

Empowering 21st-century learners to face the world confidently: A paradigm shift in teaching and learning

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Abstract:

Education is seen as the core technique of empowering individuals and prepare the young mind to live prolifically intolerant, culturally diverse and rapidly changing society. The UGC has asked local universities to show that they process the “learning outcomes” they expect that they are organising educational experiences to enable students to achieve these outcomes. Traditional teaching, especially English Language teaching tradition has been subject to incredible change. A paradigm shift in education from rote memorisation to beyond the classroom module can lead to re-organising the education system to provide not only standards of academic credentials, but also to inculcate skills such as social skills, creativity, communication skills and empathy all of which can nurture globally competent in individuals.

“We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the foundation of life. Many of the things we need can wait. The children cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, and his senses are being developed, to him we cannot answer “ Tomorrow” His name is “Today”.”
(Gabriela Mistral,1948)

This paper focuses on how best we can mould our future by nurturing our learners.

“Life is not contained in a syllabus, and everyone should be ready to face ‘out of syllabus’ situation!”(V.Rajesh)

Key words: Life Skills, Task-based learning, holistic development and modern techniques.

Introduction :

“Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man”(Swami Vivekananda)

Today, it has become mandatory for the academicians to rethink and revamp their teaching strategies with the changing times. Educators across the spectrum are vying to innovative teaching practices to keep the students motivated and foster in them a greater desire for incorporating sound knowledge. For creating interest among the generation learners, there should be a paradigm shift in the selection and implementation of the optimal methodology and techniques; however, a special effort to be taken on the behavioural challenges faced by students is also taken in consideration. Effective acquisition of life skills can influence and enhance the productivity, efficacy, self- esteem of the leaners and thereby facilitate robust learning skills.

Life Skill:

Life skills are defined as ‘abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.(World Health Organization)

Life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help the community to unravel problems, think decisively and creatively, make informed decisions, communicate effectively, build vigorous relationships, identify with others and manage to live healthy and productive manner. The trend often observed in today's culture is that once a student is enrolled in an educational institution, it is the responsibility of the educators to chisel the students. Nevertheless, it is not so, and everyone has a role in sculpting the youth of today. In the present educational scenario, students seem apathetic because of a lot of influential factors in and around the society. Some of the factors are disturbances in the class, mental health issues, relationships with both familial and peers, lack of motivation, and so on. Life skill incorporating teaching help a student to overcome some of these issues.

The different categories of Life Skills are:

1. Skills of knowing and living with oneself(Self-awareness, Self-esteem, coping with emotions, coping with stress)
2. Skills of knowing with others(Empathy, Effective Communication, Conflict Resolution and negotiation, Peer pressure resistance, Friendship formation)
3. Skills of effective decision making(Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Problem-solving, Decision making)

The ten core life skills advocated are Self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem-solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotion. The components of life skills play on thinking, and social skills is an effectual means to negotiate situations effectively. In a way, various life skills work best in conjunction.

Task-based learning:

The process of education must enable students to face situations in life confidently and emerge out of life situations triumphantly. Success in life no longer confined to a high first-class or a distinction. Task-based learning is more student-centred to demonstrate their hidden talents. As the tasks are likely to be familiar, students are more likely to be involved in the task, which may further motivate them to learn better and understand well. In task-based learning classroom can be combatted by introducing real-world situation, rather the list from the textbook, by activating the student; students are not passive receivers of knowledge but are instead actively acquire the knowledge. Task-based learning is the need for a shift to focus from teacher to the learner.

Our teaching methodology still fosters passive submission and obedience to authority at a time when the world needs individuals with the self-reliance, initiative and problem-solving capabilities to fashion new solutions rather than merely repeating without comprehending old ones. It still emphasises on getting the ‘right’ answers to questions based on prevailing theories. It prepares youth for increasingly scarce salaried jobs rather than imparting the capacity to create new jobs through self-employment and entrepreneurship. Even today, our educational system promotes a highly competitive, individualistic mode of learning in a networking society where cooperation and teamwork are the principal modes of work.

The two key concepts of the learner-centred classroom:

- (i) Placing more responsibility in the hands of the students to manage their learning.
- (ii) Teachers are taking roles as facilitators of knowledge to help learners learn rather than being the source of knowledge.

The results of task-based learning equip the learner with fluency and confidence. Such tasks can include field visit, industrial visit, conducting an interview, or calling customer service for help for naming a few.

