

Block

2

Methods of Teaching English Language

Block Introduction

UNIT 1

Teaching Strategies in the Classroom

UNIT 2

The Classroom as a Discourse Space

UNIT 3

Using the Cross-Curricular Approach

UNIT 4

Monitoring Instruction - The Reflective Teacher

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

Block-2: Methods of Teaching English Language

We talk nowadays of ‘learning rather than teaching’, ‘learner-centred teaching’, etc. All this does NOT mean that the teacher has become irrelevant and has little to do. In fact, the opposite is true. And the teacher’s ‘job’ is the focus of this block of units. What this approach emphasizes is that the traditional ‘one-way’ teacher talk beamed at largely passive ‘listeners’ is of limited usefulness — and this is especially true in the case of language learning. A much wider range of student activity has to be brought into the scope of the lesson itself. This means getting the students to think, talk, do, explore, ... The responsibility for ‘conducting’ this vastly more complex type of lesson lies largely with the teacher.

In Unit 1 we show you how the skills of listening, reading, writing, speaking can be integrated, though teachers often teach them as if they are separate.

In Unit 2, we discuss the discourse strategies used by teachers to enhance the teaching-learning process.

In Unit 3 we suggest using a cross-curricular approach as the teaching-learning strategy. Much of the language skills that develop at school are within other subject areas. However, for efficacious learning to take place, it is important to expose the children to language tasks from various subject areas, right from the beginning so that they are adequately prepared for later reading and writing tasks in school, and in real life. Similarly, subject teachers also need to concern themselves with language skills.

In unit 4 we will look at some of the possibilities open to us as individual teacher-learners to reflect on the classroom and ‘profit’ from it. Since lessons are unpredictable and (advance) planning cannot and (should not) be perfect, it is only after lessons have emerged that a teacher can usefully analyze what goes into lessons, what makes them click, how they can be improved and so on.

The units are as follows:

Unit 1: Teaching Strategies in the Classroom

Unit 2: The Classroom as a discourse space

Unit 3: Using the Cross-Curricular Approach

Unit 4: Monitoring Instruction - The Reflective Teacher

UNIT 1 TEACHING STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Integrating Language Abilities
- 1.3 The Indian Context: Teaching Language through Literature
- 1.4 Language Abilities
- 1.5 Integrating the Writing Tasks in the Lesson
- 1.6 Integrating the Listening Tasks in the Lesson
- 1.7 Stages of a Reading Lesson
- 1.8 Integrating Reading with Other Language Abilities
- 1.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.10 Hints to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you should be able to:

- develop awareness about effective communication
- integrate language abilities with real life communicative tasks
- arrive at an understanding of ‘language through literature’ approach in the Indian ESL classes.
- identify language abilities to be focused on in the ESL classes.
- devise tasks to develop language abilities in the ESL classes.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to communicate effectively in any language, it is important that one is able to listen with comprehension, speak with a degree of fluency and accuracy, read with comprehension and write effectively. These can be referred to as language abilities or language skills.

Reflect and list a few things that learners need to use English for in their day to day lives.

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You would have noticed that learners listen to commentaries, songs, dialogues, news in English; read the newspaper, course books, pamphlets, hoardings; respond to queries, greet people, apologize, introduce themselves to others; and write letters, takes notes, fill forms in English in their day to day lives.

Therefore, English teachers need to focus on the development of each of the four language abilities and effectively deploy strategies and tasks which will be meaningful in the classroom and enable comprehension and communication in their students.

1.2 INTEGRATING LANGUAGE ABILITIES

Now, let us closely examine exactly what an English teacher is required to undertake in an English class.

Go back to your school days and list the kind of tasks you were asked to complete in the English class.

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Traditionally, English teaching in India has focused on developing the learners' reading ability, possibly because English was perceived primarily as a library language which helped learners in accessing 'contemporary' knowledge. The teachers usually focused on writing along with reading, as writing was perceived as an indicator of one's knowledge of English. In the last decade or so, spoken English has also found space in the language classroom. Therefore, mastery of individual language abilities (reading/writing/speaking/listening) has been perceived as the key to successful language learning.

Now, let us take a look at how we use language?

Imagine a classroom situation where the teacher is teaching in English. The teacher begins by asking questions. The learners listen to these and respond in English. Next, the teacher distributes certain points of significance. The learners read the text (article, story, etc.) and make their notes. This is followed by a class discussion.

In such a situation, which of the following language abilities does a learner use?

Listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

Most learners would have used all these abilities in the given situation. This is an example of integration of language abilities. Most of us use two or more language abilities together. A few examples are

- Responding to queries
- Chatting with friends
- Narrating a story we've read
- Sharing our understanding based on reading
- Telephonic conversations
- Filling forms based on given instructions.

Therefore, it is felt that language is best learnt in an integrated manner, in order to prepare learners for life.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What is integration of language skills?

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2) Give example of tasks where more than one language ability is used.

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1.3 THE INDIAN CONTEXT: TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE

India is a vast country. Approached ideally, it would be best to leave the means of developing the language ability to the learners and the teachers in English classes. However, textbooks have become a means for developing the language abilities of the learners.

Can you think of some reasons for the reliance on English textbooks for developing the English language abilities of the learners?

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Some of the reasons for using the English textbooks could be:

- They are prescribed in the syllabus.
- They provide easy access to texts that can help develop the language abilities of learners.
- Similarity in standards of learning English.
- It is difficult for an ordinary teacher to think of suitable material that can be used in class.
- All learners can access these easily.

