

MANGALORE UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION
MANGALAGANGOTHRI - 574 199,
DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT, KARNATAKA STATE

COURSE 7
Pedagogy of School Subject – I (b)

ENGLISH
(Curriculum and Pedagogic Studies)
BLOCKS 3 & 4
(PART - 2)

B.Ed. DEGREE PROGRAMME
(OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING)

SECOND YEAR B.Ed.

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Overview of the Course

Teacher preparation courses have three major aspects to cater to. They are content, pedagogy including assessment practices, and teaching-learning resources. We usually consider resources under pedagogy.

However, with the developments in the digital media, the availability of rich resources has opened up another possibility of learners getting engaged with resources straightaway without any teacher mediation. This is a very tricky situation for teachers. That students can engage in fruitful learning despite the teacher compels us to think of teacher roles in facilitating student learning from a different perspective. Teachers will have to think of their role as facilitators keeping all learning resources side by side and constantly exploring their possibilities. This has lots of implications for teacher preparation programmes.

This phenomenon has been kept in mind while designing the syllabus for Pedagogy of School Subject – English. A cursory look at the contents of the syllabus will reveal the design of the course. The first block focuses on creating a broad framework concerning itself with the nature, role, and position of languages in society. Unless teachers of English have a clarity of the position of English in society they will not be able to do justice to their profession. Our objectives and processes of teaching English need to emerge from our social realities and societal aspirations. The second block straightaway takes the readers into the theoretical aspects of English language learning. This block includes approaches, methods, and insights into the learning of different language skills. The third block is actually about the methodology of teaching different texts like prose, poetry, and drama. Facilitating learning in an inclusive setup and reflective practices are the topics discussed at length in this unit. The fourth block concerns itself about evaluation, CCE procedures, and learning resources.

It would be good for the student teachers to reflect on the structuring of the course content and the interlinkages therein. We need to conceptualise classroom practices from such a holistic manner if we are to successfully engage in facilitating the learning of English. We have tried to make the lessons as reader-friendly as possible. It would be good for you to prepare your notes as you read through the units. You will be able to find more resources on the internet for a deeper understanding of the issues under discussion. It is advised that you keep the discussions conducted here as your guiding principles while browsing through the resources available on the internet. As discussed earlier, this material is designed to suit our context. Methodologies might differ from country to country. So we need to be discreet in choosing our strategies to make our classrooms relevant to our contexts.

We wish you a fruitful learning experience in reading this course material.

Block 3 : Teaching Different Texts: Poetry, Prose, Drama - Moving Towards Constructivist Approach

Unit 1 : Teaching of Prose

Unit Structure

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3.1.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- explain the purposes of transacting a prose lesson;
- describe the stages in a typical prose lesson;
- develop insights into the processes of a constructivist classroom;
- learn different techniques of introducing new words; and
- learn ways of facilitating reading aloud among learners.

3.1.2. Introduction

The methodology for the teaching of languages is many a time considered the same as the methodology for teaching other subjects. This misconception is perhaps a major reason why our language classrooms fail to develop expected linguistic abilities among learners. Language is a skill, a cognitive skill. It is not a cognitive subject like Science or Social Sciences. While content learning becomes important in a cognitive subject, learning the skills of using the target language becomes important in a language classroom. The content is only an excuse to facilitate the practice of different language skills. The lessons in an English Reader are meant for students to practice reading and comprehending the text on their own. If a teacher explains everything to them, they might understand one given text. But they may not be able to read and comprehend another text. The teacher may have to give some support. Students will have to try and comprehend the text on their own and thereby learn techniques of reading a text. The main job of a language teacher is to facilitate this practice. It is in this light that we are going to discuss the methods of teaching a prose lesson.

3.1.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

3.1.3.1. Purposes of Transacting a Prose Lesson

Prose lessons can be used for facilitating reading comprehension. The lessons available in a Reader are carefully chosen and arranged in a graded fashion for the benefit of the learners. They are expected to practice various skills of comprehending a given text in the course of reading those lessons. In this process, they learn new words, some amount of usages and more important, they learn skills of comprehending a given text. The purposes of transacting a prose lesson could be stated as follows:

- to develop skills of comprehending a given text independently
- to enable learners to read aloud with proper stress, rhythm, and intonation
- to help learners master new words using various techniques
- to help them develop skills of expression, both oral and written, making use of the text given

Please consider these purposes. They are not speaking of mastering certain content. They are speaking of developing certain skills. By the time a student completes his/her secondary schooling, he/she would have got a chance to read at least 30 pieces of texts in the prose form. Let us remember, all these texts are planned and organised systematically to facilitate language learning systematically. The main idea is that the students should always be motivated to read the lessons on their own and comprehend them on their own. The more they do that the better would be their learning.

Check Your Progress - 1

What are the purposes of transacting a prose lesson?

3.1.3.2. Stages in a Typical Prose Lesson

A prose lesson in a Reader contains a brief sketch of the biography of the writer, a few activities, text to be read, and exercises. The text to be read may have to be taken up for detailed discussions in four to six periods, depending on the time available for the transaction. In this section, we will discuss what happens in a typical lesson meant for one period of about 40 minutes duration. Let us again remind ourselves that we aim to help children construct their knowledge of language use on their own. So we need to have strategies to motivate them, initiate them into the learning process, allow them time to explore the given text, discuss whatever they explore, and put to practice whatever skills they practice by reading some other text on their own. As such practices accumulate, the students begin to master the skills of comprehending a text. Let me repeat, our approach is constructivist in nature, involves learners in the learning process and the teacher remains a facilitator. The following stages are suggested for a typical prose lesson.

Engage

It is important to get students to concentrate on classroom transactions. They might be distracted for various reasons. Children being what they are, you are likely to find them restless. They are restless because they are full of energy and there is nothing to engage them meaningfully. They need to relate to the text they are going to read and other activities that you might conduct. We need to mentally prepare them to take on the tasks you organise in the class. How can we engage them right before starting a day's class?

- Start with a casual talk about day to day happenings
- Narrate a story related to the theme of the lesson
- Sing a song related to the lesson

- Conduct an activity that can make them think on the lines of the text to be studied.
- Ask recapitulation questions if your lesson is a continuation of the previous lesson
- Raise a few questions on the theme of the lesson to be read and leave them unanswered. Take them up for discussions after completing the lesson.

You are free to do any activity. By the end of the activity, they must get ready to take on further learning activities in your subject. It is wrong to assume that if we start the lesson straight, they automatically get involved. It is necessary to create structures to relate what is going to be learnt to what is already known and reflect. If we can engage students well, half the battle is won.

At this stage, introduce the new words. We have a separate section on various techniques of introducing new words. They should know the meanings of the new words before they begin reading so that when they come across the new words, they are not puzzled. They might identify other words as new while they read. Help them out with those words, when they ask. But don't make that your main strategy. You will not have enough time to introduce words elaborately when the actual lesson is being explored. If you do vocabulary work while they are supposed to read on their own, the focus on comprehending the text will be lost.

Lastly, you can introduce the writer before moving on to the next stage.

Explore

Now the real learning activity begins. Here students are expected to read the text on their own and try to comprehend the text. They explore the contents of the text on their own. The teacher now helps them explore the text systematically. We start with a few simple questions. These questions could be called Pre-Reading Questions (PRQs, for simple). These questions deal with factual details given in the text. They must be able to locate the answers as they read the text. PRQs help learners focus on the text. The questions are asked in English and students are familiarised with the PRQs and their expectations. These questions can be orally presented or presented on a chart prepared earlier. If you can write quickly on the blackboard, you can even list the main expectations on the board.

Now read the portions of the text meant for the day aloud, with proper pronunciation and intonation. You need to practice reading aloud beforehand. Reading aloud is discussed separately in this unit. Please read it for more information. Ask students to follow the text as you read. The moment you finish reading, ask them to answer the PRQs. Accept even one-word answers. They must have the pleasure of answering questions asked in English. This can build a lot of confidence in them that even they can follow English easily. Appreciate their answers and move to the next level. You need not discuss the lesson now.

Now it is time for the students to explore the text on their own. You can give them the following instructions:

Dear children, now it is time for you to read these paragraphs on your own and try to understand them. I will display a few questions for you. You must read the text and try to find answers to those questions. If you find new words, please refer to the glossary or your dictionaries. We have discussed a few new words right in the beginning. So check their meanings from your notes. You can write answers in your notebook or mark them on the text using a pencil. Read silently. I do not want to hear any sound. I do not want to see lip movements either. Now start.

Allow them 5-8 minutes for reading. Go round the class and ensure that all of them are engaged in reading. They might need some help. Do help them. Once their reading is over, they are ready for a discussion.

Explain

Now pick up a discussion of the text read using the key questions you have presented. You may have to generate many sub-questions to arrive at the answer to the key questions. Do have as many sub-questions as possible. Avoid your explanation as far as possible. Allow them to tell whatever they have understood first. Ask questions and get them to think systematically. Involve as many students as possible in the discussion. You will find a few problems in their expressions or their comprehension. After they exhaust their ideas, you can quickly explain issues that remain unexplained. So at this stage, the first students explain and discuss. Then the teacher supplements their explanation where necessary. Once the answers to the key questions are discussed you could write them on the blackboard and ask them to copy the answers. This may not be necessary for a bright class. But you might find this step useful in classes where students are yet to master independent writing.

However, remember not to make your class just a session of questions and answers. All questions and answers should lead to some kind of discussion that leads to a coherent understanding of the text. You can draw their attention to specific points, usages, and sentence patterns so that they can appreciate different features of the text.

Expand

This is a stage where learners extend the horizons of whatever they have learnt. They do so by either practicing the skills learnt or by undertaking a new similar assignment which also provides extended practice. You can provide them with a parallel text to read. You can ask them to engage in some oral presentation on the text discussed. They can also present their experiences on similar lines. You could also ask them to do some reference work to find out the usages of certain words to develop dictionary reference skills. If you want your students to practice reading aloud, you could even spend a while asking your students to read the text aloud. Limit reading exercise only to the covered paragraphs. Ask different students to read in each subsequent period so that you cover the maximum number of students before the lesson ends.

Expand activities might continue even outside the classroom. They could be some sort of home assignments too. At this stage, we need to trigger off a spirit of independent exploration. Let them engage in related activities so that their language skills get strengthened. So whether you conduct an expand activity yourself is secondary, what is important is you suggest activities. If time permits you can monitor them. Or you can ask them to do the activities on their own. In the beginning, they may not do the activities. So you may have to monitor them till it becomes a habit. We have to talk to them about the need to do the activities that we suggest.

Evaluate

We need to know how effective our strategies were. We also need to know to what extent learners have been able to develop comprehension, the grey areas, etc. For this we evaluate. Evaluation at this stage is not really for pronouncing judgments. It is to understand the learning processes and get feedback on what needs to be changed in our strategies. You can evaluate student learning through a traditional question and answer method. You could also conduct some activities and observe their participation,

provide worksheets for them to work on, and assess their learning. After the evaluation, it would be good to reflect on their performance in whatever little way you can. Evaluation without reflection may not be of much use. We can ask even students to reflect. In the beginning, we can just tell them to think over the class and see in what way they were benefitted. Again, this has to become a natural habit. Evaluation is for enhancing learning and not for passing judgments.

Assignments (Expand)

Usually, these are called homework. The expression 'homework' has acquired a negative connotation because they were made very mechanical. Asking children to answer certain textual questions, copy certain portions are common homework given. But they don't make a good home assignment. The class time is meant for engaging in textual learning. At home, the possibilities are different. They can engage in language practice in a natural environment. Listening to news bulletins, making some reference work, browsing the net for certain information, talking to an adult about a topic, writing a summary of a movie watched, translating an interesting paragraph, and the like would be creative and engage students in expanding their learning.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. What are the six stages of a prose lesson?
2. What are the advantages of following the 5e method as discussed above?

A Sample Lesson Plan Lesson Plan – Sir C V Raman

Teacher's Name: XXXX

Date: XXXX

Subject: English

Class: VIII

Section: XXXX

Period: XXXX

Teaching-Learning Objectives: After teaching the students will be able to

- **Knowledge:**
 - recall facts related to the early life of Sir CV Raman
 - recall meanings of new words in a context as well as independent of a context
 - identify portraits of scientists

- **Comprehension:** (Comprehend through listening or reading)
 - listen to the text readout and answer questions on the text
 - make a note of the circumstances that led Raman to become a scientist
 - learn the basics of the Raman Effect by making references

- **Expression:** (through speaking and writing)
 - use new words in their sentences (discover, interested)
 - explain why Raman could not be regular at school
 - write answers to the key questions asked
 - write a short paragraph on a simple topic

- **Appreciation:**
 - give examples to show Raman's love for learning science

Teaching Learning Resources:

Charts for new words and exercises to be given, pictures of scientists as given with the text as well as obtained from other sources, a clip-on Raman Effect

Approaches and strategies: constructivist approach, activity-based co-operative and collaborative learning strategies

	Phase wise activities	Teaching Learning Experiences	Specifications of the Learning process
Phase I	<p>Engaging the learners</p> <p>Listening exercise, identifying portraits of scientists, watching a clipping on Raman Effect, introducing Raman to the class</p>	<p>The teacher greets students, has some pleasant exchanges. Asks if they can identify scientists – displays portraits – a quick discussion on the achievements of these scientists</p> <p>Shows a clipping on Raman Effect and quickly discusses what it means https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HYq7JyqqLQ (3:30 minutes)</p> <p>Asks them several questions as follows to raise their curiosity to know about Sir C V Raman</p> <p>What do you know about Sir CVR? How do you think he grew up into becoming a scientist worthy of a Noble Prize? What might be his commitment and dedication to research? Do you also have such questions as Raman had? What have you done with those questions? Let us see how Raman goes about answering the questions that bother him in this lesson.</p> <p>The teacher creates contexts for the words listed.</p> <p>Pre identified words for writing sentences discover: Columbus discovered America. It means to bring to light an already existing thing/phenomena etc interested: Children are interested in playing. He is interested in learning classical dance. It shows one's inclination and love for something.</p> <p>Now please give a few sentences using these two words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students respond to teacher talk appropriately • identify portraits • appreciate the achievements of different scientists • appreciate the concept presented in the clipping • think of the questions asked • relate their experiences to that of Sir CVR • develop a curiosity to know more about Sir CVR • check meanings in the glossary or a dictionary • guess meanings of words in contexts <p>Say sentences using words.</p>

Phase 2	<p>Exploring the contents of the lesson (the introduction and paragraph 1)</p> <p>The teacher raises a few pre-reading questions and asks them to answer the questions as soon as he/she completes reading.</p> <p>Reads the lesson aloud with proper intonation</p> <p>Quickly discusses the PRQs</p> <p>Writes on the BB one or two key questions on the text</p> <p>Asks them to read silently and find out answers to the questions asked</p> <p>Asks them to identify new words or words for which they do not know the meanings</p> <p>They read silently, comprehend the text and identify answers to the questions asked.</p>	<p>Instructions: I am going to read two paragraphs of the lesson Sir C V Raman. Open your books and follow the text while I read. I would like you to answer questions soon after I finish reading.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where was Sir CVR born? 2. Who were his parents? 3. What did he get Nobel Prize for? <p>The teacher reads the lesson aloud with proper intonation.</p> <p>Soon after reading the three questions asked above are asked.</p> <p>Good. Now it is time for you to read these two paragraphs silently. When you read, try to find out answers to these questions. Write the answers in your notebooks.</p> <p>Displays a chart of questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where did Sir CVR get his high school education? 2. What was his father? 3. What shows that Raman was interested in science? 4. Why was he not able to attend school regularly? <p>Make a note of the other new words you find in the text. Try to guess their meaning. We will take them up for discussion a little later.</p> <p>You can discuss the answers with your friends sitting next to you. Now start reading. Gives 5 minutes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow instructions • find answers to questions as they follow the text • read silently • find answers to the questions displayed on the chart • discuss answers to questions with their friends • identify new words • guess meanings of words in contexts
Phase 3	<p>Explaining</p> <p>Presentations of the outcome of tasks set o the class, reflections</p> <p>Students explain the answers. Teacher supplements if necessary.</p> <p>Discusses answers to questions asked.</p> <p>Makes students respond, reflect and reconstruct the text read in oral discussion</p>	<p>The teacher asks the students to answer the questions. A discussion is taken upon each of the answers and the answers are related to the text read.</p> <p>Students list new words. Teacher asks them to guess meanings and helps them guess by giving clues.</p> <p>They are encouraged to see the glossary or a dictionary.</p> <p>Then the teacher reads the text aloud slowly relating what is already discussed to the text and draws their attention to the points left out if any.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer questions orally • correct their sentences based on teacher feedback • check meanings in the glossary or a dictionary • guess meanings of words in contexts

	<p>supplements student explanation with more details or correct expressions</p> <p>Lists and discusses new words that are identified.</p>		
Phase 4	<p>Expanding</p> <p>Further skill practice by students</p> <p>Another listening exercise is based on the listening passages given.</p> <p>Reading aloud practice</p>	<p>Now I am going to read something to you. Then I will ask you questions on the same. Listen to my reading carefully. I will not give you any PRQs now. You have to listen to me carefully.</p> <p>The teacher reads the text on Bhaskara on page 170 of the Reader and asks the questions given at the beginning of the lesson. A quick discussion follows.</p> <p>The teacher asks a few students to read the lesson aloud. Each student is asked to read at least 5 sentences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to a reading passage with similar text. • Answer questions based on listening • Practice reading aloud
Phase 5	<p>Evaluation, reflection and closure</p> <p>Assesses learning</p> <p>Summarises the discussions and this brings to their notice the learning processes they were involved in.</p>	<p>Teacher displays a chart with questions on the text discussed. Students are asked to close the books and answer the questions from their understanding of the text studied.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give two instances to show that Raman was interested in studying science. 2. How did the government encourage Raman to continue research in the field of science? <p>The teacher ends the lesson by summarising what was discussed in the class relating the answers given by students. The teacher also reflects how they were engaged in learning and how this kind of regular practice would lead to independent learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer questions • Reflect on the learning processes
Phase 6	<p>Assign further follow up activities to be carried out at home or outside the classroom</p>	<p>Assignment for reflection</p> <p>Write a short paragraph about your interests and what would you like to become in life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices writing a short paragraph

3.1.3.3. Reading Aloud

Reading aloud is usually taken for granted. But a systematic training in reading aloud would boost the morale of learners to a great extent. The very idea of presenting something orally in English is quite encouraging. Moreover, students learn to pronounce words properly, realise the importance of meaningful pauses, and the use of appropriate tones. We need to prepare ourselves to read well and train students for the same.

Let us quickly see how we need to prepare for reading aloud.

- ✓ Read the text silently and comprehend the contents.
- ✓ Find out the meaning and pronunciation of new words.
- ✓ Mark pause groups and also tone to be employed. Initially, you can ensure that all sentences are ended with a falling tone. The questions can have a rising tone.
- ✓ Practise reading the text.
- ✓ When you read the text in the class, stand facing the class so that you can observe them.
- ✓ When you read the text, make a mental note of the words to be read, look at the students, and pronounce them. You can master this technique after some practice. It is always good to see our audience when we read a text before them instead of burying our heads in the pages.

The above preparation is for the teachers. The following procedure is suggested to provide reading aloud practice to students.

- ✓ After you complete the explain stage, you can spend a few minutes helping them mark the pause groups.
- ✓ The whole class can make a note of the pause groups. Ask all of them to practice. Then identify a few students for reading. Allot them paragraphs. Then ask them to practice at home. The next day you would ask them to read aloud in the class.
- ✓ Take up reading aloud in the next class at the expand stage. Ask them to read-only those portions they have practiced. Each subsequent day you will have more paragraphs as you would have covered those portions.
- ✓ If you find students who have not practiced, ask them to read after they practice and the chance can be given to some other student who has practiced or you can read it yourself. Here the message is simple. They need to practice before reading aloud.

You can follow the same steps after completing the whole lesson and keep a couple of periods only for reading aloud practice. Ask students to read their paragraphs in continuity. This becomes a kind of revision too. However, students might get bored to engage in only reading aloud. Hence, it might good to spread reading aloud practice over a few periods.

Check Your Progress - 3

What is the importance of reading aloud?

3.1.3.4. Introducing New Words

Each word has a concept in it. Words make our expressions more meaningful. Appropriate use of words makes communication successful. The knowledge of words is very useful in comprehending a text that is read or heard. Therefore, lots of care has to be taken to develop the vocabulary of the learners systematically. It is advised that the new words are introduced right in beginning, just before the explore stage. The following activities can be conducted to introduce new words. However, it may not be necessary to introduce each word to the same depth. Some words may be used extensively. They need elaborate treatment.

Some others may not be used very frequently. Such words need to be given a synonym. Very rarely used words could even be translated. So after identifying the new words we need to take a quick decision about how these words need to be introduced.

- ✓ You can use a combination of these techniques to introduce words.
- ✓ Create a context for the word, give sentences, and ask students to write their sentences.
- ✓ Use all the words in one context by creating a parallel text/story. Then ask them to guess the meanings. Afterward, you can take up discussion on only those words which need an elaborate introduction.
- ✓ Give antonyms of words, if you think they know the antonyms
- ✓ Give synonyms
- ✓ For rarely used words, give mother tongue meanings where you can give the exact meaning. Use mother tongue only if you think you cannot communicate the meaning in English.
- ✓ Explain the meaning with examples.
- ✓ Show pictures, illustrations, videos
- ✓ Ask them to look up the words in a dictionary

A list of words that are introduced can be on display on some side of the blackboard for the whole period so that they keep seeing it. You can also write those words on a chart and add new words every day. Keep this on display till the lesson is over. Draw their attention to the words every day. This becomes a kind of revision too. It helps them retain the image of the words in their minds.

At the expand stage, you can give some vocabulary exercises for providing practice in using words.

- Referring to a dictionary
- Word building games
- Crossword puzzles
- Cloze exercises(In a paragraph, remove every 6th or 7th word and present the text as a fill in the blank exercise. Use worksheets or project it on a screen).
- Listing words related to a picture
- Creating a story/poem making use of a set of words
- Creating word maps – listing all words related to one given word
- Word dictation and other spelling exercises

Vocabulary learning should become a major aspect of our prose lesson. Good knowledge of words would help an individual communicate better, even if he/she lacks a little in grammar. It is easier for such people to pick up grammar too because they have meaningful content to communicate.

Check Your Progress - 4

Discuss the importance of introducing new words.

3.1.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we discussed the constructivist approach to a prose lesson. A prose lesson should aim at developing reading competencies among students. The different stages of a typical prose lesson were discussed and a lesson plan was also presented. The 5e method includes engaging, exploring, explaining, expanding, and evaluating stages. In each of these stages, the students are helped to relate, search, give an expression to whatever they have

understood, practice further, and check for themselves how much they have learnt and reflected over their learning. Evaluation holds good even for the teacher. We discussed ways of developing skills in reading aloud. Different techniques for introducing new words were discussed. A prose lesson can have slots for practicing oral and written skills at the expanding stage.

3.1.5 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’

Check Your Progress - 1

What are the purposes of transacting a prose lesson?

- developing reading comprehension
- developing skills of reading aloud with proper stress, rhythm, and intonation
- help learners master new words
- help learners develop oral and written expression

Check Your Progress - 2

What are the six stages of a prose lesson?

- Engaging the learners in learning activities,
- Helping them explore the contents
- Facilitating explaining of what is understood
- Giving activities to further expand one’s learning
- Evaluating learning
- and giving assignments (another form of expand activities)

What are the advantages of following the 5e method as discussed above?

- It helps learners construct their knowledge and skills of language use
- It keeps them active because it is learner - centred
- The teacher’s role is that of a facilitator. The teacher does not impose his/her view on the learners
- It makes students independent learners

Check Your Progress - 3

What is the importance of reading aloud?

- Develops confidence in learners
- Improves pronunciation
- Makes them realise the importance of meaningful pause groups
- Helps them read with appropriate tonal variations

Check Your Progress - 4

Discuss the importance of introducing new words.

- Helps learners develop their vocabulary
- Provides them an opportunity to use words appropriate to the context
- Helps them comprehend concepts easily
- Improves overall comprehension of a text read

3.1.6 Unit end Exercises

Answer the following questions.

1. Explain the stages of a typical prose lesson.
2. Identify ten new words in a lesson. Prepare a plan to introduce those words.
3. Prepare a paragraph of about 200 words for reading aloud.
4. What is the significance of the explore stage in a prose lesson?

3.1.7. References

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Block 3 : Teaching Different Texts: Poetry, Prose, Drama - Moving Towards Constructivist Approach

Unit 2 : Teaching Poetry

Unit Structure

- 3.2.1. Learning Objectives
- 3.2.2. Introduction
- 3.2.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 3.2.3.1. Purposes of Transacting a Poem
Check Your Progress - 1
 - 3.2.3.2. Stages in a Typical Poetry Lesson
Check Your Progress - 2
 - 3.2.3.3. Preparing for Transacting a Poem
Check Your Progress - 3
 - 3.2.3.4. Frequently Asked Questions
Check Your Progress - 4
- 3.2.4. Let us Summarise
- 3.2.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2 and 3’
- 3.2.6. Unit end Exercises
- 3.2.7. References

3.2.1 Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- explain the purposes of transacting a poem in the classroom;
- describe the stages in a typical lesson in a poem;
- develop insights into the processes of a constructivist poetry class; and
- justify the need to have a different strategy for transacting a poem.

3.2.2. Introduction

We have seen how a prose lesson is planned and conducted. The basic focus in a prose lesson is on developing reading skills. But focusing only on reading skills would not lead to a balanced growth of language skills. We need to develop the skills of focused listening among learners. Poems provide an excellent tool for this purpose. Poems convey more meaning in less language. The poems may not have full sentences. But each line in a poem is connected to the previous and the next line such that complete meaning gets suggested. Such is the cohesion in a well-written poem. So we need to employ a different strategy to transact a poem than that of a prose lesson. While a prose piece by and large appeals to the intellect in the cognitive domain, a poem has its appeal on emotions in the affective domain. In this unit, we will discuss at length the methodology for transacting a poem. We will be using the constructivist model. But you will notice that the procedures in each of the stages are different from those for a prose lesson and are planned to suit the genre being transacted.

3.2.3. Learning points and Learning Activities

3.2.3.1. Purposes of Transacting a Poem

Usually, we see students grumbling about reading a poem. Somehow, there is a feeling that poems are difficult to understand. Even adults find reading a poem a difficult task. Because of this, many a time, teachers end up explaining a poem, translating a poem, or even giving a summary of the poem while transacting it. All these happen because we assume that a poem is also read like a piece of prose. So we apply the principles of comprehending prose for comprehending a poem too. However, there is a difference. A poem is essentially felt. Now we will elaborate on this.

A poem, as we have already discussed, appeals to emotions. It touches the heart first and then perhaps the intellect. It is felt. Its effect is experienced. That is why the procedures for teaching a poem have to be different. The purposes of transacting a poem at the secondary level are listed below.

- developing listening competencies
- promoting a sense of aesthetics among learners
- helping learners interpret the meanings of words and expressions right in the context of the poem
- helping them to appreciate the word pictures, images, and figures of speech used in a poem
- giving them practice in reciting a poem with proper rhythm and intonation

Let us remember, a poem is not transacted in the same manner as a piece of prose is transacted. The very purposes of these two genres are different. Therefore even the strategies for transacting them will have to be different.

