

CHALLENGES OF TEACHING LANGUAGE IN A DIVERSE CLASSROOM

In CTET exam, 2 questions in 2012, 2 questions in 2013, 1 question in 2014, 1 question in 2015 and 3 questions in 2016 were asked from this chapter. Most of the questions asked in exam are based on disorders.

India is a land of diverse languages and majority of Indians use a number of different languages. According to NCF 2005 multilingualism is constitutive of the identity of a child and a typical feature of Indian linguistic landscape. This linguistic diversity should be used as a resource readily available, as a classroom strategy and a goal by creative language teacher. Today, we know for certain that bilingualism or multilingualism confers definite cognitive advantages. Every child feels secure and accepted by adhering to use of multilingualism as a resource. Effective understanding and use of languages enables the child to make connections between ideas, people and things and to relate to the world around him/her.

5.1 Importance of English Language

English in India is a global language in a multilingual country. According to NCF 2005 a variety and range of English teaching situations prevail here owing to the twin factors of teacher's proficiency in English and pupil's exposure to English outside school. The goal of second language acquisition is attainment of basic proficiency in English and later development of language

into an instrument of abstract thought and knowledge acquisition through literacy.

We must understand that language diversity poses some challenges and opportunities to English instructors in India. More work, more efforts are needed. All teachers should have the skills to teach English in ways appropriate to their situation and levels based on some knowledge of how languages are learnt.

5.1.1 Major Challenges of Teaching English in India

Though India is a land of diverse languages, teaching of English poses many problems in India.

Some major challenges of teaching and learning English in India are as follows

1. **Over Crowded Classrooms** generally reduce the teacher's ability to teach English effectively and pay personalised attention to the learners.
2. **School Environment** should be congenial and permissive to enable pupils to hear or see or use English. Except in cities, learners have rare occasion to see any English beyond the local sign-board. The English language teaching needs a new and functional environment and this may be hard to have.
3. **Lack of Study Material** is another challenge for English teaching in India. This is generally true in remote areas and villages where at times course related books are also not available.
4. **Faulty Reading Habits** among learners pose a major challenge for teachers who have to teach English to them. Some students read by putting fingers on the words which hinders their concentration. Some children move backwards rather than going forward and many times they read in low murmuring sound.
5. **Sometimes Learning English Vocabulary** can be a problem for students as English has a vast vocabulary along with numerous homophones and phrasal verbs etc. While teaching English in a class, correcting spellings and pronunciation of the words is a big challenge for a teacher. Many words are often not pronounced the way they are written so English teacher has to find out ways to teach correct spellings.
6. **Exam Oriented** The English language learning syllabus is created wholly from the examination point of view. As a result, the content does not focus on raising the levels of communicative competence of the students and is confined to solving the examination paper.

7. **Learner's Ability** also affects teaching of English. To adjust one's teaching according to diversity in learner's ability is a major challenge and needs very competent teachers who are not sufficiently available in India. Some children suffer from chronic illness, disabilities and some are handicapped. Teaching these children poses a major challenge to the teacher.

5.1.2 Suggestions for Teaching English in a Diverse Classroom

Suggestions for teaching English in a diverse classroom are

- Appreciating the individuality of each student is important. While generalisation sensitises us to important differences between groups, each individual student has unique values, perspectives, experiences and needs.
- The teacher should make extra efforts to eradicate socio-psychological problems of the students by motivating them and giving them some responsibility.
- Interaction sessions between teacher and the students should be more.
- Teacher should always try to converse in English with the learners. One should keep talking with students about day to day things. The children will learn to converse once the ice-breakers are done. When they talk, they will learn.
- As a teacher it is very important to recognise our own learning styles and cultural assumptions as these two things affect teaching.
- Planning of lessons should be done extensively and in advance. Such examples should be taken which reflect different cultures, experiences, genders etc to include all students in learning.
- Teacher should use different teaching methods like group discussions, collaborative learning, fun activities to meet the variety of learning needs.

5.1.3 Errors Made by Learners (English)

At all proficiency levels, learners produce language that is not exactly the language used by native speakers. Some of the errors are grammatical, while others involve vocabulary selection and mistakes in the selection of language appropriate for different contexts. Responding to students' communication, teachers need to be careful not to focus on error correction as it deters confidence and communication process of learners.

Teachers can use error correction to support language acquisition, avoid using it in ways that undermines

students' desire to communicate in the English language by taking clues from the context.

