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## ENGLISH TEACHERS AT CROSS ROADS

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### Abstract:

*There is no gainsay about the important place of English in our school and college curricula. It is an inevitable as the proverbial shadow of an object in light. The question of "Why English"? has been long settled. Intact even the thought of education without English is nightmarish and suicidal. Teaching represents the core of any educational system. The objective of teaching is the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to students. Apart form classroom lectures, more innovative teaching can be imparted through other modes including discussions, case study analysis, presentations, field projects, role play, simulation methods amongst others. Teaching methods in synchronization with the learning objectives will facilitate better teaching-learning process.*

*Teachers are more than workers. They are also members of a profession. Their occupation renders definite and essential services to society. As a profession, however, teaching has had a long and difficult history. Its social and cultural functions have never been critically challenged, but nevertheless the public has not adequately supported teaching. Compared with other learned professions - such as medicine, law, engineering, and architecture - teaching ranks rather low. Some teachers are dissatisfied with, and even depressed about their professional standing. They feel that the work load is too heavy, and the recognition and appreciation are too limited. They think that they do not have sufficient opportunities to advance in their careers and that they have no power to control the content and form of their work. They resent prohibition against their direct involvement in policy making in educational affairs. Time and again, they ask: is teaching a profession? More adequately, what is a profession? Occupational status depends on the public valuing' of the competence, role and overall contribution of a particular occupation to individual and societal welfare.*

*Language is often called a 'skill' rather than a 'subject'. It is a matter of 'doing' than of 'knowing'. It's development should follow the pattern of skills of listening, speaking, reading. And writing. Let us teach the language English, also about the language English.*

### INTRODUCTION

There is no gainsay about the important place of English in our school and college curricula, It is an inevitable as the proverbial shadow of an object in light. The question of "Why English"? has been long settled. Intact even the thought of education without English is nightmarish and suicidal. Teaching represents the core of any educational system. The objective of teaching is the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to students. Apart form classroom lectures, more innovative teaching can be imparted through other modes including discussions, case study analysis, presentations, field projects, role play,

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simulation methods amongst others. Teaching methods in synchronization with the learning objectives will facilitate better teaching-learning process.

Teaching has been defined by Wells, G. (1982) as cluster of activities that are noted about teachers such as explaining, deducing, questioning, motivating, taking attendance, keeping record of works, students' progress and students' background information.

Farrell, J.P. and J.B. Oliveira (1993) posits that teaching can be seen as the logical and strategic acts denoting interaction between the teacher and the students as they operate on some kind of subject matter. Teaching involves imparting verifiable facts and beliefs; it encourages students' participation and expression of their own views. Education developed from the human struggle for survival and enlightenment.

Gerald (1994) opined that Education encompasses both the teaching and learning of knowledge, proper conduct, and technical competency. Education has also being defined as the transfer of survivalist skills and advancement culture from one generation to another.

#### **IS TEACHING A PROFESSION:**

Not every form of activity is work, even if it brings remuneration to the person engaged in it. It is work only when it produces something of value to others. The business of teachers is to help students to achieve higher standards of knowledge, ability, skills, and moral character. If teachers do their work well, then their work is of great value to others, not simply in a particular time, but also in the future.

Teachers are more than workers. They are also members of a profession. Their occupation renders definite and essential services to society. As a profession, however, teaching has had a long and difficult history. Its social and cultural functions have never been critically challenged, but nevertheless the public has not adequately supported teaching. Compared with other learned professions - such as medicine, law, engineering, and architecture - teaching ranks rather low. Some teachers are dissatisfied with, and even depressed about their professional standing. They feel that the work load is too heavy, and the recognition and appreciation are too limited. They think that they do not have sufficient opportunities to advance in their careers and that they have no power to control the content and form of their work. They resent prohibition against their direct involvement in policy making in educational affairs. Time and again, they ask: is teaching a profession? More adequately, what is a profession? Occupational status depends on the public valuing' of the competence, role and overall contribution of a particular occupation to individual and societal welfare.

Goodson (2003) noted that Occupations that have attained professional status' share the following characteristics:

- A high level of education and training based on a unique and specialized body of knowledge
- A strong ideal of public service with an enforced professional code of conduct and high levels of respect from the public at large
- Registration and regulation by the profession itself
- Trusted to act in the clients' best interests within a framework of accountability
- A supportive working environment
- Similar levels of compensation as other professions.

#### **WHY THEY ARE AT CROSS ROADS?.**

A shift in emphasis in the Course Content of pre-University English now is noteworthy. While it does not address all the problems of English teaching and learning, it is left to the teachers to wade their way from this guagmire. Now the attention is about "how much of it" and at "what stage"?. With six-years of English study as a Second language the student is expected to enter pre-university course more Expectantly and confidently. But things are not rosy only adds to the discomfiture of English teachers of this stage.