Check Your Progress - 1

What are the two most important purposes that can be achieved through the teaching of poems?

3.2.3.2. Stages in a Typical Poetry Lesson

We have seen in the earlier unit that our approach to any classroom strategy should be constructivist. We need to help learners build their knowledge and skills based on their experiences. We suggested the 5e approach for teaching a prose lesson. Even here, we use a 5e approach. But the procedures within each stage would be different. Let us now discuss the stages in transacting a poem. We will be building our discussions on whatever understanding we have developed in the earlier unit about classroom processes.

Engage

Engaging the students is important not just to get their attention to the classroom transactions, but also to prepare them mentally to take on the challenges presented before them the way they have to be. The student preparation for taking poetry reading has to be more emotionally oriented. Appropriate feelings have to be evoked. Whatever we present to them should create a mood appropriate to the poem to be read. If we narrate a story, let us say, we can either focus on the storyline and the moral, etc. We can also focus on the emotions that emerge in the story. We need the latter for this stage while transacting a poem. How do we do it? A few strategies are listed below.

- Read a parallel poem. Ask them to say what it is about. Draw their attention to the major theme.
- Sing a song that has the same mood as that in the poem to be read. The song might even be related to the theme presented in the poem.
- Narrate a story focusing on the emotional aspects. Your narration needs to say what each character felt and so on.
- Display a picture and ask them to speak about it.
- Ask them to list words that are related to the theme of the poem. You can give a couple of words and then ask them to list related words. Then you can try to discuss with them what these words mean.
- Replay a piece of music that would evoke certain feelings in them. Discuss what they feel about it. Ask them to write a few lines, which could even be in their mother tongue.
- You can read a similar poem in the mother tongue, if available, and conduct a quick discussion.
- Have some language games like listing rhyming words or generating similes or metaphors.

There could be many more activities. But it is important to remember that we need to prepare them to feel first and then think.

Explore

We already saw that poems can be used to facilitate the practice of listening skills. Now we announce that we are going to read a text, they need to listen to it carefully and say what it is about. There is no need to say what you are going to read. Do not ask them to open their books either. They need not even know that it is a poem. If you announce all these beforehand, listening loses its strength. Let them try to guess what it is about. Read the whole poem once and ask them to say what it is about. You will get some answers, even wild guesses. Accept the answers and now based on their responses generate one or two pre-listening questions. Ask them to listen to the reading and find answers to the questions. Read the whole poem again. Discuss the questions. You may or may not get satisfactory answers. But there is no need to panic. Generate one or two more questions and read the poem again. Discuss the pending questions as well as new ones. If necessary read the poem aloud again. Continue reading and discussing like this until you feel they have a general picture of the poem.

Now ask them to open their books. Ask them to think of all the questions you have been raising and try to make sense of the poem when you read. Read the poem aloud. Let students follow the text. Maybe you can give two or three slow readings so that they can identify a few answers. Encourage them to read along with you. As you have already read the poem a few times and they have listened to it, you will find them reading the poem easily along with you. Encourage them to do so. At this juncture, you can display a few key questions on a chart or write them on the blackboard and ask them to read the poem on their own to locate answers to your questions. Give them a few minutes to read the poem. If you find the new words in the poem causing blocks, just introduce them quickly. You can even give the meaning straight.

If the poem is too long, you can read the whole poem just twice or thrice and then limit your day's work to two or three stanzas. But it is always good to read the whole poem at least two or three times in the beginning. The more holistic you are the better.

Think of the strategies suggested above. There is no judgment, there is no compulsion to give the correct answer immediately. Each one's answer is accepted as it is. They are asked to reflect on their answers. The poem is read aloud many times and they read it silently on their own with the help of questions asked and the discussions were done. Now they are ready for the next stage.

Explain

Once the students complete their silent reading, pick up discussions based on the questions asked. This discussion should aim at bringing out the theme of the poem. Have as many supplementary questions as possible. Try to make them go back to the poem to find answers to your questions. Give hints. Allow them to say something to answer the questions asked. Then you can give short explanations where necessary. There is no need to compel yourself to explain every detail and make them understand the poem. Ensure that they get a feel of it. That is why, whenever you find an opportunity, read the lines. End all your discussions with the last reading of the lines discussed. As you discuss, help them list the rhyming words, if any. You can also bring to their notice figures of speech.

Expand

Students can practice reading the poem aloud at this stage. You can also have another poem read. You can ask them to tell the gist of the lines read in their own words. However, do not give activities that will take them away from the mood you have created. You can even do a few activities suggested for the engage stage. Now you can introduce the poet. You can show them a picture or a video related to the poem. Sometimes you get a rendering of the poem by the poet himself/herself. Do replay this reading for them. You can show the picture of the poet. List a few poems by the same poet and encourage them to read them. At least one or two short poems of the same poet can be displayed. They may even read the poems later. You can ask them to look for a similar poem in their mother tongue. They can even be encouraged to translate the poem. You can also give them practice in identifying rhyming words or generating a few figures of speech. Maybe, you can ask them to write a short poem or at least a few lines. They can even write in their mother tongue.

Reflect over the above discussion and see how students go on constructing their knowledge of the poem. The teacher's help is minimal. If we prepare well, we can help them comprehend the poem on their own.

The exercises given in the textbook can also be worked out at this stage. So you may need one or two periods for transacting the poem and another two periods for exercises and other activities.

Evaluate

At this stage, you can formally ask them two or three comprehension questions. You can distribute a worksheet and ask them to work out the exercises. Questions on rhyming words, figures of speech can be asked at this juncture.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. What should be the focus of the engage stage while transacting a poem?
2. Why is it suggested that we do not give any information about the poem beforehand?
3. What are the activities to be undertaken during the 'explain' stage?

A Sample Lesson Plan Lesson Plan - The Little Busy Bee

Teacher's Name: xxxx
Class: VIII

Date: xxxx
Section: VIII

Subject: English
Period: 2

Teaching-Learning Objectives: After teaching the students will be able to

- Knowledge:
 - recall facts related to the life of poet Issac Watts
 - identify rhyming words
- Comprehension: (Comprehend through listening or reading)
 - answer questions on the poem after it is readout
 - reason out why the poet calls the bee busy
 - lists basic ideas presented in the poem
- Expression: (through speaking and writing)
 - describe the various activities undertaken by a bee
 - compare their routine with the routine of the bee
 - justify the need to be busy in life
 - write answers to the key questions asked
 - write a short paragraph summarising the poem
 - read the poem aloud with proper rhythm and intonation
- Appreciation:
 - appreciate how Sir MV's life is comparable to that of a busy bee
 - develop the ability to think of a word that rhymes with the given word
 - apply the values learnt from a bee to one's own life

Teaching Learning Resources:

A few pictures presented on a chart on what a bee does; Cartoon drawing of a bee

Approaches and strategies: constructivist approach, activity-based co-operative and collaborative learning strategies

	Phase-wise activities (Period 1)	Teaching Learning Experiences	Specifications of Learning process
Phase I	<p>Engaging the learners</p> <p>talk about bees drawing speaking one sentence each</p>	<p>The teacher greets students, has some pleasant exchanges. Asks if they have seen bees, what bees do, and so on.</p> <p>Displays a cartoon picture of a bee on a chart and asks students to draw a bee.</p> <p>Activity: What is my bee doing? Asks students to say what their bee is doing. They should show their drawing to the class and say ‘My bee is flying’ and so on. The teacher can give clues: gathering honey, sitting on a flower, entering its hive, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students tell the class whatever they know about bees • draw a cartoon picture of a bee • say a sentence each about the bee they have drawn
Phase 2	<p>Exploring the contents of the lesson</p> <p>reading the first two stanzas rhythmically</p> <p>facilitating listening comprehension</p> <p>discussing the meanings of lines</p>	<p>Instructions: I am going to read a poem on a bee. I want you to listen to me carefully and try to answer the following questions.</p> <p>The teacher reads the whole poem. Students listen. Books closed.</p> <p>What does the bee do all day? Where does the bee store the honey collected?</p> <p>Children try to answer. The teacher does not immediately help. Instead reads the poem again asking them to focus on the questions.</p> <p>A quick discussion. The following questions are added.</p> <p>What is the taste of the food she makes? What are the cells made of? Discussion. Reads the first two stanzas again. Discussion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow the instructions • listen to the poem trying the find answer to the questions • answer questions from memory • listen to the poem trying the find answer to the questions • answer questions from memory

Phase 3	<p>Explaining</p> <p>clarifying answers to the questions asked earlier</p> <p>reading by students</p> <p>students look for answers</p>	<p>Now the teachers ask students to open their books and look at the poem. Teacher reads the first two stanzas aloud again. Allows them time for reading silently. Asks them to find answers to the questions asked.</p> <p>This is followed by a short discussion. Then the teacher quickly explains the lines. Displays pictures again and shows how the cells are made of wax and how honey combs are created.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow the lines as the teacher reads • find answers to the questions not answered • participate in the discussion
Phase 4	<p>Expanding</p> <p>practising reading the poem aloud</p> <p>student talk on bees</p>	<p>The teacher reads first two stanzas of the poem aloud line by line. Now students repeat the lines after the teacher.</p> <p>Children are again taken back to their cartoon drawings. They are asked to say what their bee is doing. They show their drawing and say what their bee is doing. Teacher allows them to look into the poem and answer the question.</p> <p>Now the students are introduced to the poet. Teacher displays a chart of simple questions on the poet, reads the introduction to the poet and asks them to answer the questions. This is followed by a brief summary of the introduction to the poet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practise reading the poem aloud rhythmically • say sentences on the cartoon pic of bee they have drawn making use of the ideas they get in the lines • learn about the poet
Phase 5	<p>Evaluation, reflection and closure</p> <p>answering questions</p>	<p>The teacher displays a chart with questions on the two stanzas read.</p> <p>What is the meaning of ‘improve’ in the second line?</p> <p>What word does the poet use to describe the ability of the bee to build its cell?</p> <p>Where does the bee gather honey from?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer questions
Phase 6	<p>Reading relevant material</p> <p>drawing comparisons</p>	<p>Assignment for reflection</p> <p>You will find a short write up on Sir MV in your book. Read the text and draw a comparison between Sir MV and a busy bee. Tomorrow you should be able to tell the class how Sir MV worked like a bee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage in comparison

	Phase-wise activities (Period 2)	Teaching Learning Experiences	Specifications of Learning process
Phase I	Engaging the learners	<p>Teacher greets students and exchanges some pleasantries.</p> <p>Reminds them of the assignment given. Asks them to present comparison between a bee and Sir MV. If they have not done it, gives them a few minutes to go through the text on Sir MV. Then picks up a recap as well as comparison using the following questions.</p> <p>What is the poem about? What does the bee do? Why is the bee busy? In what way is Sir MV like a bee? What are the qualities of Sir MV? For how many hours did he work every day? OK. Now we will read the remaining poem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students tell the class whatever they know about bees • draw a cartoon picture of a bee • say a sentence each about the bee they have drawn
Phase 2	<p>Exploring the contents of the lesson</p> <p>reading the last two stanzas rhythmically</p> <p>facilitating listening comprehension</p> <p>discussing the meanings of lines</p>	<p>Instructions: Like yesterday, I am going to read two stanzas. Once I will read the whole poem. Then the last two parts. I want you to listen to me carefully and try to answer the following questions.</p> <p>Teacher reads the whole poem. Students listen. Books closed.</p> <p>‘I would be busy’ ... Who is this ‘I’? How would the poet be busy?</p> <p>A quick discussion. The following questions are added.</p> <p>What will happen if we are not busy? What is the meaning of ‘first years’? How should the early life of a child be? What do you think is giving a good account?</p> <p>Teacher reads the poem once or twice and tries to elicit answers from students. Whatever answer given by them is accepted and appreciated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow the instructions • listen to the poem trying the find answer to the questions • answer questions from memory • listen to the poem trying the find answer to the questions • answer questions from memory
Phase 3	<p>Explaining</p> <p>clarifying answers to the questions asked earlier</p>	<p>Now the teachers ask students to open their books and look at the poem. Teacher reads the poem from the beginning. Then reads only the last two stanzas. Allows them time for reading silently. Asks them to find answers to the questions asked.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow the lines as the teacher reads • find answers to the questions not answered

	reading by students students look for answers discussion on rhyming words	This is followed by a short discussion. Then the teacher quickly explains the lines. Draws their attention to rhyming words and asks them to list rhyming words in the poem. Then asks students to list some rhyming words they know of.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in the discussion • list rhyming words from the poem and independent of the poem
Phase 4	Expanding practising reading the poem aloud Discuss the proverb Revisit the poem in the light of the discussion Read another poem	The teacher reads the poem aloud line by line. Now students repeat the lines after the teacher. A few students are asked to read the poem aloud. Now teacher writes a proverb on the board. 'An idle mind is a devil's workshop.' Asks them what they understand by it. Then quickly explains. Then asks student if there are lines in the poem that give the same meaning. They are asked to go through another poem given in the unit 'The Noble Nature' and asks them to list the rhyming words. If time permits, the teacher raises a few questions on that poem too. And asks them to say how it is relevant to the poem they studied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practise reading the poem aloud rhythmically • interpret the proverb • relate the meaning of the proverb to the poem read • list rhyming words from the new poem • comprehend the new poem independently
Phase 5	Evaluation, reflection and closure answering questions	Teacher displays a chart with questions on poem. Who does Satan work through? How would the poet like to be? What happens if we are not busy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer questions
Phase 6	reading relevant material drawing comparisons	Assignment for reflection Prepare a daily work schedule for yourself. Share the same in the class tomorrow. You can display your schedule on the notice board. Every day you should check if you have done all that you have planned. If no, write why. This should be maintained for a month. Then we will again revisit this poem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage in following their work schedule, reflection

3.2.3.3. Preparing for Transacting a Poem

Facilitating learning is more challenging than teaching something. Transacting a poem in the constructivist method needs some amount of planning. Once we get used to the method, planning becomes easier because we too would have constructed our ideas about transacting a poem. Some of the important preparations to be made to transact a poem are listed below.

- Read the poem as many times as needed to get a complete feel of it. Generate questions for yourself as you read the poem. Please do not go for help, even before you try reading it. You may have to read the poems eight or ten times before you get the meaning. But you will realise later that it was worth the trouble.
- Poems have the strength to generate meaning from within. So multiple readings will open up different possibilities of interpretation. Take the most coherent interpretation.
- Once you get an overall idea of the poem, make references. You may have to read a critique or refer to a dictionary or check the figures of speech etc. Do all references needed and get back to the poem.
- Now generate as many questions as you can. Think of main questions as well as supplementary questions.
- Practice reading the poem aloud with proper pauses, rhythm, and intonation. It would be good if you can recite the poem without looking at the text. When you recite you can be more forceful. As the students keep listening in the beginning, you will be able to convey meanings through your tonal variations and body language. Consider reciting the poem.

Check Your Progress - 3

1. What are the preparations to be made before taking up a poem for teaching?

3.2.3.4. Frequently Asked Questions

Is it necessary to sing a poem?

No. It is necessary to read the poem with proper rhythm and intonation. It would be good if we can recite the poem. It is not easy to tune a poem. It makes no point to sing the lines in a tune that we are familiar with. Students will remember the lines and tune that they know and mechanically utter the lines in the poem. Also, many a time, the meaning is lost for the sake of the tune. Let us remember, English poems cannot be sung as we sing classical songs or film songs. It is important to read the poem well or recite it meaningfully.

Is it necessary to introduce new words in detail?

No. Words used in a poem have contextual meaning. And they are there only to bring an effect while reading the poem. So it is enough if we just know what the word by and large means. The overall mood created while reading is more important than knowing the meanings of individual words or writing a sentence using them. Vocabulary building is not the major focus of a poetry class. However, if a word is entirely new and creates problems in comprehension, we can quickly give the meaning and leave it there. They can even refer to the glossary given. So vocabulary work need not be made a primary concern in a poetry lesson.

Do we need to teach grammar while transacting a poem?

No. A poem is not meant for teaching grammar. You might find some interesting usages in the poem. You can draw their attention to it. But it is not necessary to take up teaching grammar as a part of transacting the poem. If we mix up, the poem is likely to lose its effect. The mood created will be lost for some information based exercises. If you want to teach grammar, teach it separately. There is no need to bring it here.

Can we translate the poem line by line so that they understand it better?

No. They need to understand the poem by going through it again and again and getting a feel of it. When understanding takes over, the feeling part loses its appeal. In translating there are many disadvantages. The poem has to be understood as a part of learning English. By translating line by line, we are denying the child an opportunity to learn. The understanding that is developed among learners through translations will be essentially the teacher's understanding. Our focus has to be on helping them understand through their efforts and not just making them understand.

Can we ask them to read the lines after us?

Perhaps yes. When you give the training in reciting or reading aloud, you could ask them to repeat after you once or twice. But there is one more interesting possibility. When you take up the second, third, and more readings, you will find learners joining you in uttering the lines. This is the best thing to happen. You can encourage them to recite along with you. After a few readings, you can stop in between and ask them to complete. This will increase their participation. It will also help them identify themselves with the poem.

Is it necessary to give a summary of the poem?

Giving a summary is not an advisable strategy at all. In examinations we find questions asking them to write the summary of a certain poem. However, the summary should emerge from our discussions and their natural understanding of the poem. If we end up giving a summary or line by line translations, we will end up trivialising our efforts to make them comprehend the poem on their own. If you think a summary would be important, then generate a discussion and write the summary on the blackboard as they progress. This will help them develop written expression too.

I take the whole poem. But I am not able to complete the discussions. What should I do?

It is always good to take a poem as a whole. So if you are not able to complete it in one period, continue it the next day. However, if the poem is too lengthy and has many stanzas, limit your discussions to 3 - 4 stanzas only. Initially read the whole poem once or twice and conduct a general discussion. Then you can limit your detailed discussions to selected stanzas. But if you cannot complete the discussions even when you are considering the whole poem, then you can continue the discussion as such the next day. Give them some assignments in the poem.

3.2.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we discussed the methodology for transacting a poem. The teaching of a poem is entirely different from teaching a piece of prose. A poem has to be felt. Multiple readings followed by questions and short discussions will help the learner get a feel of the poem. Initially, it is advised that the teacher read the poem aloud a few times, students just listening. They do not open their books and look at the text. Each reading should be followed by a short discussion and further pre-listening questions. Students look into the text-only after they develop an overall understanding of the poem. Then they can read silently and answer the questions given or participate in the discussion. The activities conducted during the expansion stage can extend outside the classroom too. We also listed and answered a few frequently asked questions.

3.2.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2 & 3’

Check Your Progress - 1

What are the two most important purposes that can be achieved through the teaching of poems?

1. Developing skills of purposeful listening.
2. Developing aesthetic sensibilities.
3. What should be the focus of the engage stage while transacting a poem?
4. Evoking feelings appropriate to the mood of the poem to be read should be the focus of the engage stage while transacting a poem.

Check Your Progress - 2

Why is it suggested that we do not give any information about the poem beforehand?

If we give information about the poem beforehand, the very purpose of developing focused listening skills gets defeated. They need to develop the ability to listen to a text, make sense of the context, and comprehend it. By listening to the teacher’s reading of the poem, they also get to know the rhythm of the poem.

What are the activities to be undertaken during the ‘explain’ stage?

- Pick up discussions based on the key questions and other questions asked.
- Allow students time to locate lines that contain answers to the questions asked.
- Read the lines under discussion, again and again, to help children extract meaning from the context
- Provide short explanations if necessary.

Check Your Progress - 3

What are the preparations to be made before taking up a poem for teaching?

- Read the poem several times till one gets a complete feel of it.
- Make references
- Generate questions
- Practice reading the poem aloud.

3.2.6. Unit end Exercises

1. In what way is the teaching of a poem different from the teaching of a prose lesson?
2. How can we develop focused listening skills while transacting a poem?
3. Translating a poem or explaining each line of a poem is not recommended. Give reasons.

3.2.7. References

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Block 3 : Teaching Different Texts: Poetry, Prose, Drama - Moving Towards Constructivist Approach

Unit 3 : Teaching of Drama

Unit Structure

- 3.3.1. Learning Objectives
- 3.3.2. Introduction
- 3.3.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 3.3.3.1. Purposes of Transacting a Drama
 - Check Your Progress - 1
 - 3.3.3.2. Stages in a Typical Drama Lesson
 - Check Your Progress - 2
 - 3.3.3.3. Dialogue Reading Practice
 - 3.3.3.4. Suggestions for Writing a Lesson Plan
 - 3.3.3.5. Frequently Asked Questions
- 3.3.4. Let us Summarise
- 3.3.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2 & 3’
- 3.3.6. Unit end Exercises
- 3.3.7. References

3.3.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- explain the purposes of transacting a drama as a lesson;
- describe the stages in a typical drama lesson;
- develop insights into the processes of a constructivist classroom; and
- learn ways of facilitating reading dialogues among learners.

3.3.2 Introduction

Why do we have a drama in a textbook? In what way is transacting a drama different from transacting a prose piece? Is it necessary to follow the same steps or are the steps different? What would be the outcome of a drama lesson?

Transacting a drama is different from teaching a regular prose lesson because the genre itself is different. The very idea of prescribing texts from different genres is to familiarise them with these forms. They have to be read and appreciated for their worth. Hence it becomes important for us to know the unique features of a drama and its possibilities in classroom processes.

Aristotle lists spectacle, plot, thought, character, diction, and melody as the elements of a drama. We need to consider these elements to make a drama class more rewarding for the students. A drama has dialogues as diction. There is a plot that develops into a series of incidents as the drama progresses. The dialogues and the description of the settings help readers visualise some action happening in a certain setting. Now perhaps you can see how this form is different from a simple piece of prose or a poem. We could exploit these features to make our classes lively. A drama also opens up possibilities of dialogue practice activities.

3.3.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

3.3.3.1. Purposes of Transacting a drama

We have seen how drama as a genre opens up different possibilities before a teacher. The teaching of drama could have the following purposes:

- provide spoken English practice through dialogue practice activities
- help learners use appropriate tones in speech
- help learners pick up the use of utterances in regular speech
- train learners in generating dialogues for a given storyline
- help them make a stage presentation of the drama read

Check Your Progress - 1

What is the major focus of teaching a drama?

3.3.3.2. Stages in a Typical Drama Lesson

We have been discussing the constructivist approach to classroom processes in our earlier units. We advocated the 5e approach to the teaching of a prose lesson and transacting a poem. We will use the same 5e stages and see how each stage can be realised for this form of literature. Some of the processes here would appear to be similar to that of teaching a prose lesson. For example, the teaching of new words is the same as we discussed in unit 3.1. We will not repeat it. When you go through the following sections, do keep comparing the processes of teaching a prose lesson or a poem.

Engage

We have discussed in detail in our earlier units the meaning and relevance of this stage. So we do not have to repeat all those details. We will straightaway go to the activities that we can conduct at this stage to bring the attention of the learners to the lesson.

A drama has a storyline, dialogues, and a certain spectacle. Perhaps all these have the potential to be used as engaging activities. Look at the following ideas.

- Narrate a simple story and ask them to say two or three dialogues on the same about certain characters or incidents.
- Have a short dialogue practice activity. Display a few dialogues with six or eight exchanges each.
- Display the words on a chart. You can give a demonstration first on how the dialogues are delivered. Then they can practice in pairs.
- You can narrate the story of a famous play.
- Screen the video recording of a play for a short while and discuss the features of a drama.
- Pick up an informal discussion on a play or any performing art that they have seen and then relate it to the lesson.
- Discuss how important it is to have regular written dialogues for a play. Would it be possible to improvise dialogues based on the storyline? This can motivate them to generate a few dramas.
- Conduct some activities on tonal variations in speech and their effect.
- Ask them to find out the difference between a play and a drama and then relate it to the drama to be taken up for reading.

You can read poems or a piece of prose that has relevance to the drama to be studied and conduct a brief discussion on it.

Do introduce the new words that appear in the text to be read after the activities. Lastly, you can introduce the writer before moving on to the next stage.

Explore

As in a prose lesson, present a few PRQs. We have already discussed the advantages of PRQs. The same discussion holds good even here. Your PRQs could be on characters, the storyline, or the setting. After you familiarise students with the PRQs, just read the portion fixed for that period. Quickly discuss the PRQs. Now present key questions and allow them to read silently. These procedures are the same as they are for a prose lesson.

Explain

Now take up a discussion of key questions with the help of supplementary questions. If you feel it necessary, you can read the text aloud once more. With all these, you are helping each of the students to get familiar with the text and get a feel of the dialogues, setting, etc. The discussion can focus on the setting, the characters, and the storyline. The drama has to become an imaginary play in their mind. Then you would have achieved your goals well.

Expand

Now you can have a read-aloud session. Here you can assign different roles to different students and they read only their part. After the first round, they can exchange their roles and read. You can plan dialogue reading activities either from the second lesson or at the end of the lesson. Reading drama is more interactive. It would be good if you can take up drama reading after the lesson is over. It is important to remember that the tonal variations, appropriate moods have to be brought in while reading dialogues. Always encourage students to practice in pairs.

There are other activities you can do at this stage. You can ask them to develop parallel dialogues for the same theme. They can narrate the storyline in their own words. You can give them another short drama and ask them to read the same. You can also conduct some dialogue practice activities. Do prepare dialogues that have the same theme as in the drama. This would be useful for them to comprehend the drama.

Another interesting possibility is to ask them to explore what would happen if a dialogue of a character is changed a little. This would generate a lot of discussions on the possibilities of dialogues in character portrayal. If you have the video recording of the production of the same play, you can show it to them. Do discuss the production, portrayal of the characters after the show. The activities suggested for the engage stage can also be done here.

Evaluate

The procedures for evaluation are the same as we have discussed in the earlier two units. Drama as such promotes questions on characters and the actions. So asking students to enact a dialogue in pairs or generating their dialogues would also prove to be good evaluation tools.

Check Your Progress - 2

What are the three aspects of a drama that lend themselves to framing activities?

3.3.3.3. Dialogue Reading Practice

Dialogue reading is a good way to practice tonal variations. They offer realistic situations. Dialogues are contextual. An utterance may have to be delivered in a particular manner in a given context. Meaning depends on it. So it becomes necessary for the speaker to employ appropriate tones.

While organising dialogue practice activities, pairing students is better. A situation may have a minimum of two characters or sometimes more. The responsibility of reading the whole play could be given to a group of students. Ensure that the group has as many students as there are characters. Thus each student will get a chance to utter a piece of speech in a meaningful context. Allow them some time to practice. If they wish you can even allow them to present the drama orally without looking into the text.

It would be good to organise reading practice after the drama is discussed. They need to understand the dialogues and the context well. This will help them deliver the dialogues better.

Check Your Progress - 3

How is a drama useful in organising dialogue practice activities?

3.3.3.4. Suggestions for Writing a Lesson Plan

The lesson plan for a drama lesson would not be much different from that of a prose lesson. Therefore we have not given a sample lesson here. We would like you to generate your lesson plan based on your learning until now. Please consider a few issues.

- In what way would be the objectives different?
- When can the teacher provide dialogue practice activities?
- How will I present the dialogues for practice?
- What are the preparations to be made before the class?
- What are the TLM that I can use? Is there any media support available?
- What are my evaluation tools?