The question that arises next is what should be done with the textbooks in class? Most textbooks include prose pieces such as short stories, extracts from

biographies, descriptions, newspaper reports, along with some selections from poetry and drama. These are samples of literature, but the idea behind their inclusion is:

- They seem appropriate to the learners’ age and context.
- Learners ought to be oriented to readings from different kinds of discourses.
- They present different aspects of humanity thereby broadening the learners’ perspective.
- Literary language is suited to the development of learners’ language abilities.
- Reading literary texts help learners in understanding and appreciating the multiple levels of meanings.
- Learners can become familiar with a range of styles of writing and the different purposes for which they can be used.
- Literature provides the learners with a concrete context for language use.

The ‘Language through Literature’ approach helps the learners in achieving their main aim – which is to improve their knowledge of, and proficiency in, English. Literary texts are perceived as a resource to stimulate language activities – especially for classes VI –X

A few tasks that can be undertaken in the class are listed here:

- Read untitled poems. Select appropriate titles from the list of titles provided along with discussion: reasons for choice of title.
- Predict ‘what happens next?’ after reading till a specific point
- Read a story and write dialogues for the same.
- Guess the meaning of the words from the given context.
- Read a scene from the play and devise role play on what happens next.
- Choose the most accurate review/ summary of a short story.
- Develop and complete a time line based on what they have read.
- Decide which traits suit a character best.
- Fill in the crossword with the help of the given clues. This task is based on the words from the text being read in class.
- Listen to the discussion and identify which characters from the story are being referred to.
- Assume that you are a character from the story and write a diary entry/ letter.....

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) List some more tasks that can be used to help learners learn the English language through literary pieces. Try to come up with tasks for developing their vocabulary which integrate language abilities.

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- 2) What, in your opinion, are the strengths of transacting language through literature?

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1.4 LANGUAGE ABILITIES

As discussed earlier, language is a medium for communication. Communication takes place through a combination of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides this, other aspects that we need to focus on while teaching-learning English are vocabulary development and helping the learners in understanding and using the grammar of English.

Let us read the paragraphs given below. These paragraphs form a part of ‘Honeysuckle’ – the NCERT textbook for class VI.

Tragedy in Space

U.S. Space Shuttle Columbia breaks into flames

In an unprecedented space tragedy, U.S. Space Shuttle Columbia, carrying India-born American astronaut Kalpana Chawla and six others, broke apart in flames as it streaked over Texas towards its landing strip on Saturday, 1 February 2003, killing all seven on board

The shuttle lost contact with NASA at about 9 a.m. (19.30 hrs IST) as it came in for landing. It was flying at an altitude of over 200,000 feet and travelling at over 20, 000 km. per hour when ground control lost contact with the shuttle.

Columbia had lifted off on 16 January 2003, from the Kennedy Space Centre, Florida. It had stayed in orbit for 16 days and the seven-member crew conducted 80 experiments before it began its downward journey, which ended in tragedy. This was Columbia’s 28th space flight and the shuttle was said to be good for 100 flights.

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- 1) Kalpana Chawla said that she never dreamed, as a child in Karnal, that she would cross the frontiers of space. It was enough that her parents allowed her to attend engineering college after she graduated from Tagore School.
- 2) After a Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical engineering, despite great opposition from her father, she went for a master’s degree to the United States of America. She later earned her Ph.D. in aerospace engineering. Kalpana Chawla was the first Indian – American woman astronaut to blast

off from the launch pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida, and participate in a successful mission in space. Her family from India cheered along with staff at the Kennedy Space Center as they watched Columbia lift off.

- 3) Kalpana was born in Karnal, Haryana, but was a naturalized U.S. citizen, married to flight instructor Jean- Pierre Harrison. Besides being an astronaut, she was licensed to fly single and multi engine land airplanes, single-engine seaplanes and gliders. She was also a certified flight instructor. After qualifying as a pilot, Kalpana began to consider another challenge: applying to NASA's space shuttle program. She was first hired as a research scientist at NASA. In 1994 she was selected by NASA for training as an astronaut.
- 4) When asked what it was like being a woman in her field she replied, "I really never, ever thought, while pursuing my studies or doing anything else that I was a woman, or a person from a small city, or a different country. I pretty much had my dreams like anyone else and I followed them. And people who were around me, fortunately, always encouraged me and said, 'If that's what you want to do, carry on'."
- 5) Kalpana's first space mission in the space shuttle, Columbia, was 15 days, 16 hours and 34 minutes long. During this time, she went around the earth 252 times, travelling 10.45 million kilometers! The crew included a Japanese and a Ukrainian astronaut. The crew performed experiments such as pollination of plants to observe food growth in space, and tests for making stronger metals and faster computer chips – all for a price tag of about 56 million dollars.
- 6) On the Saturday night when the news about the Columbia disaster broke, there was shock and disbelief. The town of Karnal spent a sleepless night as thousands of households stayed glued to their television sets in the hope that Kalpana and the crew had somehow survived. A Journalist wrote:

She was a heroine. It takes enormous ability to become an astronaut. You need to know a lot about everything, from biology to astrophysics to aeronautical engineering. In this age of super – specialization, you must have encyclopaedic knowledge to be an astronaut. Her achievement is awe-inspiring.
- 7) For millions of young Indians, the story of Kalpana Chawla, a girl from a small town who touched the skies, had become an inspiration. In a message that she sent from aboard the space shuttle, Columbia, to students of her college in Chandigarh, Kalpana said, "The path from dreams to success does exist. May you have the vision to find it, the courage to get onto it.... Wishing you a great journey." There will surely be many who start off on this journey to fulfil their dreams.

You will notice that this lesson comprises two distinct text types - (a) A News Report and (b) A brief account of Kalpana Chawla's life.

Do you see a connection between the two text types?

