

**POSITION PAPER ON THE TEACHING OF
ENGLISH IN D Ed COURSE**

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Executive Summary

This position paper looks at the present scenario of English language learning and its demands on teacher education in detail. It analyses the present practices in the light of the changes that have come about as well as the socio-cultural requirement in the present time. Perhaps, a peep into future as well. The paper also presents a critique on the bases of present thinking and makes recommendations for changes.

The curriculum for preparation of teachers of English should essentially keep in mind not only the objectives of teaching English in schools but also the need to facilitate professional development. English is taught as a language for communication. Teachers are expected to develop the four basic skills in students who study English at the school level. The focus, then, is to make the student-teachers achieve competence over these skills in the first place. The curriculum should have both aspects, i.e., acquisition of English Language and the classroom methodology to facilitate its acquisition. With a view to keep in line with the national thinking, the possibility of exploring multilingualism as a strategy needs to be explored.

As far as English is concerned there are two components in the present curriculum.

1. Content enrichment programme of three months duration - The focus is on grammar and other linguistic aspects. Usage seems to have been put on the backburner. After the initial content enrichment course, there is a gap of about 9 months before they come back to English methodology in the second year. Thus in the second year it is as good as starting from the beginning.
2. One paper on methodology of teaching English in the second year, offered as a specialization only to those students who opt for it.

The constructivist pedagogy the NCF 2005 propagates has not been focused in the current curriculum. The activities seem to stress more on learning of structures independent of any context, which is not only not desirable but also hampers learning language.

ELT at the school level has two stages. 1-4 English is basically meant for providing exposure. Students have activity books and teachers have resource books. There is no formal evaluation of learning. Teaching of English from classes 5-8 is more formal. The Readers are under revision and the constructivist approach is likely to be introduced from 2012-13.

English has come to occupy a pivotal role in acquiring knowledge. However, strong base in one's mother tongue is expected to make learning of English easy. That is why English Language Teaching has to be thought of in the multi-lingual context of Indian students. Teachers need to have rigorous training in spoken English as well as teaching English. Speech practice should be made compulsory on the course. Hours allotted to the teaching of English need to be doubled. Also professionally trained ELT faculty ought to

be teaching on the course. Student teachers should also be empowered to open a dialogue with the members the community to ensure their meaningful participation in school education.

It is important to prepare teachers to work with multiple texts in a non-examination system. The focus has to be more on practical aspects than the theoretical component. Teachers use English for enhancing their own knowledge as well as facilitating learning of communicative skills among students. D Ed course should prepare student teachers for taking on these challenges well. They need to learn to use English for communicative purposes as well as learn techniques of teaching English to young learners. Classroom methodology should emerge from a comprehensive understanding of the learners. Visual media, especially cartoons and children's literature should be extensively used for facilitating learning. Student teachers should be exposed to a variety of techniques and their theoretical bases in order to help them take appropriate decisions regarding their strategies. They should also be exposed to the nuances of assessment and use evaluation as a reflective tool to enhance learning rather than make it judgmental.

I

INTRODUCTION

This position paper looks at the present scenario of English language learning and its demands on teacher education in detail. It analyses the present practices in the light of the changes that have come about as well as the socio-cultural requirement in the present time. Perhaps, a peep into future as well. The paper also presents a critique on the bases of present thinking and makes recommendations for changes.

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II

A CRITIQUE OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM

The last DEd curriculum revision took place in 2002. The publications three years later of NCF 2005 and NCFTE 2009 have indeed influenced our perspectives of language learning, language teacher education. Constructivist pedagogy has altered the traditional teacher centered practices. The basic focus now is to make any learning experiential. It is in this light that we need to understand the present system, identify the areas that need to be seriously reconsidered and recommend changes. As far as English is concerned there are two components in the present curriculum.

1. Content enrichment programme of three months duration;
2. One paper on methodology of teaching English in the second year, offered as a specialization only to those students who opt for it.