Write your lesson plan making use of the model given for the prose lesson. Adopt the 5e stages. You now know what has to be done in each of these stages. Plan your lesson accordingly. This would be good practice for you to become independent in writing your lesson plans. You can write a lesson plan and try it out in your school and see how it works.

3.3.3.5. Frequently Asked Questions

Is it necessary to present the drama on a stage?

Not really. But it is desirable. If you can get your students to enact it, it would be a good experience for them. Producing a play provides ample opportunities for collaborative learning. However, let us remember, when we go public, we have to be more and more perfect. Children are at the learning stage. They might make mistakes. In a classroom situation, we can consider mistakes natural in the process of learning. But when it comes to performing it before an audience, we go for an as perfect model as possible. This may not happen. But when the audience comments on the mistakes, children may feel bad. So before producing the play ensure that such comments are not made.

Can we ask higher class students to make a presentation of the play before the class and then take up a discussion?

You can. But not desirable. Our focus is not just understanding the play. There are learning processes. Our students must undergo these experiences to understand the drama. Only then do they

become independent learners. If they understand the drama even before they undergo the experience, they may not show interest in the activities you organise. Making older students present the play would be good practice for those students. Perhaps it might motivate your students to take up the production work. Instead, you can ask older students to make a presentation after your discussions are over. Now your students will be in a better position to appreciate the play

Can we show videos of some productions of the play and then take up the discussion?

The answer would be the same as the one given for the previous question. The problem with videos is that you have no control over it. How do you know if a product is good or not? We have seen teachers uploading the plays produced by their students. Most of them lack even in dialogue delivery. For the class, it would be a good experience. But the same does not hold good when it is presented to others. Here comes the show value. The original purpose gets defeated. So if you get a video first check if it is reasonably good. Second, check if it fits into your lesson plan. Decide when you would like to show it to your class. Also, you need good projection facilities and audio. If you do not have all that, you better do not make use of them. However, you can watch such productions to get new ideas. Make use of them in your class.

If we make a few groups and give them the responsibility of bringing out a production or even engage in the practice of dialogues their mistakes may get reinforced. So would it not be good to select only competent students for the production, create a model, and then ask groups to practice?

First of all, we have to give them a good model of reading with proper pronunciation and tonal variations. Also, monitor their practice for some time. You can also ensure that each group is a mixed ability group. However, it is always good to give opportunities to all students. They are all learners. We need not show them that a few learners are superior to others. Let us believe in the innate strength of a student to learn and respect him/her for that. Models get created naturally. We need not consciously promote them, especially within the class. Please consider not creating comparisons among peers. Also, in practice sessions, even if they make a few mistakes, it is a part of their struggle for learning. We can mildly make corrections. They do develop fluency. This will give them confidence. There are more vital aspects of language learning than just going for perfection. Please consider.

Can we add more dialogues or songs or any other form of music to make the presentation more interesting and lively?

Definitely. But the question is can you do it without disturbing the flow of the play? Also, can we write dialogues as efficiently as the original writer? If you add dialogues, get them checked by a colleague of yours. What type of songs? If we mean songs similar to our film songs, no. Can we bring music that suits the theme? For example, in the production of a play from Indian mythology, you may be able to use appropriate instrumental music in the background. So the music you use has to be appropriate for the context and should not become a distracter.

3.3.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we discussed a drama can be transacted in the classroom. We saw that the method is not much different from that of teaching a prose lesson. However, the drama is a different genre opens up different possibilities before the teacher. One of the best possibility is that dramas give a good opportunity to practice dialogue delivery in meaningful contexts. Dialogue delivery practice also brings refinement in the use of appropriate tones in utterances. Reading aloud could be taken up after the drama is completely discussed. A group of students with as many members as there are characters in the drama can be given the responsibility of reading the play in one go. This will develop a spirit of co-

operation and collaboration among them. The lesson plan for a drama lesson follows the same stages as the prose lesson.

3.3.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2 and 3’

Check Your Progress - 1

What is the major focus of teaching a drama?

Practicing dialogues and tonal variations and working in groups, facilitating collaborative learning.

Check Your Progress - 2

What are the three aspects of a drama that lend themselves to framing activities?

The storyline, dialogues, and the spectacle created from these two lend themselves to framing activities.

Check Your Progress - 3

How is a drama useful in organising dialogue practice activities?

A drama has dialogues. The dialogues have a context. The dialogues give ample scope for bringing tonal variations. It also facilitates collaborative learning through pair or group work. A drama provides a very natural situation for all these. Hence a drama is useful in organising dialogue practice activities.

3.3.6. Unit end Exercises

1. Discuss how the teaching of drama can create learning experiences that are different from those created while teaching a prose lesson or a poem.
2. The staging of a play is not so important as the process of its production from the angle of learning. Discuss.

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Block 3 : Teaching Different Texts: Poetry, Prose, Drama - Moving Towards Constructivist Approach

Unit 4 : Understanding the Relationship Between Curriculum, Syllabus, And Textbook

Unit Structure

- 3.4.1. Learning Objectives
- 3.4.2. Introduction
- 3.4.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 3.4.3.1. Curriculum for English Language Learning
Check Your Progress - 1
 - 3.4.3.2. Syllabus as an Implementable Framework for the Curriculum
Check Your Progress - 2
 - 3.4.3.3. Textbook as the Implementation Tool for the Curriculum
Check Your Progress - 3
 - 3.4.3.4. Relationship Between Curriculum, Syllabus and the Textbook
 - 3.4.3.5. Going Beyond the Textbook
Check Your Progress - 4
- 3.4.4. Let us Summarise
- 3.4.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’
- 3.4.6. Unit end Exercises
- 3.4.7. References

3.4.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- differentiate between curriculum and syllabus;
- explain the processes involved in the preparation of textbooks;
- explain the relationship between curriculum, syllabus, and textbook; and
- describe classroom transactions that can go beyond textbook prescriptions.

3.4.2. Introduction

A human being is naturally educated in his/her surroundings over some time. Schooling makes the same education more organised, focused, age-appropriate, and a full-time preoccupation. This is entirely different from the experiential learning that takes place in our day to day life. There is a need to make school learning experiential deliberately. Relating school learning to life has become an important issue for academicians. Since school education is a full-time preoccupation for the learners, the inputs that are given will have to be well planned and required structures need to be created so that every minute of the learner in the school is put to meaningful use. What are the experiences that a learner should undergo in a school? How can classroom learning be made more and more experiential? What is the role of the teacher in helping learners construct their knowledge? What should form the core of school learning? How can life experiences be put in capsules under different subject titles and made available to the learner in a systematic manner? In this unit, we will try to address all these issues. Our main focus is to understand the curriculum for English language learning, the syllabus that emerges to realise the goals of the curriculum, and the textbooks that are the real tools in the hands of the teachers for facilitating language learning.

3.4.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

3.4.3.1. Curriculum for English Language Learning

The curriculum is the total of experiences that a child gets in a school. Can there be a curriculum for the English language alone? Perhaps no. But the general curriculum will surely have thoughts on language learning too. NCF 2005 envisages English language learning in the following manner.

English must be taught more widely and more effectively than has been done before. On the status of English among Indian languages, the NCF says English in India is no longer a language of the colonial masters. In some important domains of activity, it has become a part of the Indian multilingual repertoire. In a variety of ways, it has enriched Indian languages. English plays an important role in the domains of education, administration, business, and political relations, judiciary, industry, etc., and is, therefore, a passport to social mobility, higher education, and better job opportunities. In urban India, it is very common to see young people code-mixing and code-switching between English and Indian languages. It is indeed unfortunate that English has so far remained associated with the rich, upper-middle-class elite. It should be the effort of the Indian Educational System to teach English to every Indian child and to ensure that he/she gets a high level of proficiency in it and not suffer discrimination for lack of it.

The following are a few sentences quoted directly from the executive summary of the Position Paper on Teaching of English which formed the basis for NCF 2005.

The level of introduction of English is now a matter of political response to people's aspirations rather than an academic or feasibility issue.

The goals for a language curriculum are twofold: attainment of basic proficiency, such as is acquired in natural language learning, and the development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition through, for example, literacy.

Input-rich communicational environments are a prerequisite for language learning. Inputs include textbooks, learner-chosen texts, and class libraries allowing for a variety of genres: print (for example, Big Books for young learners); parallel books and materials in more than one language; media support (learner magazines/newspaper columns, radio/audio cassettes); and "authentic" materials.

Curriculum forms a broad theoretical basis for planning the educational processes. The above ideas provide the essential guidelines for framing the syllabus for facilitating English language learning. It would be good for you to go through what the national focus group has to say on the teaching of English. The present syllabus for English is framed based on the recommendations of NCF 2005.

Check Your Progress - 1

What are the two goals of a language curriculum, according to NCF 2005?

3.4.3.2. Syllabus as an Implementable Framework for the Curriculum

Unlike the curriculum, the syllabus is subject-oriented. A curriculum makes recommendations. But it does not specify any particular framework for English or any other subject. This framework is worked out in the syllabus. A syllabus is essentially a framework that makes the recommendations of the curriculum implementable. Needless to say, the syllabus is designed based on the theoretical

foundation built by the curriculum. Syllabus for English includes suggestions for activities especially thought of for facilitating learning of English in the school. If you go through a syllabus document you would find the following issues discussed in detail focusing on the actual classroom transactions.

- Objectives for teaching English at the school level
- Levels of proficiency to be mastered at different grades
- Recommendations for selecting age-appropriate content, themes to be included
- Understanding student levels and expectations
- Suggestions for classroom processes and activities to be organised
- Suggestions for meaningful evaluation, a scheme for awarding grades/marks, and feedback mechanisms
- Linguistic content in a graded manner, type of exercises
- Vocabulary list for each grade
- A list of references or recommended texts
- Recommendations for workbooks, teachers' handbook, and other resources

If you take a second look at the above list, you will realise how they make classroom work very practical and meaningful. The recommendations for selecting age-appropriate content and designing exercises are useful in the preparation of textbooks. Now it remains for the classroom teacher to just implement them.

The syllabus designed based on the recommendations of NCF 2005 is available in the publications section of the NCERT web page. Please go through the syllabus for English. You can also check this link directly.

<http://www.ncert.nic.in/rightside/links/pdf/syllabus/vol2/11Language-English.pdf>

You will find an elaboration of the theoretical base from a practical angle in the above document.

Check Your Progress - 2

What are the differences between the curriculum and the syllabus?

3.4.3.3. The textbook as the Implementation Tool for the Curriculum

Textbooks or Readers as they are also called provide actual lessons that transform all theoretical stands into practice. The contents of a textbook have a variety of selections as suggested in the syllabus. They are organised into lessons. The lessons include prose pieces, poems, essays, drama, personality sketches, and so on. The use of authentic material is advised. Sometimes certain content might be edited. You have seen English textbooks. Try to recall the sections in those books. A quick recall would bring to your memory the following sections.

- A preface
- Guidelines on how to use the book
- A list of lessons/units. Sometimes you might find a comprehensive framework of a unit too.
- Lessons. Each lesson might be organised in a particular manner. You will find a short introduction to the author, the actual text, comprehension exercises, grammar and usage exercises, suggestions for activities. The lines in the text might be numbered. Content-specific illustrations are also provided.
- Supplementary reading material. In Karnataka, you will find the reading material at the end.
- Sometimes there could be a different book too.
- Vocabulary lists

A textbook printed in colour is attractive. The type of paper used for printing also adds to the quality of the book.

Textbooks take learners through an organised set of experiences. What has to be learnt in each of the lessons is already planned. Thus a textbook is a tool that implements the syllabus planned for a particular grade.

Activity: Go through any English Reader and find out how it is designed.

Check Your Progress - 3

Say if the following statements are true or false.

1. Textbooks provide broad guidelines for school activities.
2. Textbooks contain lessons and exercises.
3. The lessons in a textbook are finalised based on the themes suggested by the syllabus.

3.4.3.4. Relationship Between Curriculum, Syllabus and the Textbook

Perhaps you have now developed some understanding of the relationship between the curriculum, syllabus, and textbook. They are different but closely related. The curriculum is the broad theoretical framework based on which all school activities are planned. A curriculum presents a vision.

A syllabus, on the other hand, is a framework that makes the curriculum implementable as we have already discussed. The vision expressed in a curriculum may not be understood by all teachers in the same manner. The differences in teacher understanding might defeat the very idea of providing and maintaining comparable standards across the country. A syllabus identifies strategies for practicing the recommendations of the curriculum. While the curriculum presents a large framework for all subjects in a holistic manner, a syllabus culls out specific recommendations for a particular subject and develops strategies. It is necessary that the syllabi for different subjects strictly keep up to the vision of the curriculum so that the school experiences that a child gets remain holistic. This is important because the subject boundaries are redundant for the development of the personality of a child. All learning experiences together influence the thinking of the child. A subject-specific growth would make a child's personality imbalanced. Hence it is necessary to converge all subject learning experiences also into a whole. This is where the curriculum becomes the real guiding force for the preparation of the syllabus.

The textbooks are actual tools for implementing the vision of the curriculum. The syllabus provides clear guidelines for the preparation of the textbook. The objectives spelled out in a textbook need to be in tune with the recommendations of the syllabus and the vision of the curriculum. It just puts into practice what the syllabus says.

If you work back from a textbook to a syllabus and the curriculum, you will be able to notice their interrelationships.

3.4.3.5. Going Beyond the Textbook

We have seen how textbooks are the tools for implementing the vision of the curriculum. However, we need to notice that a commonly generated textbook might have its limitations. It may not suit the needs and levels of students from a vast geographical area with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Also, a common textbook may not meet the not so common needs of some students. The biggest challenge in the classroom processes is addressing the individual differences in the classroom. Students come from varied backgrounds. They are of varying abilities too. A uniform textbook may either prove to be too difficult for below-average students while it might be too easy for above-average students. A teacher will have to consider these issues and see that the needs of every single child in the class are addressed, at least to some extent. This might appear to be ideal. But it is an ideal that we can pursue if we want to. One of the ways to attend to individual needs is to work beyond the textbooks, not just depend on common activities suggested in the textbook. How do we grow beyond the textbooks?

For this to happen, teachers, themselves should act as textbook writers who would design activities based on the curriculum and the syllabus. The ultimate aim is to achieve the goals of the curriculum. So if we understand these goals clearly, we can design a local syllabus and a host of activities for the children to achieve the same goals. It does not mean that we discard the textbook and the activities suggested there. We need to identify material that would suit those students who have problems in working with the existing prescribed textbook. Then we may have to plan separate activities too. The advantage is simple and direct. The teacher knows the students personally. So each activity can be planned exclusively for a small group of students or even individual students. Let us remember, our focus is not the textbook as such. We want to help them develop language skills. So it is reasonable to plan activities that help learners grow from where they are.

Sometimes the textbook activities may prove very easy or not at all challenging for the whole class. In such situations, learners need to be challenged to ensure their involvement in learning activities. Also, if they are already good at something prescribed, it is right on our part to take them to a higher level. They need not remain unchallenged. They can explore new heights with the help of teacher-designed activities.

The idea of growing beyond the textbooks stands good in all situations. The question is how to go about doing it. What do you think you can do in the classroom other than what the textbook prescribes? Please take a look at the following.

- Ensure that students get extra reading material every day. This can be done in many ways.
 - ✓ Have a reading corner in the class. Paste one-page material in English every day. Possibly stories. You can photocopy stories and display them. Or, you can take a cutting from children's magazines in the newspapers.
 - ✓ Or, you can copy a simple story and display it. But print out or photocopy is better. If possible enlarge the copy.
 - ✓ You can buy children's storybooks and lend them books.
 - ✓ Prepare one reading card a day. Over some time, you will have a good collection.
 - ✓ You can start with one or two sentences and move on to simple narration and then stories. At the end of the card, you can have some questions too. Don't insist on answering. Tell them the questions are there for them to reflect on.
 - ✓ If you download the English resource books prepared for classes 1-4 from the Karnataka Textbook Society web page, you get plenty of stories and other activities. Do use them.
 - ✓ Graded stories are available on the net. Do browse through the net and download those stories and use them.
 - ✓ Encourage them to read at least one news item in an English newspaper. They like sports. You can ask them to prepare short reports too.
- Develop a repertoire of activities that focus on different language skills. Use them in the class every day.

- Assign them small projects like interviewing a person and preparing a report in English, writing a description of a place they visited in 50 words, and so on.
- Display one new word a day in the class in a prominent place. Just display. Let them see it the whole day. Ask them to look up the dictionary and find out its meaning.
- Encourage them to tell one sentence a day in English. They can just say it aloud or read it out. But they should choose their sentences from any source other than the textbook.
- Always bring stories related to the lesson and share them with your students. Speak only in English.
- Screen a nice English movie at least once a month.
- Talk to the parents and request them to allow children to watch one English movie once a week. You can keep track of the programmes and advise them which movie they can watch. When they watch movies, ask them to follow the subtitles.
- Encourage them to raise questions on issues that they come across.
- Teach them different functions and the appropriate forms for each of the functions. List classroom language on a chart and display it in the classroom. The forms for greeting, requesting, advising, agreeing, saying no, enquiring, asking for directions etc are very commonly used. If they get used to these forms, they will be able to manage quite a lot of speaking in English.
- Encourage them to listen to English news. You can play English news for them in the classroom using the internet connection on your mobile phone. Use a speaker if necessary.
- You can narrate a story every day. Use only 2 minutes. Tell them something in English.
- Do engage them in speaking about day to day activities.
- Run a wall magazine. Encourage them to copy some material in good handwriting and display it. They can write a few sentences in English and display the same in the wall magazine after getting it edited by you.

Perhaps there can be many more activities. What is very important is depending on your objective, the individual needs of the learners, choose your material/activities, and use it in the classroom.

Do try to give a good model to your students. This is a part of the hidden curriculum. Children learn by looking at adults. They imitate adult behaviour. If they see good behaviour, they imitate that. If they do not see good models, then whatever they come across will form their model. By being a good role model will always help you work with convictions. You show them what you teach works.

The curriculum gives you the guiding principles. The syllabus shows you a way. The textbook gives you the actual tools to walk your way. You can use the guidelines and walk your way independently. Think about this possibility of growing beyond the textbook. You will be able to reach even the slowest learner better.

Check Your Progress - 4

Pick out one expression from the above discussion which summarises the need for growth beyond the textbooks.

3.4.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we discussed the meaning and functions of curriculum, syllabus, and textbooks. We explored their inter-relationships too. Curriculum refers to the total of experiences that a child gets in the school. The syllabus is a framework that provides an implementable strategy for classroom mechanisms based on the curriculum. The textbook is the actual tool that helps you implement the

intent of the curriculum. It is always good to follow the textbook diligently. It is desirable to go beyond the textbook to help learners pick up language skills in a natural setting. We discussed a few activities that we can undertake to go beyond the textbook. A teacher becomes a truly developing professional when he/she grows beyond the textbook.

3.4.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’

Check Your Progress - 1

What are the two goals of a language curriculum, according to NCF 2005?

1. Attainment of basic proficiency
2. development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition

Check Your Progress - 2

What are the differences between the curriculum and the syllabus?

A curriculum gives general and broad guidelines for the educational processes. A syllabus is subject-oriented and tells us how the intent of the curriculum could be implemented. A syllabus is designed based on the recommendations of the curriculum.

Check Your Progress - 3

Say if the following statements are true or false.

1. Textbooks provide broad guidelines for school activities contain lessons and exercises. **True**
2. The lessons in a textbook are finalised based on the themes suggested by the syllabus. **True**
3. The lessons of a textbook are finalised based on the themes suggested by the curriculum. **False**

Check Your Progress - 4

1. Pick out one expression from the above discussion which summarises the need for growth beyond the textbooks.
2. Addressing individual differences

3.4.6. Unit end Exercises

1. Discuss the need for a teacher to grow beyond the textbook.
2. Discuss the relationship between the curriculum and syllabus.
3. Discuss how curriculum, syllabus, and textbooks are interrelated.

3.4.7. References

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Block 3 : Teaching Different Texts: Poetry, Prose, Drama - Moving Towards Constructivist Approach

Unit 5 : Individualising Learning Experiences In The English Classroom

Unit Structure

- 3.5.1. Learning Objectives
- 3.5.2. Introduction
- 3.5.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 3.5.3.1. Meaning and Importance of Individualising Learning Experiences
Check Your Progress - 1
 - 3.5.3.2. Implications of Individualising Learning Experiences for Classroom Practices
Check Your Progress - 2
 - 3.5.3.3. Understanding Learners
 - 3.5.3.4. Individualised Planning
Check Your Progress - 3
 - 3.5.3.5. Selection of Appropriate Learning Material
 - 3.5.3.6. Moving Towards a Constructivist Classroom
Check Your Progress - 4
- 3.5.4. Let us Summarise
- 3.5.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’
- 3.5.6. Unit end exercises
- 3.5.7. References

3.5.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- explain the meaning and implications of individualising learning experiences;
- appreciate the need to individualise learning experiences in the classroom;
- identify individualising learning as a major strategy in a constructivist classroom; and
- learn different strategies for individualising learning experiences.

3.5.2. Introduction

A teacher has to bear in mind all the time that each of the students in a classroom has unique abilities and needs. They come from varying socio-economic backgrounds. Some of them might be first-generation learners too. For the next ten years or so we are likely to find students who are not first-generation learners but are not much different from that position. Their parents might be literates. But the awareness levels would be the same as those who have not gone to school at all. Their school exposure would not benefit their children at all. So practically even those children are first-generation learners. Rural schools might have students with no academic support system other than the school. But they enjoy a lot of freedom or they might be free from pressure for achievement. The urban students on the other hand have the advantage of a good academic support system. But there seems to be more pressure for achievement. Economic constraints would also prove to be a deciding factor for the involvement of students. Home background, the occupations of parents, parental expectations, the home atmosphere, the cultural background, and the kind of peer group that children get in their neighbourhood also influence the participation of a child in school processes. Students in any classroom emerge from such varying backgrounds. Accordingly, their traits too vary. The biggest

challenge before a teacher is to reach out to all the children in a classroom. In this unit, we will take up this issue of individualising learning experiences in a classroom.

3.5.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

3.5.3.1. Meaning and Importance of Individualising Learning Experiences

Individualising learning experiences simply means addressing the learning needs of every single child, designing activities that he/she could perform, provide exercises that are appropriate to his/her abilities, create a support system to help the child overcome shortcomings in the system in which he/she lives. This would also hold good for those students who are in an advantageous position. We need to help them move further forward taking advantage of their backgrounds. Thus individualising does not just limit itself to disadvantaged children. It refers to attending to the individual needs of each child without any preference for one over the other.

One ideal before the education system is to ensure that each child grows into a unique human being realising his/her best potential. Designing a uniform learning system for a group that is not homogenous would be absurd. A uniform system is also designed at some level. So for those who are above that level, it would prove boring and insipid. For those who are below the level of that level, it would prove to be very difficult. We need to create such structures in a system that all students have something to take from that system at any given point in time. It is such a system that all children thrive. They will be able to develop their abilities to the fullest extent. Creativity would be at its best when individual abilities are addressed. Those who come out of such a system would contribute to society in their unique ways. The school should be in a position to celebrate differences and variety rather than glorify uniformity. Individualising learning experiences is the true mark of a good education system.

Check Your Progress - 1

Why is individualising learning important?

3.5.3.2. Implications of Individualising Learning experiences for Classroom Practices

Uniformity is appreciated because it reduces work. It works in a factory production mode. Common inputs, assignments, tests for all students. Even what we expect from students is common. We want all our students to be top achievers. But is it reasonable to have common expectations in a heterogeneous class? Then in what way are we different from that colonial system that advocated the preparation of clerks? Society does not need only engineers or only doctors or teachers. We need all types of professionals to ensure the smooth running of life in a society. So the first implication is that we need to create differential inputs, assignments and tools of testing for students.

Individualising also implies a lot of subjectivity. Uniformity might bring some amount of equality. But what a classroom need is an equity. Students in a classroom are not equal in their abilities or aspirations. But we need to remember that each has his/her own set of talents and aspirations. The learning experiences should help a child develop his/her talents and abilities to realise his/her aspirations. The teacher has to facilitate this. Therefore, the teacher's understanding of a child becomes very important. Thus a lot of subjectivity enters into the classroom. What is important to note is that the teacher should not have biases or special preferences. He/she should be able to give the best to each of the children. Subjectivity need not become partiality. We respect the worth of each child and help him/her grow from wherever he/she is. So subjectivity will be more in providing individualised learning experiences. But this is a desirable subjectivity.

One simple implication is that a teacher will have to put effort to understand the worth of each child without prejudices. So developing individual dialogues with students, observing each of them in action, identifying their unique styles of learning, or involving in activities, relating their background to their abilities becomes important. It is only when a teacher has such a comprehensive understanding of a child that he/she will be able to respond to his/her aspirations.

Teacher efforts are needed for generating differential learning and practice material, a variety of activities, and providing individual feedback. A teacher will have to make use of all the resources inside and outside the classroom to achieve this. Students in a class could be also good resources for organising various activities. Collaborative activities like project work need to be designed. The program of work for the entire academic year may have to be planned at the beginning of the year. We will have to be systematic and well organised for this. It may be necessary to develop profiles for each of the children. It may also become important to have dialogues with your colleagues who teach those children. The classroom may have to be furnished differently.

Thus individualising learning experiences in a classroom has lots of implications for planning, teacher preparation, and classroom processes.

Check Your Progress - 2

Write four implications of individualised learning strategy for a classroom teacher.

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3.5.3.3. Understanding Learners

We have discussed how individualising learning experiences would be beneficial to the learners. For this, a teacher will have to understand the child well. A few strategies are suggested here that would help you get to know your students better. Those titles which are self-explanatory are not elaborated.

Diary Writing: The teacher can maintain a diary in which he/she notes his/her reflections on all the activities that he/she conducted in the class.

This will tell us if we were effective that day. These reflections will constantly guide the teacher to become a better practitioner each succeeding day.

Student Profiles: These would contain all information about the child in one single file. A student's achievement in-class tests or examinations, participation in co-curricular activities, anecdotes of special behaviour, Notes made while talking to the parents of the child, a few samples of material created by the child could all go into a profile. We will further discuss a few of them here.

Test Scores: Scores that the child gets in your subject could be part of the profile. It should be arranged chronologically so that you will be able to find out at a glance if the child has been showing progress. Sometimes even the answer scripts are kept in the profile. This will enable you to analyse student responses too to understand the learning problems.

Assignments and Project Reports: All the assignments and project reports prepared by the student can be part of the profile. This will again help you assess student progress by juxtaposing it with other documents.

Anecdotal Records: These are descriptions of incidents or in which students under observation are involved. Certain incidents involving students might be of special concern. It might mean a lot in terms of helping the child cope with studies or relationships. Sometimes it could be a motivating factor too. Say for example an attempt on the part of a student to speak in English could be noted. Praise for such an effort would go a long way in building confidence in the child. Discipline related behaviour is also recorded for counseling purposes. This profile can go with the child to the next class. Thus even a new teacher will be able to respond to the needs of every individual child in the classroom.

Participation in Co-curricular Activities: Both participation, as well as achievement, could be recorded in the profile. A copy of the certificate of achievement could be kept in the profile. A few samples of creative work could also be kept in the profile.

Notes made on particular issues involving students, parental opinion, teacher feedback and the like could also find a place in the profile. We can maintain a note sheet in which we write our comments and observations as well as comments made by others. The parents might narrate an incident or some particular habit of the child. All such details can find a place in the profile.

