

ACTIVITY BASED LEARNING METHOD; A PARADIGM SHIFT FROM TEACHER CENTERED TO CHILD CENTERED

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ABSTRACT

The study discusses the effectiveness of Activity Based Learning method of teaching English among the higher secondary students of Kerala. This research paper was carried out with 240 higher secondary students from various schools of Kerala. Among these, the various branches of higher secondary section include Science, Humanities and Commerce. The study also included the views and opinion of educational experts and linguists of Kerala. According to the observers, the activity based learning method has created an improvement in children's learning and mental development. Even though activity based pedagogy has already been started at the higher secondary section, an innovative revision of syllabus has not been introduced yet. The study based on the theory of David Numan's Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Numan defines 'task' as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners on comprehending, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form (1989:10)".

Keywords: ABL (Activity Based Learning), CCE (Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation), First bell, ICT (Information and Communication Technology), LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing), NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training), RTE (Right to Education), SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), Victors

Introduction

The present system of education is highly enriched with child-centered activities. It is a paradigm shift from teacher centered to child centered education. Once everything under the control of teachers, totally changed into discourse oriented pedagogy. Nowadays, the teaching learning process is full of activities such as discussions, performances and the system became livelier. The teachers were the leaders or masters of the system changed as a guide or mentor. While discussing the benefits of activity based learning, it can expose their capabilities and talents. Even average students also can perform well. It focuses the tastes and interests of the learner. It guides the learner vocationally and to acquire the various skills. The school and the surroundings become livelier and the classrooms are the factories of various ideas and thoughts. The group discussions, seminars, symposiums etc. help the learner to involve in the contemporary issues. The system helps the students to face their family matters and they can shoulder the responsibilities individually and familial. The discourse oriented pedagogy helps the students to acquire the language skills such as of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The paradigm shift which emphasis from the teacher to student; from theoretical aspects to functional; from other learning skills to speech;

from traditional methods to new trends; etc. "Studies have revealed that children are quick at study in general and particular in language learning. They acquire the device known as 'Language Acquisition Device'" (LAD) (English Language Education P-26). Nowadays, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) plays an important role in the teaching – learning process. The major change noticed as the digitalization of classrooms. The gadgets like computers, laptops, projector, flash drives, internet etc, help the classrooms activities more effectively. The proper use of audio – visual aids help the teachers to teach learner more lively. For example, the visual presentations help to learn the learners than the verbal presentations. Moreover, the internet facility helps the learners to get more information about a particular subject. The agencies like Google, Wikipedia help the learners to do their project work other than the classroom discourses. The digital pedagogy in learning is the radical change in the contemporary educational scenario. Due to the pandemic situation, many states in India shifted their education platform into virtual reality. The prose and consequences of online classes are highly discussing nowadays. Once television and mobile phone were not a necessary thing in the learning process, become an essential one. For example, in Kerala the government is successfully

running online classes with the name of 'First Bell' through Victors channel. That means the traditional classroom methods made a paradigm shift into virtual reality. The Kerala government is started their new academic year in the month of June through virtual platforms. The concerned school teachers will handle their students through online without opening the schools physically.

Discussion

Accordingly to the language experts, the ABL method has created an improvement in children's learning and mental development. The ABL method is first started and tested in the 1990's by the Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh. Later it has been followed and implemented into other states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh etc. The ABL system will provide quality education to various schools, while the poor background can initiate the system as well.

The goal of activity-based learning is for learner's mental models that allow for higher order performance such as applied problem solving and transfer of information and skills. The ICT technologies provide to develop and deliver multimedia learning objects for activity-based learning in teaching a foreign language (English). The aim is either instrumental or communicative. In the present context, a foreign language learner uses the language for the purpose of communication in his or her day to day life.

The activity oriented pedagogy is following for teaching a foreign language from the primary level to higher level. The NCERT has established this method with support of SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan). It provides free and compulsory education in between the age of 6 to 14 (RTE Act, Right to Education - 2009). The Activity – Based Learning provides maximum opportunities to the learners to acquire language early. The Natural Curriculum Framework 2005 started many changes in the field of education in India. Along with this, the NCERT prepared textbooks for various subjects based on NCF 2005.

