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### ENHANCING READING AND SPEAKING SKILLS OF LEARNERS THROUGH ROLE PLAY

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#### **Abstract**

A little has been said and done about digitizing classrooms with state of the art technology, as one could witness from the classrooms in our locality. In reality classroom remains the same; so does the outcome of it. Based on the few suggestions given in this paper a teacher can very well initiate a method which suits everyone. Teachers are facilitators, instead of waiting for 'divine intervention' in the guise of technology one can step up and practice something useful to make language learning useful. It is the responsibility of the teacher to make their learners believe that world outside their mobile phones is more interesting and colorful.

**Key words:** Learners, Reading skills, Speaking skills and Enhancement.

#### **1. Introduction**

Technology has branched out to all domains of our daily lives. It is hard, nowadays, to identify a system which doesn't work without technical aid. Education is a sphere where technology has become the back bone. From a basic level electronic device to highly configured software everything with the name of 'technology' has infiltrated into our education system. In one side of the picture technology is doing wonders, other side the technology is frustrating. This mixed perception about technology resulted in mixed results of teaching and learning process.

To teach this generation learners a teacher should not only have sound knowledge but also an interesting pedagogy to make their learners independent without much dependence on technology. Teachers should make their teaching

simple, clear and useful. Anna Sabramowicz, an educationist writes in her blog, "Learners in the internet age don't need more information. They need to know how to efficiently use the massive amount of information available at their fingertips – to determine what's credible, what's relevant, and when it's useful to reference." As language teacher one need to understand the above mentioned quote, how to make the class more interesting with available resources should be given paramount importance than what technology can be used in classroom, which doesn't require a new form of technology.

#### **2. Let's think out of the Box**

Today the task of many English language teachers is to make sure that learners equip themselves with best available resources. Gautama G (1997) a columnist has quoted RK Narayan's appeal to the Yashpal committee about the basic need for every individual during their higher education. They are,

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- Ability to speak clearly, grammatically and cogently
- Ability to read all that is written/printed
- Ability to comprehend all that is read

Reading and speaking skills are considered to be passive and active skills respectively. While learning a skill one cannot ignore the other. Teachers must understand their students' level of understanding and devise a method which best suits everyone in class. Tasks given in class, in the form of activities, should be student centric and outcome oriented. Nunan (2004), an education researcher comments, "A communicative task has been defined as a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge to express meaning". English, as a second language, cannot be taught in conventional pattern of A to Z, instead it can be taught as an interesting language with interesting activities. Identifying weak area of learners is the primary step in devising an activity for learners; secondly the teacher has to make sure about resources needed for the activity/task.

The following are the aspects a teacher has to check before the activity,

- 1) Resource materials
- 2) Objective of the activity
- 3) Student involvement
- 4) Duration of the activity
- 5) Assessment of the activity
- 6) Feedback about the activity

The above mentioned aspects are to check whether the activity has reached learners are not. It is the duty of the teacher to assess each and every activity based on the feedback received by the students. Teacher has to constantly give instant feedback at the end of every activity. This will enable the learners to correct their mistakes and give the teacher another chance to fine tune their activity. This paper aims at using role play to involve learners in three different activities. Why

role play? Professor Ments (1999) suggests in his article, "The concept of role acts as a short hand way of identifying and labeling a set of appearances, behaviours and characteristic of a particular person and predictable within a given situation."The following are some activities which can be practiced in class,

### Activity 1

Resource materials: Short poems, newspaper articles, reports

Duration: 15 to 30 minutes

Method:

- 1) Teacher has to divide the learners into groups of six
- 2) Anyone of the above resource materials should be given to the group
- 3) Learners should convert the resource content into a valid role play by improvising characters
- 4) After presenting the characters each one of the group has to give a report about their performance
- 5) Last five minutes can be given to have question and answer session with the audience

Skills acquired: Team work, role play, and situation based vocabulary

### Activity 2

Resource materials: Flash cards, unlabeled pictures

Duration: 15 to 30 minutes

Method:

- 1) Teacher has to divide the learners into groups of six
- 2) Provide six flash cards to each group
- 3) Each card should have some hints about the key word at the back of it
- 4) Learners should form a group after ten minutes of preparation and enact
- 5) Key word in the flash card should be used often while enactment



- 6) Pictures can be given to the groups as a supporting material to cohere with the key word

Skills acquired: Logical thinking, coherence skills and presentation

### Activity 3

Resource materials: Pamphlet/brochure, train reservation forms, used medicine strips, bottles etc

Duration: 10 to 15 minutes

Method:

- 1) Teacher should form pairs from the total strength of the class
- 2) Five minutes will be given to collect facts about given resource material
- 3) Learners should enact a conversation based on the facts acquired
- 4) Audience should be instructed to jot down points exchanged in the conversation
- 5) After the pair conversation ends audience can post questions based on the points noted down

Skills acquired: Conversation technique, note taking, question and answering

The above activities revolve around two important skills, reading and speaking. To practice these two skills one has to be motivated to nurture good reading habit to understand these skills before they practice it. Akbar F(2014), a professor of English comments, "Reading habit enables learners to understand a context effortlessly; even they do not know meanings of some words in the text." Once the confidence and knowledge gained the learners have to elevate themselves to the next skill, speaking. Speaking skill has to be nurtured carefully, because the spoken form of language is widely accepted than the written form. Teachers have to motivate their learners to approach English from a basic level of language to versatile level of language with ease. Professor Sameera (2014) comments, "Learners need chances to say what they think or feel and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened." When

the learners reach that level English will become easy for them to comprehend; to reach that level teachers have to plan simple, clear and productive pedagogy.

### 3. Conclusion

A little has been said and done about digitizing classrooms with state of the art technology, as one could witness from the classrooms in our locality. In reality classroom remains the same; so does the outcome of it. Based on the few suggestions given in this paper a teacher can very well initiate a method which suits everyone. Teachers are facilitators, instead of waiting for 'divine intervention' in the guise of technology one can step up and practice something useful to make language learning useful. It is the responsibility of the teacher to make their learners believe that world outside their mobile phones is more interesting and colorful.

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