Please reconsider all the above discussions as a whole. You will realise how useful it would be to have all these details about a student while we try to understand him/her. For a language teacher, such profiles are of immense value because every detail recorded in the profile will have some implications for language learning. After all, language is the medium of communication. For this, we need not differentiate between mother tongue and English. Those who can use their mother tongue proficiently are likely to pick up English faster because they would have developed good communication skills. Let us make it a point to help the child develop better comprehension and expression both in mother tongue and English.

3.5.3.4. Individualised Planning

We have seen how we can try to understand each child in our class. This very understanding will show us our path for future action. The very awareness of a student's profile would help us keep in our mind what that child requires. Once you are aware of the problems and their reasons, solutions automatically follow. We instantly know what type of tasks we can give them and what could be our expectations from them. However, instead of making such individualised interventions sporadic, we can plan them and systematically execute our plan so that at any given moment we know where the student is and what needs to be done.

However, in a class of more than 25 students, it would be difficult to provide individualised learning experience to each child. We already have a common, average plan for the class that comes to us through the textbooks. Perhaps first we need to work out strategies for those students who are at the two extreme ends of a normal distribution. It is also true that every single child in the class may not require particularly individual attention all the time. They also learn from the experiences of others. However, we can keep in mind all these possibilities and prepare a yearly work plan. Perhaps the following strategy might be useful.

If you are continuing with the class to the next grade as an English teacher, you already know them and have their profile with you. Use the information there for planning. But if the batch is new to you, please contact the teachers who taught the batch in the previous year with the name list and try to find out the learner characteristics of each of them. Make your notes. Later, when you meet them, spend a few periods just in the introduction and a few ice-breaking activities so that you understand

them better. Don't consider this a waste of time. This is very much needed to reach out to all children in the class.

Based on the understanding you develop a plan for your interventions for the year. You would have a common textbook for completion. So a major part of the planning is already guided by the prescribed textbook. Now you need to note down special activities and inputs that you think of for them. Then check which activity can be taken up in each of the lessons. You can note down these in your year planner. If you think a few students need extra inputs or remediation, do make provision for the same in your plan. You might be already in the habit of preparing your year plan. After reading this you must be able to plan your interventions in a more focused manner, keeping the individual needs of children. Your plan emerges from an overall understanding of your class. Therefore, you will notice that each of the activities you would like to conduct will find a place in your plan. You will be able to manage your time better.

You can keep the following as the thumb rules for preparing your year plan.

- Focus on activities that are conducted collaboratively
- Check if the activity gives them scope for practicing any of the language skills
- Ask yourself if you would have been able to do the activity if you were a student
- You can change groups for each of the activities. This will help them in developing interpersonal skills
- Make source material available to them; in fieldwork obtain necessary permissions beforehand
- Plan an evaluation tool for each activity. Write down rubrics and make them aware of what is expected from them.
- Always use descriptive language for providing feedback. Use of just 'good' or 'excellent' or 'poor' or giving marks does not provide any useful feedback. It is necessary to tell them what is good and why it is good or what is not acceptable and why it is not acceptable and how it could be changed.

Does it look very elaborate and tiring? It does. But as you get into this, you will start enjoying it because it is very absorbing. In understanding a student, we understand ourselves. We find quite a number of our qualities in them. With each plan, we make efforts to learn something new. That is how we become 'experienced'. We have to consciously apply ourselves for a while to achieve this. However, once it becomes a habit and way of thinking, it becomes an automatic behaviour. Whether you put your plan in writing or not, you would have considerations for all individual differences. Writing will add to documentation and make data available even for future use.

Check Your Progress - 3

How are textbooks useful in planning for individualising learning?

3.5.3.5. Selection of Appropriate Learning Material

Learning material is available in plenty in this age of technology. The selection of appropriate learning material is an important issue. A teacher has to carefully go through the available material and then ask a few questions before finalising the selection. Look at the following questions.

- Does it suit the age level and thinking of my students?
- Does my classroom setting allow me to use it meaningfully?
- Do I have an uninterrupted power supply while using e-resources?
- Can I tailor it easily to suit the needs of the class?
- Can it be easily integrated into regular class work?

- Does it involve a lot of expenditure?
- Is the language used simple enough for my students to understand? In what way can I make it simpler?

You can generate your checklist depending on the material and your requirement. Again, let us remember one small but important rule. Learning material is there to support the efforts at learning. It is not there to replace a teacher. Let us say there is a video clipping of a full poetry class. It is a resource. But if the teacher replays it for students, then what is the role of the teacher? A teacher can get ideas from such clippings. But it is always desirable that classroom learning is mediated by the teacher. It is only the teacher or the facilitator in the classroom who can take instant decisions on how an activity should go on, or a discussion should progress and understand student responses keeping in mind individual differences. It is a teacher who can answer the queries from students based on his/her experience instantly. There is a lot that the students learn through human mediation. The teacher essentially provides that. So let us ensure that the teaching-learning material that we choose does not replace the teacher. Instead, it should provide support to student learning.

We also need to consider the type of resources that students might come across outside the class, in the community, at home, and so on. Perhaps we need to guide them to use such resources appropriately. For example, a TV could be a nuisance or it could be an asset for learners. Whether we want it or not, it is there with us. The best thing would be to plan how the presence of a TV at home could be converted into an advantage. We may have to study the programme guide in advance and advise parents and students what they can see. That does not mean they should not see other programmes. But a small understanding that the TV at home has an educative value can change the attitudes of parents and their wards. This holds good for the internet, mobile services, and any other digital media.

You might have noticed by now, selection of learning resources has more elaborate implications than just some classroom application. Finally, we aim to make our students independent learners. So they must be enabled to make use of resources available to them appropriately. So, on the one hand, we make our selections and use the resources in the classroom, and on the other hand, we also educate our students on getting the best from the resources available to them.

3.5.3.6. Moving Towards a Constructivist Classroom

We have been talking about constructivist classrooms. Typically, in a constructivist classroom, it is the student who puts his/her best efforts to learn. The construction of knowledge is essentially personal. Each individual constructs his/her knowledge even though he/she has experiences that are common to all. That is why focusing on individual learners in a class becomes important. Let us say, for example, in an experiment you boil some water before students. Now you want them to check the temperature and find out for themselves that water boils at 100°C. But it is possible that students take many other things from your experiment or they have many other questions. Look at the following.

- litres of water boils at 100°C when put on fire for minutes.
- Water boils at 100°C when the outside temperature is
- Will water continue to have 100°C temperature even when it is kept boiling for more time?
- Water taken from the school water tank boils at 100°C. We have to check if it is true with water from other sources.
- Will water continue to boil at 100°C on top of the Himalayas?

Now how would you take this? Each student has his/her way of making sense of the experiment that you conduct or whatever you say. Please notice that each of the above has the potential for further scientific probing. Attending to such issues would promote divergent thinking among students. They also develop the faith that their thinking is valid and they can continue to probe the truth from their angles too. All that you need to do is to allow them to air their ideas. If possible reflect on them or allow the class to reflect. Compare this strategy with the one answer tyranny controlled by the teacher. Students don't have to think when we insist on one answer. Even when we talk about universal truths, we need to allow them to ask questions and think from various viewpoints. Finally, they may all end up at one single answer. But the process of constructing that answer would have brought out the hidden thinking of the learners. This is the essence of a constructivist classroom.

All these can happen only we individualise the classroom experiences. There may not be one single rule for this. It would change from classroom to classroom. Based on the discussions presented above, you will be able to reflect on all these issues and make your classes more constructivist in the kind of learning experiences provided and the material used.

Check Your Progress - 4

Mention one major characteristic of a constructivist classroom.

3.5.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we discussed the need, importance, and implications of individualising learning experiences. We saw that a class that has a constructivist approach will make learning experiences more and more individualised. For this, a teacher has to understand the students, their background, their aspirations, and match learning tasks to the same. This needs elaborate planning. However, once teachers get used to these strategies, it becomes a habit in them to think of individual learners and not the class as a whole. In a classroom, we find students who are average, below average, and also above average. A teacher has to attend to all these categories of students without making them aware of it. A textbook is a common tool for carrying on with classroom processes. The teacher has to replan the inputs based on the textbook to suit his/her class. The use of appropriate learning experiences, learning material, and also educating the students on how to use the available resources to promote learning are strategies that will help in creating a truly constructivist classroom.

3.5.5. Answers to 'Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4'

Check Your Progress - 1

1. Why is individualising learning important?

- It caters to the individual needs of every student in the classroom including the average, below average, and above-average students as well as the disadvantaged ones.
- It celebrates variety and so promotes individual abilities and creativity

Check Your Progress 2

Write four implications of individualised learning strategy for a classroom teacher.

- base lesson plans/classroom strategies on the individual needs of students
- generate differential teaching-learning material
- ensure unbiased approach even when subjective
- try to understand the uniqueness of each child in the class and provide inputs accordingly

Check Your Progress - 3

How are textbooks useful in planning for individualising learning?

Textbooks carry inputs for the class in general. So the content part is taken care of. A teacher will have to match the textbooks' inputs to the level of the students. For this, he/she may have to go further within the textbook inputs or go beyond. In both cases, textbooks act as a benchmark.

Check Your Progress - 4

Mention one major aspect of a constructivist classroom.

In a constructivist classroom, the students are given ample scope for expression. They can ask questions, raise issues, and explore the learning points according to their abilities. Thus learning becomes highly individualised in a constructivist classroom. Here learners are encouraged to construct their knowledge.

3.5.6. Unit end Exercises

1. What is the significance of individualising learning experiences?
2. An inclusive classroom celebrates variety. Discuss.
3. Discuss the preparations to be made by the teacher for individualising learning in his/her classroom.
4. What are the issues to be considered while selecting a teaching-learning material?

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Block 3 : Teaching Different Texts: Poetry, Prose, Drama - Moving Towards Constructivist Approach

Unit 6 : Teacher as A Researcher and Facilitator in the Inclusive English Classroom

Unit Structure

- 3.6.1. Learning Objectives
- 3.6.2. Introduction
- 3.6.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 3.6.3.1. An Inclusive English Classroom
 - Check Your Progress - 1
 - 3.6.3.2. Teacher as a Researcher
 - Check Your Progress - 2
 - 3.6.3.3. Language Teacher as a Facilitator
 - 3.6.3.4. Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner
 - Check Your Progress - 3
 - 3.6.3.5. Diary Writing as a Tool of Reflection
 - Check Your Progress - 4
- 3.6.4. Let us Summarise
- 3.6.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’
- 3.6.6. Unit end Exercises
- 3.6.7. References

3.6.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- say what it means to consider teachers as researchers;
- give examples for research-based classroom practices;
- describe classroom processes in a research-based classroom;
- explain the meaning of inclusion in an English classroom; and
- justify the need for a teacher to become a researcher and facilitator in the inclusive English classroom.

3.6.2 Introduction

Three words in the title of this unit demand an in-depth understanding of their meaning and implications. They are ‘researcher’, ‘facilitator’, and ‘inclusive’ Here the teacher is seen as a researcher and a facilitator. The classroom is envisaged as a place that will strive to be inclusive in all respects. It is including every child in the class and not just accommodating a challenged child. How do we understand the teacher as a researcher? A school teacher is not a trained researcher in the sense the university researchers are. What do we mean by considering the teacher a researcher? In what way a research work undertaken by a teacher would be different from other regular research work? What are the researchable issues available in a school context to probe into? We need to understand this keeping in mind a classroom that includes every single child in the learning processes. The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator of learning. Thus under these changed role expectations, the idea of the teacher as a researcher becomes relevant. In this unit, we will discuss these issues and try to understand the concept of the teacher as a researcher and facilitator in an inclusive classroom.

3.6.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

3.6.3.1. An Inclusive English Classroom

In the last unit, when we discussed the concept of individualised learning, we were discussing an inclusive classroom procedure. There was a time when we used to think that students who do not appear to be normal like other children in the class, would need special inputs or even separate treatment. This, by and large, was limited to the physically and mentally challenged children. But our class also has other children who are not like the majority of children in the class. There could be very slow learners. There could be a few gifted children. The class consists of children from varying socio-economic backgrounds. We have girls and boys and maybe, children who belong to the third gender, in our classrooms. All these children have varying interests, abilities, and aspirations. It is but right that we accommodate all these children in the classroom processes and allow them to grow from wherever they are to heights that would be possible for them to reach. We need to include every child in the class in whatever learning activities we organise so that all of them get an opportunity to grow. A teacher who tries to pitch his/her efforts at the average level, reaches only the average group and partially some others and does not reach a few at all. It is assumed that some children cannot be helped. However, the present classroom thinking has rejected all such assumptions. The need is to attend to every child, include every child because it is his/her right to get educated to the best of his/her abilities. We are there only to facilitate this process.

Hence the role expectations from a teacher have changed. We are now discussing how a classroom can be made inclusive. We have already discussed this in the earlier unit while we discussed individualising classroom learning. So we will not spend more time revisiting the same ideas. We will now quickly discuss how an English classroom can be inclusive and what the possibilities are in an English classroom for inclusive practices.

All students in a class are not proficient in language use at the same levels. That they are at different levels can be used to our advantage. Those who are more proficient can become role models for those who are not. They can be used to lead activities. Mixed ability learning groups will ensure the participation of all learners in group activities. They would engage in communication with their peers without any hesitation.

A resource-rich classroom is another possibility. All students must be able to lay their hands-on material that they can use. Make the material available in a general fashion. Give them tasks. They will look for the resources that they need. It is perhaps not a good idea to specify who should use what material. Then the spirit of inclusion is lost. Let us make the material suitable to all levels available. Let us also plan activities in which all students can take part. The class will automatically become inclusive. We can have a small library, a few dictionaries, projection facilities, internet connection to the class computer, one bulletin board to display reading material or what the students write, a stock of chart paper, colour pens, sketch pens, scissors, twine, gum, gum tape and so on to undertake activities. What is important is that children must have easy access to all these resources. This might appear very idealistic. But please consider such a classroom. It would have some meaningful input for every child. That is the spirit of inclusion.

Teacher attitudes play an important role in inclusive classrooms. If we have an impression that a few children are better than others and they need to be promoted, our efforts won't be truly inclusive. If we feel that there is nothing we can do for a few children, we cannot be called inclusive. We might have noted individual differences. But such an understanding of children should help us plan for each individual and not exclude a few from the mainstream. Let us remind ourselves again and again that all

children are capable of learning. The time taken for learning might differ from student to student. But all of them learn. There is no need to separate a few and give them extra treatment. This might demoralise them. We do have planned inputs for all of them. But we don't brand them. We need to develop the spirit of inclusion in our thought and action. Only then we can make our classes inclusive.

There might be a few physically or mentally challenged children in the school. A few children might need special attention. We need not make it very public that a few children are different and they need to be attended to separately. Instead, the teacher can personally talk to them and their parents and educate them on how they should work in groups. For that matter, each child in the class would need some personal attention from the teacher. Let us give it to all.

In a large class, the idea of inclusion becomes very tricky. Perhaps all learning activities need to have mixed ability groups. But for practice sessions, we might create homogeneous groups. This will help us monitor group work easily. We will also be able to provide inputs required specifically by each group. This is only a management strategy and there is still no need to brand children as slow learners or gifted learners. To some extent, they would know it. That is a fact too. But we need not highlight it. We need to act on that information and not give propaganda to the information. When we work with a large number of students when resources are limited this strategy would be meaningful than going for an average plan.

Check Your Progress - 1

1. Describe an inclusive classroom.
2. For learning activities groups are useful.
3. For practice activities groups are useful.

3.6.3.2. Teacher as a Researcher

Research, on the outset, means to us finding out something new or throwing light on aspects of life that we have not been able to understand until now. It has a procedure so that what a research work arrives at is universally acceptable. That is how research contributes to the growth of human knowledge. It uses the scientific method to probe into issues. So there are observations, hypotheses, testing of hypotheses, and arriving at conclusions. The more systematic the testing of hypotheses, the more universal the knowledge generated would be. What might happen if a hypothesis is tested in a very limited manner? The findings would be relevant to only the happenings within the limits of that particular sample. It will still give results applicable to that specific situation. A classroom problem-solving initiative, be it learning-related or behaviour related or system related, need not always end up with a universally applicable result. But it can still use the research procedures to whatever extent possible, to understand the variables better. Problem-solving is the major focus and not knowledge generation. Thus, if a teacher probes into the behavioural problems of a particular child in a class, such a probe can have steps of a regular research procedure. The findings would be relevant to that child. Fine. Over some time, the teacher who undertakes such work would be able to generalise certain aspects of that problem and find solutions to such problems instantly. All findings of a research work need not be universally applicable. Even with local applicability, they have their relevance. Such is the idea of a teacher as a classroom researcher.

In this regard, action research seems to be very useful for classroom applications. Department of Education in Karnataka has published books on action research and given extensive training to teachers in action research procedures. It has also been made a paper in all pre-service teacher training programmes. Hence, we will not discuss action research here. But we will try to understand the role of a teacher as a researcher.

What does a researcher do? He/she observes a certain phenomenon, based on the information available(through observations and study of similar cases elsewhere), hypothesises certain relationships, further collects data through studies, experiments, or elaborate observations and discussions with experts, tests the hypothesis by analysing the data and either accepts or rejects the hypothesis and finally comes out with certain conclusions. This is a very simplified version of research procedures. However, this suits a teacher's needs too. Let us say that we identify certain learning/behavioural problems among students. We want to probe into them. We make more focused observations to identify the nature of the problem. Then we can try to make references and find out if someone else has addressed such a problem. Then we ask ourselves what changes we expect to take place and how we could achieve it. Thus we hypothesise. We say what would happen if we bring in certain interventions. Then we bring in the intervention, collect data on the effect of the same, and see if the hypothesis is proved right. If yes, then we make the interventions a part of our practices. If the hypothesis is not proved then we know certain interventions do not have any effect. A teacher is benefitted in either case. If the result is positive then a teacher adds certain research-based practices to his/her routine. If the result is negative the teacher knows what not to do. Whether the findings are universally applicable is immaterial.

Research, for a teacher, is a very personal preoccupation meant for promoting his/her professional development. It is not expected to have a universal application. The teacher addresses classroom issues in a very scientific manner so that he/she grows as a professional.

You might find differences in specific procedures for different types of probing. The spirit would be the same. If you internalise these steps you will be able to research the classroom level without any external help. A research-based practice is the true mark of reflective practices.

Check Your Progress -2

List the general steps in the classroom research procedure.

3.6.3.3. Language Teacher as a Facilitator

Perhaps now you know who a facilitator is. We will not again go about defining the word. We will try to see how a facilitator is different from a teacher. Our present focus is to understand our changing roles.

A teacher is essentially seen as the leader of the classroom processes. He/she is expected to be more knowledgeable than the students and hence in a position to lead the act of knowledge construction. All role expectations from a teacher emerge from this assumption. A teacher's job is that of 'helping the other understand'. You might have heard students talking about a teacher. They feel that they 'understand' a certain teacher well and 'do not understand' some other teacher. Hence the former is held in high regard. Now think of this again in terms of language learning. In language learning, understanding is not the same as learning to use that language. Those who feel they need to make students 'understand', resort to translations. Students do understand the contents. But do they learn the use of language? Language use is a skill. We are not preparing linguists. We are helping our students use English for various purposes. So skill practice should be our priority. So by planning various types of skill practice exercises we facilitate language learning. English language learning is not learning about English, it is learning the language itself. The role of the teacher is to act as a facilitator. He/she facilitates the practice of various language skills. All the efforts made by the teacher to understand his/her students, activities planned to reach out to every student in the classroom aim at facilitating language learning. We need to be facilitators in the true sense of the term.

3.6.3.4. Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner

We have discussed what it means to say that a teacher is a researcher. However, we agreed that a teacher is not a researcher in the sense a university researcher is. A teacher-researcher is a professional who makes use of research procedures to achieve his/her targets. Among many other practices, a teacher uses the data obtained from research probing to reflect on a given situation and bring changes. Hence the teacher is seen as a reflective practitioner.

A reflective practitioner has many more tools under his/her sleeve than just research or action research as it is often called. A teacher observes student behaviour, makes a note of the student's strengths and weaknesses, plans strategies to help him/her engage fruitfully in classroom processes, reflects on the results, and again repeats the same procedure. This cycle continues as long as he/she continues to teach that student. Many tools help teachers reflect on student behaviour, both learning as well as general behaviour. These tools have been presented to you while the department brought out the CCE manual. The list of tools is presented below for your information.

- rating scales
- anecdotal records
- student profiles
- questionnaires
- checklists
- observation schedules
- documentation of student activities
- progress report
- consolidated marks register
- cumulative records
- teacher's diary
- action research findings
- case studies
- information from interviewing parents, colleagues, and other students

This list may not be complete. It does not have to be. Whatever throws light into a student's behaviour is useful for a teacher. You can use any of these tools to collect data about students. Subject learning is only one aspect of a student's life in school. Other areas influence the student, they spend a lot of time at home, with their peers, and so on. We need to understand this part of a student's life too because it will have a bearing on his/her learning. Thus, reflection implies observing students, documenting information, and thinking about the information collected about a student's learning and other personality issues. A reflective teacher will be able to pinpoint a student's problems and provide the required help when needed. Reflections also help in the professional development of the teacher. With every reflection, the existing teacher becomes a better teacher. That is the essence of professional development.

Check Your Progress - 3

Why is a teacher called a reflective practitioner?

3.6.3.5. Diary Writing as a Tool of Reflection

Look at the following notes written by a teacher in her diary. These are also called teacher journals.

A page of a teacher journal might have notes like this.

Date: 16.07.2013

1. I found students of VIII B quite distracted in the English class. They were not attending to the lesson. When I asked them they did not tell anything. But it was evident that something was bothering them. I have to discuss this with my colleagues.

2. Nithin had not done his homework even today. He has not done any homework this month. Even Science and Math teachers reported the same. He gives some excuses. This problem is not limited to one subject. I need to talk to his parents.

If such notes are made on issues that draw our attention in the class for about ten days we can note that a few issues are repeated. The very notes above raises two questions. Will the students continue to be distracted even in the next class? Will Nithin continue not to do his homework? We readily know that it is necessary to get down to some action as far as Nithin is concerned. The daily notes made by the teacher develop various insights in the teacher. They also give information and guidance on what has to be considered a problem and needs remedial interventions. The notes could be on our practices too. See these notes.

17.07.2013

1. Today the class was not distracted. There might be some special reason for yesterday's behaviour. However, I feel I need not worry about it anymore.

2. Nithin has not done his homework even today. I have asked him to bring his parents to school. I have to make a list of issues to be discussed with them.

3. I don't think the way I read the poem was effective today. Even students appear blank. Tomorrow I have to read the poem meaningfully with appropriate tonal variations. I should also give them practice in reading poems. When I asked Krishna Kumar to read the poem he sang it. I have to ask him to sing it again. If I help him to maintain the rhythm, other children can also learn the same. It would be easier to recite the poem

The future notes will contain what the teacher spoke to Nithin's parents.

Similarly the effect of the teacher's efforts to read the poem properly would also be noted. All these will essentially throw light on the teacher's classroom strategies and if the path taken is correct. Such notes could be on students, classroom processes, the discussions with students or any other interaction and our opinion on that. By reading these notes once in a while it becomes clear

to us what we had to do, what we can do in future. Teachers journals help teachers grow personally and professionally. Notes of lesson written before the class tells us how to go about the lesson. The diary written after the class informs us if the lesson could be delivered as planned, what were the problems faced, how did the students get involved in the learning activities. Ultimately such notes

influence our future classes. Moving towards meaningful practices based on the reflections facilitated by the diary notes is the focus here.

(From Reflective Practices: Action Research published by DSERT, Bengaluru)

Perhaps teachers can write their observations and reflections in a notebook specially kept for the purpose. I know a teacher who had an opportunity to work with the same batch from class VI to class IX. In the first year, when the batch was in class VI, she maintained a diary in which she had made entries for all students in the class. But when they moved on to class VII, she dropped those students from her diary who had grown to be independent learners. Thus when the batch came to class IX there were four students left in the diary. She maintained her observations on them. The others in the class had truly grown beyond the need for such regular monitoring. She used her diary entries to reflect over student behaviour and find out what needs to be done. She planned her classes accordingly. She could even develop dialogues with the parents and ensure their cooperation in reaching out to the students. Isn't that interesting? That is the use of a diary. Please consider maintaining a diary for your class.

Check Your Progress - 4

Why is diary writing important for a teacher?

3.6.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit we discussed what it means to understand a teacher as a researcher and facilitator. A teacher is not a researcher in the sense a university researcher is. But he/she follows the same research procedure in order to understand students and plan classroom processes to suit their varying levels. The findings of a classroom research are basically applicable only to that class. However, over a period of time a teacher might be able to generalise a few insights and benefit from them. The language teacher is not a giver of knowledge. He/She should assume the role of a facilitator. A teacher's job is to help learners practice language skills and learn to use language. There are many tools that help teacher to be a reflective practitioner. Diary writing or maintaining journals is an important tool of reflection that can help teacher understand his/her classroom processes over a period of time and make observations about trends in the learning styles of children as well as in his/her facilitation skills. This information will help in one's own professional development.

3.6.5. Answers To 'Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4'

Check Your Progress - 1

1. Describe an inclusive classroom.

An inclusive classroom is a place where all children irrespective of their abilities, background, sex or any other criteria get chances to participate in the classroom processes. Facilities are provided such that every student can make use of the facilities to meet his/her needs.

2. mixed ability

3. homogeneous

Check Your Progress - 2

List the general steps in classroom research procedure.

- Identification of problems
- Focused observations
- Making references, if needed.
- Formulating a hypothesis
- Experimentation/Observation and data recording/intervention
- Analysis of data collected and testing hypothesis
- Accepted hypothesis will lead to the integration of experimented interventions and rejected hypothesis will lead to further probing if necessary.

Check Your Progress - 3

Why is a teacher called a reflective practitioner?

A teacher observes classroom processes and their effect on student learning. Based on these observations he/she further brings changes in his/her practices. Thus reflection over one's own performance is a part of a teacher's profession. That is why a teacher is called a reflective practitioner.

Check Your Progress - 4

Why is diary writing important for a teacher?

Diary writing on day to day activities in the classroom help teachers reflect over the classroom processes and identify the lacuna and plan what is needed for the next class. This is a continuous process. Through such reflections a teacher will be able to reach out to every child in the classroom. Over a period of time it will lead to the professional growth of the teacher. That is why diary writing is important for a teacher.

3.6.6. Unit end Exercises

1. List a common classroom problem and explain how you would probe into the problem like a researcher.
2. How does diary writing lead to professional growth?
3. What is the significance of an inclusive classroom?

3.6.7. References

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Block 4 : Teaching-Learning Materials

Unit 1 : Print media; other reading materials - learner chosen texts, Magazines, News Papers, and Class Libraries

Unit Structure

- 4.1.1. Learning Objectives
- 4.1.2. Introduction
- 4.1.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 4.1.3.1. Meaning and characteristics of the print media
Check Your Progress - 1
 - 4.1.3.2. Newspapers and Periodicals
Check Your Progress - 2
 - 4.1.3.3. Literature
Check Your Progress - 3
 - 4.1.3.4. Children's literature
Check Your Progress - 4
 - 4.1.3.5. Using the print media for enhancing language learning
Check Your Progress - 5
- 4.1.4. Let us Summarise
- 4.1.5. Answers to 'Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4'
- 4.1.6. Unit end Exercises
- 4.1.7. References

4.1.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- explain the meaning and characteristics of the print media;
- classify different types of print media into different categories;
- discuss the implications of children's literature; and
- develop awareness about the potential of the print media in enhancing language learning.