The study focused to assess how far activity based learning method effective to the Higher Secondary students. The researcher selected 240 higher secondary students (plus two) of Kerala which include Science, Humanities and Commerce disciplines. The number of girls is

higher than boys and the study reveals that the girls performed well than boys. There are students from urban and rural areas and with the family background of joint and nuclear. The study highlights the students from urban areas are much better than rural areas.

Among the 240 students, 120 students are from Science stream and 60 of both Humanities and Commerce. The researcher given four types of activities to test the various skills of the learners such as listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). Altogether 15 questions were there, and the majority of the students carried the above average score. Out of 240 students, 119 students (49.6) scored excellent grade. 111 students (46.3) scored very good and 10 students (4.2) scored good position. All students done excellent in interactive, investigative and performance based activities. But some students have limitations in written activities. The students found difficulty in spelling and grammar. They try to think and write through mother tongue. The learners try to write what they heard. They don't know the correct spelling and pronunciation. For example, I was given the words 'environment', 'descent' etc, but the student made mistakes in writing.

According to the study, the students learn grammar through context. They are not getting chance to learn grammar through rules. For example, the researcher given the question of, 'the reasons for his failure _____ many (is/are)'. Many students wrongly answered as 'is'. They do not know the rules of concord or subject-verb agreement. They have difficulty in learning words through their foreign language. They have always learned the words through their mothertongue itself. We know the English words pronunciation may be entirely different words like 'lieutenant', debut, bourgeois are examples. The suggestions to improve the writing skill of the students are

1. Proper use of language lab.
2. Use of audio – visual aids in the classroom.
3. Enhance the use of reading skills.
4. Promote the use of written activities like diary entries, letters reviews, poems, stories, editorials etc.
5. Translate the mother tongue texts to English and vice-versa.
6. Give more importance to the grammar portions in the syllabus and examinations.

7. Include more practices like dictations through orally.
8. Give more practice to guided or controlled composition and free composition.
9. Promote the individual write-ups like study notes, articles, appreciation, travelogues etc.
10. Promote the use of Punctuation and Capitalization.

The system of evaluation also has drawbacks. In the present scenario students from first standard to ninth standard giving promotion without failing any public or board examinations. There is no systematic measurement to check the language proficiency of the learner. The system should implement to test the vocabulary and language use in each and every class. That means the evaluation should test the acquired skills of the learners. The students learn through wrong usages or mispronunciation lead to the ignorer of the proper usages. The students try to learn from other speaker's communication without getting the real sense. While studying through mother tongue, the learners try to write and learning the same word order, or syntax and semantics.

Conclusion

The 1990s new pedagogy-activity-based, process – oriented and learner – centered curriculum started Continues and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and Grading system at the higher secondary level. But, an innovative revision in

the curriculum and syllabus had not been functioned at the higher secondary level, even though text books for certain subjects, source books, and edumates for all subjects were recommended by SCERT.

The present curriculum revision should include with contemporary ideas and talks in to the taste of the learners. The higher secondary curriculum and syllabus should be standardized in to the international level. Global education does not refer to the standard of education set by a particular country. Alongwith this, it must focus in the learners ability to take to their life forward at any circumstances of their, after the completion of their higher education. It should be the totality of all the experiences and information to be gained by the learners for the solutions to their problems. This emphasizes the need to help globally agreed teaching – learning method to our students. The syllabus revision put forward an attempt in that level. To improve the quality of education at the plus two level, the government started to implement many innovative teacher transformation programmes. Subject – based teacher groups help to find the problems in the teaching – learning process to plan learning discourses. The educational expert committee formed by the government for syllabus and curriculum revision aimed the needs for timely, apt and adequate changes. Besides, curriculum revision must also envisage the methods related to curriculum and syllabus in the Right to Education Act.

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