The first is a news report of the tragic end of Kalpana Chawla, whereas the second describes her journey to becoming a space scientist, her success, and touches upon the tragic end that she met with. It is a brief biographical sketch of Kalpana Chawla.

As this is part of a textbook, we automatically assume that it is meant to be read. Can you think of ways to develop the listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities of the learners of class VI with the help of this lesson? How would this lesson help in developing the vocabulary and grammar of the learners?

Let us read it again and notice a few things about the two text types.

Grammar

- What is the tense used?
- What are the aspects of grammar that this text lends itself for – prepositions, clauses, adjectives or any other?

Vocabulary

- Which words do you think the learners will have a difficulty with? (Remember, it is class VI) List these here.

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Listening

- Can some part of these texts or a related text be used for a near authentic listening activity / task in class? If yes, list your ideas here.

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Speaking

- What kind of speaking activity can be generated from this text – discussion, debate, panel discussion or any other?

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Reading

- How would the teacher be able to help the learners in comprehending the text?

For this, you need to decide the types of tasks which are suitable for the text.

Are there any connotative meanings attached? How would we help the learners in understanding these?

Writing

- What type of writing tasks can emanate from this text?
- Are your learners ready for this linguistically?

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Would they prefer academic /personalized/ content – based writing at this juncture?

Besides these, we need to think of

- Ways of introducing the lesson so that the learners are able to connect to it.
- Ways of helping the learners to stay connected with it – i.e., how does it impact their lives / personalities.

Is it possible to take up each of these areas in each and every lesson /unit?

1.5 INTEGRATING THE WRITING TASKS IN THE LESSON

Let us refer to the Lesson ‘Kalpana Chawla’ and try to examine the types of writing tasks that can be integrated with it.

The lesson on Kalpana Chawla has two distinct writing forms – the first part is a newspaper report, while the second part is a biographical sketch. Teachers can choose to work on either of the two or both of these with their learners.

Possible tasks that can arise from it are:

- Identifying the features of
 - a newspaper report
 - news headlines
- Identifying the format of a newspaper report.

These can be followed by controlled or guided tasks for framing newspaper reports.

A few examples are:

- Match the pictures to the newspaper headlines.
- Observe the given pictures closely. Discuss the nature of the events depicted in these. Small group discussions lead to a class discussion and the significant points are listed on the board. This can be followed by the learner’s attempt to write the news report in pairs/groups/individually.

- Watch this YouTube video and imagine yourself as a citizen journalist. What points would you like to include? Discuss in small groups and write a news report.
- Similarly, learners can be asked to file in a profile sheet based on the biographical sketch of Kalpana Chawla. This can be followed by a discussion on the features of a biographical sketch. Next, the learners in groups are supposed to write a biographical sketch of a famous sports person, actor, scientist or someone who inspires them. They could be asked to collect biographical details about a person of their choice and create a few profiles/ biographical sketches which can be displayed in class later.

It's important that writing is integrated with other language abilities. A few examples are: -

- Imagine that Kalpana Chawla, on her last visit to India met an old school friend. Based on the biographical piece you've read in 'Honeysuckle' write an imaginary dialogue that might have taken place between them.
- You have read Kalpana Chawla's biographical sketch and are inspired by her. Write a letter to your best friend saying how impressed you are (or you can write a diary entry expressing your feeling).
- You have read 'Kalpana Chawla's biographical sketch. Now listen to some of the people who've known her and write a tribute to Kalpana Chawla.
- Listen to the audio recording of people talking about Kalpana Chawla. Listen carefully and fill in the profile sheet based on this information.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Select a prose lesson from any textbook. Frame at least three writing tasks based on it. Ensure that you integrate listening, speaking and reading when framing these.

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1.5.1 Giving Feedback on Writing

Writing is permanent and the written work stays the same over time. Therefore, learners' writing embodies not only the learning that has taken place over time, but it's a record of their mistakes as well. ESL teachers need to be extremely careful when giving feedback to learners on written work.

Learners need to be given suggestions on content, organization and style rather than focusing on spelling and grammar errors only. Marking a notebook red by encircling or underlining each mistake may demotivate learners. Therefore, it may be a good idea to limit red marks to individual mistakes made by learners.

This needs to be negotiated with learners and correction/ redrafting needs to be made a part of the follow up work. Redrafting can lead to a better grade in formative assessment.

Learners are usually open to learning from each other. Therefore, some amount of peer correction can be incorporated in the feedback process, provided the classroom atmosphere is congenial, supportive and encouraging. Peer correction and reviewing each other’s work in groups and contributing to its improvement as part of the drafting process can be incorporated in the classroom processes. Teachers must give comprehensive suggestion in order to help improve learner’s writing.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) What considerations will you keep in mind when giving feedback to your learners on their written work?

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1.6 INTEGRATING LISTENING TASKS IN THE LESSON

Let us refer to the passage on ‘Kalpana Chawla’ – from Honeysuckle.

Can you think of ways of developing the listening ability of your learners with the help of this unit? List your ideas here:

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Given below are three listening tasks based on “Indian- American Women in Space: Kalpana Chawla”. Read these carefully.

Task A: Listen to the news clip and complete the information grid.

- Date and place of lift off:
- Number of astronauts on board:
- Number of days it stayed in space:
- Number of experiments done by scientists:
- Date of return journey:

Task B: Listen to the interviews with three successful women and note down the odds they faced on their way to success.

Woman X

Woman Y

Woman Z

Task C: Listen to the reactions of these two budding astronauts to the news of Kalpana Chawla's sad demise and note their reactions.

As you noted, one of them would like to continue with the dream of becoming an astronaut, the other seems a little in doubt. What are your views?