4.1.2. Introduction

One of the challenges before the teaching community is to overcome communication losses in classroom situations. Facilitation of learning is easier said than done. The facilitator has to plan elaborately to ensure that the activities are done, interactions learners have among themselves, learner performances finally deliver what they are supposed to deliver. In all these processes gaps get created for a variety of reasons. Unless these gaps are filled, learning can not be complete. The facilitator may have to bring in a lot of redundancy or provide extra support for a communication situation to ensure whatever is being communicated reaches the target audience. When fundamental rights are discussed, the actual content to be learnt is a list of fundamental rights. Is it enough if we just display the list and read it out? Will learners understand whatever is there in the list? To ensure that the learners understand what each of the rights listed means, what its implications are, and how it is important. It is for this that the facilitator undertakes several activities. Starting from a straight explanation in the lecture method, the facilitator can make use of several teaching-learning materials, create opportunities for student interactions and collaborative learning, provide extra reading material, and so on. Finally, what decides the success of classroom communication is the strength of the class to reach every learner in the way he/she can comprehend. This is where TLM becomes very important.

Different things are available in and around the class, books, charts, and other print material, related content available in the digital media, various activities, the linguistic environment, and human resources available form the support system which help the teacher in facilitating learning in the classroom. In this unit, we will examine closely the print media, its meaning, characteristics, and implications for facilitating learning.

4.1.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

4.1.3.1. Meaning and characteristics of the print media

Print media is a tool that uses printed material for communication purposes. It is one of the oldest forms of communication. Yet it has not lost its relevance even to date. Just look around you. Including the text you are reading now, you will find lots and lots of printed matter. Whatever is printed gets documented permanently. Until the digital era came, print media dominated the scenario of social communication. Even after the coming of digital media, the print has not vanished. It has come to stay for its worth. Textbooks, periodicals, newspapers, reference books, novels, stories are all printed for use beyond the real-time limits. The medium of print depends on the printing technology, supply of printing material like paper, ink, printing equipment, generation of content to be printed. The literature already available in the print media has fixed implications while the possibility of creating content as per our requirement throws a challenge to our creative abilities. The print media is distinctly different from the electronic media in many ways. Let us quickly take a look at the unique characteristics of the print media. We will try to understand these characteristics from the point of their educational use.

Characteristics of the print media

- A permanent document - Whatever is printed is available for future use. It can be preserved. The printed words cannot be changed as per one's wishes. Something different can be printed but not alter what is printed once. This greatly helps while tracing the history of an idea or an event. It is easy to trace the path of development of a particular piece of knowledge because whatever is available in the print form can be arranged chronologically for a better understanding. For researchers, this would be very helpful.
- Portable - The print media provides the convenience of carrying where ever we go. You some reading material in your bag where ever you go. Most of the books are printed such that they do not become a burden to carry.
- Provides the freedom to use it anytime, anywhere – As the printed material is easily portable, reading can take place in any place at any time. We have seen people reading books while traveling, waiting, and so on. With a book around, we are engaged all the time.
- Allows back and forth movement while reading – Many a time, we do not comprehend a line in our first reading. We may have to revisit earlier lines or check a couple of pages later for some information and so on. Print material allows this movement very easily. A reader has to just turn over the pages.
- Important text can be marked, and notes recorded on the body of the printed page – Many good readers keep a pencil with them, mark the lines that they think are important, and sometimes make notes in the margin space for future reference. It is quick and remains attached to the text forever. Thus we can record our immediate response to the text without missing any idea.

- The printed text demands the ability to read from its users - A person has to be literate to read a printed text. Making sense of the printed text needs a certain level of mastery over the skill of reading.
- Multiple copies can be created for use in groups – With the advent of local printers that can be connected to a laptop, printing technology has entered every office, household and readily available for use. A page from a book can easily be photocopied and distributed. This has tremendous implications for classroom practices. Worksheets and handouts could be shared with students for providing practice activities. Think about it.

You will be able to bring more examples for the above characteristics if you reflect over them for a while. The print media has become a part and parcel of our life. The ease of use is the main advantage of print media. The print media can be used to take learning beyond the classroom. All distance education programmes heavily depend on print media for sharing reading material which is printed in the form of structured lessons.

An activity

Sit quietly for a while and separate the print media from all other media. Try to understand the role the print media has played in your life.

Check Your Progress - 1

1. What are the characteristics of the print media?

4.1.3.2. Newspapers and Periodicals

Newspapers

Newspapers are one of the most important mass media. Most of the newspapers are produced daily and a few of them could be weekly. A few newspapers may even have their evening editions to keep up to date with news. Newspapers have large-size loose sheets. There could be many sections catering to local, state, national, and international news. Usually, they have an editorial page which might also carry a few articles on which are loosely arranged. There could be weekly sections for children and youth and other age groups of people. They may have special features for each day of the week. On Sundays, all newspapers publish special editions with features on a current topic. Of late, newspapers carry colour pages too. Newspapers heavily depend on advertisements for managing their finances. That is how they are made available to people for a very cheap price.

When it comes to our situation, we find newspapers in local languages as well as in English. English newspapers are available throughout the country. With the progress made in printing technology, newspapers are also locally printed and distributed. So the availability of an English newspaper is not an issue in most cases. There may be still a few habitations which are very remote and not well connected by road. Only in such places, newspapers may not be available regularly.

What is interesting about newspapers is that as a tool of learning, even old newspapers have their value and they are available for a very cheap price in bulk. Thus newspapers form easy and rich sources for the development of reading skills.

Activity

Take an English newspaper and study each page carefully. Make a note of all the features. Go through different articles to have an estimate of the language level. Similarly, go through the same newspaper for a week. Now you have an idea of what is available on each day of the week. See how you can make use of this resource for classroom purposes.

Magazines

Magazines are periodicals. There are many types of magazines. Trade magazines, published exclusively for promoting certain trades. There could be a magazine exclusively disseminating information on cars. Journals promote academic thinking and discussions. They provide a forum for sharing discussions among scholars in their respective fields of study. Thus there could be discipline-specific journals. There are magazines meant for light reading. They have the general public as their readership. There could be magazines meant for a particular theme just like the trade magazines. Many religious institutions publish their magazines.

Like newspapers, magazines also carry advertisements. There are a few journals that run only on the support of its readership. That is why you find journals very costly.

How are magazines useful for learners of English? While journals are useful for teachers, the common magazines meant for the general public could be a rich source of reading material for learners. Unlike newspapers, magazines do not carry day to day news. There could be reflective articles on certain incidents and developments. Magazines also carry a lead article. They have sections for all age groups. They might have serials too. There are also regular columns. All these can be exploited for enhancing the learning of English. Think of a magazine dealing with sports. Children would love to go through them. First, they may see only pictures. But later, if you can set meaningful tasks, they will start reading the articles too. The contents of magazines could be relevant even as old volumes. Compared to newspapers, magazines deal with more general themes than a specific day to day events. We can collect old magazines from various sources and make the collection available to children.

Activity:

Try to have a look at different magazines available in your surroundings. You can even visit a newspaper stall and check what types of magazines are available there. Prepare a list of magazines that could be useful for your purpose. Find out from the shopkeeper names of those who buy those magazines. You can contact them and request them to donate the old volumes to your school.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. List four advantages of a newspaper as a teaching-learning material.
2. How are magazines relatively more lasting resources?

4.1.3.3. Literature

Literature is the written creative expression of human thought or feelings. It is expected to have an aesthetic appeal. Novels, stories, poems, dramas form the body of literature. Imaginative and creative pieces of prose could also be considered literature. Contrast literature with articles, reports, and documents. We do not categorise these under literature. Literature, being imaginative and creative, can hold the interest of the reader. Literature provides a very useful reading material. Reading of literature can be of great help in language development and the development of aesthetic sensibilities among learners. Reading literature has a humanising effect on readers. By reading life-related stories, we start reflecting on our actions and thinking. Literature can make individuals more sensitive to their fellow beings.

Considering literature as a resource has two dimensions. First, introducing learners to great literary personalities by creating opportunities for reading their works. Second, it can be used as a tool to develop the language abilities of the learners. Reading results in receiving ideas and information. We need ideas and information to form our expression. We process the ideas and information we receive through reading and form our impressions. These impressions form the basis of our expression, both spoken and written. Thus reading supplies content for practicing spoken and written skills.

When we expect learners to read literature other than the contents of their textbooks, they are more relaxed. By and large, children take to literature instantly. Starting from comics and stories, they can go up to reading fairly long novels. They may not immediately take to poems and essays. But they will enjoy listening to songs and try to sing themselves. All that we need to do is to make literature available in plenty to the learners.

Reading of literature need not have a very formal evaluation task. Then the joy in reading is lost in focusing on the evaluation. Instead, there could be tasks. Children could be asked to share the themes of whatever they read in the class when the class is free. You can also arrange discussions on a material that is read. They can convert a story into a poem or a poem into a story. However, reading literature by itself is a useful activity. Its benefits may not be felt immediately. But the influence literature can have on the child will show up at later stages. Reading literature can have a lot of influence on one's behaviour, thinking, aesthetic sensibilities, and language skills. That is why even reading literature in Kannada will have a bearing on the learning of English. What a reader gets through literature crosses the boundaries of the language in which that literature is created. So think of reading programmes based on literature both in English and the MT of students. When it comes to skill practice focus on English.

Check Your Progress - 3

How can you say that the effect of

1. Does literature cross the boundaries of the language in which it is created?

4.1.3.4. Children's literature

You might have come across this expression earlier. What do we mean by children's literature? This could either be literature created by adults especially for children or it could be literature created by children themselves. As teachers of English both are of interest to us.

Children's literature created by adults has its benefits. The authors would have controlled the language level for their target age group. Since it is specially created, you will be able to find children's literature graded for different age groups. You will also find abridged versions of classics rewritten for children. They are meant for developing the reading abilities of children. Such books contain exercises too. On the other hand, you will also find stories rewritten or created for children without any grading. In such cases, we have to decide what would suit our students. In children's literature, you will find stories, short novels, poems, biographies, narration historical events and other information-based reading material. All these could be made available in the school for the use of children. Perhaps we need to have a good idea of what our library has in its collection and encourage children to read by suggesting titles for them to read. It would be good if we also have an idea of what is written in these books so that we will be able to pick up discussions with children when they read those books. There are also magazines and newspaper supplements specially created for children. It would be good for schools to subscribe to these magazines and newspapers. A few newspaper houses print low priced

editions of their daily for exclusive distribution to schools. All these are useful in developing reading skills among learners. The contents of what is being read could be used for generating discussions, thus leading to the development of spoken skills. They can also be encouraged to take up writing tasks on whatever they read.

Literature created by children may not be directly usable in the classroom. They are a result of a child's creative expression. The language there may not lend itself to designing tasks for organised learning. They are random and not aimed at any audience.

The use of literature created by children needs to be understood from a different angle. The very idea of publishing what children write is an encouragement for them to write. We need to create forums for children to begin creative writing. They will be able to express their feelings and thoughts freely in such forums. Perhaps teachers need to go through what children write to understand them better. What children write needs recognition. So wall magazines could be run wherein whatever children write can be published. There is no need to judge what they write. It is important to encourage them. This will not only help them improve their language but also develop confidence in them about their abilities to think and express.

Check Your Progress - 4

What are the two types of children's literature?

1. How are they useful?

4.1.3.5. Using the print media for enhancing language learning

We have discussed the characteristics and various possibilities of the print media. We need to see how print media can be exploited for enhancing language learning. You might have developed some idea of it after reading the earlier sections and conducting the suggested activities. The real challenge is making the print resources available to the students according to their needs and interests. Getting students to read by itself is rewarding. It is enough if we ensure that they read. It is a bonus if we can also hold discussions with them on what they read. If we can create opportunities for them to express what they think of the material that they read, it would be a further enriching language learning experience. These could be understood as three aspects of using print media for enhancing learning.

- Making reading material available, creating space and time for reading, making literature that suits their interest and abilities available
- Creating opportunities for discussions in the classroom every day even for a few minutes or outside the classroom at a personal level
- Creating a forum for them to express their views in writing. You can run a wall magazine where they publish whatever they write based on their reading.

The use of print media should not become a bother. They should take to it naturally. So reading need not be considered another assignment which they have to complete compulsorily. Some of them may not take to reading easily. Check what interests them and get such material. Once they get interested in reading, they get into an independent gear. They will look for reading material everywhere. This is what should happen. Our job, as facilitators, is to help them develop a love for reading.

Class Libraries: A small library can be created for the exclusive use of children in the class. They get free access to this library whenever they are free. This will develop a culture of making use of a library. Class libraries need to have reading texts that match the abilities of children in that class. There can be a cupboard where books are arranged. If a class has 50 students, if the teacher manages to

collect 50 books or such reading material, this would be enough for the class for 50 days, assuming that one child reads one book a day. After all the material is read, you can exchange these books with books in another class. However, class libraries need to have certain permanent features like good dictionaries, books on grammar, activity books, AV material, and so on.

Sometimes it helps to read some short stories aloud in the class in free time. Some of them will develop an interest in reading as a result of listening to nice stories.

If children read stories on their own, they practice silent reading. If the teacher reads certain texts aloud, children get practice in listening. If we pick up discussions on the material read, they develop spoken skills. If we ask them to write their views, we would develop written skills among them. Print media has not lost its popularity even after digital media making such great progress. It will continue to have its place. This is because print media is simple and it is readily accessible.

Check Your Progress - 5

1. What are the three aspects of using print media for enhancing language skills?

4.1.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we discussed the use of print media for enhancing language learning. We saw that the newspapers provide a perennial resource for a language classroom. Similarly, even magazines are a rich source for providing language inputs. We also discussed the possibilities of using literature and children's literature in the classroom. Children's literature could either be literature created by adults for children or literature created by children themselves. While the former is useful in enhancing reading skills, the latter promotes creative expression among children. Class libraries can be created to help children develop reading habits. The print media can be used to develop all language skills with proper planning.

4.1.5. Answers to 'Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4'

Check Your Progress - 1

What are the characteristics of the print media?

- A permanent document
- Portable
- Provides the freedom to use it anytime, anywhere
- Allows back and forth movement while reading
- Important text can be marked, and notes recorded on the body of the printed page
- Multiple copies can be created for use in groups
- The printed text demands the ability to read from its users

Check Your Progress - 2

1. List four advantages of a newspaper as a teaching-learning material.

- It does not involve great costs.
- It is available with different content each day.
- It is available in all places.
- It caters to the needs of all age groups and provides a rich source of reading material.

2. How are magazines relatively more lasting resources?

Magazines deal with more general issues compared to newspapers which deal with day to day news. Hence the articles that magazines publish can be stored and used at a later time. Only a few themes like stories, feature articles in a newspaper remain relevant after a few days.

Check Your Progress - 3

How can you say that the effect of Does literature cross the boundaries of the language in which it is created?

Along with language skills, literature also influences the behaviour, thinking, and aesthetic sensibilities of the readers. The humanising effect that literature has makes it have a universal appeal crossing the boundaries of the language in which it is created.

Check Your Progress - 4

What are the two types of children's literature? How are they useful?

Literature created by adults for the use of children and literature created by children themselves. The former is useful in developing language skills, especially reading and the latter is useful in providing a forum for the creative expression of children.

Check Your Progress - 5

What are the three aspects of using print media for enhancing language skills?

- Making appropriate reading material available
- Creating opportunities for discussions on the texts read
- Creating a forum for expressing views in writing

4.1.6. Unit end Exercises

1. Compare newspapers and magazines from the point of view of their availability and usability for enhancing language learning.
2. Write a note on the significance of using literature for facilitating language learning.
3. Describe how you would organise a class library.
4. How can we make use of the print media for enhancing student learning?

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Block 4 : Teaching-Learning Materials

Unit 2 : ICT - Audio-Visual Materials, Internet Including CALL Programmes

Unit Structure

- 4.2.1. Learning Objectives
- 4.2.2. Introduction
- 4.2.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 4.2.3.1. Meaning and Characteristics of ICT in Education
 - Check Your Progress - 1
 - 4.2.3.2. Audio-visual material
 - Check Your Progress - 2
 - 4.2.3.3. Uses and Challenges of Using the Internet
 - Check Your Progress - 3
 - 4.2.3.4. CALL programmes
 - Check Your Progress - 4
- 4.2.4. Let us Summarise
- 4.2.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’
- 4.2.6. Unit end Exercises
- 4.2.7. References

4.2.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- explain the meaning and characteristics of ICT;
- classify different types of digital resources available under ICT;
- explore the possibilities of using the AV material for enhancing learning;
- discuss the implications of internet connectivity for a classroom practitioner; and
- develop awareness about CALL programme.

4.2.2. Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has come to play a great role in modern life. The world is getting smaller day by day. Electronic gadgets like the TV, mobile phone, computers, laptops, projectors, and the internet and applications based on the internet have changed our way of life and style of functioning. Naturally, their influence on the system of education is also felt directly and indirectly. The use of the ICTs for educational purposes is a direct influence on the development of the ICTs. Indirectly, what ICTs have to offer other than school experiences has a significant influence on students and such influences have a telling effect on the participation of students in classroom processes. However, ICTs have come to stay. So it becomes necessary for us to understand various aspects of ICT and their use in enhancing learning. The use of ICTs comes with its own set of challenges. While thinking of ICT as an aid to classroom processes, we need to be aware of its possibilities as well as the problems it might create. In this unit, we will try to understand the nature of ICT and discuss how ICTs can be used for enhancing student learning. We will also discuss the challenges in using the ICTs.

4.2.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

4.2.3.1. Meaning and Characteristics of ICT in Education

ICT in Education is about using computers and technology as tools to enrich learning in various subjects. Various technological tools are used to facilitate learning, provide feedback, open dialogues with parents and the community, create, store, and share information. ICTs provide rich resources for classroom applications. The digital content available on the internet and internet-based applications are usable for educational purposes either directly or with some modifications.

Characteristics

ICTs as aids to learning have their features. They are different from any other TLM that we come across. The following are some of the characteristics of ICTs. They have not been elaborated upon as they are self-explanatory.

Paperless: The use of ICT does not need paper. To that extent, it is a nature friendly and sustainable aid.

Stores data and makes it available for a future use

Includes audio, video, images, text, and animation in one platform

Allows content modification of the saved data

Allows easy data transfer and dissemination

Cost-effective: ICTs need heavy investments while installing. But its reach and versatility make it a more cost-effective tool compared to any traditional TLM.

Allows personal reach to students

Accessible anywhere, anytime

Makes two-way communication across the globe possible in real-time

Key benefits of ICT-based Education:

- Promotes Learning by doing
- Enables self-paced learning
- Provides access to a wide range of up-to-date learning materials
- Enriches learning through a combination of audio, video, images, text and animation
- Enhances learning through interaction and collaboration
- Cost-effective

A few considerations

ICTs depend on the availability of gadgets and uninterrupted power supply and internet connectivity. Sometimes these could be limitations because many a time setting these right may be out of our control. There are other issues too. It is possible that the information we receive could be misleading. Whatever is available on the internet is not useful. We need to identify only those materials that serve our purposes. Otherwise, we may end up bringing a lot of junk to our classrooms. So users of ICTs should use their discretion in selecting an ICT tool. We need to remember that ICTs are not meant to replace human mediation. ICTs might replace many traditional practices. But it is the teacher who has to decide on the purposes of using ICTs and also to what extent ICTs need to be brought in. A learning situation is essentially human. We need to guard ourselves against losing this. Excessive use of ICT might even limit our imagination.

Let us remember, ICTs are there to serve us. If we allow too much of ICTs into our lives, we may end up becoming the slaves of ICT. We need to be aware of this.

Check Your Progress - 1

1. List five characteristics of ICTs
2. Write four precautions to be considered while using the ICTs.

4.2.3.2. Audio-visual material

AV material as the expression suggests includes both audio and video inputs in one material. The movie or anything videographed could have both audio and visual content. Just look around you and you will find hundreds of AV material that have the potential to be used in the classroom to facilitate learning. Now that we have advanced technology in the form of a mobile phone, we can produce our AV material to suit our purposes. We will try to understand the AV material from two angles. First, the material that is prepared, stored, and available for ready use. Second, material that is created by a teacher for a specific learning context.

The available material includes films, documentaries, cartoons, video recordings of experiments done, special talks by experts, hundreds of concept specific clippings available on the internet. Search the internet for AV material on the concept that you want to deal with, you will find thousands of sources listed. This is where we need to use our discretion. If we quickly go through a few of them we know if they suit our purposes. A few of them may be available for editing. In such cases, we can tailor the material to suit our classroom needs. If we cannot edit and still we need to use, we have to note down the timings of the parts that are useful and replay just that. It would be good for you to keep browsing for material and whatever you find useful could be downloaded if possible or you can prepare an inventory of useful programmes along with the links. Do it digitally so that when you want to open a particular link, you just have to connect to the internet and click the link. It is so easy. The material that you want to use could also be available in discs. In all these cases, it is necessary that you watch the programme first and ensure that it does not contain any junk or unwanted content.

The option of creating our AV material is a very exciting possibility. The smartphones have made the creation of AV material a child's play. So the technology for the creation of AV material is not a problem at all. However, we need to work with our objectives. It is suggested that we write the script for the AV material beforehand. The script is a road map. We need to fix the location, participants, their roles, and what they should speak keeping in mind the effect we want to achieve. Sometimes we would like to use an available programme partially within our creation. Fine. In such situations, it is necessary to just display the source on the screen. The best possibility of creating our material is bringing a phenomenon to the classroom as it happens. Let us say you see a bird or an animal otherwise rarely seen in your locality. You can video record its movements and show it to children. The process of asphaltting the road can be videographed and shown in the classroom. This is safe too. Children can't crowd a place where roads are being asphalted. Nevertheless, they can have the same observations done using a video recording. You can think of many such uses. Again, let us remember not to project ourselves in these videos. We need to go with our objectives. The teacher made clips could be very useful in facilitating learning.

Sometimes we may find some material that has been created by another teacher and uploaded on the internet. Then we need to check if it suits our classroom needs. The quality of the programme also matters. It would always be good for you to create your material. Also, it may not be necessary to upload all that we create. Let every teacher create what he/she needs. If we restrict ourselves to taking what others create, we may lose our ability to create AV material or any other TLM.

We can also consider audio and visual separately. The advantage of an only audio file is that it is not as heavy as a AV file. So it can be easily stored and transmitted or shared. AV files take more digital space. Similarly, still, pictures can even be printed and used. Charts can be created and displayed in the classroom. Only audio, only visual and audio and video together have their advantages and limitations. We need to consider our requirements and choose an appropriate medium.

Using the AV material in the classroom

Using the AV material in the classroom has two aspects. We need to have the facility to use the ICTs and then we need to blend the AV material used into our classroom processes.

We can project an AV programme onto a screen using a computer and a projector. We can also project the programme on a smart TV screen using our mobile phones. We need to ensure the power supply and the readiness of these gadgets for use. In a class where projection facilities are not available, we can display the programme on the laptop screen. We need to keep the laptop on an elevated surface to ensure that all can see. We may have to use USB speakers connected to the laptop or the mobile phone to enhance the audio levels. All these have to be considered before the class. While in the class, we can not waste time preparing to project.

The actual use of a programme has a certain procedural requirement to make it blend with the classroom processes. Announce that you will present an AV programme. Tell them what they need to observe. You can even give a couple of questions to help them follow the programme. Don't use a very long programme. It should not take more than five or six minutes. After they watch the programme, discuss the programme as a part of your regular classroom processes. IF necessary replay. Ask questions and help them understand the concepts.

The possibilities of modern technology are immense. A teacher found a nice programme that suits her class needs very well. But the audio was in the Spanish language. The teacher could follow the visuals. She decided to use it in her English class. She kept the audio mute and gave her commentaries in English as and when required. It worked well.

She could have edited the programme and replaced the original commentary with her commentaries.

She could have presented the programme as it is and then asked students to guess what was happening there and describe the visuals they see in their own words.

Let me again remind you that AV material has to be used to support classroom processes and not to replace a teacher. Please think about this.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. What are the two types of AV material?
2. What are the two aspects of using AV material in the classroom?

4.2.3.3. Uses and Challenges of Using the Internet

The Internet has become a great source of all sorts of information. People keep uploading the results of their experiments, their thinking, interpretations of issues, and so on. The information includes audio content, AV content, texts, picture, and applications. There could be links within a programme too That is why, even when you search for one simple concept, hundreds of links related to

the material appear. How do we know what suits us? How do we get what we want to get? We need to know the uses as well as challenges of using the internet so that we learn to use it judiciously.

Advantages and challenges

What is interesting about the internet is that the very advantage that we talk about could be a disadvantage too. Let us see how. We will discuss both under the same title.

Easy access: The Internet makes all sorts of literature, AV material accessible to all people who have an active internet connection. We can access the internet using our mobile phones too. Easy access is the best feature of the internet.

Easy access seems to have made people addicts to the various programmes available on the net. Most of the time, browsing has no specific goal. What is browsed at random does not relate to any of our needs. Also, when something is easily accessible, we tend to feel that it will be available in the future. So we can see it when we need it very badly. This is not always true. The web page may close or the material may change. Moreover, children might access content that is not suitable for their age. It is possible that a few students may not be in a position to subscribe to internet packs to access it. They may not have gadgets that facilitate internet access.

Availability of plenty of relevant material: People all over the world would have uploaded whatever material they create to the internet. Thus if you search for some discussions on the sonnets of Shakespeare, you will get plenty of it. You can get literature on the teaching of English, AV teaching-learning material, dictionaries, and many such aids. We can also access material for varying age groups.

Availability of plenty of material also creates problems in deciding which one to choose. Utmost discretion is needed in making choices. Some junk would have been presented as if it is very useful. We may have to spend a lot of time identifying the material that suits our purpose. There is also a possibility that people come to believe whatever they come across again and again as true. So baseless information, gossips, and such junk might come to direct our thinking.

Sharing and storing: We can also share whatever material we have with others through the internet. There is a provision to get responses too. The reach of each individual, even in sharing, is worldwide. So one can develop his/her readership or viewership all over the world. The feedback we get from those who use the material we upload helps us grow. The material we want to access anytime, anywhere can also be saved and stored on the internet. For example, you can save your files in Google drive or any such application.

Whatever people share may not always be good. Also, what one person creates is usually specific to his/her context. We need to use our discretion again to ensure that it is useful to us. People can share their prejudices too and influence people in their circles. The freedom to share without any limits or control could be dangerous.

Online services: There are several online services available that could be useful for a language teacher. Some websites offer translation services. Some applications provide us reading services – text to voice. Some websites offer expert services. You can ask your questions on grammar or any other language use and get clarifications from experts. You can also publish books. Online shopping helps us buy books and other learning material right from our own houses.

However, some of the online services are paid services. There could be some sites which mislead us and make us part with huge sums of money. The personal information we may have to share may not be as secure as the sites claim. One has to be very careful in making use of online services.

Anonymity: While interacting with people using the internet, many a time we may not know whom we are talking to. We might talk to scholars in the field or an ignorant person in our field. This helps us live as we are without really tailoring the material to suit the fancies of people whom we address. Not knowing the audience could make us more natural because our identity in known circles is not at stake.

