

Integrating Language Skills to Teach English: An Empirical Study

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Abstract:

The general English syllabus separates the language skills that are to be learnt by the students. This study aims at studying the difference between the performance of the students in language for communication purposes classes when they were taught segregated and integrated language skills. The methodology adopted included 5 stages that include designing tasks for individual and integrated skills, executing the tasks sets and comparing the results. The performance anxiety and motivation levels are taken care of by allowing the students to work in groups. The results of the study revealed interesting facts about language learning of the students which include: a. when skills are taught in an integrated mode, the effort and time of both the teachers and learners is saved. b. As the input skills present the right form of language, the output with immediate effect of input skills gives better performance results in the students. c. Students have less anxiety levels and also increased motivation levels because of working in groups that reduced the possibility of failure drastically.

Keywords: Language, Integrating, English, Study, communication etc

Introduction

The objective in any ESL classroom is to get the learners learn the target language and use it, which is done best when they are involved actively in the learning process. To make the learners engaged in this process, the teacher needs to create an interest in the learner and make sure that their interest is sustained in the classroom activity designed by the teacher. Therefore a teacher who has a stock of techniques to teach English is more likely to succeed in achieving this objective than one who has a limited number of techniques at command. At the same time, an important aspect to be remembered is to

have a stock or variety of tasks or activities does not ensure success. The teacher must be able to take spontaneous decision regarding the task/activity to be executed.

For example, “familiarizing tasks” is a technique which can be used at the familiarisation stage of a lesson, but not for a communicative activity. Language has been divided into Skills and sub skills.

An important aspect of language learning mostly ignored by syllabus designers as well as teachers is that, the skills and sub skills are segregated where training in language skills(either listening or speaking or reading or writing) has become the order of the day. That is, we teach and make the students practice only one skill/sub-skill at a time. However, it is important for a student to remember that the tasks or activities used in a classroom do not end with learning it in the classroom, but must be practiced in real contexts. The real contexts never require a single segregated language skill; they always require a response to the receptive skills (Oxford, 2001).

The Empirical study with Engineering Students:

Language learning cannot be usually observed directly; therefore experimental method was taken up to give effective and useful training to the student. One of the most frequently used tasks is to gather the data about good language learners and about what is that they do that makes them more successful than the slower language learners. Although results regarding the effectiveness of finding out the best are rather mixed, it is an established fact (Oxford, 2002) is that some of the successful language learners might have become more proficient in language because of using more effective language learning strategies that are intuitively appealing to them. This also establishes the fact that the slow learners are using strategies that could not help them attain the required proficiency or objective of that course or task.

As many studies proved (Merin, 2017)(Abdrabo, 2014)integrated skills teaching have many advantages:

- a. Makes language learning more practical and contextual where the students immediately find its relevance
- b. Requires more dynamic class activities or tasks that increase the students' motivation levels
- c. The process of language learning becomes a completely woven process without leaving any gaps in the processes.

Experiment conducted at different stages in the B.Tech classroom soon after their entry into a professional course is as below:

Stage 01: Design tasks on independent language skills after identifying the levels of the learners and divide the class into groups to administer the tasks

Stage 02: Analysing the data to understand the language learning abilities of the Engineering Students.

Stage 03: Design integrated skills tasks

Stage 04: Executing the tasks as group activities

Stage 05: Comparing the results of the tasks given in stage-1 and stage-4.

• **Techniques of teaching Learning and Speaking basing on the output resulted from observation:**

Listening and Speaking are considered to be the two sides of a coin as their sub-skills are inter-related to one another. In listening a learner identifies sounds, and in speaking learners produce sounds, in listening the learner interprets and understand syntactic patterns, in speaking the learner produces language using proper stress, rhythm and intonation producing language in syntactically acceptable pattern forms.

