



Research Paper

Challenges to the 21st Century English Language Teachers

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Information literacy is the new buzz word throughout the globe. In order to live a happy, progressive life and to excel in this modern hi-tech world, one has to be literate in information technology. Today in present scenario we all required to have a close examination or rethinking of our entire education curriculum in terms of information and its practical implication. How appropriately Kinder commented on the advancement of the last three decades of technology and science, “among the most significant forces for changes in recent years is the technological sophistication we now process for this sophistication not only affects our lives in profound ways but also seems to hold tantalizing promise for increasing our efficiency in education.”

As we all know that teaching is an ‘Art’ that requires interaction in a triadic frame in which knowledge, ideas and concepts are exchanged with appropriate rigour and depth. Therefore, the integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Teacher’s education becomes a necessary compulsion in order to adopt a ‘transformative’ rather than a ‘transactional’ or even ‘transmission orientation’. This approach is an initiative for better teacher education to be focused on developing and enhancing a more autonomous, critical and transformative intellectuals who would be able to respond to local problems with different solutions, while not underplaying the ‘globality’ of the English Language. It will also fruitful in fostering ‘language awareness’ along with developing ‘media competence’.

Perspectives Required for a Language Teacher:

The primary concerns of the education in the present century are relationship, trust and magnitude between student and teacher. Today English is considered not only a second language but also a basic requirement as it is a language of President to common man, documentary to social media, sms to application in various fields of work. Hence there is an urgent need of change in the role of language teachers. The teachers of English language must have the following perspectives in their mind to do full justice with their job:

- a) What subject, curriculum or objective of teaching should be established for deeper and effective implications and result of instruction?
- b) How is teaching affected by the setting or arrangement of physical space, structure of the classroom communication or how does the environment or physical setting improve the way of teaching?
- c) How does a language teacher tackle with the students of different intelligence, aptitude in different ethnic background, social class and gender? How does to get the best out of them in these circumstances?

Essentials of Highly Effective Language Teachers:

- a) **Innovative:** Innovativemind is the utmost requirement of an effective language teacher that always inclined to try something new and untested or even ready to take risk for better results. Those who are inspired with this attitude would never get discouraged by failure rather consider this as an opportunity and exposure to learn new experiences.
- b) **Visionary:** A teacher must have a vision of success or an image of excellence that demands an urge to improve and never being content with just ‘getting by’ in teaching. Their vision is a vision of attaining the heights of best in productivity.
- c) **Creativity:** It is a quality to make instruction more interactive and fruitful in real sense of imparting the best knowledge and education. Employment of new ideas, thoughts and ideologies for better result among the learner is the principal aim of an effective language teacher. Prof. David Abercrombie rightly asserts, “Language teaching is an art and not a science. A good teacher can get result whatever method he is using.”

d) **Motivational:** Motivation is more over a necessity as with this learning becomes a continuing, improving, interesting, hopeful and enjoyable process. In this process learning is more fun than instructional. In other words, it is the force that account for the arousal, selection, direction and continuation of behavior. A language teacher must cultivate and encourage classroom motivation i.e. to find and think of various activities to encourage the learners to reach their potential and goals.

e) **Faithfulness:** An effective language teacher should have faith in his student as well as in his noble profession to reach the height of perfection for both of them in life and career. Without this attribution their profession is a baseless job.

f) **Flexibility:** A language teacher is required to live with the expectations of the changing educational ethos in order to grow, refine and set up the various parameters of his noble professional life. Incapability of moulding teaching technique according to the changing times is one of the greatest hindrances in effective language teaching.

g) **Multiple-Role:** With the advent of scientific and technological advancement, the role of teacher has become more demanding. In the modern era a language teacher is required to play multiple-role as that of performer, facilitator, motivator, friend, catalyst, counselor, consultant, a surrogate parent and mentor.

h) **Goal-Oriented:** It is important for an English teacher to know what he wants to achieve by teaching English. The exact understanding of a goal will enable him to decide his methods and techniques as the basic principle of teaching English is “know what you do and only do what you know.”

Approaches for Teachers development for Second Language (English)

a) **Action Research:** According to Daoud’s study, action research contributes to teachers’ autonomous learning and that consequently assists in promoting learner autonomy. The research is focused towards the identification of problem posed and its resolution. Action research allows teachers to develop their teaching through the process of discovering, posing and basically solving problem related to language teaching. It can be called as a ‘community effort’ that provide a platform to all language teachers to work collaboratively through discussion and sharing their experiences.

b) **Self – Observation:** Teaching is a life-long process of learning and training both formal and informal. Infact, it is a learning skill which requires constant adding of knowledge, practice and observation. Thus the main purpose of self-observation. Thus the main purpose of self observation is to construct and reconstruct teaching methodologies and update one’s own knowledge about teaching and exploring alternatives for better and better results. As Rabindranath Tagore states :

“A lamp cannot light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flames. A teacher cannot teach truly unless he or she is still learning himself.”