Answer the following questions:

- 1) Try to identify at what point of transacting the lesson 'An India-American woman in Space: Kalpana Chawla' could these tasks be included?
- 2) What is the focus of each of the listening tasks?
- 3) Which of these would you prefer to use with your learners? Why?

You would have noticed that while tasks A and B can be used as an introduction to this lesson, task C can be used after the learners have finished reading the lesson.

The focus in Task A is the tragedy, Task B focuses on the difficulties one faces on way to success and celebrates successful women and Task C centres on the uncertainty and risk involved in the career choice of becoming an astronaut and this may lead to a debate in class.

Each of these tasks has its own merits and limitations. Task A is the simplest to deliver as the listening text, as the grid is given in the lesson. Therefore, it's easy to take it up in class. But it's a rather sad beginning / introduction to a lesson. Task B is extremely interesting and forward looking but the selection of the listening text may be a problem. Task C is reflective of the dilemma faced by children. But, once again the teacher will need to create a text and get it recorded by the learners.

Therefore, a while-listening task can be used at the beginning or the end of any unit / lesson. Ideally, it needs to be preceded by a simple pre- listening task and followed by post-listening tasks.

Listening tasks can be successfully integrated with grammar and writing lessons too. Prepositions can be reinforced with the help of a map-based activity where the learners are following directions.

Learners can strengthen their understanding of adjectives by identifying people on a worksheet with the help of descriptive words used in a text.

Learners could use listening cues in order to undertake a process – writing task.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) List the three aspects of a listening plan? How will you ensure that these are 'connected'?

2) Frame a sample listening lesson for your learners based on authentic listening material.

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3) Which text types would you like to use for listening? Give reasons for your choice.

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4) Devise pre- and post-listening tasks for any lesson of your choice.

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5) Choose a poem and devise a listening activity based on it.

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1.7 STAGES OF A READING LESSON

Reading can be approached in several ways; however intensive reading calls for a set of steps to facilitate classroom transactions. These include pre reading, while reading and post reading. (similar to pre listening, while listening and post listening)

Pre-Reading: Pre- reading tasks are framed in order to stimulate learner interest and prepare them for the challenges (linguistic and semantic) that they're likely to face in the reading text. These help the learners in focusing on the text ahead. For

example, a possible pre-reading tasks for “An Indian- American woman in Space: Kalpana Chawla’ could be:

- A) Use a dictionary to find meanings of the given phrases:
 - a) Naturalised U.S. citizen
 - b) Exploring Space
 - c) Space tourism
 - d) India’s space exploration

This language task is suited to learners who are unfamiliar with these words. It would also familiarize them with the context and get them to look forward to this unusual life story.

- B) Can you think of people who’ve been to space or have contributed to our knowledge of space?

This question could initiate a healthy discussion in class, giving an opportunity to space- enthusiasts in class to air their knowledge. A discussion such as this would whet their appetite and they’ll look forward to the lesson. This discussion can also help familiarize the learners with the context and the vocabulary used therein.

- C) A discussion initiated with: Can you think of women who have broken barriers by choosing relatively unusual professions? Give the names of such women and mention why you consider their chosen work area as ‘unusual’?
- D) Read the news clipping “Tragedy in Space – U.S. Space shuttle Columbia breaks into flames” and discuss with your partner.

This can lead to a discussion of how the aspirations of Kalpana Chawla could not reach their natural conclusion.

Which of the above pre-reading tasks do you consider suited to your learners’ linguistic level and interest area? Why?

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While Reading:

The while reading stage can be called the meaning-making stage. The tasks designed for while reading stage help learners to comprehend the text at various levels.

These could include

- Comprehension questions

Where was Kalpana Chawla born? Why is she called an Indian–American?

- Tick the correct answer:

Kalpana Chawla

- a) often thought that she came from a small city in a different country.
- b) first became a space scientist in India.
- c) was encouraged by people around her to follow her dreams.
- d) could not qualify as a pilot.

- Put the following events in order

- The town of Karnal spent a sleepless night.
- Kalpana Chawla went to the States to earn her Master’s degree.
- She was licensed to fly single multi-engine land airplanes.
- Kalpana Chawla studied in Tagore School, Karnal.

- Match the words to their meanings

encyclopaedic knowledge

nowadays, in these times

in this age

having knowledge of a wide variety of subjects

awe-inspiring

set of jobs to be undertaken by a group of people in space

space mission

something that causes feelings of respect and wonder.

Read these carefully and try to identify how a learner would gain from each of these.

You would have noticed that comprehension questions help the learners in global comprehension of a text, and facilitate the comprehension of details and nuanced meanings. Reordering the events can help the learners arrive at the chronology of events (another kind of detail), and matching the words to their meaning can aid them in better comprehension of meaning of new words in the text.

Try to frame while reading tasks which encourage the learners to:

- differentiate between fact and fiction
- infer details.
- identify the main points of a text.

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Post – Reading

Post-reading tasks help the learners in building upon their previous knowledge, relating the newly acquired knowledge to what they knew before and connecting it with the world outside the classroom.

- A) Do you have a dream or something that you very much want to accomplish? Write a paragraph stating your wish. Next, write another paragraph on how would you accomplish it?
- B) Collect information on Space Missions that are currently in progress. Share the information with your peers by displaying it on the class board.
- C) Debate/ Discussion on girls must be given equal opportunity to pursue their dreams.

You would have noticed that each of the above listed tasks tries to connect the learners' interest areas as an extension of the lesson. These call upon the learners to use critical / creative thinking as much as the language skills (LSRW) and build upon their already existing knowledge base. Task C calls upon them to articulate their opinion.