While pre-university course is not a natural extension of general school education, with choice study of Subjects leading to academic or professional education, the language studies in general, English study in particular. Attract Secondary importance. The half answered queries of "how much"?. And "in what way"?. Beg our attention and efforts.

The tale of owes of English teaching continues to the more exclusive degree courses too along with all attending problems. It is the proclaimed goal to introduce the different faces of English literature at the degree level. While this claim cannot be contested, the functional usability of English remains unattended. The best anthology may satisfy the first condition and not the second one.

The causes for this problem are not far to seek. They are inherent in the teaching of second

language. The natural advantages of learning mother tongue cannot be expected to help learn the second language. While spontaneity, effortlessness, self-motivation and readily available field are the advantages in learning one's mother tongue, the learning of a Second language experiences the oddities of lack on natural environment, late-starting, non – similarity with the mother tongue, poor efforts in beginning teaching, lack of trained and motivated English teachers, etc. It does not mean the importance of learning English has lessened and , on the other hand, it's inevitable prominence is dully felt. It is the accepted motto that no student should be awarded a university degree unless he has acquired some proficiency in English.

Eulogizing the prominent role of learning English as a compulsory subject apart, its mode of teaching needs compelling attention also. The teaching of English should be more practical and language – oriented in order to achieve the limited objectives of learning it. The study of English has to serve different purposes. The content and character of this language and method of imparting it have to undergo a change.

English has to be taught principally as a language of comprehension rather than as a literary language.

To comprehend writings in English.

To change in the character and knowledge of English appropriate to our new requirement is different from the past.

To learn a language for communication is one thing and to know about it is another. Comprehending English is mainly a matter of understanding the basic grammar and structure.

The capacity for expression in it is to be cultivated along with comprehension, Added to this is the widening vocabulary of it. While the students might have an ability to recognize the use of language, where they fail is in their ability to apply. A perception of the literary beauties of Shelly's lyrics and of Shakespeare's poetic imagery is not strictly related to the above requirements. If the development of reading comprehension could occur at school education, as it is envisaged the advancements into the tasting of English literature there afterwards would have been another.

The widespread functionality of English leads to a practical command of the non-literacy and non – technical English. It is what is expected of our pupils to acquire. No literature can be properly appreciated without an adequate command of the everyday language. From functionality point of view the student of English is to be helped to use it in life situations as in ordinary conversations, reading English news, listening to TV News and talks in English, reading non-technical prose, enjoying simple poetry, writing personal letters, applications, reports, etc. The problem of learning a second language should be addressed differently. As regard and to field to develop the use of English in India, the Students are exposed to.

Read English news papers – including sports and cinema pages.

Follow English advertisements-commercial and professional.

Read English sign boards- in public places.

Listen to Radio and television broadcasts –sports commentaries and news.

Practice computer commands.

Use SMS transactions.

Read literature related to electronic goods and home appliances to handle them.

Language skills as communication skills can be acquired only through practice. The individual is in to use his mother tongue first. Because, if he does not, some of his basic needs are likely to remain unfulfilled. So both consciously and unconsciously he used even its highly complex code. But in learning a second language of English natural resources of learning mother tongue are not available. It should be learnt deliberately with conscious efforts. It is done (and also mostly restricted to ) classroom teachings. So classrooms have to provide sufficient motivation and scope for practicing English.

One of the major problems of learning a second language is the problem of overcoming the pull of the mother tongue and the dissimilarities between the components of mother tongue and English. By already formed habits of thinking in mother tongue, he falters to communicate in English.

#### **TO OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM:**

Concentrate on efforts in the sounds and structures in which the difference between the two languages is the greatest.

The teachers have to use these “ trouble spots” and devices suitable strategies to deal with them.

At the college stage the capacity for imitation is less, which is very important for language learning. Hence make pupils to listen to English as much as possible.



Draw the attention of the students to the peculiarities of both the languages.  
 Help grasp the situation in order to understand the expression, practicing the expression whenever the situation arises until it becomes part of automatic habits. New language items (words, phrases, idioms, etc) should be presented in appropriate life situations.  
 Encouraging pupils to develop conversational English among themselves or one whole day in every week as "English conversation day" in the college.  
 Where direct experiences are not possible, the teacher can recourse to contrived situations.  
 Encourage pupils to send and read even SMS over mobile in English (even though distorted in spelling and golden rules of grammar) as they do serve the spirit of communication.

#### CONCLUSION:

Language is often called a 'skill' rather than a 'subject'. It is a matter of 'doing' than of 'knowing'. Its development should follow the pattern of skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Let us teach the language English, also about the language English.

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