5.1.4 Children Suffering from Various Disorders (Learning Disabilities)

Some students have unique challenges that make learning in a traditional classroom difficult. e.g. visual or hearing impairments, attention deficit disorder, handicapped, chronic illnesses etc. Learning disorders that are most conspicuous usually revolve around reading, writing or Mathematics.

Dyslexia

It is a learning disability in reading. Basic reading problems occur when there is difficulty in understanding the relationship between sounds, letters and words. Reading comprehension problems occur when there is inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases and paragraphs.

Learning Disabilities in Maths (Dyscalculia)

Learning disabilities in Maths vary greatly depending on the child's other strengths and weaknesses. A child's ability to do Maths will be affected by language learning disability or a visual disorder or difficulty with sequencing, memory or organisation.

Dysgraphia

Learning disabilities in writing can involve the physical act of writing or the mental activity of comprehending and synthesising information. Basic writing disorder refers to physical difficulty in forming words and letters. Expressive writing disabilities indicate a struggle to organise thoughts on paper.

Dyspraxia

This type of disability refers to problems with movement and coordination in cutting, writing or gross motor skills such as running or jumping. A motor disability is sometimes referred to as 'output' activity meaning that it is related to the output of information from the brain in order to run, jump, write or cut something, the brain must be able to communicate with the necessary limbs to complete the action.

Asphasia/Dysphasia

Language and communication learning disabilities involve the ability to understand or produce spoken language. Language is also considered an output activity because it required organising thoughts in the brain and calling upon the right words to verbally explain something or communicate with someone else. Signs of language based learning disorder involve problems with verbal language skills, such as ability to retell a

story and the fluency of speech as well as the ability to understand the meaning of words, parts of speech, directions etc.

Auditory Processing Disorder

An inability to distinguish subtle differences in sound or hearing sounds at the wrong speed make it difficult to relate to words and understand the basic concepts of reading and writing.

Visual Processing Disorder

Problems in visual perception include missing minor differences in shapes, reversing letters or numbers, skipping words, skipping lines and having problems in eye-hand co-ordination. Visual perception can affect gross and fine motor skills, reading comprehension and maths.

Difficulty in school doesn't always stem from a learning disability. Anxiety, depression, stressful events, emotional

trauma make learning more of a challenge. In addition, ADHD and AUTISM sometimes co-occur or are confused with learning disabilities.

ADHD (Attention Deficiency Hyperactivity Disorder)

Attention Deficiency Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is not actually a learning disability but it can hamper or disrupt learning. Children with ADHD often have problems sitting still, staying focussed, following instructions etc.

AUTISM

Difficulty in mastering certain academic skills can be due to developmental disorders such as Autism and Asperger's syndrome. Children with autism may have trouble in communicating, reading body language, learning basic skills, making friends and making eye-contact.

CHAPTER EXERCISE

- "Schools need to become centres that prepare children for life and ensure that all children especially the differently abled, children from marginalised sections and children in difficult circumstances get the maximum benefit of this critical area of education". This observation found in the National Curriculum Framework 2005 is related to
 - Inclusive education
 - Constructivist learning
 - Gender equality
 - Critical pedagogy
- A mixed ability group is heterogeneous in
 - economic status
 - gender and age
 - social strata
 - knowledge and skill
- A creative English language teacher can use multilingualism as
 - a classroom strategy to involve all learners
 - a tool to make connections between ideas, people and things
 - best resource readily available
 - All of the above
- A class II teacher, Ankita, uses various tasks such as creating charts, graph, drawing, gathering information and presenting them through pair or group work. This type of instruction
 - helps learners with multiple intelligences to perform well and learn better
 - is a way of demonstrating her own knowledge
 - only helps the bright learners
 - is the best way to prepare students for an assessment
- According to NCF 2005 'across the curriculum approach' for teaching English means
 - using English only as a medium of instruction
 - breaking down barriers between English and other subjects
 - having a separate curriculum for English which goes beyond the other subjects
 - treating English as one of the subjects in the curriculum
- The teaching of English in India is facing the main problem of
 - excessive use of teaching aids
 - use of traditional and old methods
 - lack of good learning material
 - Both (2) and (3)
- How a good teacher will treat a child with some learning disability?
 - Ignore the student completely
 - Pay individual attention
 - Motivate the student to learn
 - Both (2) and (3)
- A student of class II finds it difficult to read his text book lesson. He is suffering from
 - discalculia
 - dyslexia
 - anxiety
 - dysgraphia
- Suhel, a student of class I, can speak and read out his lessons very fluently. But when it comes to writing, he is unable to write even small sentences. He is suffering from a learning disability called
 - dyslexia
 - autism
 - dysgraphia
 - dyscalculia