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) List the stages of a reading lesson. Mention their significance

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- 2) Frame two tasks for each of the following:

- Pre reading
- While reading
- Post reading

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1.8 INTEGRATING READING WITH OTHER LANGUAGE ABILITIES

As mentioned earlier, integrating language abilities is important in a language class. Indian classrooms have chiefly focussed on reading ability, so much so that English classes have revolved around or been limited to the text books. As a result, we have been unable to optimize the opportunities to develop the listening, speaking and writing abilities of learners. Contemporary approaches to teaching English call for integrating language abilities in class in order to prepare learners to face real life situations.

Read the given list of tasks and activities that can be included as part of the reading lessons.

- 1) Talk in pairs / groups about the theme / context being taken up in the reading passage/ lesson. Share this with the class.
- 2) Show the class the pictures of a couple of characters from what is to be read. Ask them to imagine who they are, how are they related and what kind of conversation are they likely to be a part of. This activity is to be undertaken at pair / group level. Possible answers to be listed on board before reading.
- 3) Enact a role play based on the poem.
- 4) Work with a partner. Read the following extracts of poems and discuss the word pictures (imagery) that you read.
- 5) Imagine you are an interviewer from 'Times of India'. Interview the characters from the story to establish the truth about events. Work in groups of 4.
- 6) Read the newspaper clipping and compare the facts with the events in the story.
- 7) Complete these words puzzle with words from the passage.
- 8) Work in groups of four. Think of an alternative ending. What changes are needed in the story to accommodate this ending?
- 9) Which of the cartoons describes the meaning of the given passage best?
- 10) Given below is a partially filled table. Fill it on the basis of the given passage.
- 11) Convert this story /poem into a play.
- 12) Compare this play / story with the movie.
- 13) Complete the cartoon strip on the basis of the story / passage read.
- 14) Fill in the missing sentences of dialogues. Use your own words.
- 15) Write out the dialogues for the story you just read. Work in groups of four.
- 16) You've read the story. Now listen to two characters from the story. Identify who could these be based on the character traits displayed in the story. Give reasons for your answer.
- 17) Imagine you are one of the characters from the story. Write a diary entry / letter. Enact / Role play a scene from the text read.

Read the above listed tasks again, and try to identify which language skills are being enhanced through each of these. You would notice that Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing are all being addressed through these. It's crucial for language teachers to recognize that a reading lesson can promote all language skills in an integrated manner as it prepares learners to meet the language demands they are likely to face outside the classroom.

Check Your Progress 7

- 1) Choose a lesson from an English textbook. Read it carefully and frame pre-reading, while reading and post-reading tasks. Ensure that you've included at least one task for promoting each language ability.

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1.9 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we tried to show you that any teaching- learning of language usually takes place with the use of strategies where more than one skill is used. This is known as integration of skills/abilities. It is also important for the teacher to be aware that the focus should not be on accuracy or correctness but also on fluency. The learners' views and ideas must be articulated first and only then correctness should be stressed upon. Using two types of text, we show you how various skills may be integrated with the lesson. These strategies will help learners to communicate effectively and meaningfully.

1.10 HINTS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Even when a class is focusing on a particular skill, for example, Reading comprehension, other skills are also used, i.e. speaking/listening – when the learners are discussing in pairs / group. When answering comprehension questions as homework, the writing skill is used. Any language lesson/task will in most cases involve the integration of skills – i.e. multiple skills at the same time.
- 2) A writing task – which involves discussion as a whole class activity (speaking), getting points from the Internet (reading) and then the writing activity itself (writing).

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Do it yourself
- 2) - Helps learners understand and appreciate multiple levels of meaning.
 - Learners are exposed to different authors' styles and genres.
 - Learners gain critical thinking ability because literature lends itself to multiple and nuanced meanings.
 - Learner is exposed to metaphorical language.

You may add some more points.

- 1) Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) - don't focus merely on spelling, punctuation or grammar but pay attention to content, organization and style as well
 - don't make red marks but suggest ways of redrafting
 - encourage peer feedback.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) The three aspects of a listening Lesson are Pre-listening, While-listening and Post-listening activities.

Pre-listening could be an introduction to the task. It may also involve revision of difficult vocabulary or structures so that learners may attempt the main task with ease.

While-listening is the main activity.

Post-listening is generally any project that may emerge from the main listening task. It may also involve expressing emotion as shown in Task C.

- 2) Do it yourself.
- 3) Do it yourself.
- 4) Do it yourself.
- 5) Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) **Pre- reading tasks** are framed in order to stimulate learner interest and prepare them for the challenges (linguistic and semantic) that they're likely to face in the reading text. These help the learners in focusing on the text ahead. While Reading:

The while reading stage can be called the meaning-making stage. The tasks designed for while reading stage help learners to comprehend the text at various levels.

Post-reading tasks help the learners in building upon their previous knowledge, relating the newly acquired knowledge to what they knew before and connecting it with the world outside the classroom.

- 2) Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 7

- 1) Do it yourself.

UNIT 2 THE CLASSROOM AS A DISCOURSE SPACE

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Classroom Interaction
- 2.3 Classroom Discourse
- 2.4 Features of Classroom Discourse
- 2.5 Negotiated Interaction
- 2.6 Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC)
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Hints to Check Your Progress
- 2.9 Suggested Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have read this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain classroom interaction, its aspects and types;
- Critique the Initiation Response Feedback (IRF) exchange structure;
- Discuss how we can promote meaningful interaction in our classrooms;
- Enumerate a few techniques for promoting negotiated interaction;
- Manage classroom discourse effectively to promote learning
- Develop classroom interactional competence

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Learning takes place in the classroom through interaction. The aim of every lesson is to facilitate learning and increase learning opportunities for the learner. The language that we use in the classroom plays a very important role in determining the classroom discourse through which the learner engages with the syllabus and materials. Teachers can improve their professional practice by developing a closer understanding of classroom discourse specifically by focusing on the complex relationship between language, interaction and learning. In order to make the classroom space dynamic and more engaging teachers as well as learners need to develop classroom interactional competence (CIC), a concept which will be introduced and described towards the end of this unit.

