

# INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Theory based learning in English language prepares the students in exam point of view whereas Practical way of teaching enhances the students' comprehensive level that leads to face the challenges in English speaking environment. By integrating theory with practice, Outcome based learning is possible in any environment which could be applied for English language learning. Goal Oriented Education is a theory of education where a learner attains his goals at the end of an educational journey only by incorporating theory with practical. This methodology is spreading its wings all over the world that facilitates the students' to excel in their determination and come out with flying colors. This system of education is broadly followed in foreign countries which need to be practiced exclusively in our English classroom to emancipate the students' hesitation and convert them into a good orator and writer. There occurs a necessity to substitute the present system of education by means of outcome based learning. This enhances their level of fervor, confidence, and self-motivation and brings success in their life. Students are feeling difficult to envision the difference between the format of a given subject in theoretical context and the same subject in applied context. This could be surmounted by incorporating the theory and practice that develops analytical and critical thinking skills of the learners and know the nuances of carrying out the concepts. Ample opportunities are obtainable for the students, if they had known to encompass theoretical and practical knowledge. The steadfast objective of this paper focuses on bridging the theory practice gap by exploring the integrated ways of teaching and practice in English classroom and discussing the merits and demerits of merging theory and practice in teaching and learning of English language.*

**Key Words:** *Outcome based learning, ESL classroom, enhance, communicative skills, incorporating, theory and practice*

## INTRODUCTION:

In the midst of the contemplation of student's outcome in English learning, it is mandatory for the language facilitators to integrate theory and practice instead of prioritizing form- foci language teaching. All the tasks in English involve both productive (Speaking and Writing) and Receptive (Listening and Reading) skills.

Boud, Cohen, and Walker (1993) believe that experience is the central consideration of all learning. They argue that learning builds on and flows from experience and that "learning can only occur if the experience of the learner is engaged, at least at some level" (p. 8). One way to enhance student learning is by the integration of teaching and practice of the instructor. Dewey, in his essay "The Relation of Theory to Practice in Education" (Dewey, 1904/1974), expressed the belief that content knowledge (i.e., scholarship) should not be remote from the practical issues that teachers face. He believed that teachers' practical knowledge could serve as a valuable resource for enhancing educational theory. We make the assumption that teaching leads to learning, but it is the experiences that teaching helps create that prompt learning (Boud et al., 1993). When a teacher uses an example from his or her own experience, learning can occur and can stimulate a desire for further learning (Boud et al., 1993).

One important component of the active learning model that distinguishes it from other learning models is an emphasis on experience rather than merely listening as a means of acquiring knowledge (Bonwell&Eison, 1991; Coulshed, 1993; Felder & Brent, 2003). Miller and Boud (1996) argue that experience is indispensable for learning to occur: "Experience cannot be bypassed; it is the central consideration of all learning" (p. 9).

The English language tutors face challenges in classroom as the students are from diversified background and also multilingual speakers outnumber monolingual speakers in the classroom. It is apparent that English in the classroom is entirely different from the English outside. Despite the fact, the students are exposed to English language for almost 12 years of school life; they possess less vocabulary skill and scanty grammar knowledge.

It leads us to focus on incorporating theory and practice at ease in English classroom so that student's deferment in obtaining employment, clearing competitive exams, getting seats in renowned universities or studying abroad will be fulfilled. Students should intensively integrate theory and practice to enhance their skills. The communicative approach advocated in the present curriculum seems to be external instead of internal approach. This paper proposes alternative theory cum practical framework for certain topics in English teaching environment and its pros and cons.