CONTENT ENRICHMENT

Currently content enrichment is meant for all students. The basic focus is to ensure that the student-teachers are prepared with reasonable mastery over the use of English. Students who have completed their PU course would have already undergone 7 years of English language learning. This three month programme proposes to review all that learning and also help student-teachers to fine tune their skills.

However, a quick review of the syllabus of this programme shows that the focus is on grammar and other linguistic aspects. Usage seems to have been put on the backburner. To continue with the same programme that has not delivered in the past seven years would not be a rewarding exercise. There is no real effort to find out the actual need of the student-teachers. Are the faculty of DEd colleges equipped to plan the inputs independently to suit the needs of their students? Initially a training programme was conducted in this regard taking into consideration practices and beliefs which were current then. But after that many changes have come about in the way in which we look at language learning, conduct classroom pedagogy etc. It is necessary that a teacher is equipped to handle the current issues in the classroom. A situation where language is considered across the curriculum, 'content enrichment' (here it means enhancing language skills) should be mandatory. The student-teacher should be sensitized to the changing scenario of language learning and also changing societal expectations. The new curriculum should take note of the changing paradigm.

It would indeed be unrealistic to assume that the English language they have not learnt in seven years' time till plus two would be learnt, or even brushed up and make everything perfect in three months! As per the present curriculum, they do not engage in English learning activities after the content enrichment programme. Later, they are offered English methodology as an optional in the second year. In practice, at best, only 50% of the students offer to take methodology of English teaching. After the initial content enrichment course, there is a gap of about 9 months before they come back to English methodology in the second year. They have no formal opportunity to practice whatever they are taught in the content enrichment programme. Thus in the second year, it is as good as starting from the beginning. The new curriculum can't ignore this fact. Most importantly, those who opt for English methodology should have English as an ongoing activity throughout the first year. This will equip them with reasonable command over English, which is lacking now.

The constructivist pedagogy the NCF 2005 propagates has not been focused in the current curriculum. A cursory glance at it shows that the focus is on theoretical issues. With only one unit on the basic skills, the content enrichment course in the first year proposes to revise the knowledge of structures and grammar! In the second year, student-teachers who opt for teaching English have to undergo a course in content based methodology of teaching English. The paper also provides for inputs in the teaching of prose, poetry, grammar and composition. It has a chapter which deals with instructional methods, approaches and strategies. Two approaches are dealt with in detail, i.e., communicative approach and structural approach. Student-teachers who may not have a good knowledge of English language learning would rather prefer structural approach because every step there would provide them evidence of what appears to be learning. Though activity based classroom processes are advocated, **the activities seem to stress more on the learning of structures independent of any context, which is not only not desirable but also hampers learning language.** Chaitanya II- English manual is a compendium of such activities. These are competency focused activities. Thus there are separate activities for practicing the four major language skills. Since the material does

not clearly explain the difference between skills and competencies, it naturally leads to confusion. It does not talk about any source from where the competencies were taken. Though KSQAO has listed a few competencies for classes V, VI, VII and VIII, the list is not made available to all DEd students officially. In such circumstances, student-teachers are left with only the Readers prescribed for those classes. Finally the Readers have their supremacy over the processes of learning. ‘Growing beyond the text book’ of NCF 2005 naturally negates this. The new curriculum should take care of it. Also NCF 2005 proposal for multilingualism needs to be considered by curriculum writers now.

ELT AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

English is taught at classes 1,2,3 and 4 using & Teachers Resource Books & Students Activites Books. Everyday the teachers are expected to transact five segments. They include narrating a story, singing a rhyme, playing a language game, conducting TPR activities and practicing dialogue delivery. The resource books have a collection of stories, games, rhymes, TPR activities and dialogues. Student activity books have activities corresponding to these five segments. There is no formal evaluation of English language learning at classes 1,2,3, & 4. The emphasis is on providing a good exposure to English so that when learners enter class V where formal learning of English begins, they are ready to take on the challenge without much problem.