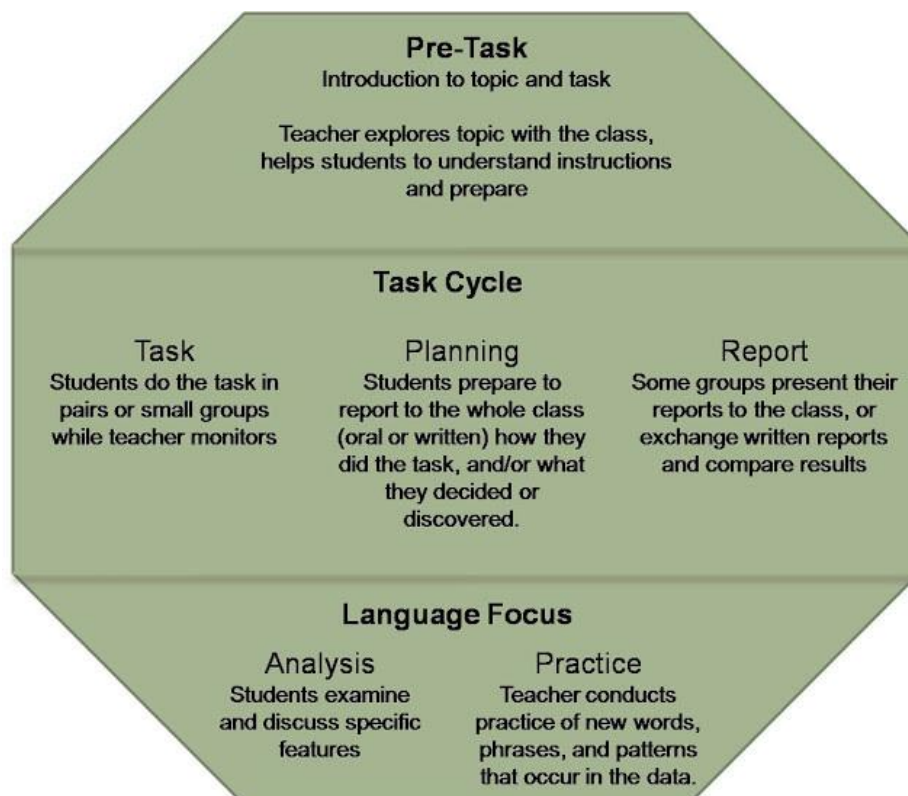
*“Tell me and I’ll forget;
Teach me and I’ll remember;
Involve me and I’ll learn”.*(Anonymous)

In today’s dynamic classrooms, the teaching and learning process is becoming more nuanced, more seamless and teacher-centred.

Nunan’s Task-Based Approach:

The emphasis of task-based language teaching is “learning by doing”. The syllabus designed on requirement analysis which gives a list of the target tasks for the selected learners to carry out. While those selected learners perform these tasks, they can develop positive methods of learning the target language and experience a sense of success.

There are three phases in the task-based framework: Pre-task, Task cycle and Analysis &Practice.



Technology-enhanced teaching and learning:

Technology lies at the heart of the globalisation process, affecting education and culture. It is the need of these hours to put into action modern technologies to upgrade the level of teaching in all respects. Use of authentic materials in the form of films, radio, TV has been there for a long time. After the invention of the computer, the ICT classroom where introduced as well as the provision of distance learning become possible, which gave a new shape for teaching-learning today scenario.

COVID-19 brought revolutionary changes in the way of functioning of educational institutions and broke the stereotype teaching in the classroom. Students and teachers are sitting at home, learning the syllabus keeping technology in the heart of education. Technology platform enables us to connect virtually and to deliver content over the internet to students.

Technology integration is defined on the basis of available type of technology, accessibility to the technology, and who is using the technology. One primary factor for effective technology integration is embracing change willingly as technology is continuously, and rapidly, evolving. COVID-19 could not stop teachers and students from learning together and colliding students and teacher to explore the ocean of knowledge. Enhanced learning refers to a broad conception of technologies such as interactive whiteboards and mobile learning devices.



Conclusion:

These are the genuine feelings of our learners at present while they imbibe the educational concepts. Teachers should act as facilitators and promote a composite approach to Life Skills that embeds within it a holistic approach. Education ought to emancipate individuals from bondages, and it must create an atmosphere of freedom so that an individual can bloom well. Today the blueprint of education should not be merely to foster endowment of knowledge. Instead, the learning landscape can be widened by the incorporation of methodology that propels skills-oriented activities.

Let us remember the saying of Henry Adams “*A teacher affects eternity ;he can never tell where is his influence stop*”.

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