10. If a child is hyperactive, impulsive and lacks general coordination, she/he is considered as a child with a
 (1) hearing problem
 (2) visual problem
 (3) physical problem
 (4) learning disability
11. Which one of the following is not a principle of helping pupils with learning difficulties?
 (1) Teaching preparation
 (2) Devise various learning situations
 (3) Design meaningful learning situations
 (4) Teacher offering tuition at home
12. A child is very friendly and takes active part in group work. But his parents always complain to the teacher about him not writing properly and misplacing the words, not getting good scores in written exam. The teacher can support the student by
 (1) praising his social interaction
 (2) explaining to the child's parents that he is suffering from dysgraphia
 (3) request parents to be patient with the child and say motivational words
 (4) All of the above
13. Which of the following is a value associated with an inclusive classroom?
 (1) Competition (2) Envy
 (3) Sympathy (4) Collaboration
14. After reading a poem, a teacher involves the learners in group work. One group writes the theme of the poem, another draws a picture to depict the main character and yet another write the summary of the poem. This activity
 (1) is aimed at learners to prepare for assessment
 (2) will distract the learners
 (3) is a sheer waste of time
 (4) caters to diverse abilities and interests of the learners
15. According to NCF 2005 (3.1.3), "At the initial stages of language learning may be one of the languages for learning activities that create the child's awareness of the world".
 (1) English (2) Vernacular language
 (3) Second language
 (4) Hindi

Previous Years' Questions

16. According to NCF 2005, learning of English aims [CTET Nov 2012]
 (1) to enable knowledge acquisition through literacy and its development into an instrument of abstract thought
 (2) to subsume the languages that a child acquires naturally from her/his home and societal environment
 (3) to introduce standard sign language in English for children with language related impairments
 (4) to provide adequate facilities at the state level for instruction in English at the primary stage of education
17. What is taught is not what is learnt because [CTET Nov 2012]
 (1) a teacher or learner can never fully master any discipline
 (2) students pay attention during informal discussion
 (3) a teacher's socio-economic level may differ widely from the students
 (4) students possess different abilities, personalities and come from a variety of backgrounds
18. A 'special needs language classroom, is ideally [CTET July 2013]
 (1) has extra teachers to help regular teachers
 (2) exclusively furnished
 (3) located separately
 (4) integrates all types of learners
19. One of the challenges of 'Behaviour Management' in a senior class is [CTET July 2013]
 (1) teacher's lack of self confidence
 (2) students' readiness to use the smart board
 (3) students' lack of self study skills
 (4) teacher's preference to conduct group rather than individual work
20. Enriching the curriculum for learners who are gifted and talented [CTET Feb 2014]
 (1) give them leadership roles in class activities
 (2) increases complexity of curriculum for them to experience a wider variety of language and opportunities for creativity
 (3) promote them to a higher class so that they are exposed to a more difficult syllabus
 (4) introduce a foreign language
21. Dyslexia is an intellectual disability that negatively affects the understanding abilities in terms of [CTET Sept 2015]
 (1) oral language (2) sign language
 (3) dialect (4) reading
22. The major objective of teaching English at primary level is [CTET Feb 2016]
 (1) using English in different situations of life
 (2) speaking English in British accent
 (3) scoring good marks in the exams
 (4) knowing the grammar of English
23. After reading a poem a teacher involves the learners in group work. One group writes the summary of the poem, another draws a picture to depict the main theme and yet another sets the poem to music. This activity [CTET Feb 2016]
 (1) is a sheer waste of time
 (2) caters to diverse abilities and interests
 (3) is aimed at preparing the learners for assessment
 (4) will distract the learners from the lesson
24. Aditi, a visually challenged child in class IV, does not have any text in Braille. How can a teacher facilitate her in reading the English textbook? [CTET Sept 2016]
 (1) She may arrange and give the audio CD of the textbook to the child
 (2) Instead of focussing on this single child, she may use her energy in teaching the remaining class
 (3) She may ask her parents to look after their child
 (4) She may ask the principal to arrange a special teacher for her

Answers

1. (1) 2. (4) 3. (4) 4. (1) 5. (2)
 6. (4) 7. (4) 8. (2) 9. (3) 10. (4)
 11. (4) 12. (4) 13. (4) 14. (4) 15. (1)
 16. (1) 17. (4) 18. (4) 19. (1) 20. (2)
 21. (4) 22. (1) 23. (2) 24. (1)