
Task based L2 Method for Effective Learning in University of Karnataka , Mangaluru

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Abstract:

English is a language that has gained prominence around the world. In Indian Universities language teaching has become a prominent task with different challenges. Task based learning is one of the methods to overcome these challenges from a design of a syllabus to the process of execution and teaching. This paper aims to introduce task based learning as an effective tool in teaching if it is introduced in today's teaching methodology.

Key words: *task based learning, syllabus, English language skills.*

INTRODUCTION:

Millions of people want to have a command over English language as it is important at the international and the national level. In Karnataka even though Kannada is a state language many people like to have a command over English language only for the reason that the communication skill in this language makes them to identify at the higher level. Employers, too, insist that their employees have good English language skills, and fluency in English is a prerequisite for success and advancement in many fields of employment in today's world.

Recently a number of survey and studies have been conducted in this area. It is a known fact that Indian Universities do not emerge at the top ranking because they do not open up themselves to the changes. The students have to be given task based learning activities for their development of skills. Hence a syllabus must be able to comprehensively test all the four basic skills Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION:

Skill based learning: The competency of skill in any language is based upon the usage that is made in appropriate context with grammar, syntax, vocabulary etc. English language has its stand on four prominent skills i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. It is suggested that reading helps to write better and listening helps to speak better. In today's world, graduates and post graduates enter into the competitive world with a notion that they are pretty good in using the language. But, they fail in many tasks which are competitive in nature. For example they lack the skill of introducing themselves even though they have good scorings in academics also there are instances when they fail to make a good presentation of themselves in CV and letter of application. Hence it's a need of the hour that we build youth who are aspiring for better employable prospects with competent skill based language capacity to nurture their talents in an appropriate manner suiting to the emerging needs of the present day.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

The main objective of the study is to know about the skills present among the under graduate students.

1. To assess the perspective of skills present among students.
2. To find out the awareness among the students about various skills.
3. To develop the competitive skills in students through skill based learning.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on the primary and secondary data. The secondary data includes the various articles assessed related to skill based learning. The primary data includes the questionnaire method. The prepared questionnaire was given to the students of under graduate level of a select college. The sample size was 50 students .An initial test was also conducted and the assessment was made from the test.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

David Nunan in his book Syllabus Design (1988) opens up our minds to a wonderful definition of the concept of syllabus and curriculum. He says that there are several conflicting views on this, and he broadly distinguishes syllabus design from curriculum development. There is also some disagreement about the nature of 'the syllabus'. It is possible to distinguish a broad and a narrow approach to syllabus design. The narrow view draws a clear distinction between syllabus design and methodology. Syllabus design is seen as being concerned essentially with the selection and grading of content, while methodology is concerned with the selection of learning tasks and activities. Those who adopt a broader view question this strict separation, arguing that, with the advent of communicative language teaching the distinction between content and tasks is difficult to sustain.

H H Stern “ Syllabus design for General English Classroom “defines the difference between syllabus and curriculum as, the curriculum is concerned with the theme, content and structure, the syllabus is concerned with the WHO and HOW of establishing the curriculum. He says curriculum theory is called a curriculum process (Stern 1984: 10-11).

Janice Yalden “Principles of course design for language teaching”(1987) defines the component of syllabus as- [The syllabus] replaces the concept of 'method', and the syllabus is now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a degree of 'fit' between the needs and aims of the learner.

Widdowson H.G in his article “Explorations in applied Linguistics” says the syllabus is simply a framework within which activities can be carried out: it’s a teaching device to facilitate learning. It only becomes a threat to pedagogy when it is regarded as absolute rules for determining what is to be learned rather than points of reference from which bearings can be taken.

Breen M.P in the article “Process syllabus for the language classroom” puts his definition as, any syllabus will express however indirectly certain assumptions about language, about the psychological process of learning i.e. the pedagogical and social processes within a classroom.

J.P.B Allen puts his views on curriculum, as curriculum is a very general concept which involves the consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational program. Syllabus, on the other hand, refers to the subpart of curriculum which is concerned with a specification of what units will be taught.

Patricia Guadalupe Castro in her article “Design of English Language Teaching Materials” (2010) observes thus- English teaching as a foreign language has always been a relevant idea over the years. English is today’s most widely used language all around the world. Teaching the language can be done in variety of ways if various approaches are adopted. In this article a discussion is made on the design and application of language teaching material. When a syllabus is designed by the designer or a teacher there must be a satisfactory outcome on both sides. In this article the use of materials and approaches of teaching are discussed. Designing teaching material is a challenge to designers and teachers she says a syllabus must be designed keeping the following concepts in mind

The grammar concept

The lexical concept

The functional concept

The situational concept

The topic-based concept

The task-based concept

The multi-syllabus based concept

Michael J.V.Woolcock “A handbook for faculty, teaching assistants and teaching fellows” (Revised ed. 2009) presents the following methodology and says-An effective syllabus contains a number of elements which are necessary, especially in view of course objective, this helps the students to understand the aim of the course. To attain this there must be effective teaching strategies. When there is the formulation of an effective syllabus the teaching will be more effective and it will be helpful for the learners to understand the course objective in a more effective manner. We must have a comprehensive picture to attain the overall objective of course design by understating the most common features of design and implementation. Good teaching ultimately ends in good learning, so also good syllabus design achieves the success of learning.