c) **Peer-observation:** This technique needs peer-observation of teaching methodology of two language teachers to examine critically and to explore their own ways of teaching. It helpsthem to work in collaboration for improvement situation dynamically. Infact, a good teacher is always open to objective suggestions. This is a positive endeavour to consolidate and to incorporate those suggestions observed by his peer; it would be definitely helpful in changing the picture. The job of language teacher is complex and multidimensional and so he must seek help from peers to grow, to reform, and to perform his professional ethics.

d) **Regular Feedback:** An effective language teacher should realize the hidden capacity of human brain, as learning is an arduous and slow process. Present research has shown that much of one’s brain is always left unused in normal circumstances and therefore, there is need of peripheral and subconscious learning. Feedback from students in this condition is mandatory for the execution of the process of language teaching program. Indeed it is tool for teacher to introspect and rectify the methodology.

e) **Application of Appropriate Teaching Aspects:** Most teaching always focused towards the three domains cognitive, psychomotor and affective. The cognitive domain deals with intellectual abilities, the psychomotor deals with physical or motor skills and the affective domain deals with expression, feeling, attitude, interest and value. According to Alkhuli,

“The teacher should be psychologically and professionally prepared to vary or at least modify his methods to suit different educational situations.”

Thus, without getting enslave to this or that ideology, the language teachers require to reshape and to renew teaching methodology and strategies according to changing times. They should willingly incorporate all desirable changes accordingly for deeper effects.

f) **Technical Training** for the enhancement of language teacher’s efficiency and productivity is also very important. They should be members of eminent associations related to research, literature and journals (both off-line and on-line) such as TESOL, ELT, EFL, EPT etc. Joining additional courses, new teaching practices, participation in various refreshers courses, orientation, workshops, seminars and conferences will be effective

step in this direction. Through these activities a language teacher could facilitate himself with latest study related to the development of his teaching skill.

How to Improve English Language Teaching:

Alkinson comments, "Teachers should not opt for the contemporary methods in language teaching just to demonstrate the knowledge possessed by them in order to justify their position as educationist, but should adopt or use other methods according to the condition and solution they face." Therefore a language teacher is required to adopt some measures or skill for effective teaching such as:

- a) Need of more exposure to language and its activities that will provide more opportunities for communication among learners.
- b) Learner-centered-approach.
- c) Need to create an informal atmosphere than the formal one in the classroom.
- d) Gradually movement from simple to complex should be followed.
- e) Involve the learners in planning, execution and implementation of study material.
- f) Efforts should be made to accommodate the student's preferred learning style.
- g) Change in traditional role of teachers'. Today, a teacher is no longer remain as sole arbiter and controller of classroom activities but the independent status of the learners is of prior important in modern hi-tech education.
- h) Need of a balanced attitude towards error and error correction of learners. These days errors are not tagged as punishable offence or sinful act but recognized as a mandatory and systematic part of the learning process. Self-correction or evaluation should be encouraged and more emphasizes on building inner criteria.

Function of Teacher in Language Development:

Language is learned and developed in a social context for functional purposes. Hence a teacher should perform the following functions to enable the students to master the language:

- a) Help the students to develop early reading habits and enable them to do book reviews.
- b) Provide a relaxed environment for free expression of ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- c) Encourage creative efforts of the students.
- d) Organize debates, class discussion and displays etc.
- e) Create situations where language may be used for various purposes.
- f) Provide ample scope to develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Conclusion:

Technological innovations have gone hand-in-hand with the growth of English and are changing the way in which we communicate. It is quite true the progress of internet has facilitated the progress of English language. We are living in this very progressive era of science and technology where teaching of any foreign language like English demands effective way of teaching. So the classroom in the 21st century has to be modern from every angle; only 'talk and chalk' is not enough these days. The use of different types of aids makes the teaching meaningful and effective. With the help of interesting, suitable and attractive instructional aids, the students understand even the complex knowledge easily. As a matter of fact, material aids prove helpful in training the senses of the students. As it is generally said:

"What we hear, we forget,
What we see, we remember,

What we do, we learn," (Chinese Proverb)

Because the sense organs are considered as the entrance points of knowledge, so it becomes necessary that the students are given various kinds of experiences which have direct bearing on the sense organs only then can education be made effective and successful. So the instructional aids like charts, flannel board, flash cards, radio, television, power point presentations and language laboratory help the teacher in good communication, healthy classroom interactions and effective realization of teaching objectives. We can say that out of the five senses it is through hear and sight that 86% knowledge is gained. The audio-visual aids, therefore, have multifarious values in making teaching-learning process effective and interesting. These aids not only save time and energy but also make students active, aware and rational; as the use of these aids develops the power of imagination as well as the power of reasoning.

In short the main aim of teaching English should be linguistic and practical and not literary or aesthetic, so that the students should be able to understand spoken English and learn to speak English, to read English and to write English. With the help of mock interviews, group discussion, extempore, language games, role play, tongue twisters, word-prompts, dialogue construction teaching of English will lure the learners. Modern language teachers are required to assimilate modern techniques for developing teacher autonomy. It will lead a

hand to raise a ‘virtual community’ where language teacher can share information and skill with other language teacher all over the planet along with redefining the diverse parameters of their professional life.

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