Designing Activities Based On the Field Of Outdoor Games For Teaching Language At The College Level

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At the college level it is very difficult to make the students to get involved into a task because of so many reasons. It is essential to establish a situation in the class room that could create a favorable frame of mind for the students to co-operate and collaborate voluntarily in the activity of imparting speaking and listening skills. Regular outdoor games are one of the potential arenas for the incorporation in order to achieve effective communication practice.

During the last few decades, so many methods considered to be suitable for effective second language teaching have been coming up. They include the popular methods like Grammar-Translation Method, Natural Method, Phonetic Method, Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching, Immersion Programs, Audio-lingual Method, cognitive based approaches, Total Physical Response (TPR) and many others. It is also the notion of the experts of the field that it is difficult to establish a particular method as the most effective one or the best one for a particular language or a particular group of people. However, the reason for the development of these methods can be so many but one important aspect is achieving total involvement of the students in the process of language learning. This document attempts to suggest one possible way of achieving total involvement of the students through a designed activity for language learning.

Nature of tasks in language teaching

Language teaching methods are composed of prescribed tasks for understanding the syntactical and semantic patterns and the task is defined by Long as

> "...a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation.... and helping someone across a road. In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between" (Long, 1985 p. 89).

Language is a system established already by a group of people with traditional inheritance and contemporary novel and scientific influence and influx. It is certainly impossible to define how much time it would take for a student to learn a new language or a language teacher to teach a language to a student. It is because it involves quite a number of

prerequisites or the establishment of the same from the part of a teacher and a learner. However the fact is that this process is widely attempted and contemplated because of the growing need for the 'lingua franca' to communicate with people with whom we do not share our mother tongue. Wilkins states clearly that in the process of language teaching different parts of the language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up (Wilkins, 1976 p. 2). Nunan considers the task as any classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989 p. 10).

Tasks At The College Level

At the college level it is very difficult to make the students get involved int a task because of so many reasons and among them the most important portion is involvement. A young student's mind is always in a dynamic mode of assessing a situation and to be carried away with the associated inviting fancies of the adolescence. A student's mere presence does not guarantee his involvement. Achievement of a student's cooperation is an accomplishment and to utilize it to teach language in a classroom, in a given number of hours, is a Herculean task. So, compared to activities of reading and writing that are achieved with concrete prescribed class work materials in a classroom, activities of speaking and listening are complicated as there are no concrete prescribed class work materials. These days, the assistance of computer is compensating these shortcomings, yet the atmosphere created in classrooms is far superior to the assistance of computers because of its personal connection. It is because of the fact that there is no practical necessity or attractive feature while learning with computers, to invite students' involvement. Moreover computer is not a novel feature anymore and the feeling of monotony kills the interest of the students. It does not give the excitement that one has while interacting with human beings.

While considering the practical difficulties of a language teacher and the tendency of students to be receptive to only situations that are attractive, action oriented and capable of keeping them alive from the beginning to the end, the use of innovative situations that demands involvement may be very effective. For example, a debate over a disputed statement may be attractive to young students. It would provoke them to come out and stand their views. For example, a topic like "who is responsible for corruption, politicians or citizens?" may be attractive with a latest issue cited in the newspaper. But it may not be interesting for a long period of time, so it may be called as "short-term stimulant". On the other hand, following that idea regularly based on the arguments about it, following it with regular news headlines on the same issue may make it a "long-term stimulant". In the same way, making the students to take-up a similar kind of issue and enact it in the form of a drama or skit will be a short-term stimulant and to entrust them with the responsibility of doing it continuously may encourage them and it can be done for a long term. So, it becomes much easier for a language teacher to operate in a situation that they are interested in and in which they have something to listen and speak about.