Anonymity may make a person take more liberty than required. We have seen people abusing others using words that they would not have used in a face to face conversation. They have no hesitation in sharing anything that comes to their minds without any ethical considerations. The inability to use one's freedom in the right manner may affect personal and social relationships.

Possibility of downloading material of our choice: By and large we can download the material we get on the internet for our later use. The copyrighted material needs special permission or some payment. But we get lots of material free of cost.

All such literature and videos can be downloaded and taken to a place without connectivity and used.

Downloading any material from the net consumes space in our gadgets. The more we download the more space we use up. We tend to download all material that we find useful at a glance. Many a time we never use what we download. In such cases, it becomes a burden on the space available in the gadget. The gadget may slow down. If some file we download is infected, then it might infect all the material in the gadget. So downloading comes with its nuisance too.

However, the internet is a great source. We have to train ourselves to use it well. We need to be discreet in our choices. We need to be focused while browsing. We should ensure that we don't get deviated from our focus while searching for some material. If we use such cautions, the internet is a pleasure.

Check Your Progress - 3

Write two guidelines for an internet user.

4.2.3.4. CALL programmes

Computer-Assisted Language Learning(CALL) is the use of computers for language learning purposes. Though it started with just computers, CALL has now come to encompass the use of any ICT tool with or without the traditional desktops or laptops. Even mobile phones work like computers. But the principle has not changed. We can have a very quick glimpse of the history of CALL.

To begin with, in the 1960s, CALL used programmed instruction approach and provided learners with practice material, feedback, and remediation. But as computer technology grew, there were more options. Multi-media education began in the 1980s. Interactive video discs revolutionised the concept of language learning with fewer interventions from the teacher. Efforts were made to combine the possibilities of technology with language pedagogy leading to the creation of computer-based language learning programmes. With the advent of the internet and mobile technology, ICTs have become easily accessible. Even an end-user of ICT can generate programmes that assist in language learning. There are many applications available that help a teacher designs his/her exercises

to teach and evaluate language learning. You can study the detailed history of CALL separately. In this section, we will focus on the uses and implications of CALL in language learning.

CALL originally presupposes minimum or no intervention by a teacher. Students sit with gadgets and go through a set of learning experiences on their own, at their time and place, and pace. However, there is a programmer behind all these who is the real teacher. The modern trend has been to provide for blended learning rather than depend on only one medium. We need to understand CALL from this perspective.

It is possible to use CALL programmes to provide inputs for the development of all the language skills. Thus a learner who uses an ICT based language learning programme can practice listening and reading, engage in conversation with an online teacher or peers, write his/her views or workout guided exercises, share them with others, and get feedback. Internet applications have made AV communication possible across geographical areas. Thus, CALL can work beyond the limits of the classroom. As in other ICTs, the use of CALL can be of two types.

Using the already available programmes

Using a programme that is designed by the teacher himself/herself using the technology available. We don't have to give you a list of ICT based programmes available for language learning. Just Google the area that you want to practice and hundreds of sources will be listed. You can choose to study grammar, literature or develop your vocabulary and so on. We need to browse through the net and find out what is useful for our purposes and prepare a list of such programmes along with the links. This can save us a lot of searching time later.

The second type is more challenging and creative. Here, the teacher will have to be very clear about his/her purposes. Using already available technology, learning programmes can be designed. We can use the word processors to prepare an exercise sheet. YouTube can be used to present a talk or some other AV content. Interactive platforms can be made use of to directly engage in a conversation with the students. Demonstrations can be shown online. If there are students who do not have access to all these ICT tools, we can bring all these to the classroom and present the same to the whole class and help learners get exposure to language and also practice language.

The focus now is on the use of all the media available leading to blended learning. While the material can be prepared and shared with others using ICT tools, print outs of exercises can be distributed in the classroom for providing practice in language use. The AV material can be projected. The programmes can be watched for a while, followed by interactions and discussions within the groups, and then again get back to the programme.

Thus now the question is not on the availability of resources for language learning. We need to develop expertise in identifying the right programme or creating one to suit our objectives.

One question that should bother us at this juncture is if the ICTs can replace a teacher. The tremendous growth in the field of technology has been able to create a virtual teacher and a virtual classroom using the ICTs. However, we need to remember that the learners are humans and are to live in human society. Hence human mediation will surely have its relevance in all formal learning situations in schools. The ICTs will be there. But the teacher will have to decide how to use an ICT tool for the benefit of students, who can use what type of programmes with or without his/her mediation, and so on. Language learning is closely related to all human activities. Language-communication depends on every single context. A language learner has to learn to use language appropriately in a

given context. For this, ICT tools need human mediation. You might hold a different view on this. Fine. But do think about the role of a teacher in any ICT based learning situations.

Check Your Progress - 4

Define CALL.

4.2.4. Let us Summarise

ICT in Education is about using computers and technology as tools to enrich learning in various subjects. Various technological tools are used to facilitate learning, provide feedback, open dialogues with parents and the community, create, store, and share information. ICTs are paperless, useful in storing, managing, and transferring data, accessible any time, anywhere. AV material includes films, documentaries, cartoons, video recordings of experiments done, special talks by experts, hundreds of concept specific clippings available on the internet. The Internet makes rich sources useful for language learning across the globe. The Internet also has its problems. A user must know what to choose from the vast data available. While the anonymity in internet use gives learners a secure feeling, it is also possible to abuse it. So users of the internet have to be very discreet and focused. Computer-Assisted Language Learning(CALL) is the use of computers for language learning purposes. Though it started with just computers, CALL has now come to encompass the use of any ICT tool with or without the traditional desktops or laptops. Even mobile phones work like computers.

4.2.5 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’

Check Your Progress - 1

1. List five characteristics of ICTs

- Accessible anywhere, anytime
- Paperless
- Stores data and makes it available at a later time
- Cost-effective
- Data creation, modification, and dissemination possible

2. Write four precautions to be considered while using the ICTs.

- The relevance of the ICT selected to the objectives
- Teacher mediation points to be identified beforehand.
- Ensuring its availability and accessibility to all
- Separating the junk from what is useful

Check Your Progress - 2

1. What are the two types of AV material?

Material that is created, stored, and made available as a ready material at a later time either by teachers or by anyone.

Material created by a teacher for a specific class.

2. What are the two aspects of using AV material in the classroom?

First, getting the gadgets ready, and second, the actual use of the material, blending it with the classroom processes.

Check Your Progress - 3

1. Write two guidelines for an internet user.

Be discreet.

Be focused.

Check Your Progress - 4

1. Define CALL.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning(CALL) is the use of computers for language learning purposes. Though it started with just computers, CALL has now come to encompass the use of any ICT tool with or without the traditional desktops or laptops. Even mobile phones work like computers.

4.2.6. Unit end Exercises

1. Discuss the uses of the ICT tools in enhancing learning with examples.
2. What are the precautions to be taken while using an ICT tool?
3. Every merit of the internet has a demerit embedded in it. Discuss.
4. What is the role of a teacher in a CALL classroom?

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Block 4 : Teaching-Learning Materials

Unit 3 : Progress and assessment of the development of language

Unit Structure

- 4.3.1. Learning Objectives
- 4.3.2. Introduction
- 4.3.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 4.3.3.1. Understanding learning progress and assessment
Check Your Progress - 1
 - 4.3.3.2. Issues in the assessment of language development
Check Your Progress - 2
 - 4.3.3.3. Importance of feedback
Check Your Progress - 3
 - 4.3.3.4. Achievement tests and diagnostic tests
- 4.3.4. Let us Summarise
- 4.3.4. Let us Summarise
- 4.3.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’
- 4.3.6. Unit end Exercises
- 4.3.7. References

4.3.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- explain the relationship between learning progress and assessment;
- develop insights regarding the issues in the assessment of language development;
- appreciate the importance of giving feedback; and
- explain the purposes of achievement tests and diagnostic tests.

4.3.2. Introduction

Think of any activity that you undertake. As you work towards a goal, you would like to know at each stage if you are moving in the right direction. In other words, you assess your progress from time to time to ensure that you are moving towards realising your goal. Assessment here is not for passing judgments. It is essentially reflective. A mason, for example, stops his work for a while, checks if what he is constructing is done properly or not. It could be laying stones or plastering. Even the slightest deviations are observed and set right immediately. That is how construction work becomes aesthetically appealing. Now apply the same principles to a learning situation. It is doubly important to have an assessment built in a learning process because the product of learning is not physically visible like a wall. We can only feel its effect in actions. Even the slightest deviation in the beginning stages might land us far away from our goal. It is possible that we may not even realise this anomaly immediately. Most of the quality issues in the field of education are related to the assessment and feedback mechanisms. Where assessment and feedback mechanisms are strong, the product will be formed as expected. In the language learning process-based assessment and feedback play a very important role. In this unit, we will explore this phenomenon further and try to understand how assessment and feedback function in the language development of the child.

4.3.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

4.3.3.1. Understanding learning progress and assessment

Language learning is a continuous process. We generally remark that learning has no end. This is very evident in the context of language learning. A language learner exhibits certain proficiency at a given level. But it would not remain at the same level after a few days. He/She would have added a few words to the existing linguistic repertoire. At best we can say that a learner reaches certain levels of proficiency at a certain level and we can assess if it has happened or not. If the learner has not reached the expected levels of proficiency at a given time, it only means he/she will have to move backward to find out the problems, set them right, and move ahead. In the context of language learning, such back and forth movements are very common. It is a necessity too. For classroom learning purposes, levels of language proficiency to be achieved at each stage are identified. The year-end assessment takes place accordingly. However, it is important to understand how language learning progresses to see that learners reach the expected levels of proficiency. The assessment has to be used as a tool for facilitating progress and not just for declaring certain results. We will try to understand this with the help of a few examples.

In an examination-oriented system of education, every classroom process seems to focus on examinations. If a learner can exhibit his/her mastery by doing the expected tasks, it is assumed that learning has taken place. Thus if a child can produce a small paragraph of about 100 words on a given topic, it is assumed that the child has learnt independent writing skills. If the child can answer questions asked on short reading material, it is assumed that the child has learnt reading. Let us further analyse these situations.

That the child can write a paragraph in an examination may not be a mark of total proficiency in writing. When the examinee is aware of the type of questions asked in the examinations, he/she can always prepare for those questions. Thus paragraphs are learnt on expected topics, certain techniques for answering comprehension questions are taught. What the child produces as an answer in the examinations is not real learning. It is some kind of tutored show where the child presents what is taught by the teacher or practiced earlier. Real language proficiency should exhibit itself spontaneously in any given situation. Most of the time, when there is an excessive focus on examinations, this happens. The performance in examinations is taken for granted as learning. But we know that it is not very true.

We will now see how language learning can be understood as a process. Let us say, a child has to write a paragraph on a given topic. How does this take place? There could be several possibilities.

Child 1

The child might write whatever comes to his/her mind in the form of sentences in one paragraph. This may not have any structure as such. The sentences within the paragraph may not be connected. The paragraph as such may not give one coherent meaning.

Child 2

This child thinks of the topic for a while. Notes down all he/she can think of. Now reorganises the notes to produce an organised piece of writing.

Child 3

This child organises ideas and then thinks of appropriate expressions for those ideas. Thinks of what each sentence communicates. Makes changes to bring out the expected effect on reading it.

Child 4

Takes a stand on the topic and tries to identify ideas that support his/her stand. Writes the whole paragraph to communicate his/her stand to the readers. All sentences focus on strengthening the stand taken.

All these children produce a paragraph without any language mistake. It appears that all of them know to use the language without committing any grammatical error. In the final assessment, all four children are placed at the same level. Let us say they get A+. All of them are happy. It is taken for granted that the children have learnt the language as expected. Does this mean all of them are proficient at the same level? What about the different processes that each of them was engaged in? Isn't it necessary that we help learners move further from wherever they are? Would it be all right to provide the same feedback to all the four children mentioned in the above example?

Now take a re-look at what these four children are doing. Each of them is producing a paragraph. The processes of writing for each of these paragraphs are different. From a mechanical answering of a question, the processes range to a higher goal-directed activity. How do we understand these processes? Can we make any statement about the learning of a child without being aware of these processes? Will it be helpful to the child if we just say he/she has got an A+, compliment the child for the same, and leave it there? Thus those students who get good marks are left on their own because they can score well on their own. Those who score very low are left to fend for themselves because they can not cope with the learning tasks meant for that level. The average learners get some chiding to score more marks. Please note in all these situations, the focus is on marks and not learning. Scoring well is supposed to be the mark of learning. NO. Using the target language well is the real mark of learning. All our efforts should be focused on helping learners use language in a variety of contexts. They need to be helped to move ahead. You might have now realised how all the four children mentioned above need different types of inputs. We can summarise all our discussions as follows.

Assessment in language learning has to be process-based to help learners develop various skills. The purpose of assessment in the process of learning is not to pass judgments, but to facilitate reflections to help the learner move ahead. Both facilitators and students have to reflect. While the facilitators reflect on the inputs to be given, the learners try to understand their problems and work towards overcoming those problems. Thus learning progress and assessment are inseparable.

Check Your Progress - 1

Say if the following statements are acceptable or not in the context of language learning.

- Learning progress is not directly related to assessment and feedback
- Learning will progress only if there is a well-structured process-based assessment.
- Lower scores mean that the learner has not learnt well.
- Learning is meaningful if learning and assessment go hand in hand.

4.3.3.2. Issues in the assessment of language development

Lack of clarity of purpose

Why do we teach English to our students? Many have a fancy value for English. Most parents believe one can learn a language if the grammar of that language is learnt. Some others learn English just because it is there as a subject. Think of all these situations. When there is no clarity of purpose, reflections can not be meaningful. People who do not have clarity of purpose may appreciate only the end product. It is perhaps natural that a parent understands only the end product. But are we, as teachers, clear as to why English is taught and how it has to be taught in our classrooms? Are we teaching it just because it is prescribed or do we have a vision beyond that? What are the processes of learning a second or a foreign language? Do we have good mastery over the language that we teach? When we do not have clear answers to these questions, we won't be in a position to develop clarity among the learners on why they have to learn the language. Naturally, the nuances of assessment and feedback are not appreciated by the teachers, students as well as parents. Perhaps misplaced priorities are a bigger challenge before the language teachers than lack of resources.

The assumption that assessment is for making a final statement on student learning

It is because of our misplaced priorities we focus only on the end product. Everyone is happy if a child scores above 95%. What do you think will be the responsibility of parents and students if you try to give some feedback for further improvement to a student who has scored a very high percentage? They might listen to you for courtesy. But so long as the scoring is good, everyone is complacent about the processes. If the child fails, then either remedial classes are thought of after identifying specific problems, or the child is sent to a tuition house. In both cases, learning gets limited to mastering a few structures that caused low scoring. This general assumption that assessment is for making a final statement does not allow both teachers and the taught to grow beyond the preoccupations with the end product.

Looking at learning and assessment as two separate phenomena

A large number of parents, as well as teachers, like to see learning and assessment as two separate phenomena. If the teacher asks questions in the middle of a lesson, it is only to help children focus on the lesson. The answers given are not taken seriously. If there is a correct answer, generally a 'good' follows. If the answer is wrong, the child is chided for not listening to the teacher. We do not take it as a signal that the child is not able to relate to the lesson. Classroom interactions would become meaningful only when assessment and learning are seen in the same continuum going hand in hand. It is because we see these two as separate entities, our concerns largely limit themselves to the marks obtained in the final examinations.

Excessive focus on norm-based testing rather than criterion-based testing

We tend to compare the achievement of one child with that of the other. Thus the assessment scores are used to grade children. We have seen teachers making a statement such as 'she is very good in English', 'she stands first in all tests and exams', 'they can score more, but they are lazy' and so on. Why do these comparisons emerge? In what way are they helpful in promoting student learning? Some people argue that such comparisons motivate children to learn more. Whether there is a motivation or not, it remains that such comparisons do not tell the learner anything about issues related to his/her learning. Norm based testing is fine for public examinations wherein we have to conduct examinations for a large number of students across a vast geographical area. The purpose there is certification. But we need to assess our students in the learning process based on certain criteria. Such an assessment will give them feedback on where they need to improve.

Lack of training in using various assessment tools

There are several tools to facilitate reflections in the learning process. Starting from a simple question and answer technique, we can conduct activities wherein observations could be made on a child's learning right at the application level. However, using observation schedules, creating checklists or questionnaires, designing activities need some training as they are technical in nature. We might be aware of the existence of many such tools. But we need to know how to design them according to our needs and how to interpret the results.

Use of inappropriate tools

Can we test speaking skills using a paper-pencil test? Perhaps to some extent. We have seen tasks like dialogue completion activities in tests or writing the transcription of a word or marking tonal variations in a given text. But these tasks have very limited value. Language is essentially spoken. So the most appropriate tool to test speaking ability would be an activity that involves speaking. The examiner may have to observe or even be a part of the activity to assess the development of spoken skills. Similarly, you will find questions on grammar asked without any contextual reference. The grammar of a language works in its actual use. A student might be able to change the voice of a sentence, identify parts of speech of words, report a piece of speech. But this does not mean that the student can use the language in actual life. We need to identify appropriate tools for language assessment.

Problems in individualising assessment

When we see assessment as a part of the learning process, it gets individualised because each child has his/her style of learning. We can not go by the general norm. It is only when we individualise assessment and feedback, we can help learners at all levels to move further from wherever they are. However, in a large classroom, it is difficult for a teacher to attend to every child as and when required. The teacher will have to have different techniques under his/her sleeve to attend to each child at a personal level. Not that it is impossible, but it is difficult unless we have a sound plan of action.

Weak feedback mechanisms

Our feedback generally stops with an appreciation word or a chiding expression. This is a result of our assumption that assessment is a final statement on student learning. Phrases like 'good', 'excellent', 'needs improvement', 'redo', 'wrong' and the like do not provide any feedback that is helpful for a learner to reflect on his/her learning styles and bring changes. Good feedback is essentially qualitative. The teacher may have to spend some time analysing the mistake, telling the child how it happens and how it can be overcome. Such guidance is directly helpful to the child as it tells what to change and how. Moreover, it is very motivating for the child that a teacher takes so many pains for his/her sake. We need to seriously reconsider our feedback mechanisms.

Lack of dialoguing with parents and students

Student attitudes towards learning are formed at home. They strive to keep up to parental expectations. Parental expectations are usually high achievement-oriented. We have seen quite a several students working under such achievement pressure. Some other parents try to dictate how a school should function. For example, most parents expect homework to be given by teachers every day. Such parents are happy if the homework given involves a lot of writing work and their wards are busy even at home. All these are detrimental to student learning. The school must open a dialogue with the parents on these issues. Parents must be educated on how they need to work with their wards at home. It is not doing the homework for their children, which many parents resort to. It is more about giving companionship to their children in their learning endeavour. The school should tell parents how the

classroom activities are conducted and what type of support it expects from the parents. Parents need to be educated on what they can expect from a school and what they can not. When such meaningful dialogues exist between the school and the parents, learning becomes more and more meaningful to children.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. List issues in the assessment of language development.

4.3.3.3. Importance of feedback

In the earlier sections, we discussed assessment as a part of the learning process. We also used the word 'reflection'. What do you think is the significance of that? Every learning process has reflections built in it. Sometimes we consciously use them. Sometimes we don't. The assessment gives us the material for reflecting. If we do well we need to reflect and see what helped us do well and strengthen that. If we do not fare well then we need to reflect and see what caused the failure and identify means to overcome the failures and work on them. In all these feedback is implicit. From the assessment we get points to ponder, from these reflections we plan our future actions and implement the same. Again there is a process along with assessment, followed by feedback and rectifications.

Feedback is information about student performance conveyed to the concerned student. Feedback is essentially given for improvement. Look at the two types of feedback given on an essay written on the topic 'Secularism in India'.

Type 1

Good/Excellent/Poor

Type 2

You have tried to analyse the concept of secularism as practiced in India. Perhaps you can compare the concept of secularism as practiced elsewhere in the world with that of India. Can you make this a little personal? How do secular thinking and living affect you? What would be an ideal policy to maintain harmony among various religions in this country? Perhaps you could list a few examples of secular practices. Are you secular in your thinking and living style? Please consider these issues and try to see if you can make your essay more focused.

The first one is the usual feedback given in schools. Look at the second. It has come to the notice of the teacher that the essay does not have a clear focus. But just asking the child to focus will not help. We need to tell the child what to focus on and how to reconsider the ideas. Feedback should make the learner think and reflect. Language development is closely related to the development of thinking ability too. Unless we think and conceptualise, we may not have anything to express, or whatever we express may not reach our audience. Language develops as we think. The purpose of feedback is to make the learner think and reflect on his/her performance.

Feedback has to be positive in its essence. The objective is to help the learner. The confidence is that the learner will be able to improve with proper feedback. The focus should be on the abilities of the child to learn. If we highlight only the lack of abilities the child will not know what to do with it. Think about your language abilities. You would know many of your problems in using the language. You do not need others to point out those problems. You need guidance to overcome those problems. This is true for all learners. In giving guidance we are straight away helping learners overcome the problems.

Giving feedback in the learning process is an important activity. How the feedback is given is also equally important. If our feedback hurts the learner, we have failed in our job. If our feedback encourages and guides the learner to work further to overcome the problem, we have succeeded in our job.

Check Your Progress - 3

1. What is the role of feedback in learning?

4.3.3.4. Achievement tests and diagnostic tests

Achievement tests are tests used to measure the extent of learning of the material presented in a particular course or programme of instruction. Achievement tests have a definite focus. Every learning process starts with a set of objectives. These tests check if the objectives have been achieved or not. They are limited to the content transacted in a course. There is a specific syllabus. Achievement tests are useful in certification at the end of a course. They could also be given focusing on specific skills that are practiced. After undergoing a learning experience, a learner is expected to learn certain skills and exhibit certain levels of understanding. Achievement tests aim at finding out to what extent the learners have learnt.

While planning an achievement test, we need to consider the syllabus and the actual classroom inputs given. We should also ensure that all areas of learning are given coverage. Questions have to be designed based on the weight given to different lessons or areas of learning. The difficulty level of the questions will also have to be balanced. Usually, a blueprint is prepared before designing an achievement test. In criterion-based testing, these tasks become easier as the criteria for assessment are specifically spelt out. The examiner will have to just decide what level of proficiency in a given criteria is acceptable. Please note, even then, some kind of planning is necessary. Blueprints contain such planning.

Diagnostic tests are tests that are designed to identify or diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of a learner in a particular area of learning. A diagnostic test is best planned after a general achievement test or after getting some information about the learning of a child. When you analyse the achievement test scores, you might realise the learner has problems in grammar or reading comprehension. Which areas of grammar appear to be causing problems? What type of mistakes are made? Do the same mistakes repeat throughout the answer script? In reading comprehension the issues are different. A child may not be able to interpret the meaning of a word in the given context. He/she may not have understood the linkages between sentences. Lengthy sentences could have caused problems in comprehending the text as a whole.

In both the cases discussed above, you can notice a few sub-areas or sub-skills related to the main skill tested in the achievement test. It is only when we can pinpoint problems, we can help learners improve. Otherwise, our guidance will remain vague. Now tests are created to see how the learners tackle questions specific to these sub-areas or sub-skills. The results of such tests have two aspects. First, they help teachers identify specific problems. Second, they also tell the teachers specifically, which sub-areas do not need any attention. Thus what was, in general, a negative point in the achievement test is further analysed and only those aspects which have problems are separated. Now it becomes easy to guide the learner. Practice exercises and other inputs can be planned accordingly.

Diagnostic tests are not conducted right in the beginning. They are designed after general problems are identified through observations or achievement tests. They are second or third-level tests aimed at pinpointing a learning problem and the nature of the problem.

While planning a diagnostic test, we have to list all sub-areas of a major area or skill. In the beginning, this might be a little difficult. But as we focus on skills, we get used to identifying the sub-areas easily. Let us say, you have asked a question on rhyming words. They are expected to study the word list given and pair rhyming words. You find that one child is not able to list rhyming words properly. You are not sure why the child has made mistakes. It could be because the child has seen only the spelling and not the pronunciation. The child may have gone by the number of letters in a word or a certain combination of letters in words. You would like to check this further. So you prepare another list of words as follows and ask them to group the rhyming words.

weight, white, kite, height, might, light, bait, bite, date, site, mite

The child groups the words as follows.

weight, height, might, light,

kite, site, mite

bait, bite

What do you think of the above grouping? Why has the child included weight in the first group? Why are the words in the second group are listed separately? This analysis gives rise to a few possibilities of making mistakes. The child goes by the spelling pattern in word or the letter combinations or just the number of letters in a word. When we know this, we know for sure where the mistake lies. We need to plan inputs for the same.

Diagnosing is a process of isolating specific mistakes to help learners provide assistance and guidance in overcoming them. Tests that are planned and administered to pinpoint problems are called diagnostic tests.

Check Your Progress - 4

1. How are diagnostic tests different from achievement tests?

Diagnostic tests are specific to problem areas. Achievement tests aim at finding out to what extent the learner has learnt what was taught in a given period. As the words suggest, achievement tests find out achievement in a given area of learning and diagnostic tests find out specific problems in the areas that the child has not been able to perform well.

4.3.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we saw how assessment and feedback play an important role in the language development of a child. Language learning is a continuous process. It is important to understand how learning progresses to see that learners reach certain levels of proficiency at a given stage. Assessment is a stool used for facilitating progress and not just declaring certain results. Children in a class might need different types of inputs as feedback. Learners need to be understood at their levels. However, issues like lack of clarity of purpose, our assumptions about the use of assessment, looking at learning

and assessment as separate phenomena, lack of proper training in using various assessment tools, excessive use of norm-based tests, weak feedback mechanisms, and lack of dialogues with students and parents influence our assessment practices too. Providing continuous, individualised, qualitative feedback plays an important role in a child's language development. Specific learning problems could be addressed through diagnostic tests. Diagnostic tests are conducted to understand the nature of learning problems so that remediation can be planned accordingly.

4.3.5. Answers to 'Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4'

Check Your Progress - 1

Say if the following statements are acceptable or not in the context of language learning.

Learning progress is not directly related to assessment and feedback. NOT ACCEPTABLE

Learning will progress WELL only if there is a structured process-based assessment. ACCEPTABLE

Lower scores mean that the learner has not learnt well. NOT ACCEPTABLE

Learning is meaningful if learning and assessment go hand in hand. ACCEPTABLE

Check Your Progress - 2

List issues in the assessment of language development.

- Lack of clarity of purpose
- The assumption that assessment is for making a final statement on student learning
- Looking at learning and assessment as two separate phenomena
- Excessive focus on norm-based testing rather than criterion-based testing
- Lack of training in using various assessment tools
- Use of inappropriate tools
- Problems in individualising assessment
- Weak feedback mechanisms
- Lack of dialoguing with parents and students

Check Your Progress - 3

What is the role of feedback in learning?

Feedback helps learners reflect on their work and improve upon it. The feedback that a learner gets right when he/she is engaged in learning is very helpful in shaping learning in the right direction. Positive, qualitative feedback goes a long way in helping children learn.

Check Your Progress - 4

How are diagnostic tests different from achievement tests?