English learning and teaching at classes 5,6,7 and 8 are more formal. Here English is learnt as a second language. Formal evaluation begins here. There are prescribed Readers to work with. The textbooks are being revised and new Readers with a constructivist approach are likely to be introduced from 2012-13. It is imperative that the curriculum revision considers these changes too.

III

PRESENT THINKING

“Quality must be seen in (the) light of how societies define the purpose of education.” (UNSECO 2004). If it’s agreed that the purpose of education is to ensure that all children acquire knowledge, linguistic skills, values necessary for the exercise of responsible citizenship, it is mandatory on the part of the curriculum to ensure that the cognitive development, creative and emotional growth and language skills are ensured, beginning from the first language moving towards English.

Language precedes knowledge. Right or wrong, in our education system, English has come to occupy a pivotal role in acquiring knowledge. It’s apparent now that quality language education is what the curriculum should be looking at. It doesn’t mean to say that the regional language should be driven to the back waters. Linguists have shown that the second language learning would be easy if the children are strong in their first language. It’s here where multilingualism can be a serious concern in the DEd curriculum:

MULTILINGUALISM

In the 21st century, our children have to compete with the global challenges. We need to cope with the situation. The only option open for the educators is to prepare the children for the new challenges. Perhaps, the English language would take them a long way. English teaching, therefore, should be strengthened with a professional approach. But having said that it must be quickly added that it shall not at any rate affect the first language teaching. English can't replace, or even undermine the regional language teaching. It's essential that curriculum should be concerned with the cultural realism and maintain a viable delicate balance between the two. English language teaching should be developed on the already acquired skills of the first language in children. It also needs to be said here, in order to fall in line with the NCF 2005, that an attempt could slowly but unobtrusively be made towards multilingualism.

Multilingualism – English language and mother tongue/regional language are taught simultaneously (from grade 1) in schools now. This may be desirable to bridge the social gap that exists and also to develop multilingual competence in children.

“It's now well established by a series of studies that there is a positive correlation between multilingualism and scholastic achievement. That means that the higher the degree of proficiency in different languages, the higher is the achievement in different subjects. The purpose of our education should not be to English only but to enhance higher levels of proficiency in three or four languages by the time the child passes plus two.” (**'A Plea for Early Access to Multilingualism'**, R K Agnihotri, 2006, p 16)

Attempt should begin at the elementary level. Prof Agnihotri's recommendation can be considered in a discreet manner. Encourage multilingualism in a modest way without loading it with apparent quantum of content. It should happen without children feeling the burden. The new DEd curriculum can show the way.

QUALITY OF TRAINING

The teaching English in Karnataka schools is at crossroads today. There are few professionally trained English teachers in the majority of our schools. Since most children arrive in school with full-blown linguistic system, the teaching of language must have specific objectives in school curriculum. Our DEd teachers should be well equipped to teach English to such children. For DEd teachers as well as school children, curriculum must provide for more and more acceptable English to fall on their ears; increasing their self-confidence by helping them achieve fluency;

Not many training colleges have ELT trained professionals to do the job. If in the UG course, which prepares the future BEd trainees, English teaching is reduced to mere symbolism; in PG courses, which prepares the UG teachers, there is little or no English teaching. The MAs they churn out on an annual basis are not trained to do the job at the UG level. These graduates continue with the same attitude downwards. The need of the hour is 'professional touch' to English teaching at all levels. The course correction should

come, at least for DEd course, in the curriculum. There is an overtly visible vacuum in the content and its teaching.