Simple Technique used in my classroom:

- **Count it :** played a recording and asked the learners to count the number of times a word Occurs, and also to identify the grammatical context of the word and the way it is used in a context.(From the Lesson A.P.J.Abdul Kalam....prescribed JNTUK syllabus).
- **Grid :** The learner is then asked to fill in the information in the grid basing on the Audio he experienced
Ex: Lesson :A.P.J.Abdul Kalam
Task : Listening and Responding
Output : Filling up the grid with necessary information

Birth & Childhood	Education	Career	Contribution

Hence, the learner will actively participate in doing the task as it is set in a group and the learners are instructed to come out with a group output. The listening passages may vary from group to group.

• **Speaking :**

Dialogue chain with a question raising technique:

This techniques deal with the interactional aspect of speaking and dialogues can be used to practice functions of Language such as greeting, agreeing, disagreeing, and asking for information and suggestions. Based on the information gathered through listening, Learner – 01 frames set of questions to be asked to Learner-02 on a theme set.

Ex:

LEARNER – 01	LEARNER - 02
Hello	Hi
How are you?	I am fine, thank you and you...?
Whats up?	I am busy in working with my submission

<p>Oh, that's great! May I also participate in It? Can you please tell me about the missile man</p>	<p>Of my assignment on A.P.J.Abdul Kalam Oh..sure ...join me Sure, A.P.J.Abdul Kalam.....</p>
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With this kind of activity, the learners will be able to develop their skills in exchanging information, in association with the context. The members involved in the dialogue will develop their arguments to support opinions, ideas and arguments.

• **Techniques of teaching Reading and Writing:**

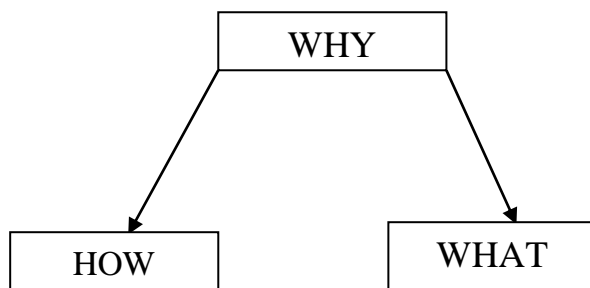
READING:

While teaching Reading to the learner, he should understand

Why a person reads or the purpose

How a person reads or the method

What a person reads or the materials...



WHY	HOW	WHAT
To get the gist	Skim	Newspapers, Magazines
To get a piece of Information	Scan	Mcq's
To understand completely	Detailed reading	Research Article

Here , basing on the context given, the Learner is provided with the material and is asked read according to the questions designed for presentation, like

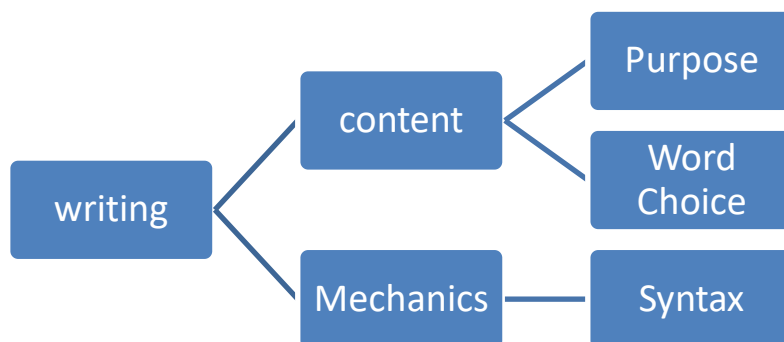
Sample Questionnaire:

- 1) List out the Names of the Family members in A.P.J.Abdul Kalam's Family? (SKIM)
- 2) In which year Kalam designed Agni ? (SCAN)
- 3) Describe A.P.J Abdul Kalam as Missile Man of India.. (Detailed Reading)

To make the learner thorough with the text provided.

