprocal teaching are effective strategies to access the zone of proximal development. The teacher must aim to bridge the gap between the classroom and the universe outside, but never overprotect the learner. With the virtual universe invading the language classroom, as well as teacher devising materials from diverse sources, Language classes will no longer be mere chalk and talk sessions with the teacher dominating. The language teachers should use all the innovative techniques and resources to make class fruitful, interesting, knowledgeable and lively. As a facilitator and motivator, the language teacher should change their approaches to teaching and learning and provide more appropriate opportunities for their students to be active participants rather than passive recipients.

Role of Teaching Resources in English Language Classroom

Globalization, Competition and the revolution of information technology have changed the face of higher education dramatically. Its the need of hour to have a fresh look at the entire educational system worldwide. New zones other than technology, medical sciences, pure sciences have to be identified. I wish to state that English Education could be the next great thrust area in which India could excel and can become a major player in the poor and developing countries.

English has undoubtedly emerged as the most preferred Global language in the last century. English is the dominant international language in communication, science, business aviation, entertainment, diplomacy and the Internet. English is a living language. It is evolving and changing all the time in response to the needs of people who are using it. It is as if English is , to borrow the title from US News and world report (Feb 18,1985), “Out to conquer the world”. Emphasizing the omnipresence of English across the globe one can say, “ English here, English there, English everywhere”.¹ English language has circled the globe.

In the last 25 years, Its character has changed significantly because of its use in the newly discovered means of communication and the resultant large scale assimilation from other languages rooted in varied cultural contexts. A working knowledge of English is required in many fields and occupations. It has become necessary for most countries today to teach English as one of the compulsory subject at the school level besides the mother tongue.

In the globalized world, the communication revolution has endowed English language with its eminence that has eclipsed other languages with time. Because of its flexibility, fluidity, adaptability and unique hybrid quality, English is the most widely spoken language in the universe. In India, English has acquired a prominent position. It is no longer a foreign language but has gained new form which is a blend of the regional touch and colloquial flavor as used in the media, movies and advertisement. Gradol has strongly viewed that the third world contries specially India and China would be the leading English speakers. He has stated, “ Total number of English speakers in India and China now exceeds the number of speakers elsewhere in the world”.²

However, the teaching of English language in Indian classroom is still a challenging as well as herculean task. A proficient faculty, the very essence of quality instruction in any field of education is the greatest weakness that lies with regard to teaching and leaning English. There is no uniform methodology to train the English teachers. The syllabus designed in Indian context does not at all cater to the need of the students. Lack of workshops, laboratories, modern-infra-structure poses yet another obstacle in the teaching and learning process.

In tune with the pressing need of the time, the traditional teacher centred pedagogy has to be replaced by the task based language teaching. One of the most challenging task faced by the teacher in Indian English language classroom is to bridge the gap between the corpora of

linguistic objectives posed by the curriculum and the inadequate grasp of language structures and functions displayed by the students. Moreover, how to communicate with and establish positive rapport with the students is another difficult issue to deal with.

While teaching anything, one should always have Rousseau's idea in one's mind, "My object is not to furnish his mind with knowledge but to teach him the method of acquiring it".³ (Rousseau of Emile) As a facilitator and goal setter, the teacher should assess the language needs of the students and lay down certain objectives; as a task designer, the teacher should undertake action research in the classroom, devising multiple tasks and activities to strengthen the skills involved in language use. As a motivator, an English language teacher should make language learning a vitalizing experience and curriculum development an achievable reality. "The role of a teacher in the language classroom," as Richards says, "is that of a facilitator who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning."⁴ Language teacher in the new millennium must necessarily be innovative and creative in designing teaching resources and devising new activities to facilitate learning. For achieving success and reaching at the desired destination, the English language teacher should use a number of teaching resources and technologies which are as follows-

1. Authentic Texts-

Text books are undoubtedly helpful in a language programme as they help to standardize instruction, provide a range of learning resources and also act as instruction manuals for newly appointed teachers. The teacher, in fact, has relative freedom to choose authentic materials. In actual practice, authentic materials always need to be adapted for classroom use. If properly used, they can generate greater interest and motivation than text book materials. The Teacher's role should be as course designer and task organizer.

2. News papers :

One of the commonest items of our daily lives, Newspapers are a veritable store house of language terms and text types and can serve as an invaluable resource in the language classroom. Akira Tajino and Clive Pemberton argue that "the topical content of newspapers can act as a

powerful learning stimulus and also demonstrate how newspapers can be used to develop language skills through multiple task.”⁵

Newspaper Headlines, News stories, reports, gossip columns, advertisements and weather reports can be utilized for developing the four communication skills.

(A) Headlines-

- A variety of headlines can be cut out from different newspapers and pasted on a sheet in numbered sequence. Photo copies can be given to the students.
- The teacher about the possible content of the stories, the headlines describe.
- The teacher can give the students the task of discussion of stories in groups and then ask them to write.
- Headlines can also be used to construct new stories or serve as ideas for speaking exercises.

(B) Articles and News Stories-

Articles can be used for various activities like information gathering/ retrieval reading comprehension tasks, opinion sharing and speaking tasks. The teacher may also cut out the endings of various articles and present it to the students who then have to invent suitable endings.

(C) Pictures-

Pictures including cartoons and photographs in newspapers can serve as potential cues for speaking as well as writing activities. Suitable pictures can be used to create flash cards for vocabulary building, or a sequence of pictures can be used to reconstruct an entire tale. Moreover, pictures may be used in various ways to generate class discussion topics and simultaneously provide ideas for short humorous sketches on current issues.