DATA ANALYSIS AND EVALUTION FINDINGS

The present study is based on the four important skills of English Language i.e. Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. The questionnaire was prepared to assess the skill based language learning, the questionnaire was distributed to a group of students who are pursuing their under graduate course at a select collage under Mangaluru University.

WRITING SKILLS:

The study shows that 33.3% of the respondents are very much interested to write in English, but majority of the respondents i.e. 66.7% are not much interested to write in English. When considering about the writing skills whether it is easy 33% of the respondents have found it very simple, 63.3% have found it little easy but remaining respondents have disagreed saying that the writing skills are not simple.

The study shows that most of the respondents i.e. 76.67% have agreed that writing activities are learnt in the classroom but remaining respondents have partially agreed saying that the writing activities are learnt in the classroom. More than half of the respondents are saying the writing skills are partially important, but remaining respondents i.e. 46.67% have fully agreed that the writing skills are useful.

63.3% have agreed that the writing skills are helpful in communicating the ideas, 33% have partially agreed and remaining 3.3% have not agreed on the helpfulness of writing skills in communicating the ideas.

Confidence in writing skill:

Most of the respondents are not fully confident about the writing skill. 96.67% opines that they are partially confident but other respondents have disagreed and their response shows lack of confidence in writing skills. 23.33% of the respondents say that the good writing skill means use of good words, grammar and vocabulary. But remaining have only partially agreed with it.

60% of the respondents partially agreed that writing skill is very important but 33.3% have strongly agreed on the importance of writing skill. But remaining 7% of the respondents agree that writing skill is just important for them.

50% of them have strongly agreed that writing skills help to communicate better. 40% of them partially agreed on the idea of communication. Remaining 10% didn't agree that writing skills help in better communication.

READING SKILLS:

60% of the respondents find reading is very easy and remaining 40% do not find it too easy to read in English. Among these 70% of them are partially able to understand the text, 10% of them are not able to understand the text while reading and remaining 20% of them are fully able to understand the text as they read it.

More than 60% of the respondents are not much focused while reading. Only 16% of them are focused while reading. The remaining lack focus completely.

Most of the respondents i.e. 80% of them feel that the reading makes them feel relaxed. But 20% of the respondents are not relaxed after reading text in English.

More than 60% of the respondents find the vocabulary difficult to read. Only 6.67% of the respondents are finding the vocabulary in the text easy. Remaining 26.67% find it difficult to read due to the words which are used in the text.

30% of the respondents opinion that reading improves their language skill but remaining 70% say reading helps only a little to improve their language skill.

80% of the respondents say that they get new ideas while reading. Out of this 10% of them agreed that they get few ideas because of reading and remaining partially agreed on this.

All the respondents have said that the newspaper, magazine etc helps them to improve their reading skills. Out of this 70% of them strongly agreed saying it is effective to improve their reading skill.

80% of the respondents agreed that they read English related subject daily. But remaining 20% of them said that they do not read English related subject daily.

LISTENING SKILLS:

According to the study, 83.33% didn't consider themselves as an active listener. Remaining considered themselves as active listener. .

73.33% of them agreed that listening generates a little interest. 26.67% of them strongly consider that listening generates interest.

43.3% of them have said listening strongly improves knowledge. 56.67% of them have said listening improves the knowledge only a little extent.

20% of them strongly agreed saying simple words are essential for good communication. Remaining 80% of them have partially agreed saying simple words are essential for good communication.

Among the 30 respondents one respondent is not confident to speak in English. 16.67% are very confident to speak in English. Remaining 80% of them are less confident to speak in English.

TASK BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING:

Task based language teaching is an approach that enables students to learn through meaningful tasks in the target language. These tasks enable the students to approach ways that are popular and are also helpful to increase the student confidence. The development of task based approach was an attempt to uplift the classroom communication through various activities and tasks that help to develop the sphere of communication among the learners through various activities like role-plays, information gap activities, reasoning activities, puzzles,quiz. These activities have helped the learning process become more effective and interesting. The concept of task based learning was popularized in India by N. Prabhu.

The task based learning approach has been termed to be effective and has contributed in the overall development of the student performance and the activities have been effective to generate interest and enable in the growth of confidence among the students. The students are given activities either in groups or pairs or sometimes individually which makes them active and develops confidence to perform the activities in an effective manner. These activities enable them to develop the vocabulary, form effective sentences, generate new ideas, speak confidently etc. Hence task based learning can be used in modern day classrooms as an effective tool to enhance the skill based learning among students and it can also be used as one of the ways to improve the basic loopholes present among the students through the traditional methods of teaching.

Conclusion:

English language teaching has always been a need of the hour. The challenges are many but an effective skill based language teaching approach can be very useful and successful in providing an effective cornerstone to eradicate the problem. With the development and emphasis on new ways of thinking and new ways of approach for attaining success will not be difficult provided we adapt to the changes and be more open to implement new methods in the teaching learning process.

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