If the DEd or BEd college teachers are to be effective, they should have rigorous training, to adopt a phrase from NCF 2005, “meet the most stringent criterion” in ELT. They ought to have been familiarized with not just the communicative skills but also the modern grammar, usage and the communicative language teaching (CLT) methods, as well as the nuances of English language. It’s a continuous process. It’s mandatory that they ought to be in touch with the living idiom of the contemporary English, strenuous though. And his/her accent should be intelligible to any student up and down and across the country. **In order to achieve this, (s)he should have rigorous training in spoken English as well as English teaching.** More easily said than done! Yes, but we have been driven by globalization, which has touched every aspect of our life since the dawn of the 21st century. World has driven into India. Complacency on the part of the academic world will be ruinous to our children. The curriculum must recognize the societal pressure to train our students lest they would be left out of the global market. This can be achieved if we train our student-teachers in English professionally.

It’s not enough if they are told about the structures. They should listen to the actual use of these structures by good speakers and learn to generate more sentences based on them meaningfully. The curriculum must spell out the areas in which the training should concentrate, or where the emphasis should fall in the training. **It is here where speech practice, (intense practice) should be made compulsory in the course.** Nobody expects the neither viable nor feasible RP, but the fair expectation would be “intelligibility.” If the teacher’s accent and articulation are ‘intelligible’ or ‘acceptable’, school children will learn with joy and indeed develop confidence in the teacher, which has now become a casualty in rural areas.

“Second-language pedagogy, more than the teaching of any other curricular subject, must meet the most stringent criterion of universal success.”

NCF 2005, position paper, p 4.

If there are professionally trained teachers in the early stages in school, it will make the children’s experience pleasant, profitable and long lasting. They need not go through any ‘bridge course’, ‘crash course’, ‘remedial course’ or expensive spoken English courses run by private agencies at later stages. Teachers should be trained adequately here. “Input” is repeatedly stressed in NCF 2005. In ELT, input is one of the vital components. In rural areas, where 70% of our students are being educated, language input is tenuous and rarely contemporary. More often than not, the teacher is found wanting in good speech, leave alone preparing materials.

VULNERABLE AREA IN THE PRESENT TRAINING

There is a skepticism about the quality of training imparted at the training colleges. Furthermore, the linguistic competence of the trained graduates, it’s feared, is far below the desired standard. There are many concerned voices seconding the criticism. The

trained graduates carry inflated marks cards which show 80% to 90%, but in the written test conducted at the recruitment stage debunks it. With few exceptions, they invariably score less than 50%. Some score 15%-20%. This can't be overlooked, much less ignored. It's time the curriculum addressed the issue seriously. **Teacher training is seminal in the process of school education.** Best minds are seldom attracted to DEd and BEd courses. The teacher trainers must accept the challenge to train them to get the best out of them **The hours allotted to the teaching of English in the present curriculum is impractical and awfully inadequate. We, therefore need to double the teaching hours or else the teacher trainers will not be able to train them adequately. The trainees will continue to be under-trained to perform at the level they are required to perform at school. University regulations permit introducing an extra paper if the trainees are found weak in English.** The curriculum designers must definitely take note of it. It's not enough if the hours are increased and a special paper introduced. **Professionally trained ELT teachers ought to be teaching on the course.** An untrained teacher defeats the purpose. Teacher trainers have an arduous task to perform here. They have to take up the challenge with tenacity.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Participation of community in the educational processes has become an important area of concern and also an intervening variable. The community has its own expectations from schools which is at loggerheads with the research findings of experts. Jnanpeeth and Nobel laureates are also at variance with the community's demands. The present Indian society looks at English language learning solely from economic angle. This builds pressure on the system to be more and more product oriented. The process of language learning takes the back seat and the production of language alone is seen as success. The rote methods of language learning might appear to bring success initially. But what has not been noted is that in the long run, the repertoire of English they are equipped with in this type of rote learning would not be of any use to them. Thoughts and expressions do not match because ability to think, relate and express in English is not developed. Activities of higher order prove difficult for them. All these finally affect the very quality of learning in higher education. It smothers creativity. While addressing the problems the community brings on the one hand, and changing the focus from mere product to the learning process on the other hand, the teacher should act as a troubleshooter. There is a need to empower the teacher in this area.