2.2 CLASSROOM INTERACTION

In a classroom the teachers and learners come together and language learning is expected to happen. However, this language learning happens as a result of the reactions amongst the teachers and the learners. We need to note that learners do not come 'empty-handed' into the classroom. The learners bring their whole experience of learning and of life in classrooms along with their own reasons for

learning the language. They have their own needs that must be addressed. The teachers also bring in their experience of life and learning and of course of teaching. They also get the syllabus in the form of materials. Therefore how the teachers and learners react to each other when they are together in the classroom is of utmost importance. 'React' has been used in the research literature to refer to the constant interaction that takes place between the learners and the teacher and among the learners themselves.

How successful this constant interaction is, cannot be taken for granted. The interaction cannot be completely planned. That would be too artificial. Therefore, interaction in the classroom needs to be managed rather than planned. Moreover, the interaction cannot be managed by the teacher alone, even the learners play an important role in the management of interaction. As a social event these contributions on the part of the teacher as well as learners are crucial for interaction to be successful.

From this viewpoint, interaction is a kind of 'co-production' and it involves a few complications. The major concern is that successful interaction in the classroom involves everybody managing at least five different things simultaneously. These five factors are:

Who gets to speak? (participants' turn distribution)

What do they talk about? (topic)

What does each participant do with the various opportunities to speak? (task)

What sort of atmosphere is created? (tone)

What accent, dialect or language is used? (code)

Allwright & Bailey (1991)

Another problem is that these five aspects of interaction are a means as well as an end. Thus, language teachers recognize that using a language also involves the ability to handle interaction in that language. Thus, classroom environment also provides opportunities to learners (as well as teachers) to involve themselves in interaction management.

Here it becomes important to understand interaction in the context of learning. In a classroom the teacher and the learners manage interaction for language learning to happen. However, in most cases it is considered to be solely the teacher's job to plan a sequence of lessons and execute them effectively in the classroom. The teacher may get the best plan to class but finally what each learner learns depends on what happens in the course of classroom interaction and whether or not the learner is able to make use of the language learning opportunities available to him/her.

In order to facilitate language learning, classroom interaction needs to be understood and optimized. Moreover, the quality of interaction is largely determined by teachers during their face-to-face communication with the learners. As quality of interaction contributes to learning, it is important to optimize it rather than maximizing it. To improve language learning in the classroom, appropriate interaction in tandem with desired learning outcomes has to be encouraged.

Any second language lesson can be viewed as a dynamic and complex series of interrelated contexts, in which interaction is central to teaching and learning. Latest studies in classroom interaction indicate the need to consider the idea that teachers and learners together co-construct (plural) classroom contexts.

Van Lier(1988) identifies four types of second language (L2) classroom interaction:

Type 1: The first, which he calls ‘less topic- orientation, less activity- orientation’, is typical of everyday conversation. Thus, it is the least structured, allowing the most freedom for self- expression.

Type 2: Second is ‘more topic- orientation, less activity- orientation’ which is typical of the type of interaction that occurs when information is provided in instructions or a lecture. The interaction is one- way and involves little space for exchange of ideas or opinions.

Type 3: The third category, ‘more topic-orientation, more activity orientation,’ occurs when information has to be exchanged following specific and predetermined lines, as in an interview, joke or story.

Type 4: The final category, ‘less topic- orientation, more activity- orientation’ is typified by substitution drills, pair work and activities that have very specific procedures.

Van Lier’s classification is definitely not exhaustive and may not be capable of accounting for all types of interaction. However, it is certainly representative of the typical patterns that occur. It also makes some attempt to connect language use to activity; rather than proposing a purely functional framework. Van Lier’s scheme relates classroom activity to type of language used.

Check Your Progress 1

1) The word ‘react’ in the context of classroom is often used to describe

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2) What are the five things that the teacher and learners continuously manage in the classroom?

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3) Why do we need to understand classroom interaction?

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4) What are the different types of L2 classroom interaction?

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2.3 CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

It has been established by experts in the area of classroom discourse that the teacher plays an important role in understanding, establishing and maintaining patterns of communication that foster, to the greatest extent, both classroom learning and second language acquisition. Therefore, classroom discourse needs to be understood to promote learning in the classroom.

Let us first understand the typical structure of classroom discourse. We have all been part of various classrooms as learners and teachers. It is easy to identify and present a very clear structure of classroom discourse. In most classrooms teachers control both the topic of conversation and turn-taking. Learners take cues from the teacher through whom they direct most of their responses. In a second language classroom the teacher is often considered to be the main point of reference and he/she controls most of the patterns of communication primarily through the ways in which the teacher restrict or allow learners' interaction, take control of the topic and facilitate or hinder learning opportunities.

The underlying structure of second language classrooms typically represent sequences of discourse 'moves' IR (E/F), where I is teacher initiation, R is learner response and E/F is an optional evaluation or feedback by the teacher (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). In later versions of the model, F became follow-up. This model is referred to as the IRF sequence, as illustrated below:

Extract 1.1

(I) Teacher: There are two things that the writer establishes at the beginning of the story. One is situation ... situation. What is the situation at the beginning of the story? Anybody? What's the situation Anita? Have you read the story Anita?