S.No	Plan	Hours	Activities and tasks	Example	Out come
1	Preliminary Test	1	To analyze students' level of English proficiency.	General questions like What is cricket?	Knowing the proficiency level of the students
2.	Introductio n	1	About cricket Collection of vocabulary, verbs, Positions in the out-field	Ball, Bat Bowl, drive, strike Pitch, slip,	Imparting knowledge to students about cricket
4.	Nouns and role	1	Subject-verb agreement	He <u>is</u> a batsman / They <u>are</u> fielders. He <u>faces</u> the ball / They <u>stop</u> the ball. He <u>scores</u> runs / They <u>restrict</u> runs.	Leaning subject-verb agreement in simple present tense
5	Oral practice for students in simple present tense	1	Practice conjugation in simple present tense on activity based way	Sam and Ken play cricket. Sam plays cricket.	Oral fluency
6	Action and reflection	1	Making students perform and comment	He drives the ball. They watch the match.	Usage of simple present tense
7	Ranking/co mparison	1	Use of adjectives	He is a good player. He is not so good.	Expressing ideas

8	Teaching tense usage 1	2	Use of simple present, past and future Actions: Bat, Bowl, Keep, Conduct Time: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,	On the stage four of the students for a tense with cricketing articles. Others will take turn in speaking about their actions and time of action. Ex: 1. Gopi batted yesterday 2. Ram bats today 3.Sham bats Tomorrow	Learning the difference between simple present, past and future
12	The sense of "ing"	1	Usage with verbs	They are batting tomorrow. He is batting now.	Essence of continuous tense Some times for planned actions
13	Dream team	2	How will your dream team play? Reasoning Characters and strategy	Sachin is batting first. Kumar is batting next. I have selected Sachin because……..	Practice
.14	Inquiry at a particular stage	1	What is going on? Step by step reflection	Who is getting runs? Who is bowling well?	Comments while match is going on
15	Comparisons	1	Positive and negative, Reason	Lee bowls well but Shevag plays better He is a good batsman because he scores quick	Learning to compare

				runs	
16	Use of conjunctions	1	Between the players Between the teams	Gambir is better than Rina. Which team is better? India or Pakistan	Making contradictory paradoxical statements
	Progressive test	1	To test the level of understanding in simple present and continuous	Demonstrations and charts live commentary documented	Check the usage of simple present tense and continuous tense

Regular Outdoor Games And Their Nature

Finding a "long-term stimulant" like the one mentioned above may sound meaningful and useful but its relevance to the young people in the college may not be that appealing. It is because of the fact that it needs continuous assimilation of popular reflections. In other words students have to collect some information related to the topic regularly, in order to find something to share. So, if there be a situation in which all the students or at least most of the students would react spontaneously with interest and in which they need not prepare themselves with extra amount of time and effort, it will help a language teacher to train the students in all the skills of communication through language and especially the speaking and the listening skills.

Outdoor game is one of such activities suitable for young students at the college level as it has the charming features associated with it. Generally, young students are attracted towards it more than people from other ages irrespective of their sex. It is because it is a part of their everyday life. They either like it through actual participation or by regularly watching it on television. Most importantly students at the college level tend to feel that they are closely connected to the game than the teacher because of their juvenile fancy. Here students need not have to collect information especially on the topic as they do it every day out of interest in order to share with their friends and they are interested in it.

One important aspect to note is that young students are interested in almost all the games but they love to follow one game specifically or sometimes few with regular updating. It varies according to topography, the tradition and so many other related attributes from county to country. For example, in India people love cricket more than any other game though hockey is their national game. So, speaking about the game, a game that is over, an

upcoming game, the best game in the history of Indian cricket or even about the personality of the players will certainly provoke the college students to indulge in discussion.

Manouvering The Game Of Cricket

The following table brings the details of the plan to enhance learning of particular rudiments of language, the activities associated with it and outcome.

After selecting the popular game of the students' interest, the task of the language trainer is to design or to manouver the regular activities in such a way as to assist the establishment of a healthy language practice. The above mentioned planned activity is to give practice to students in the language and to refine their understanding about usage of simple present and present continuous tense. Here, instead of making the students to come out with their own understanding and reflection, with a systematic plan and in a prescribed number of hours they are made to perform the expected activities.

Conclusion

Regular outdoor games are the potential arenas for the incorporation in order to achieve effective communication practice. Leading the students into an outdoor game situation of their interest and discussing about it and aspects relevant to it, with the knowledge of general and technical vocabulary will suffice the needs for effective language teaching and learning. Experimenting with a selected group of sports students or students who love to play is likely to deliver a new possibility and approach in the field of language learning. It will be an added feature for people associated with sports and games also.

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