Diagnostic tests are specific to problem areas. Achievement tests aim at finding out to what extent the learner has learnt what was taught in a given period. As the words suggest, achievement tests find out achievement in a given area of learning and diagnostic tests find out specific problems in the areas that the child has not been able to perform well.

4.3.6. Unit end Exercises

1. Discuss the problems in the assessment of language development.
2. How is a diagnostic test different from an achievement test? What are the uses of a diagnostic test?
3. Learning progress, assessment and feedback are intern linked processes. Discuss.

4.3.7. References

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Block 4 : Teaching-Learning Materials

Unit 4 : Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation

Unit Structure

- 4.4.1. Learning Objectives
- 4.4.2. Introduction
- 4.4.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 4.4.3.1. Meaning and Importance of CCE
 - Check Your Progress- 1
 - 4.4.3.2. Assessment for learning Vs assessment of learning
 - Check Your Progress - 2
 - 4.4.3.3. Documentation in CCE
 - Check Your Progress - 3
 - 4.4.3.4. CCE as a tool for reflection for teachers and students
 - Check Your Progress- 4
- 4.4.4. Let us Summarise
- 4.4.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’
- 4.4.6. Unit end Exercises
- 4.4.7. References

4.4.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- explain the meaning and importance of CCE;
- differentiate between assessment for learning and assessment of learning;
- appreciate how CCE acts as a reflective tool for students as well as teachers; and
- choose an appropriate tool of documentation while practicing CCE.

4.4.2. Introduction

In the earlier units, we have discussed how classroom practices need to become more and more reflective. We have moved from a teacher-centered classroom to a student centred classroom. We have also come to appreciate the need to make classrooms learning centred which means even the teachers act as co-learners in the classroom or co-structor of knowledge. In a teacher-centered classroom, evaluation questions were simple and straightforward. We wanted to know how much a student could receive. All tests and examinations focused on finding out the amount of learning. Thus tests were viewed as tools to find out the nature of the end product of a learning process. As the focus shifted from the teacher to the student, the onus of learning fell on the students. In a learner-centered classroom, each student is given a chance to construct his/her knowledge in his/her unique style. Individual differences are respected. The focus is to bring out the best in each child and not put everyone into uniform grooves. Naturally, the evaluation questions will also have to change to assess the effect of such processes. The focus now is more on the learning process. How learning takes place, how a student is moving towards becoming an independent learner is the question. The focus now is not on the quantity of learning. We are trying to facilitate the abilities of independent learning among students. This does not mean there is no focus on the end product. But our emphasis has changed. The assumption made is that a proper process would lead to a meaningful product. This changed view envisages evaluation as a part of the learning process. We are now thinking of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation(CCE) as an important component of the learning process. In this unit, we will try to understand the concept of CCE in detail.

4.4.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

4.4.3.1. Meaning and Importance of CCE

CCE is a process of systematically observing documenting and analysing a learner's performance in scholastic as well as co-scholastic areas for providing authentic feedback to the learner. Incidentally, the findings provide useful feedback even to the teacher on his/her performance as a teacher and create scope for his/her professional development. CCE focuses on the all-round development of the learner. To understand the concept of CCE, we need to understand the two words, 'continuous' and 'comprehensive' in detail.

The expression 'continuous' indicates that learner evaluation is not a one time exercise as done in the year-end examinations. Here, evaluation goes hand in hand with the learning processes. Even as the child is involved in the learning activities, there are questions to be answered. Is the child able to cope with the activities given? Is he/she able to follow the instructions given? Is he/she moving in the right direction? What is the kind of collaboration he/she has established with others? What is his/her interest level? Is he/she able to make the required references or locate resources required for the activity? In what way can I, as a facilitator, help the child move in the right direction?

Questions such as listed above are not at all considered in a terminal or end of the course evaluation. But these questions are of great importance in terms of the development of the child as an independent learner. Feedback obtained based on questions such as the above would prove very helpful in constructing one's learning. We can not answer these questions at the end of an activity. We need to observe the child in action with such questions in mind. The information we gather has to be documented systematically so that it is available for reflection. This feedback could be given to the learner, if necessary, even in the middle of the learning process. But it is very useful for the teacher as he/she can bring necessary changes in his/her approach as and when problems are noticed. 'Continuous' evaluation is a kind of 'taking stock' of the progress in learning from time to time. The word 'continuous' need not alarm us. It does not mean the teacher has to observe each learner without any break. But the teacher has to be conscious of the efforts being made by each child in the class. The feedback given could be for the whole class as well as for individual learners depending on the context. We will try to understand this with an example.

Let us say, we have asked our students to sit in groups of five and discuss the implications of the right to freedom in a multicultural society like ours. They begin to discuss in their groups. We observe them. What are the concerns here?

Are they able to generate discussions? Who is leading the discussion?
Do they listen to the opinion of others with patience and then respond to them?
Are they taking notes? Have they identified a person for leading the group?
Are they making references were necessary to support their views?

These questions are very important because along with developing awareness about the content, they also learn certain life skills here. They collaborate, listen to each other, express their differences politely, learn to substantiate whatever opinion they hold. After the group discussions, the groups present the summary of their discussions. Now we have another set of concerns.

Has the group been able to conduct a focused discussion?
Is the content wanting in any respect? Do they need to be supplemented?

Is the use of language good?
Are they able to justify their stands?
Have they covered all the issues listed to be discussed?

These questions give us an idea of the level of understanding they have reached. If necessary the teacher can intervene and supplement their explanations. We will also know about the orientations of different groups. After the presentations are over, the teacher can now give them feedback on their involvement, the areas they need to improve upon.

The effect of such continuous evaluation and feedback will be felt in the coming group discussions. Now the students know how to engage themselves in group discussions. They also know to explore a concept. This does not happen when a teacher resorts to the lecture method, acting as the presenter of knowledge. When the teacher speaks, students go silent. They do not need to explore any knowledge. The teacher gives and they receive without questioning. What abilities are we developing in them except silently receiving what the teacher says?

If you analyse the above process, you will notice that the learner-centered classroom has lots of activities for students. Each activity has to be observed. The feedback the teacher gives is crucial for students in constructing knowledge. Also, the observations done in the above example go beyond content learning. They cover student behaviour, attitudes, acceptance of differences, and so on. In other words, it is comprehensive. It does not see a student as a content learning machine. It looks at a student as a thinking being, living in a social context.

The comprehensiveness of evaluation covers student participation in co-scholastic activities too. There are a few concerns here.

- Does a child participate in co-scholastic activities?
- What is he/she interested in?
- What is he/she good at?
- How is his/her general behaviour? What is wanting in the behaviour? What qualities need to be appreciated?
- How are his/her social skills?
- What type of language does he/she use?
- What is his/her general attitudes towards school, learning, teachers, parents, and classmates?

It is only when we look at a child in holistic manner questions such as the above become meaningful. Comprehensive evaluation does this. The feedback that the teacher would give after such observations would help the child mold his/her personality, way of living in a society.

All these might appear very cumbersome and unnecessarily elaborate. But let us remember, schooling is not done only to help them master certain content and get a certificate. It is in school that they are initiated to social life. When we look at the whole learning process from this point of view, the CCE procedures appear very relevant and meaningful.

Check Your Progress- 1

1. How are CCE procedures different from the traditional evaluation system?

4.4.3.2. Assessment for learning Vs assessment of learning

We have discussed these two concepts without actually naming them. Let us start with a small activity. Identify the major uses of term end examinations/public examinations in the following list.

- finding out the quantum of learning
- identifying hard spots
- certification
- provide feedback to learners for improvement
- to reflect upon the problem areas
- plan future teaching strategies

Have you marked all? Which ones have you left out? Why do you think you did not mark them? Is there any other type of test which helps in providing feedback for improvement

Assessment can have two major purposes. The first one is to assess the quantum of learning that has taken place. The second is to help learners in bringing changes and improvement in learning. Public examinations are typical examples of the first type of assessment. Through the examinations, we want to find out how much a student has been able to learn in the prescribed content for a given period. There is no scope for reflection. The whole examination process ends with certification.

However, tests and examinations can also be used as a tool for reflection. Even the year-end examinations, for that matter, could be used for reflections to find out what are the gaps to be filled before the child moves on to the next class. We need not think only class tests promote reflections. We also have cases wherein even class test results are not reflected upon.

Thus, any assessment can be made use of either for promoting learning or only to promote the student to the next grade through certification. We as teachers should be aware of this possibility. When we announce class tests, surprise tests make observations, go through their notes or any other work, we need to be clear right in the beginning why we are undertaking that exercise. If the assessment is used as a tool for promoting learning, the final assessment of learning will certainly give better results. Perhaps we need to focus more on assessment for learning. It is only when assessment and learning go hand in hand, as we have been discussing, learners will be able to construct their knowledge in a meaningful way. The fear of judgment will not affect them.

When the assessment is used for learning it is formative. You will learn more about the various tools used for formative assessment in the next unit. When the assessment is used for certification, it is summative. Assessment of learning focuses on summarising the total learning by the student in a given period. It is judgmental in nature.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. What is the difference between the assessment of learning and assessment for learning?

4.4.3.3. Documentation in CCE

Documentation is to record our observations, findings for future reference. Systematic documentation can lead to very fruitful analysis and reflections. Let us understand this with an example.

One student in a school was found throwing stones at his friends during the games periods. He was warned, chided and even his parents were informed about it. But he continued his stone-throwing. Then the teacher decided to document this as anecdotes. The teacher started making a note of the day, a

period when it happens, whom he throws the stone at, and so on. He also described the incident, the reaction of the students, other teachers too. After he had about fifteen anecdotes documented, the teacher started analysing the data. Then it came to his notice that the boy was otherwise a very nice person. He was friendly with everyone. It was also noticed that he did not throw stones at certain periods in a week. After further analysis, it was found that he resorted to throwing stones only when he had a Math class in the preceding period. There were four games periods in a week. Three of them were preceded by a Math class. It was observed that the boy did not resort to stone-throwing in the period that was not preceded by the Math class. Later it was discovered that he was humiliated in every Math class. He was not good at Maths. The Maths teacher was overenthusiastic to teach him Maths. So he always called this boy to work out sums on the board so that he could personally guide him. But the boy could not do the sums properly. He missed one step or the other. The Math teacher did not chide him for that. However, the boy felt bad and insulted that he could not do the sums properly. So he had to get rid of his frustrations. So throwing stones indiscreetly was his way of getting rid of his frustrations. The PE teacher talked it out with the Math teacher and the boy changed his behaviour.

The above example shows how documentation could be useful for analysing and understanding learners. An academic problem ends up becoming a behavioural problem. The PE teacher would not have been able to understand this phenomenon without systematic documentation. We do keep records of marks obtained by students in tests and examinations. If used for reflections, this can provide insights into patterns in student learning. The scores obtained by a child in different tests can be compared. The results of this comparison can be correlated with student behaviour and involvement in school activities to understand the child further.

What are the various tools of documentation?

Register of marks, observation schedules for various tasks given, anecdotal records, records of student participation in various activities, opinion of other students, feedback of other teachers can all go into one profile. For more information on this, please refer to the CCE manual published by DSERT. It is available in all schools. The best way to document student learning and participation would be to maintain individual files for all the students. Whatever has to be recorded will go into that file. When we open the file, we should be able to get a complete picture of that child. Samples of student writing, creative writing, answer scripts, different certificates can all find a place in such a file. It could have a health record too.

The sole purpose of documentation is facilitating better reflection. This type of assessment is for promoting learning and development. If what is documented is not reflected upon, the very purpose is defeated. Documentation becomes a mechanical activity. One of the reasons why many people think of documentation as a burden is that they do not know what to do with that data. Those who have realised the worth of documentation, use the data available there very meaningfully to reflect and facilitate better learning.

Check Your Progress - 3

1. What are the uses of documentation?

4.4.3.4. CCE as a tool for reflection for teachers and students

We have already discussed the uses of CCE in the earlier sections. CCE practices are based on the concept that evaluation is for learning. Whatever we document in the classroom processes need to be reflected upon. This will create a map of student learning patterns and also help teachers identify the future course of action. We will now discuss how CCE is useful for both teachers as well as students.

Any student assessment reflects on teacher performance too. A reflective teacher takes it upon himself/herself that if his/her students do not fare well, he/she is responsible for that. Then such teachers go about collecting data, analysing it to find out what went wrong in their approach. Teachers get all the information they need in the course of CCE.

Assessment can also be understood as a process of finding out if the objectives of a certain lesson have been achieved or not. Even while we think of the processes, there are questions. Did the students participate in the activity? What was their level of participation? Could they follow the instructions given? Were they able to work in collaboration with others? Did they share resources? These questions are best answered through observations. Each question here has an assumption that the issue it probes should have been achieved. These assumptions are made because of the objectives. So process evaluation goes about checking if the activities are going on as desired or not. If not, then the teacher reflects on the causes of the same and tries to change the strategies. To make reflections productive, we need to ask the right questions. Look at the following questions.

How many marks did she get in English?

What could have been the reason for such low scoring? Generally, she scores well.

The first question does not lead to any reflection. It just finds out a fact. But consider the second. It explores the reason why the learner might have scored less. To find an answer to this question, the teacher will have to consider various issues related to the student's learning. The reasons for not learning or facing difficulties in learning might lie outside the classroom. The teacher will know through the use of various observation tools. Thus a teacher can use the information obtained through CCE for reflection. Such reflections will help the teacher become a better professional. A change in the teacher's approach will finally qualitatively affect student learning.

It is necessary to share information obtained through CCE with students. Sometimes a teacher may not feel like sharing all the information that he/she gathers about a child. However, he/she will have to think of a feedback mechanism to convey his reflections to the students. Then the students will also reflect on the feedback and bring necessary changes in their learning styles. Again the teacher needs to raise the right type of questions to make students reflect. Another aspect is that the students themselves can reflect independent of the teacher. In a group discussion, the members of the group learn from each other, think of their ideas in comparison with the ideas of the others, observe their behaviour, check one's behaviour, and so on. Involvement in activity by itself leads to lots of reflections. Students can also go through their profile once in a while and see for themselves how they are progressing. The information available in a profile will show them how they have to change their style of functioning to perform better.

Imagine a classroom with reflective students and reflective teachers. Such classes will easily outperform classes where only traditional evaluation schemes are used. What makes the difference is the practice of CCE.

Check Your Progress - 4

Fill in the blanks.

1. CCE is based on the principle that evaluation is _____ learning. (of, for, in, on)
2. CCE is useful for _____ (the student, the teacher, both students and teachers, the department)

3. It is _____ to share CCE information with the students. (necessary, not necessary, not always necessary)
4. It is _____ to give feedback to students on issues related to their learning. (necessary, not necessary, not always necessary)

4.4.4. Let us Summarise

CCE is a process of systematically observing documenting and analysing a learner's performance in scholastic as well as co-scholastic areas for providing authentic feedback to the learner.

The term 'continuous' indicates that evaluation is not a one time task. The term 'comprehensive' proposes the inclusion of co-scholastic areas in evaluation. CCE is an assessment for promoting learning and is not limited to the certification of learning. CCE procedures make classroom processes reflective and lead to the student learning as well as professional development of teachers.

4.4.5. Answers to 'Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4'

Check Your Progress - 1

The traditional evaluation system was teacher dominated. Learners were treated as receivers of knowledge. So evaluation mainly focused on how much a student could receive. But in CCE procedures, the processes of student learning are focused. Students get feedback and guidance from the teacher based on CCE findings throughout. This is very helpful in the construction of knowledge as well as in shaping one's personality, thinking, and social living.

Check Your Progress - 2

Assessment of learning focuses on certification. It certifies the quantum of learning that has taken place in a specific period on the prescribed syllabus. Assessment that is used for learning identifies hard spots and provides learner feedback on his/her learning problems and facilitates reflection.

Check Your Progress - 3

Documentation is useful in getting a complete picture of a student's development as a learner. It creates lots of scope for reflection and improvement. At any given time, the student, teachers as well as parents can go through such documentations and see how they can help the child better.

Check Your Progress - 4

1. for
2. both students and teachers
3. not always necessary
4. necessary

4.4.6. Unit end Exercises

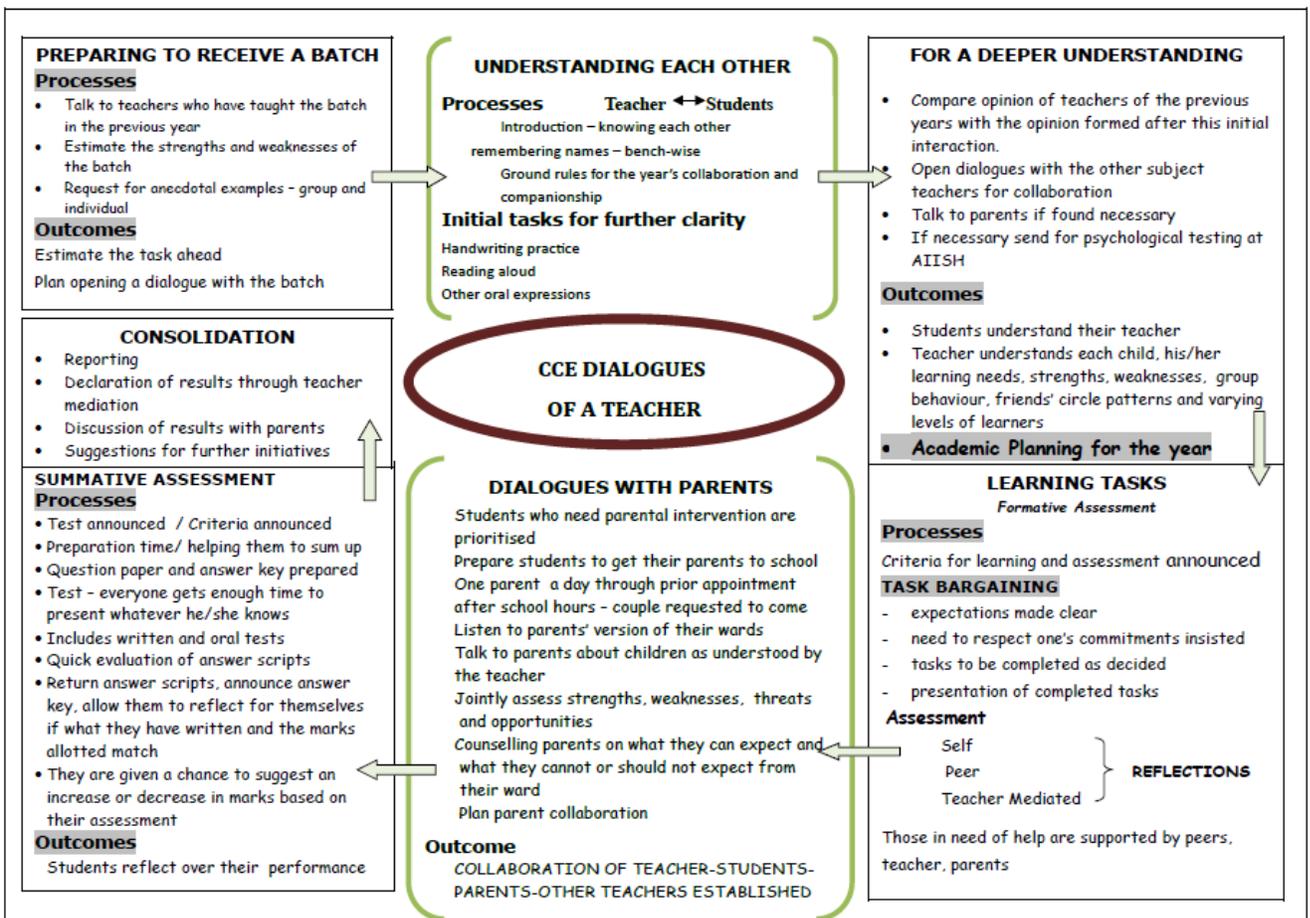
1. Explain how CCE is led to reflective classroom practices.
2. Analyse the difference between evaluation for learning and evaluation of learning with examples.

4.4.7. References

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Additional Reading Material

CCE as practised by a teacher. You will find here how CCE is inclusive in its approach and conceives the education of children as a collaborative process. Study this poster carefully to understand a complete CCE process.



Presented by U Triveni, TGT in English, DMS, RIE, Mysore in National Conference on assessment practices in schools, RIE, Mysore, 15-17 May 2013

Block 4 : Teaching-Learning Materials

Unit 5 : Techniques of Evaluation - Oral, Written, Portfolio; Cloze test, Self-evaluation; Peer evaluation; Group evaluation

Unit Structure

- 4.5.1. Learning Objectives
- 4.5.2. Introduction
- 4.5.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 4.5.3.1. Need for using a variety of assessment tools
Check Your Progress - 1
 - 4.5.3.2. Techniques of evaluation
Check Your Progress - 2
 - 4.5.3.3. Tools of evaluation
Check Your Progress - 3
 - 4.5.3.4. Facilitating self, peer, and group evaluation Techniques of using the assessment tools
Check Your Progress - 4
 - 4.5.3.5. Understanding the learning needs of a child
- 4.5.4. Let us Summarise
- 4.5.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’
- 4.5.6. Unit end Exercises
- 4.5.7. References

4.5.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- appreciate the need to use different techniques of evaluation to promote learning;
- learn different techniques of evaluation;
- prepare tools for each of the techniques learnt; and
- triangulate data available from various sources and understand the learning needs of a child.

4.5.2. Introduction

In the previous unit, we discussed the differences between evaluation for learning and evaluation of learning. We also saw that CCE is useful not only for facilitating student learning but also for enhancing the professional development of the teacher. What could be our techniques to use evaluation as a tool for learning? What different types of data do we need to understand various aspects of student learning? How do we collect such data? How can we integrate all these into our regular classroom processes? In this unit, we will explore all these questions. We will discuss various techniques of evaluation and tools that we can use for the same. We will also see how we can interpret all the information we gather to understand students better.

4.5.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

4.5.3.1. Need for using a variety of assessment tools

When the evaluation is used as a tool for promoting learning it becomes important for us to understand the child's learning pattern from various angles. A child's attitudes, interests, and background, teacher attitudes, child's involvement in the learning activities organised in different subjects, his/her relationship with peers, and participation in co-curricular activities have their influence on the learning of a child. This is further complicated by the fact that teacher attitudes, how feedback is

given also have a bearing on a child's learning. How do we understand all these? If we want to help the child improve his/her learning performance and grow into an independent learner we need to have at least a general understanding of all these aspects of a child's school life. In other words, we need to collect information on these aspects and analyse the information in a holistic manner. We need to understand that problems in any of these aspects could have a bearing on a child's learning style. This is where we need to have a variety of tools in our repertoire to collect data on these aspects of a child's life in school. In this unit, we will study a few important tools that could be used for evaluating a child's performance in school, analyse the information gathered to generate insights into a child's learning problems. This, in turn, will enable us to assist the child to overcome problems and improve his/her performance.

We saw that collecting data about learners from different sources is important to help them. We will try to understand this with an example.

For example, if a child is a loner and has little interaction with his/her peers, he/she will not be able to clarify his/her doubts or get some immediate help when some learning problems arise. He/she won't be able to meet the teacher either for want of free time in school. Finally, he/she will start ignoring what is not understood. This is a serious issue. If a teacher can understand this early, he/she can help the child overcome this problem and get involved in the learning activities fruitfully. For this, the teacher will have to collect data on various aspects of that child's life in school and understand the child's problem and needs. Only then he/she will be able to help the child. Initially, even to identify this problem, we need some proof. So we need to have information about the child at two levels. First, general information about the whole class, of which even this child is a part. We have the test scores of the class, general observations made on their learning problems and our diary entries, when we analyse the test scores, we may be able to identify students who have constantly scored less. To understand why these students are not doing well, we may need to understand how they involve themselves in the classroom processes. Now, at the individual level, we reflect on the notes made in our diaries or observation schedules, specifically about these children. We find reduced participation of these children in classroom processes. Further, we will also be able to identify those who are shy by nature and those who have become shy of late. While the former needs opportunities to overcome shyness, the latter may need some type of counseling. A teacher who has just test scores as information will not be able to pinpoint problems of children and help them out.

Thus, we need to gather information about children from various sources and for this, we need to employ a variety of tools.

Check Your Progress - 1

1. What are the two levels of information we need to help children?

4.5.3.2. Techniques of evaluation

Techniques could be understood as our strategies for evaluating learners. We talked at length about collecting information about the child. How do we do this? We use a variety of tools. Tools are instruments of data collection. Techniques are how we undertake the task of collecting information. Let us understand this better with an example.

You want to know the background of a child. How do you do it? There could be many techniques. Look at the following list.

1. Talking to the child
2. Interviewing the parents, neighbours, peers

3. Asking the child, parents to fill a datasheet
4. The interview is a technique. Using a format/a data sheet is a technique.

The questions you would list down or an interview schedule is a tool. Similarly, the data-sheet is a tool.

You must be familiar with quite several techniques by now as CCE is practiced in Karnataka for the past eight years. For more information, you could study the CCE literature supplied to your school. There are different ways of understanding techniques in evaluation. For our purpose, we will understand techniques under three broad categories. We will not go into a very detailed discussion of these techniques.

Oral techniques would include interviews, casual talk, reflective presentations by the child and the peers, and the group as a whole, oral testing, and the like wherein the person collecting information will have to note down what is being presented.

Written techniques would include paper-pencil tests, surveys using questionnaires, giving assignments, classroom observations, diary writing, writing anecdotal records, conducting cloze tests, maintaining portfolios, and so on wherein information is collected through the written mode.

Activity-Based Techniques would include giving projects, games, organising group discussions and any activity where the teacher can observe the child in action and systematically record the same to be reflected upon later.

A teacher has to understand children individually and in a group as a whole. For this, he/she will have to employ different techniques. Thus we can use a combination of all types of techniques to understand the individual child and the class as a group.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. What is the difference between tools and techniques?
2. What are the three types of techniques of evaluation?

4.5.3.3. Tools of evaluation

We have already seen how need some instruments to collect information about students using various techniques. We will try to quickly understand a few of them which are useful for a classroom teacher.

Tests and examinations

Every academic year, for every class, we conduct a certain number of tests and term end examinations. Sometimes the teachers might give surprise tests or more number of tests than the scheduled ones. All these tests and examinations give information about the learning achievement of the child. These could be called achievement tests. We can also give some focused tests to understand the nature of learning problems that a child faces. These are called diagnostic tests. We have learnt about these two types of tests in the third unit. These are two important tools used by teachers regularly. Achievement tests are constructed based on the classroom transactions of certain content. Objective-based or criterion-based tests are useful in promoting student learning as they focus on objectives. Norm-based tests are useful in understanding a child's position in a group. Ideally, question papers should be balanced, covering all aspects of the portions, different types of questions at

different levels. It is necessary to have easy, average, and difficult questions to cater to the whole group.

Oral tests are very useful in assessing a student's speaking skills. Oral tests will also have a question paper. But the teacher personally tests each child by asking the child to perform certain tasks or by engaging the child in a conversation. Whatever the child says will have to be noted down by the teacher or recorded using a recording device for later analysis.

A cloze test is essentially a language test. It is a type of fill in the blank exercise. But there is a difference. In a cloze test, words are removed and a blank is left for the student to fill in regular intervals. Thus we might remove every 6th or 7th word in a paragraph. The assumption is that when blanks are created at regular intervals, they cover all types of words. To fill such blanks, the examinee needs sound knowledge of the language and a good comprehension of the context of the paragraph. It is very holistic. The word that a child supplies should fit into that blank in the context of the paragraph. Sometimes, words are removed with a specific purpose. Maybe you want to check the ability to use verbs only. You can remove only verbs. It is important to note that we should be clear about our purpose in creating a cloze test. The mind can perceive the whole and identify the parts correctly. It is based on the 'gestalt' principle.