(R) Student: No ma'am.

(F) Teacher: Ah that won't help then will it? Who's read the story? What is the situation at the beginning Rahul?

As you can see in the above Extract 1.1, for every utterance made by a learner (R), teachers typically make two (I,F). Thus, teacher talk (speech of the teacher in the classroom) represents approximately two-thirds of classroom speech. It is both particular to the classroom and characterized by it. This is the traditional IRF interaction which prevails in most classrooms.

Musumeci (1996) discusses four reasons for the dominance of the IRF sequence in our classrooms:

- 1) Teachers' and students' expectations consider question and answer routines as appropriate classroom behaviour. This is how conversation in a classroom is characterized.
- 2) Teachers feel the need to make learners 'feel good'. The feedback given by a teacher to a student is important and necessary.
- 3) The system of power relations in most classes means that it is the teacher who has more of the 'floor' owing to asymmetrical roles.
- 4) Finally, the time constraints facing teachers make them believe that question and answer routines are the most effective means of advancing classroom discourse.

However, experts have frequently highlighted that the IRF sequence has a negative effect on classroom communication because it gives minimum interactional space to the learners.

The teacher talk considerably increases and learners don't get enough opportunities for language use. In order to facilitate learning in the classroom we need to grant greater participation rights to our learners and allow them to play a more central role in classroom interaction. If our classroom discourse is dominated by the IRF sequence then interaction can become very mechanical and also monotonous. We need to be aware of this and we should consciously try to break the IRF pattern. In the following sections we will discuss various strategies that we can use to make our classroom discourse interacting and effective.

In the L2 classroom, teachers control both the content and the procedure of the learning process. L2 classes exhibit some typical characteristics:

- 1) teachers control the topic of discussion;
- 2) teachers control who may participate and when; students take their cues from teachers;
- 3) role relationships between teachers and learners are unequal; teachers are responsible for managing the interaction which occurs; teachers talk more.

Thus one may conclude that teachers often control both the content and structure of classroom communication, at least in part, by their use of language. Furthermore, their decision as to whether to tightly control the topic of discussion or whether to allow a more egalitarian discourse structure in which students self-select and have a more equal share in turn-taking, is not random. Thus, teachers influence learner participation both by the ways in which they use language and by what they bring to the classroom. Therefore, it is important to be aware of our language use in the classroom.

In Extract 1.2 below, for example, note how the teacher selects who may talk (turn 1), controls the topic of conversation (1), selects another speaker (7), evaluates the learner’s performance (3, 5, 7), manages both language form (*what’s the verb* in 5) and the message (*they go to* in 5). Note too how the predominance of an IRF structure characterizes this extract as a piece of classroom discourse.

Extract 1.2

1) **I) Teacher:** *Ok Rita could you explain something about law and order in our country? What happens if you commit a crime?*

2) **R) Learner1:** *If we do crime policeman come to take somebody to police station*

3) **F) Teacher:** *Yes...*

4) **R) Learner1:** *and prisoner questioned and if he is (5 seconds unintelligible)*

5) **F/I) Teacher:** *Yes what’s the verb Rita... if she or he yes... commits a crime they go to...*

6) **R) Learner1:** *They go to court ... but if they... he... they didn’t do that they can go home*

7) **F/I) Teacher:** *They can go home (...) very good indeed right what happens in the court?*

Thus, we find how the teacher *controls* the classroom discourse. The responsibility for promoting efficient and effective language use resides with the teacher. Thus, the teacher’s use of language can get the best out of a group of learners– that is, facilitating contributions, helping them say what they mean, understand what they are studying and making sure the rest of the group is able to follow – is dependent on a teacher’s ability to make *professional* use of language. This ability has to be learned and practised over time, in the same way that we teachers acquire and perfect classroom teaching skills. In order to make our classroom discourse meaningful and effective we need to understand some of the desired features of an effective classroom discourse. In the next section we will discuss these features of classroom discourse.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Answer the following questions in not more than 100 words each.
 - a) Why do we need to understand classroom discourse?

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b) What is IRF structure? Why is it the most dominant pattern in most classrooms?

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c) What are some of the problems of IRF structure?

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d) What are some of the typical characteristics of L2 classroom discourse?

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2) Read the following statements and mark true (T) or false (F) against them. Correct the ones which are false.

- a) Half of the classroom discourse constitutes teacher talk. T/F
- b) IRF stands for initiation, reaction, final response. T/F
- c) Teachers play a very important role in determining the quality of classroom discourse. T/F
- d) Teacher's decision making in the classroom has an impact on learner participation. T/F
- e) We should strictly follow the IRF structure of classroom discourse. T/F

2.4 FEATURES OF CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

In this section we will discuss features of classroom discourse. This will also help us to understand the desired strategies that we need to incorporate in our discourse to facilitate interaction and hence learning in the classroom. The following features enable the teachers to manage classroom discourse effectively.

Elicitation techniques

Elicitation is a technique by which the teacher gets the learners to give information rather than giving it to them.

For example: a teacher elicits the rules for the structure of the first conditional by asking learners to look at some examples, then writing 'We make the first conditional in English with...?' on the board.

In the classroom, elicitation is an important technique for various reasons. It helps develop a learner-centred dynamic, it makes learning memorable as learners can link new and old information, and it can help produce a dynamic and stimulating learning environment.

Typically, classroom discourse is dominated by question and answer routines, with teachers asking most of the questions as one of the principle ways in which they control the discourse.

Many of the question- types selected and used by language teachers are of the closed variety and produce only short responses from students. Our questions in the classroom need to have the ability to produce responses which are 'communicative'. In order to be able to do so let us discuss the different types of questions that we may use in our classroom.