IV

THE NEW PROPOSAL

The question we need to consider here is: should there be a separate content enrichment programme or not? If there should be, what are the changes to be made in the existing inputs? The study conducted by DIET, Mysore has reported that content revision up to class VII is good enough for the student-teachers. A similar observation has been made in the study co-ordinated by Dr Murthy(2007). The study recommends

transaction of LPS and HPS contents in both the years. This study also recommends after making a detailed study of the present DEd curriculum that greater attention has to be given to practical aspects than the theoretical component.

TEACHER'S READYNESS

The basic problem observed in 1-4 English is that the teachers have not yet subscribed to the idea of working without textbooks. In a system where the end of all educational endeavour is to write an examination, the non-examination system of learning English has not been able to catch up with the parents as well as quite a number of teachers. What is good in theory may not be good in practice, they opine. However, the scene is not likely to change as far as 1-4 English is concerned because, the programme implements all recommendations of NCF 2005. It is important to train the working teachers as well as would be teachers in understanding this philosophy and also practice it. It is advisable that such an approach is carried forward even in classes 5-8 or even up to 10th. The prospective teachers need to be prepared for this.

CONCERNS AND OBJECTIVES

ROLE OF ENGLISH IN THE DEd CURRICULUM

Language learning which has been hitherto understood as acquiring a set of habits (language structures and words) is now being perceived as a tool for knowledge construction and processing knowledge. Thus, the need to look at language not in bits and pieces but as a whole to serve the purposes for which it is meant. This implies that the student-teacher at the DEd level has to understand the different communicative functions of the language and come to terms with it. The student-teacher, it is understood, after a successful completion of a two-year programme will be required to act as facilitator causing language learning by providing acquisition and rich environment for the learners to get exposed to the target language. He/she will have to be a source of input to the nuances of language besides training the learner with a set of learning strategies. This input may be referred to as teacher talk which includes the use of different language forms and expressions for serving communicative functions such as giving feedback, instructing, advising, seeking information and so on. Needless to say that the input from the teacher must be comprehensible and therefore the teacher in the classroom must be able to find suitable and appropriate alternative language elements.

NEEDS OF STUDENT TEACHERS

Even if the student-teacher is not going to opt for English language pedagogy, he cannot afford to avoid English. Proficiency in language would include high levels of comprehension, The other related sub-skills required of the student teacher are as follows: the ability

- to listen to a stretch of discourse and comprehend, interpret and evaluate;

- to decode, interpret and evaluate written texts;
- to use appropriate accentual patterns and tonal variations and related articulatory features so as to make speaking highly intelligible;
- to be grammatically acceptable and
- to choose and use the appropriate lexical items and language expressions besides the ability to encode different types of texts

It is hoped that when the student-teacher equips himself /herself with these abilities, he/she will be able to use finely tuned language appropriate to the context. The curriculum envisaged therefore needs to take into account these language and communication needs of the student-teacher and also the curricular/textbook requirements at the primary levels of learning in Karnataka. In other words, the curriculum must be highly need-based with suggestions for effective classroom interaction and transaction of the content.

For those who opt for ELT methods in the second year, the curriculum should necessarily focus on:

- developing a knowledge of classroom processes;
- equipping the student-teacher with a set of strategies for effective transaction of the prescribed content;
- enabling the student-teacher with a knowledge of the trends in language teaching and learning with a focus on the theoretical principles that support different pedagogical procedures;
- creating an awareness of the alternatives available in the curriculum transaction process;
- developing the ability to design tasks, activities and supplementary tools and materials for classroom use;
- developing alternative strategies for evaluating learner performance;
- facilitating an understanding of the need to adopt and try out reflective practices;
- helping them to find possibilities for an integration of subjects across the curriculum;

V

BROAD CONTENTS

In order to realize the objectives mentioned above, broad contents for the DEd curriculum have been suggested in the section that follows.