Interview schedules

Interview schedules are structured. Based on our objectives we list down the questions to be raised during the interview. The interviewer will have to record the responses given by the interviewee. Many a time, the interviewer may have to ask additional questions to get clarifications. This is an advantage. Through discussions, we can develop good clarity about issues relating to the child.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are useful when we can not interview individuals personally. The questions in the questionnaire could be open-ended wherein the person answering is allowed to respond in his/her style. This is very useful in generating insights about the areas of child behaviour that we are not aware of. But when we are sure of the data type we can give them closed questions wherein they will have to choose from the suggested answers. For example, you want to know how much time parents spend with their children at home. You just want to know the number of hours. So you can create an item like the following.

How many hours do you spend with your children every day?

a. Less than an hour b. 1 - 2 hours c. 2 - 4 hours d. 4 hours and above

With such questions are answered by a large number of parents, you can find out who spends the maximum amount of time with their children and so on. You may also find that certain categories of parents spend less/more time with their children.

In the above item, you don't allow the parent to record their explanations. Your purpose is specific.

But look at the following question.

How do you spend time with your children at home?

While you can give some options, this question is better left as an open-ended question. They may have different things to say. Our purpose is to understand the interaction processes between the children and their parents in a detailed manner. Hence this is an open-ended question.

Questionnaires can also be shared with parents through Google forms. The forms are created in Google drive. The links are shared with the people who have to respond. They can open the form using their smart phones too. They can fill it up and submit it online. The advantage of the online form is that the data gets saved in a spreadsheet the moment they submit it. So the data is readily available for analysis.

Observation records, checklists, anecdotes, teacher diaries,

Observation records could be maintained for each student in the class or the class in general. Observation notes could be specific to certain activities or general remarks on the class. When an activity is given or some project work is given, the teacher can prepare a checklist for monitoring the progress in the task given. An observation sheet with specific columns for different areas can be prepared. In such sheets, the observer will have to just mark the observations. For example, when a project is announced, the teacher can also prepare a checklist of activities that students are expected to do. He/She can observe students and note down their participation in the group work as per the checklist. This will help him/her give meaningful feedback to the child and also assess student performance more objectively. Similar observation lists and checklists can be prepared for all activities.

A checklist contains different tasks to be accomplished in completing a project. All the activities to be undertaken are listed. This gives a set of criteria for the teacher to observe student participation. The teacher can bring to the notice of the students the missing points or what they forgot to do. Against each item in the checklist, the teacher can also make notes on the quality of their participation.

Observations on a specific incident can be recorded as an anecdote. An anecdotal record typically includes the description of a particular incident, students involved, details of location, time, and other details observed. It is descriptive. In the end, the teacher can also include his/her remarks.

A teacher's diary is a record of personal reflections on classroom processes. The teacher reflects over that day's classroom interactions and makes his/her notes. This might include general information or specific observations on certain student behaviour. The teacher can go back to the diary to get his/her responses to children.

We have just introduced to you a few tools that could be used for collecting information about students. Each of them is useful in its way. Once you identify a technique, think of the kind of data you would get or you need to get while using that technique. Accordingly, you can select your tool. While preparing the tool keep your objectives in mind. You can keep the following set of questions in mind while choosing a particular tool.

Does this tool provide me useful data?

Does it match the objectives of its use?

Would it be possible for me to collect data from a maximum number of people through this tool?

Would it give me data that I can easily consolidate and analyse?

A portfolio is a collection of all works of a child and feedback given to them. It could be a file wherein the personal information of the child is recorded and what the child creates is filed chronologically. The feedback is given and information obtained through various sources could also be filed in the portfolio of a child. Each of the children in the class will have separate portfolios. At any given time, if any of the faculty members or parents want to know about a child, they can refer to this portfolio. A portfolio documents the development of a child over some time. This is a very useful tool that can be used for reflecting even by children. They could go through their portfolios once in a while and reflect upon their progress. Maintaining a child portfolio is a very rewarding technique of evaluation.

The selection of a tool depends on the type of evaluation technique that we want to use. It also depends on the kind of data we would like to collect - qualitative or quantitative. Each tool has to be used with care and enough planning. Only then we will be able to get useful information.

Check Your Progress - 3

1. What are the tools of evaluation that are useful for a classroom teacher?

4.5.3.4. Facilitating self, peer, and group evaluation Techniques of using the assessment tools

We are always under the impression that evaluation has to be conducted by the teacher or an outside agency. But if evaluation should lead to reflection, then evaluation should emerge from within. It should lead to reflections. Only then the evaluation will facilitate meaningful learning.

Self-evaluation is one of the best forms of evaluation. Here, the student reflects on his/her performance. In the beginning, the self-evaluation will be a very subjective process. The learner might feel he/she has done everything right. But over some time, he/she will understand the missing links in his/her learning. Self-evaluation, if practiced well, will make the student an independent learner.

We have seen teachers allowing their students to correct simple exercises by comparing their versions with that of the teacher. Here, if the focus is only on allotting marks, the major purpose of such an activity is lost. We must ask children to reflect and find out how their version is different from that of the teacher and whether it is acceptable. Such decision-making processes will lead to learning.

Whenever a project is given or children undertake any activity, you can always ask them to pause for a while, go through their work and say if they are happy or satisfied with what they have produced, which areas still need improvement, and so on. This has to happen in a non-judgmental environment. Children can reflect well if they are assured that your purpose is not to corner them over their mistakes. Experience says that if learners are allowed to reflect in a secure atmosphere and permitted to make changes to whatever they have produced, they are more critical and objective about their work. This is where self-learning begins. Try this in your class. Give the class a few minutes to reflect on their work. Give them some criteria to reflect upon. Let us say, we have asked them to write a short paragraph. We can ask them to keep their write-ups before them and reflect upon them based on the following questions and tasks.

- Are you satisfied with the handwriting? Can others read it? Give it to your friend and ask him/her to read and find out if they can read. What are the areas of writing that created difficulty for them to read?
- Have you explained the issue? Defined it? Given examples?

As they get used to self-evaluation, they will be able to consider different aspects too. Teachers must create a set of criteria for reflections and make it available to the class. Sometimes you can even announce the criteria right when you announce the task. This will help them reflect right during the course of their work. They learn to complete a task in a focused manner.

Peer evaluation is a very useful technique. Learners always feel very secure in the company of their peers. Even if they are harsh to each other, they don't take it to the heart. They can receive open and critical observations from their peers. Peers always protect the self-image of their friends. Children would always like to present a good image of themselves before the adults. So when adults come to know of their mistakes, however kind and understanding they are, children feel insecure. But this is not the case in the company of peers. We may have to guide children on how to go about reflecting upon the works of their peers. So a set of criteria has to be given.

In group evaluation children collectively reflect on their work. Let us say it is a project report presentation session. Ask all members of the presenting group to come to the front. After one student presents, let them reflect and say what went right and what went wrong in their project. This collective reflection does not have any individual risks. The group as a whole faces comments. The reflections will be on collaboration and co-operation. For every mistake, the whole group is responsible and not one single individual.

Sometimes, in a small class, or small groups, we can ask children to present their work to the class/group. Now the entire class/group will give feedback to the child. Again, this might need a little training to help them express their views without hurting the feelings of their peer. The teacher need not show any disapproval of student observations unless they are offending. Gradually, help them move from comments like 'good', 'bad' to 'he/she could have done this', 'This could have been a better option', 'the content has to be updated' and so on. This is a situation wherein a student learns to stand before a group and faces critical remarks on his/her work. Please ensure that they work in a secure atmosphere.

In all the types discussed above, we need to bear in mind that evaluation initiated by a learner is only a reflection. We don't expect them to be perfect evaluators. Initiating them into a process of reflection is the focus. There are many aspects that we can correct ourselves if we revisit our work. Thus, through reflections, we will be able to present our best. If a student does not correct what he/she can correct at his/her level, the feedback given to him/her will not be effective. The teacher will have to spend a lot of time correcting mistakes that a learner would have corrected on his/her own. By the time the real issues are taken up for reflection, both the teacher and the student are tired. It is only when the learner presents his/her best, he can be guided to improve his/her best.

Check Your Progress - 4

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

1. Self-evaluation leads to _____
2. A child who develops the ability to reflect becomes _____ learner.
3. For engaging learners in reflections, the teacher has to create a _____ atmosphere.

4.5.3.5. Understanding the learning needs of a child

The only purpose of using a variety of tools and techniques of evaluation is to understand the real learning needs of children and help them where necessary. We have seen the limitations of just written tests or information gathered through any single tool/technique. Using a combination of

techniques will give us a complete picture of the situation. Look at the following example which shows how different tools and techniques help in understanding a learner better.

Shreya has not done very well in her English test. The teacher analyses her answer script to find out the areas of difficulty for Shreya. Then he/she designs a diagnostic test to understand the learning problems better. After the diagnostic test is administered, the teacher can pinpoint the problem areas. Now the teacher talks to the child to get clarity over her problems. She infers that Shreya could not focus on her studies at home for some problems. The teacher also interviews other teachers who teach Shreya's class to find out how Shreya is doing in their subjects. She makes a note of issues to be discussed with Shreya's parents. Now the teacher invites the parents for a chat and discusses the problems Shreya faces and how her parents can help her out. The possibilities are mutually explored. Then the teacher goes about an analysis of all information she has gathered and takes decisions about helping Shreya. This includes tutorials for Shreya to be organised beyond class hours for which she obtains parental permission. Then she ensures that Shreya gets enough time and attention at home to engage in learning. She also suggests a few books be bought for Shreya. She also pairs Shreya with another classmate of hers for facilitating peer learning.

Now let us discuss the above example. The teacher does not rely only on test scores. She conducts diagnostic tests, interviews the child and the parents, talks to colleagues and then goes about planning strategies to help Shreya.

We need to understand learners as comprehensively as possible. Only then our efforts will lead to better learning. Learners in the classroom have their backgrounds and different personality traits. One single strategy can not be of much use to all the students in a class. The information we obtain through various techniques will have to be triangulated to understand the child. Data triangulation is a process of bringing data from different sources onto one platform which helps see connections among issues.

4.5.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we discussed various tools and techniques of evaluation. Techniques refer to the way we go about doing a task while tools refer to the instruments through which we conduct the task and collect information. We tried to understand techniques by putting them in three broad categories, i.e., oral, written, and activity based. The various tools that we discussed include tests, interview schedules, observation schedules, cloze tests, questionnaires, checklists, teacher diaries. We also discussed that self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and group evaluations lead to reflections. Through reflections, students move on to becoming independent learners. The teacher has to triangulate information from all sources to develop a holistic understanding of a child.

4.5.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, 3 and 4’

Check Your Progress - 1

What are the two levels of information we need to help children?

1. General information about the class to identify those who perform poorly.
2. Individual-level information to understand what exactly is the reason behind their poor performance.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. What is the difference between tools and techniques?

A technique is a way of carrying out some task.

A tool is an instrument used for carrying out that task. Thus interview is a technique and an interview schedule is a tool.

2. What are the three types of techniques of evaluation?

Oral, written and activity-based techniques

Check Your Progress - 3

What are the tools of evaluation that are useful for a classroom teacher?

Tests and examinations, questionnaires, observation schedules, checklists and teacher diaries,

Check Your Progress - 4

1. reflections
2. independent
3. secure

4.5.6. Unit end Exercises

1. Discuss the difference between tools and techniques of evaluation with examples.
2. List and discuss techniques of evaluation that are useful for a classroom teacher.
3. Discuss the advantages of maintaining a portfolio.
4. How can we help a child become an independent learner? Discuss.

4.5.7. References

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Block 4 : Teaching-Learning Materials

Unit 6 : Typology of questions; activities and tasks

Unit Structure

- 4.6.1. Learning Objectives
- 4.6.2. Introduction
- 4.6.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities
 - 4.6.3.1. Need and importance of asking questions in classroom processes
Check Your Progress - 1
 - 4.6.3.2. Question forms
Check Your Progress - 2
 - 4.6.3.3. Types of questions
Check Your Progress - 3
 - 4.6.3.4. Activities and tasks for generating relevant questions
- 4.6.4. Let us Summarise
- 4.6.5. Answers to ‘Check Your Progress - 1, 2, and 3’
- 4.6.6. Unit end Exercises
- 4.6.7. References

4.6.1. Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to

- appreciate the need and importance of asking questions in classroom processes;
- describe different forms of questions;
- explain the need to use different types of questions in classroom processes; and
- develop the ability to generate questions that are relevant to the lesson.

4.6.2. Introduction

What do you think is the difference between asking a question and making a statement? When a statement is made the mind can either respond or remain unresponsive. Even those who agree with the statement can remain without reacting to it. But when a question is asked, there is a natural challenge. It creates a gap in the minds of the listeners. So it becomes necessary for the mind to fill this gap. The mind starts probing. The gaps need to be filled. So if a statement is found as an answer to the gap, the mind immediately absorbs it and fills the gap. The statements made without creating any gap will not find a place to fit in. There is no structure to relate to. Questions are very useful in creating such gaps or structures to which new learning can be connected. Relevant questions can bring to the notice of the learners the gaps in their learning. Once the gap is felt, there is an urge to fill it. As teachers, we need to understand different forms of questions, question types, and their uses. We need to develop the skill of generating questions. We also need to develop the ability to generate questions among our learners. Questions make us think. Development of the ability to think marks the development of language too.

4.6.3. Learning Points and Learning Activities

4.6.3.1. Need and importance of asking questions in classroom processes

A teacher has two options before him/her. He/she can either give a lecture or generate a discussion. Generating a discussion is always held to be qualitatively better than just giving a lecture. The success of a classroom teacher lies in making learners think and relate to the learning experiences they get. Questions are a big help in this regard. Questions provoke learners into thinking. Asking

relevant questions at the appropriate time will help learners construct knowledge for themselves. Let us discuss this with an example.

Let us say a teacher is planning to give an information transfer exercise to the class. He. She plans to present a table of some information and ask them to write the information available in the table in sentence forms. There could be two major strategies for making learners do this. Let us now see how two teachers go about this task.

Teacher 1

Dear children, this is a table of information about the food habits of the people of Karnataka. You will find the names of districts in column 1 and the food habits of people in those districts in column 2. Column 3 shows the major food crops in those districts. Now I want you to make sentences using this information, For example, you can say, 'The people of D K district eat rice. They also use fish and chicken and so on. Now write similar sentences for the people of all districts.

Teacher 2

Dear children, look at this table. What is it about? Study it carefully and tell me what type of information is available there. Why do you think people in different districts of Karnataka have different food habits? What is the most common food all over Karnataka? Do you think the geographical location where people live has something to do with their food habits?

Compare the strategies employed by these two teachers. The former straightaway gives a task. The latter generates questions and allows students to explore a couple of hypotheses. This very act of probing helps them relate their earlier learning with the new experiences. In this process, they also generate language. Thinking and language use are closely related. We express what we think. When there are ideas, communication becomes focused. It is in the process of communicating our ideas to others or receiving ideas from others our use of language becomes purposeful. Questions are very useful in this regard. The need and importance of questions can be summarised in the following points.

- Questions help students in generating ideas
- Questions identify gaps in the thought process. Learning takes place to fill up these gaps
- Questions are useful tools in the hands of the teacher to set tasks for children
- Timely questions in a discussion lead to meaningful learning
- Questions are useful in guiding students to arrive at certain conclusions
- Questions are useful in testing student learning
- Questions are useful in getting the right information from others
- Questions open up possibilities
- Asking questions to oneself can lead to a lot of meaningful reflections
- Even in giving a one-word answer, students develop the confidence to engage in interactions as they will feel a part of the active interaction

Questions can make a language class very interesting and engaging. We need to know different question forms and also different types of questions to use questions effectively in the classroom.

Check Your Progress - 1

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

1. Questions _____ ideas.
2. Questions are useful in _____ student learning.
3. Asking questions to oneself leads to _____
4. Questions make us _____

5. Answering questions develops _____ among learners to express themselves freely.

4.6.3.2. Question forms

Just think of different questions that you ask in your everyday life. Why do we ask questions? We ask questions to get some information, to clarify our doubts, or to confirm our views, or to make others think. We broadly put the different forms that we use for achieving these purposes into three categories.

1. 'Wh'

questions which include questions starting with the words 'what', 'when', 'why', 'where', 'which', 'how', 'how much'. These questions seek certain information. Look at the following examples.

What's your name?

When do you usually get up in the morning?

Why do you always keep this leaf in your shirt pocket?

Where do you stay?

Which is your favourite food?

How do you commute to your office?

How much did you pay for this laptop?

Why do you think he encouraged simple marriages?

What do you think of the UFOs?

Think of answers to all these questions. You will have some information as an answer in all cases except the last two. The last two questions also promote thinking. They expect the person answering the questions to think and relate to some information and say how it makes sense to him/her.

2. Questions seeking 'yes' or 'no' answers include questions starting with auxiliary verbs or helping verbs. Look at the following examples.

- Do you like music?
- Did you go to the concert last evening?
- Have you seen the film 'Gandhi'?
- Could you meet your friend while in Chennai?
- Can you bring it here?
- Shall we go to a movie this evening?
- Will you please help me with cleaning this cupboard?
- Are you joining us for tea?
- Is she your classmate?
- Was it good?
- May I come in, madam?
- Does this road take to the town hall?

In statements, the subject comes first followed by the verb. But in these questions verb comes first followed by the subject. This is called 'inversion' which simply means a reversal of order.

Answers to all these questions are limited either to a 'yes' or a 'no'. There is no need to give any explanation. People on their own can give some more information along with their answers. Look at the following.

- Are you joining us for tea?
- Yes, but a little later.

- Was it good?
- No, it was broken.

But it is not necessary to extend your answer. These questions appear to seek confirmation. But they can be used for very many functions. Consider your answers to the questions listed above. There are inquiries, requests, suggestions, seeking clarification/opinion, and so on. However, there are only two answers to these questions, either 'yes' or 'no'.

3. Question tags are asked to confirm our views/assumptions/thinking. Look at the following.

- You like music, don't you?
- She has gone to the playground, hasn't she?
- He can dance, can't he?
- He does not know how to drive, does he?
- He is not able to walk, is he?
- You will not go there tomorrow, will you?

These questions have a pattern. Here questions are tagged on to a statement. The statement is what the speaker has in his/her mind. It is to confirm that, the question is tagged to the statement made. Question tags use helping verbs. There is one more pattern. Observe the statements and question tags in the above list. When there are positive statements, the question tags are negative. When the statements are negative, the question tags are positive. The same subject as in the statement appears even in the tag. This is a very important rule. In our language, we do not have such a pattern. So 'isn't it' is a common question tag in our languages. We tend to use the same even in English. This is a clear case of mother tongue influence. Look at the following.

They can write, isn't it?
 They can write, can't they?
 He is going there, isn't it?
 He is going there, isn't he?

Now, look at the following.

She drives very fast, doesn't she?
 You wrote your exam well, didn't you?

How do we finalise the helping verbs for creating tag questions? When the statement contains only a main verb, we need to understand the nature of the main verb. Look at the following split up.

'drives' can also be written as does + drive
 'wrote' can also be written as did+write

Thus you will see that the main verb has a helping verb in it. We need to identify the appropriate helping verb for the main verb used in the statement depending on the tense used.

Please observe the English spoken around you, including your usages. You will hear plenty of 'isn't it' tags.

How do you frame questions?

Look at the following.

He is from Kerala.

Is he from Kerala? ('yes'/'no' answer)

Where is he from? (information seeking)

He is from Kerala, isn't he? (confirming)

The above example starts with a simple statement. The second is a simple inversion of the subject and the verb. The verb always comes before the subject in a question. In the third, a question word is added at the beginning followed by the helping verb. The fourth just tags a question to the statement.

Can you generate questions similar to the following statements?

He will go to Bangaluru tomorrow.

We are discussing the basics of question forms. As you use English more and more, you might come across some exceptions to these rules too. We will not discuss them here. When you have a doubt, do check with some expert user near you. Tonal variations also have a bearing on what the questions mean. Try to relate the tones used while asking questions when you listen to someone asking questions.

Check Your Progress - 2

Identify if the following questions have the correct forms.

- She will be there on time, won't she?
- She plays cricket, isn't it?
- You can't complete it by tomorrow I suppose, can you?
- We are not going there, aren't we?
- Did he fix the nail on the wall, fixed he?
- Where you are going?

4.6.3.3. Types of questions

Questions are asked for various purposes. Seeking information is only one simple purpose. As we discussed earlier, questions, especially those seeking 'yes/no' answers serve different functions. Similarly, questions that are raised in some specific background can lead to a lot of deeper thinking. We will learn more about the different types of questions in this section.

Information based questions are those questions which seek some information. We have already discussed them in the earlier section. When you ask someone 'Where did you find that wristwatch?' we expect the name of a place as an answer. Information based questions are simple and straightforward. What do you think is the use of information-based questions in the classroom?

Every learning situation is built around some information. So ensuring that the intended information is received by the students is a part of the teaching process. Information based questions just do that. Take for example a prose lesson or a poem. They also contain facts based on which other meanings are constructed. In the story of Punyakoti, the following questions are information based questions.

- What is the name of the cow?
- What is the name of the tiger?

- Where does the incident take place?
- What is the name of the cowherd?

Probing questions help learners understand the context better. They develop insights into the incidents and understand the information given in a related context. Information as such does not mean anything. It is only when we probe into the relationship between pieces of information we start developing an understanding of the context. In the process of knowledge construction, such probing is very helpful. Now we will go back to the story of 'Punyakoti' and ask a few probing questions.

- Why was Punyakoti anxious?
- Why did the tiger stop the cow?
- Did the tiger kill the cow immediately? Why?
- Did the tiger agree to the request of the cow?
- How did Punyakoti justify her decision to go back to the tiger?

Study these questions. They are surely based on the information available in the poem. But they relate information and incidents to generate meaning. To answer these questions, one may have to go back to the lines again and again and find information in the lines to justify a stand taken.

Higher-order questions go beyond the factual understanding of a text. They help in personalising the meaning constructed. This is where learners relate what they learn to their thinking. We will again go back to the story of 'Punyakoti' and ask a few questions that generate higher-order thinking.

1. Why do you think the tiger allowed the cow to go to feed its calf? Was it a kind tiger? Don't you think it is unnatural for a tiger to allow its prey to escape?
2. What do you think is the mindset of Punyakoti? What gives her the courage to go back to the tiger which would kill her?
3. In the end, the tiger kills itself. Do you think the tigers repent their acts? Do you think this incident means much more than a tiger killing itself?
4. What do the cow and the tiger stand for? Should we focus on the basic nature of cows and tigers or should we focus on the values that they represent?

In all the above questions, we are taking students beyond a factual understanding of the story. You will also notice that the answers to these questions emerge from a personal response to the events that take place in the story. I am sure you will agree with me that when we heard the story of Punyakoti for the first time we had tears in our eyes. What made us cry? It was our response. It was an emotional response. Once we start analysing our responses, we arrive at some intellectual response.

Information based questions help in getting facts, probing questions help us in constructing meaning. Questions that seek higher-order thinking help us get the suggested meaning or inner meaning of the same text at a personal level. It highly personalises an experience. We go deeper into our initial responses, understand them intellectually through reasoning from our angles.

In the process of constructing knowledge, all three types of questions are useful. A teacher must be able to guide his/her students through these stages to help them construct their meanings by way of personalising learning.

Check Your Progress - 3

1. Write the purposes of three types of questions.

4.6.3.4. Activities and tasks for generating relevant questions

Training learners in asking questions is an important aspect of language classes. Questions have to be correct in form as well as in their relevance. Well-framed questions help learners get information, relate information to construct meaning, and finally to make sense of the meaning at a very personal level. Let us now think of a few activities that would help learners develop the ability to ask questions.

20 Questions

Tell the class that you would think of something in the classroom. They should tell what it is by asking 20 questions that get only 'yes/no' answers. Those who can make the right guess with minimum questions win. First, you can ask one of the children to think of something and you can ask questions to find out what it is. The response will be either a 'yes' or a 'no'. This activity has a lot of potentials to develop the ability to think. You can vary the strategies to suit your needs.

Converting statements into questions

Give a statement and underline a word. They should frame a question such that they get the underlined word as an answer. This is also given as a test item in examinations.

Generating questions on a given text

Present a text of about 100 words to students. You can even identify one paragraph from one of their lessons. Ask them to frame as many questions as possible on the paragraph. Let them include all types of questions. Those who write the maximum number of questions spread over different types win.

Question and answer sessions

One child can ask a question and another child in the class can answer the question. Those who answer the question get an opportunity to ask a question. For this purpose, a specific lesson can be identified. A slight variation in this activity will bring a lot of enthusiasm to the class. Ask children to ask you questions about the given content. You have to answer them. They should say if your answer is acceptable or not. Encourage them to challenge you with difficult questions.

A quiz can be conducted on specified content. One lesson, a few lessons, one poem, or even some areas of grammar can be considered.

Practicing question forms

We have discussed this earlier. Write a statement on the blackboard. Ask children to write three forms of questions on this statement, i.e., 'wh' questions, 'yes/no' type, and question tags.

Say question tags

The teacher says/reads a statement and the children should immediately say the question tag for that statement. This is a speed game. Prepare a list of a statement covering all tenses before the activity. You can even repeat statements in between. You can ask one student to read the statements one by one. You can monitor the answers. You can repeat the correct answer.

Preparing interview schedules

Tell the children that they have to interview an eminent person or a few people on an incident. Ask them to list down the different questions they would ask. Tell them that their questions should lead to the development of some understanding of a person or an incident.

Generating questions on a theme

Display a picture in the class and ask children to generate questions on that picture. Just like generating questions in a given paragraph, they need to consider all types of questions and all forms of questions to understand what the picture is about.

You can even narrate a story and then ask them to list questions on the story.

Activities or games need not be competitions. Please do not make winning important. There is no need to give a prize to the winner or glorify them. Every activity, even games, should finally become learning experiences. They should lead to collaborative learning. Questions lead to thinking. Thinking leads to language development.

4.6.4. Let us Summarise

In this unit, we discussed different question forms and question types. There are three question forms, i.e., 'wh' questions, questions seeking 'yes/no' answers, and question tags. The three types of questions include information-based questions which help learners pick up facts, probing questions which help in relating facts to construct meaning, and questions that lead to higher-order thinking which helps learners in making sense of the meaning constructed at a very personal level. Questions make learners think and thinking, in turn, leads to language development.

4.6.5. Answers to 'Check Your Progress - 1, 2, and 3'

Check Your Progress - 1

1. generate 2. testing 3. reflections 4. think 5. confidence

Check Your Progress - 2

1. yes 2. no 3. yes 4. no 5. no 6. no

Check Your Progress - 3

1. Information based questions help in getting facts, probing questions help us in constructing meaning. Questions that seek higher-order thinking help us get the suggested meaning or inner meaning of the same text at a personal level.

4.6.6. Unit end Exercises

1. Explain with examples of how three forms of questions are generated.
2. Probing questions are useful in constructing meaning. Explain.
3. What is the relevance of different types of questions?

4.6.7. References

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