Writing:

Writing is perhaps one of the most demanding of all skills, therefore the teacher must give an outline of what or how the learner has to reciprocate after the activity for a recorded proof



If an outline is given and explained in detail, the learners would be able to come with an output of the activity assigned to them.

Conclusion:

The integration of Skills in the Language classroom can be defined quite simply as a series of activities or tasks which use combination of four skills. LSRW is a continuous sequence...

Listening with Writing : when Learners listen they write points

Reading with Speaking : when they read, they discuss with the peer group

Speaking with Writing : When they write they discuss regarding the context

Therefore when using a skill, other skills of language are also simultaneously used which in turn made the learner integrate skills. This experiment of ours in the classroom brought out fruitful results and learners could develop their LSRW skills using a content and context

Advantages and Disadvantages:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Peer Learning	Noisy
Team work	Large Classroom
Group Discussion	Time Taking
Active involvement of every student	Fixed Infrastructure

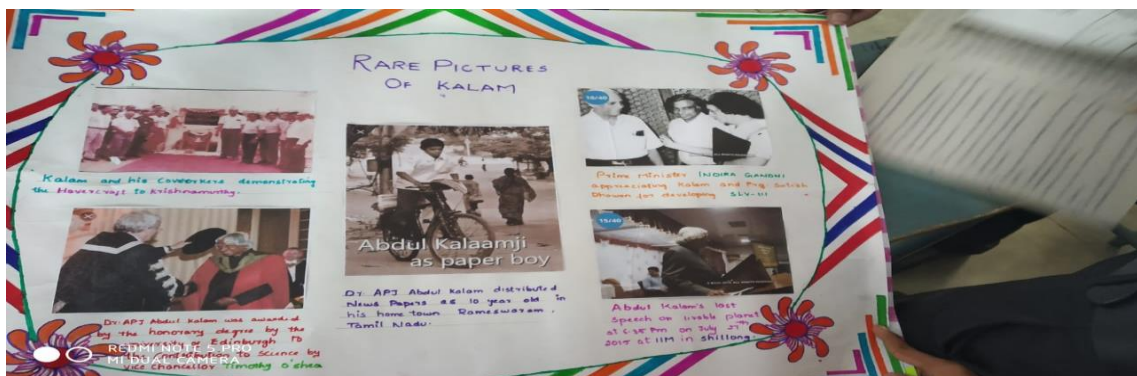
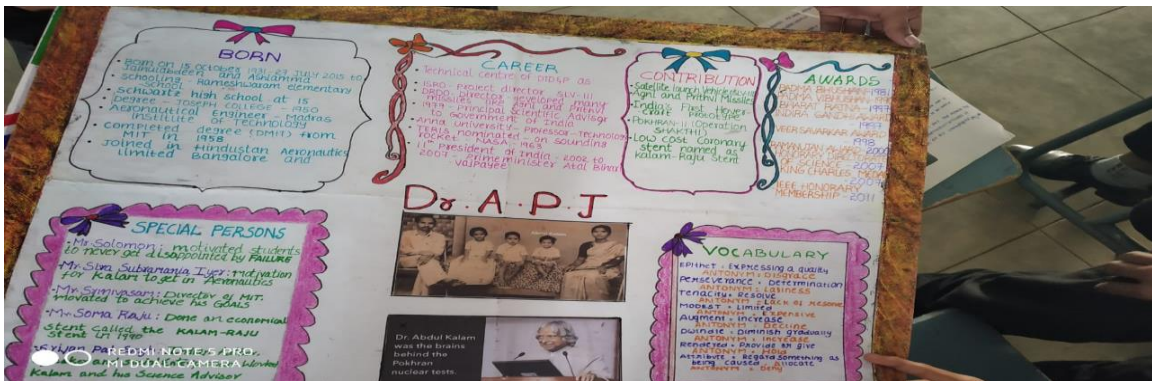
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Appendix-1

Images of the students doing the experiment: Task Responses





How to cite this article?

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