NCF 2005 has observed that teacher's low proficiency in using the language is a major concern and has come in the way of providing rich comprehensible input to learners at the primary level. Lack of language competence on the part of the teachers has resulted in mechanical ways of teaching English in the classroom. For example, teacher talk has

been reduced to questions and answers and there is hardly any meaningful interaction taking place in the classroom. Also, teaching has been reduced to teacher explaining the content and learners learning the content by heart.

It is worth, in this context, to mention the following observations made by the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009):

- Teachers need to be prepared to view learners as active participants in their own learning and not as mere recipients of knowledge;
- Teachers need to be trained in organizing learner-centered, activity-based, participatory learning experiences - play, projects, discussions, dialogue, observation, visits, etc.
- Teacher education should engage teachers with the curriculum, syllabi and textbooks to critically examine them rather than taking them as 'given' and accepted without question.
- Teacher education should provide student-teachers with opportunities for reflection and independent study without packing the training schedule with teacher-directed activities alone.

Against this backdrop, it has been decided to revise the DEd curriculum so that student-teachers will be able to make the teaching-learning of English more meaningful and effective.

The following section provides clear guidelines for revising the existing curriculum and addressing certain important issues.

As student-teachers need to develop their language competence (both grammatical and communicative) and also understand effective methods and techniques of teaching English at the primary level, the DEd curriculum should include two curricular areas:

1. Language proficiency, Language knowledge and Communication skills
2. English language pedagogy and classroom processes

VI

Area 1: Language proficiency, Language knowledge and Communication skills.

We need to recognise the centrality of language in the teacher education programme and therefore the above curricular area should be made compulsory for all DEd students and the course must be stretched to the full academic year in the first year of the programme. The purpose of this course is to enhance the language proficiency of the student-teachers and also to develop their language knowledge - knowledge about grammatical structures, lexical items and segmental and supra-segmental features of articulation. This course

should also help them to develop their communication skills i.e. to use English for a variety of communicative (both spoken and written) purposes. Student-teachers can gain good mastery over language if they are exposed to communication rich environment in the D Ed classrooms. Student-teachers as well as their educators should see language as a set of skills to be acquired rather than as a content subject to be taught or learnt by heart.

Language acquisition may not take place if student-teachers remain passive in the classroom. They must be engaged in a lot of meaningful communication 'activities' so that they develop fluency and confidence levels in using the language. Activities such as repeating after the teacher, miming, performing, etc. by themselves may not enhance the language competence of the adult learners. We need to scaffold their learning or provide adequate support and rich input to help them do the activities successfully. Hence, a proper understanding of the term 'activity' is necessary for both student-teachers and the teacher educators. A 'task' may be a better term in this regard.

Providing rich input in the form of listening and reading is an absolutely necessary condition for developing the linguistic and communicative competence of the student-teachers. Listening is a pre-requisite to develop good communication skills. Reading is also an essential skill to enhance one's vocabulary, grammatical knowledge and writing skills. Hence, a variety of meaning-based inputs will help in expanding the language repertoire of the students.

For developing listening skills, audio cassettes, CDs, radio and television programmes may be used extensively. Listening to instructions, descriptions, narratives, announcements, reports, different types of speeches, etc, will help learners pick up language. Speeches of well known personalities (declamations) may be used in the classroom and student-teachers can be asked to analyse these speeches in terms of the rhetorical devices used, the tone adopted and the structure of the speech, etc.

Reading a variety of text types is another major source of input for language acquisition. Reading is essential for developing one's comprehension skills, thinking capacity and also critical and creative abilities. In addition, reading plays an important role in language acquisition. A lot of incidental learning such as developing knowledge about language aspects, acquiring meaningful chunks of language takes place in the process of reading. A variety of reading materials such as course books, newspapers, magazines, stories, fiction, children literature may be used in the classroom to develop skimming, scanning and extensive reading skills. Higher-order skills such as inferring (arriving at logical deduction), making comparison and contrast, distinguishing facts and opinions, evaluating, etc. must be developed at this level. Texts from other content subjects such as science, environmental studies, social science may also be used for developing reading skills.