## **WAYS TO INCORPORATE THEORY AND PRACTICE IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM:**

### **SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS:**

**Practical techniques to attain target vocabulary by means of the following three ways:**

i) The possession of simply knowing the meanings and opposites of enormous words won't facilitate speaking and writing skills of an individual. To enhance its application, opportunity is created for the students to frame sentences of their own with the newly learnt words in every day English classroom and the same has to be checked by the facilitator. This augments their capability to utilize the appropriate words in written and oral mode of communication.

ii) The teacher has to read the synonyms and antonyms in front of the students in the classroom. Later, the class can be divided into two equal halves and will be given the list of synonyms questions to one half and the Antonyms for another group. Students having the meanings at one side pose the questions to another side expecting the correct answer in a sentence and vice versa. The team which says more number of correct answers will be the winner of the activity and would be monitored by the concerned faculty.

iii) The class can be divided into teams according to the strength of 5 to 7 members per team. The teacher can conduct a skit per week in which the students have to use the newly learnt words of the week. The team that uses the maximum words is appreciated and given memento from the respective staff. This activity surely enriches their vocabulary skill and increase the capability to use the words in appropriate situation. This improves an individual to retain the words in their memory and can be applied in their future prospects.

### **INTENSIVE PROSE LESSON (DETAILED PROSE):**

The word prose has been derived from the Latin word, 'Prosa' or 'Proversa Oration' that means 'straight forward discourse'. It helps to gain the ideas of the author and extends vocabulary skills, sentence structure, grammar knowledge and so on. Prose is written in conversational language comprising paragraphs. It focuses on one specific idea, event, laws, principles or concepts. After complete teaching the particular lesson, the teacher can ask the students to paraphrase the listened content in written form. It aids them to write the gist of the lesson in their own words and the teacher asks few students to interpret it in front of the peer group. This amplifies their four modes of writing ability such as Descriptive; Narrative, Expository and Argumentative and also enunciates their speaking skill.

### **EXTENSIVE PROSE LESSON (NON DETAILED PROSE):**

Non detailed prose is taught for obtaining knowledge and pleasure. It is in the form of narrative writing. Story or Conversation based prose can be taught by assigning the characters to the students and make them to enact it in front of the classroom. This confiscates their shyness in

speaking and stage fear. The sessions will be video recorded and shown to them for their rectifications in body language, pronunciation and presentation.

### **POETRY:**

Poetry can be taught in the form of self-expression. The elements of the poetry: sentence structure, neologism, figures of speech, rhyming words, vocabulary, punctuation and concepts can be taught to the students. Moreover, they are encouraged to contribute a line for particular topic and also insisting them to write a poem in the same style adhered by specific poet taught in the class. They learn the art of writing figuratively. Their inherent skill of writing poetry can be stimulated by publishing the best poems in school magazine or anthology of poems due to which they get brainwave to compile a lot.

### **DRAMA, SHORT STORY AND NOVEL:**

The best way to teach drama, short story and novel is assigning the roles of the characters in the play and asking them to enact it in the class. This boosts their public speaking skill and eliminates their stage trepidation. The best performer in the class can be selected based on voting system and they can be appreciated in common forum.

### **NECESSITY TO INTEGRATE GRAMMAR LEARNING AND PRACTICAL LEARNING:**

Students feel hectic towards Grammar learning. They dislike grammar because they can't comprehend the rules of grammar. The research reveals that: due to untrained teacher who teaches Grammar in a disgruntled way creates disinterest among the students. If we understand concepts in any subjects, it kindles us to learn further and excel in the particular concept and would be our favorite subject. On the contrary, if we detest any subject, concentration remains lagging thus increases the difficulty level of the subject. Grammar plays a predominant role in reading, speaking and writing English language coherently. Grammar learning through practice promotes the communicative learning easier and makes the target language memorable by a successful mentorship.

### **SUGGESTING FEW WAYS TO FAMILIARIZE THE RULES OF THE GRAMMAR:**

#### **PARTS OF SPEECH:**

Parts of speech can be taught through deductive method. By writing a sentence on the board, the teacher can explain the grammar parts and ask the students to identify the parts of speech. To enhance the topic further, the teacher says her, self - introduction or speaks about any topic for a minute. Later, the students are asked to identify the parts of speech in it. Likewise the task could be extended which hone their grammatical skill on particular area.