(D) Letter to Editors-

Letter writing is a part of syllabus in India for weak students. For weak students, It is really difficult to write letters in particular layout. A study of the letters written to the Editors in various newspapers provides a rich body of authentic texts which can serve as suitable models.

Newspaper, thus are beneficial in developing all the four skills listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Newspapers serve as inputs for holistic language learning. Besides

newspapers, A teachers should use journals and magazines also. A teacher should motivate his/her students to read newspapers, journals and magazines.

3. Poetry-

Another important teaching resource is poetry. Gerry Abbott states- “Poems are authentic texts; they use fairly single language; and because they express emotions, many are vivid and memorable”⁶ Language is employed for aesthetic and artistic purposes. Poetry consists in the artistic use of language with its creative potentials stretched to the maximum and with emphasis on the employment of sound patterns such as rhythm, rhyme etc. Through poetry, a teacher should strengthen students; potentiality to appreciate the thematic content and the employment of language.

Title of a poem plays a significant role. The title represent the semantic chunk, like the potter’s clay or the sculptor’s block, out of which the poet is going to form an aesthetic utterance by using addition, subtraction, generalization, specialization, enrichment etc. Poetry is helpful in developing ‘Reading skills’. A teacher should read a poem loudly with proper intonation and enjoy its rhythmic beauty. The students must be motivated to read the poem with same intonation and same appeal.

Rhymes can also be used in pronunciation tasks. “Row Row, Row your Boat”, offers practice of “r” sound, while “Goosey, goosey, gander” shows how words with similar spellings have different pronunciations. Poems can also be the basis of grammar practice activities. To practice grammar and to learn grammatical terms, students can be asked to compose poems according to a given grammatical ‘pattern’. Rhymes, poems and riddles are of great value in the language classroom as they serve as a good introduction to the quirks and idiosyncrasies of the English language.

4. The Web:

Learning in the classroom was previously synonymous with book learning. The Internet, however, has changed all that by bringing in a radically new dimensions into the teaching learning matrix. The Web components in teaching help the language teacher to prepare students for their world of work. The Internet specially as used in the context known as the Web, has begun a remarkable communication revolution. The Web’s greatest intrinsic power for teaching

is that it encourages branched, non linear instruction. Not only can students jump around among the materials that they have created for them, they also can access materials created by others.

Undoubtedly, the Internet has made teaching and learning very feasible, communicative and fruitful. Power-point presentation acts as a herb for weak English language students. A teacher should act as a physician using these devices. Most fascinating and of the greatest use to ESL teachers are the numerous websites only intended for their use. These sites are resource pools, having innovative teaching Ideas, imparting knowledge about teacher training and the latest happenings in the field, and are constantly updated. There are some outstanding sites for English Language learning beneficial for teachers as well as for students-

- a) **One stop English(<http://onestopenglish.com>)** : Empowered by Macmillan, this is truly resource- rich site, replete with the most exhaustive information for language teaching and provides a wide range of materials entirely free of cost.
- b) **Oxford teacher club (www.oup.com/elt/teachersclub)** : Developed by OUP, this site is very productive as there are lesson plans for adult, teenage and young learners. There are dictionaries, graded readers and books for teachers.
- c) **Longman.Com (<http://www.longman.com>)**: This site comprises diverse offerings. It has extensive sets of graded down loadable worksheets, activities and lesson plans. Modern English Teacher, The Teacher Trainer Journal, English Teaching Professional, ELT News and EL Gazette are useful links to Journals and newsletters.

Moreover, creating blogs or weblogs can be an instructive as well as interesting way for learners to master writing skills. They are the electronic equivalents of learner diaries and can be correspondingly developed like an ongoing journal. Diana Eastment states-“ Blogs are simply online diaries. They are logs..... of thoughts, reflections and events in the writer’s life. A space for individuals to write whatever they choose, with an option for readers to comment on what they have read”.⁷

Nonetheless, A teacher must be sincere enough in using the Internet for classroom activities. David Eastemnt says- “The learner, whether in class or studying alone, would be better advised to concentrate on conventional ELT materials”. He also states that teachers should know to use the Internet properly, search-engine skills, ways of evaluating web pages, techniques for

creating their own web materials and integrating them with the rest of their teaching, and above all to learn the language of the Internet or net speak.

5. English Language Laboratory

To avoid variations in accent, to get rid of the hesitation and fear of the students to speak English and to make student familiar with the standard pronunciation, the concept of English language and communication skill lab can be introduced at graduation level. Sophisticated English language and communication skills Lab with all the latest equipments should be established in each college. Regular listening practice, drills, oral tests, use of audio-visual aids in a language lab, performing role plays on day to day topics, doing G.D.S. on controversial issues, taking part in presentations and extempore etc., enhance speaking capacity to master interactive skills in English, which is one of the most important steps to success. A Teacher must honestly use this lab, check the performance level of the learners and guide them accordingly.

To sum up, it can be concluded that because of its flexibility, fluidity, adaptability and unique hybrid quality, English is the most widely spoken language in the universe. It is not only a language of international corporate sector but also of the cyber world that is playing a significant role in making communication highly effective. That's why, critical selection and creative implementation of English language teaching is the need of the hour. The role that a teacher plays in the lives of students and the teachers potential to improve the quality of life for students cannot be underestimated. Scaffolding and reciprocal teachings are effective strategies to access the zone of proximal development. With the virtual universe invading the language classroom, as well as teacher devising materials from diverse sources, language classes will no longer be mere chalk and sessions with the teacher dominating. The language Teacher should use all the innovative techniques and resources to make class fruitful, interesting, knowledgeable and lively. As a facilitator and motivator, the language teacher should change their approaches to teaching and learning and provide more appropriate opportunities for their students to be active participants rather than passive recipients.

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