VISUAL MEDIA AS SECONDARY SOURCE OF MATERIAL

English is not available in the environment in rural areas to reinforce what is taught in the classroom. Language learning is innate, but, as Vygotsky points out that a child's speech is essentially a result of an interaction with society is worth considering here. Although we're talking about second language teaching, Vygotsky is relevant because it's here where the rural children are at great disadvantage. They have no equity. There is virtually none to speak English around them. The only source from where good English speech can be provided in such places is visual media. Mass media should, therefore, be made part of the syllabus in DEd training. Not only is the acceptable language available but also the changing language gets reflected first in the mass media anyway. Teachers should be encouraged to use the visual media. If the students and the teachers are in touch with the print and the visual media, it will reinforce in their language learning process. And it's available round the clock. It's an indirect way of taking advantage of the speech of journalist educated in reputed universities. Furthermore, many university dons speak on TV and write in the print media. The teacher trainers should know how to take advantage of it. Not all of them can be treated as models. But majority of them can be. BBC definitely is authentic, but the major Indian English channels can be recommended. The more the language falls on their ears, the better it's for them to develop self confidence. Apart from teaching language, they should be made to cultivate the habit of constantly thinking about language. What the surface structure says may be different from what the deep structure suggests. Language is not static, it's changing regularly. The changes happen first in the mass media. If it's made part of the curriculum, the speech available on TV could be treated as the secondary level of learning material. In places where good language is available in and outside the classroom, mass media would be redundant. However, the primary material must come from the curriculum. It goes without saying that the teacher trainers in the training colleges must have high degree of linguistic "competence".

USE OF CARTOONS AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Many cartoon pictures would also be useful in teaching conversational English. Daily one hour can be set aside for viewing cartoon on TV by the DEd colleges as well as schools. Beside the news bulletins, they should be shown cartoon pictures where good and simple dialogue is used. If this is not possible in rural areas, pre-recorded CDs can be provided to them. They communicate easily to rural students. The trainees must be trained to use them profitably. It should be shown to students under the supervision of the English teacher.

Another important benefit of reading is that it contributes, to a great extent, to language acquisition. Reading texts used for comprehension purposes may also be exploited for promoting language acquisition. In other words, interesting, meaning-based and also form-focused vocabulary, pronunciation as well as grammar activities may be designed on such reading texts. This way, teaching of language elements may be contextualized and made more meaningful. Some form-focused activities/exercises on selected areas of

grammar such as present perfect form, clauses, auxiliaries and modal verbs may be desirable at this level.

Students may also be encouraged to actively participate in debates, discussions, different speech acts, presentations, etc. so that they develop intra- and inter-personal skills. They may also be trained in delivering welcome speeches, introducing guests, giving vote of thanks, compeering a programme, giving a valedictory speech, etc. so that they can perform these roles better in future.

Area 2: English Language pedagogy and classroom processes

In addition to developing the language proficiency and communication skills of student-teachers, it is important to develop a sound knowledge of the principles of language teaching, various approaches and methods of teaching a second language, language acquisition theories, etc. This course is for one full year and is introduced in the second year and is meant for those who opt for teaching English at the primary level. The course will help student-teachers to understand the trends and issues in English language teaching and also to learn ways of developing learners' language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The course may have different units as suggested below:

UNIT 1: APPROACHES AND METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH

This unit should provide an overview of how different methodologies have evolved over a period of time and the strengths and limitations of various approaches. Rather than presenting information about different ELT approaches and methods, student-teachers must be made to engage in professional reading of articles and relevant literature. The course should allow them to visit schools, observe a few classes and report back to the group about their observations and hold meaningful discussions. At times, the teacher educator can demonstrate a few approaches with a group of primary school learners or student-teachers can be engaged in peer-teaching. These demonstration lessons and peer teaching sessions may be analysed and examined for their effectiveness. Additionally, relevant video clippings or reading materials may be used to help students understand the principles enshrined in each approach. On the whole, the unit should enable them to examine their own biases and beliefs, relate to and reflect on their own experiences and arrive at a methodology that is appropriate to their contexts.