### **TENSE:**

The teacher can communicate her daily activities done for a week and explain the tenses and its kinds to the students. Later, Students are asked to write a week's activities from morning till night and ask a student to read aloud in front of all. The teacher could make necessary corrections in terms of present, past and future tense and its' forms. All the students will be given a chance and is checked by the staff.

### **FRAMING SENTENCES (WH QUESTIONS):**

Bi-lingual method is also a means to develop the communication of ESL students. By dividing the class into halves, student from one group frame a sentence in their regional language and directs a person from the other team to translate in English language. Each one in the class should participate in this task under the supervision of the subject matter expert and gets clarification for their doubts. Participants revamp their learning ability through observing others.

### **ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE:**

The effectiveness of writing depends on voices which could be familiarized to the students by integrating theory and practice through activities. By assigning simple activity or posing simple questions in classroom, the essence of the grammar rules will be induced among them through deductive method. For example, Students are asked to bring reading resources like newspaper, magazine, text books, novel, drama etc., and ask them to identify the active and passive sentences from the available sources. With the intent of involving them in brainstorming, they are asked to compare and active and passive voice.

### **MIXED GRAMMAR:**

The English department staff members jointly prepare a skit on particular theme comprising all the grammatical topics. It will be shown to them in classroom and the topics will be explained in discussion method. To instill the grammatical knowledge among them, they are divided into 5 per team and ask them to prepare a skit in the concept assigned to them. They have to submit it within the stipulated time duration. From their conversation, the staff can make them to recapitulate the rules of grammar. This removes their digression in learning grammar and makes them to retain the rules in depth and applies it appropriately without errors.

### **GRAMMAR THROUGH ACTIVITY METHOD:**

Students are assigned tasks according to their interest and through the activity done by them, they are asked to interpret the concepts. The staff may correct the sentences and make them to aware of their mistakes. This way of tutoring grammar is interesting to students and they learn grammar naturally. For example, if a pupil is interested in drawing, he will be asked to draw a

picture on certain concept and ask him to speak about it. The tutor listens and corrects the mistakes, if any.

If the students are desired to do craft work, they are allowed to do so and asked to explain about the process of making the craft item done by them. The teacher listens and corrects the sentences, if there are any mistakes. The activity method of learning provides a conducive platform for the students to progress their grammatical knowledge in a practical environment.

## **MERITS AND DEMERITS OF BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE:**

### **PROS OF BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE:**

The entire classroom is getting chance to perform that enriches their knowledge in particular concept. It helps to increase the students' listening and observing skill. One gets the chance to listen and observe one's pronunciation, body language, speaking technique, sentence structure, grammatical usage, etc. The acquisition of language is possible for ESL learners through this method. The facilitators' desire of balancing theory and practice is achieved in pedagogy. The domains of language acquisition, **Speaking, Writing, Reading and Listening** are acquired by the students which help them to synthesize the course information easily. The tangible evidence is identified among the students when they apply the infusion of theory and practice in this competitive world. Theory cum practice methodology is successful if the tasks are intrinsically interesting which motivate the students to do it enthusiastically and aids them to retain the rules in their mind and apply them appropriately.

### **CONS OF BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE:**

As we have the two sides in a coin, every attempt has both positive and negative side. Bridging theory and practice has fewer cons when compared to its pros. The time consuming process is a major extrinsic factor. It is difficult for the faculty to complete the practice session of the entire class students within the allotted hours to complete the particular topic. Students feel frenzied to sit in the class once their task gets completed and deviation will occur in the realm of the activity.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The paper provides deeper insights in integrating theory and practice in communicative approaches of English classroom. Drill method or audio lingual method along with the extended activities mentioned above will be helpful to the students who feel English as Nux Vomica. These are all the best means to enunciate their skills in the chunks of language that revolutionize teaching and extol their Productive skills.

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