

# The Objective of Teaching English as a second language at the secondary level.

## Part-I

### Objectives of teaching English at the Secondary school stage:

In order to make the programme of Teaching English effective, we should first of all identify our objectives we want to achieve. It will help the teacher to apply the correct methods and devices to achieve the particular object at any particular stage. So it is extremely necessary to fix up the objectives of teaching English in the beginning. Read More Teaching English (TEFL)

With the change of the position of English in the new set up of India, the aims and objectives of teaching English has naturally undergone a change. We have accepted English as a second language. English is, therefore, taught now as a skill subject as opposed to literary subject. So the objectives of teaching English in schools will be the acquisition of linguistic or communicative skills.

The four skills of the objectives of Teaching English are mentioned below:

#### 1. 'Listening Skill':-

Listening skill means ability to understand English when spoken. Thus the objectives of teaching English is to enable the pupils to understand ordinary daily English speech spoken at a normal speed. They will be trained in grasping what is being said.

#### 2. Speaking Skill:-

"Speaking Skill" means – "ability to speak English correctly and easily". The pupil will have a command over English vocabulary and a sense of correct intonation and pronunciation. This can be achieved gradually through regular practice.

#### 3. Reading Skill:-

It means the ability to understand when written. The pupil should achieve the skill to understand simple and non-technical English first, then he is likely to appreciate literary English. Read More Teaching English (TEFL)

#### 4. Writing Skill:-

The students on leaving high school should be able to write correct English. It is expected to them that they should be able to write on matters of their personal experiences, interest and needs correctly in simple English.

(Each of these four foundation skills has its component parts of speaking English, as for example are pronunciation, intonation, phrasing, stress, rhythm etc. ). Moreover these four linguistic skills are closely related to one another and one assists work towards another. Thus reading assists writing and writing assists reading. These four linguistic skills should be developed in continual interrelation of the language activities of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Read More Teaching English (TEFL)

The All India Seminar on the Teaching English in secondary schools, held at Nagpur in 1957, recommended that, "within a period of six years of the high school course the pupils should be enabled to attain a working knowledge of English, giving them mastery over about 250 language structures and a vocabulary of 2500 essential words".

The objectives of teaching English are to develop in students both receptive and productive capabilities. The students' role is receptive when he reads or listens and the moment he speaks or writes, the ability becomes productive.

For Example, The West Bengal Board of Secondary Education has set forth the following objectives of Teaching English at the secondary stage:

(i) "The main object should be to develop the student's language sense and linguistic skill and his ability to understand, speak, read and write general English".

Pupils should be enabled to attain working knowledge of the language from

utilitarian point of view.

(II) The second objective is to develop the capacity of our pupils "to express themselves in English freely, correctly and with proper pronunciation in talks or conversation on ordinary topics". Read More Teaching English (TEFL)

(III) The third objective is to enable pupils to express their ideas of non-technical nature in simple correct English obviously the stress is entirely on expression".

(IV) The fourth objective is "to generate in the pupils a love for the language and a desire to cultivate it at leisure for pleasure and profit".

(V) The fifth objective is to teach English as an auxiliary language to maintain communicative skill with other parts of India and outside.

(VI) The sixth objective is to enable pupils to acquire knowledge of fundamental concepts of English grammar.

Lastly, we may say that our approach in Teaching English throughout school stage should be balanced and aim at the

English at the school stage must be "to impart a practical command or the four basic skills for use in the widest possible range of situation".

#### Part-II:

How far is the current High school curriculum helpful in realizing the objectives?

Now we shall review the present high school curriculum in West Bengal, a state in India, in the light of the objective of teaching English.

The new syllabus in learning English textbooks classes (VI – X) was introduced in 1984. It has taken the linguistic materials from the old structural syllabus but it has arranged those materials according to the functions of the structures in natural circumstances. So, it can be said that the new syllabus is the product of a structural functional compromise. It provides motivation to the pupils for using English in a naturalistic way. There is some scope in realizing the objectives of teaching English through the learning English text books.

(1) This syllabus is meant for older children of class-V whose cognitive maturity helps them to grasp the linguistic materials quickly.

(2) The textbooks are prepared in such a way that they provide the learners to perform some sort of language work through out period. The lessons keep them engaged in individual or group activities.

(3) The students get more freedom in the use of language material/materials since they are not required to use a particular list of structure and phrases for each lesson.

(4) The syllabus lays more stress on the naturalness of presentation. The structures have been grouped according to their natural co-occurrence in usage.

(5) The present syllabus has left no scope for the teaching of formal grammar separately. Grammar has been integrated in the text in a meaningful way and there is no need to teach it in isolation. But the teacher will have to deal with the functional grammar where and when necessary.

But in practice, we see that –

(I) It is not possible to fulfill all the objectives in Teaching English. Students, after leaving the schools are not able to speak and write properly. Their vocabulary is also poor. They do not know the proper use of the words. The lack of practice of writing is responsible for all these defects.

(II) In most of the schools, the old traditional method of teaching Grammar is being followed. Teaching of grammar and composition are not interrelated. The teaching of vocabulary, structures, conversation and pronunciation are not followed with perfect sincerity. Practically the receptive and productive skills are being conducted in a haphazard way. The teachers are poorly trained and ill equipped too.

The present method of teaching based on the so-called functional communicative approach has become much dissatisfaction amongst parents and guardians. It places a great deal of stress on verbal skill, but the most teachers can not follow it in practice. So workshop and short course training for the teachers of English should be provided. The SCERT should view the present syllabus of English in secondary schools. The teachers and the educational authorities should aware of the objectives of Teaching English and make a collective effort to bring about



the scientific teaching of English for fulfillment of those objectives of teaching of English.

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