UNIT 2: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES

The purpose of this unit is to promote an understanding of theories related to second language acquisition. Student-teachers should know the differences between acquisition and learning, input-intake and output, language acquisition device (LAD), Universal

Grammar (UG) system, and other related concepts. For this, a glossary of ELT terms may be prepared and given to student-teachers. Similarly, they should read about Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, Krashen, Chomsky and other researchers and experts in the field. However, these theories should go hand-in-hand with field experiences and should help the student-teachers to actively construct knowledge during learning. They may be made to observe young learners inside and outside the classrooms and understand the special abilities and characteristics of young learners to learn a language, learners' needs, motivation levels, learning styles, home background, etc. This can be done through a project using group and individual field-based assignments.

UNIT 3: DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS AND TEACHING ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE

The unit should be designed to include teaching of the following skills and aspects of language:

- Teaching listening
- Teaching speaking
- Teaching reading
- Teaching writing
- Teaching grammar
- Teaching vocabulary

Practical tasks and activities to develop professional capacities to teach language skills and other aspects of language should be conducted. While doing this, the course books prescribed at the primary schools may be used and hands-on experience in transacting the prescribed content may be given to the student-teachers. They may also be encouraged to design additional tasks and activities to supplement the course books.

UNIT 4: ASSESSING YOUNG LEARNERS

Assessment and evaluation is an essential part of teaching-learning process. However, young learners should not be subjected to tests and examinations that encourage rote learning. memory-based testing that focuses recalling of information should be discouraged at all levels of learning. Hence, assessment procedures at the DEd level should also be revised and classroom-based assessment should be implemented. Using a variety of tools for assessment such as checklists, self-evaluation, peer-group assessment, observation records, student portfolios, project work, presentations must be thought of at this level so that the same can be introduced in the classroom.. Continuous and comprehensive evaluation should be carried out to assess student-teacher performance. Also, student-teachers should get hands-on experience in designing classroom-based assessment procedures.

The curriculum, the syllabus, and the actual transaction in the classroom must undergo radical changes. The training process should be made more rigorous . The government must keep three or four groups of Expert Committees comprising ELT experts in each

group with proper ELT expertise to guide and monitor the teaching of communicative English across the State. It should have the status of an Advisory Body to the Education Ministry in English teaching. They function as an Expert Body to put the training on track wherever it's not functioning on the suggested line. They should liaison between the policy makers and the practitioners. It is a serious matter dogging the state because the students' global market depends on the proficiency they gain in English. Linguists seem to be linking economic prosperity of a country to the spread of English. Overstated as it might look, the curriculum writer must take cognizance of it. If it's remotely connected with the child's future, it would be costly. The State therefore must pay serious attention to English teaching. It's high time we stopped making compromises here.

Probably more appropriate step in the age of technology is to create a digital forum to be constantly in touch with the practicing teachers. The teachers should have easy access to the Expert Committees to find solutions to their problems. The DSERT is well advised to open a website where they could record their problems and the experts could answer them immediately. Periodically the experts could be asked to give talks on the areas the teachers find difficult. Also on new developments in the area in order to update their knowledge. All these could be uploaded on to the website. If the digital forum is created now, it could develop into a rich multimedia resource that can be used to enhance the professional development of prospective teachers. The bottom line is it could have a snowballing effect to develop into a repertoire of parameters and strategies for the future textbook writers and curriculum developers.

On the whole, the DEd curriculum should help in enabling the prospective teacher to be a reflective practitioner. Finally, if a teacher guide book is to be written, a team of experts has to be formed. A single individual can't be entrusted with it. The manuscript has to be scrutinized by the practicing teachers in the DEd course in a couple of workshops.

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