Display questions:

A display question is one to which the teacher already knows the answer. In most cases, the learner too knows that the teacher knows the answer but she answers it to satisfy the teacher. Examples:

When was Mahatma Gandhi born?

Is this a chair or a table?

Display questions do not normally generate new information. They demand little thinking. However, if they are used for a certain pedagogic goal they can serve a very useful purpose. For example, if we are doing accuracy based activity in the class and our pedagogic goal is to give practice for a newly acquired sound or word or repeating a newly learnt sentence pattern or word stress, display questions can work successfully in such situations. Also for classroom management purposes (maintaining control of your class) display questions can be used.

Referential questions

Referential questions or genuine questions demand real answers. They often require thought and effort. Such a question may ask the student to infer a meaning, to evaluate a statement or to separate fact from fiction. Examples:

How is swimming more or less satisfying exercise than jogging?

In what ways do dogs make easier pets than monkeys?

These questions seek real answers. They demand an explanation, often generate new thinking and can elicit individual answers.

Display vs. referential questions

Referential questions are more likely to produce 'natural' responses than display questions.

Traditionally, display questions, to which the teacher already knows the answer (e.g.: *what's the past tense of go?*) are seen as being functionally different from referential questions, where the answer is not known in advance (e.g. *do you have any brothers and sisters?*).

Display questions typically produce shorter, simpler responses from learners. While accepting that the purpose of all questions is to elicit responses, the display/referential distinction is important.

Closed question

A closed question has a single, correct answer. Examples:

Is Mumbai the capital of Maharashtra or of Gujarat?

Is Kuala Lumpur part of Singapore or Malaysia?

Open-ended question

Open-ended question allows for opinion as it has more than one correct answer. Examples:

All banks in the city provide the same quality service. Discuss.

When is it better to travel by rail or road than by air?

These questions allow for different responses based on differing experiences.

Factual questions

These questions help determine if students know some required facts or information. They may not normally call for reflection on events, attitudes or beliefs. Examples:

Who is the President of United States?

How far is Chennai from Delhi?

The above classification of questions clearly shows that these question types may overlap. Therefore, while classifying a question we may have to use multiple terms. A display question could be also factual or close-ended. A referential question can also be open-ended.

Another classification of types of questions was proposed by Benjamin Bloom (in Tickoo, 2003). He divided the questions into six types and defined each of them as follows:

- 1) *Knowledge questions* that ask students to get information given in their book or in any other source of knowledge. Example: Where is the Gir Forest?
- 2) *Comprehension questions* that ask for understanding. Example: What does the author mean by 'surrender value'?
- 3) *Application questions* that involve using one's understanding. Example: 'How does yoga help build concentration?'
- 4) *Analysis questions* that ask for looking at parts of a situation. Example: 'In what ways is a solar heater better or worse than an electric heater?'

- 5) *Synthesis questions* which ask students to combine their skills to create new ideas. Example: ‘What can we do to make roads safe for visually challenged people?’
- 6) *Evaluation questions* which ask people to make judgements. Example: ‘Are large dams best answers to water and power shortages?’

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Give at least two examples of each of the following question types:
 - a) Display questions:
 - b) Referential questions:
 - c) Close-ended:
 - d) Open-ended:
- 2) How did Benjamin Bloom classify questions? Explain with examples.

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- 3) If we want to promote thinking in our classroom what types of questions should we ask?

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Using questions appropriately in the classroom

Our choice of questioning strategies can have a huge impact on learner participation. Questions can serve to signal turns, help understanding, provide opportunities to learners and even compel involvement. Our use of questions helps in discourse modification and maintains participation among learners. In other words, classroom discourse differs from ‘normal’ communication in terms of the number of questions used and their function.

Each of the above question types would contribute positively to classroom discourse if the question type matches our pedagogic goals. Pedagogic goals are the learning outcomes that we have in our mind for our lessons.

According to a teacher’s pedagogic goal, different question types are more or less appropriate: the extent to which a question produces a communicative response is less important than the extent to which a question serves its purpose at a particular point in a lesson. In short, the use of appropriate questioning strategies requires an understanding of the *function* of a question in relation to what is being taught (Nunn, 1999).

The table below shows different types of pedagogic goals that require specific types of question:

Question type	Pedagogic goals
Display questions/closed questions/factual questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable learners to produce correct forms • To provide corrective feedback • To display correct answers • To provide language practice around a piece of material • To elicit responses in relation to the material • To provide students practice in sub-skills • To clarify when necessary • To evaluate learner contributions
Question type	Pedagogic goals
Referential questions/open-ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable learners to express themselves clearly • To establish a context for discussion • To promote oral/ written fluency

Why-questions

Questions which use the wh-word *why* are called why-questions. For example: if a student says he/she likes action movies, then we can ask why does s/he likes action movies?

The more the number of why-questions the better would be the quality of our classroom interaction. Why-questions initiate longer responses and allow us to initiate and sustain discussions in class. In most classrooms the frequency of why- questions among teachers and students is extremely low which in turn suggests that both the quantity and quality of student contributions is likely to be mediocre.

In Extract 1.3 below, note how turn-taking and length and type of learner contribution are very strongly influenced by the nature of the questions being asked. In this extract, all questions are of the display, ‘closed’ variety, evolving from a reading passage which the class has just read. If the teacher’s agenda at this stage in the lesson is to check comprehension, then her choice of elicitation technique is appropriate and in line with her pedagogic goal. If, however, she aims to promote class discussion and critical thinking in her students, a different type of questioning strategy would be needed, using more open, referential questions.

Extract 1.3

1 Teacher: Now if you look at the first sentence Rohan...can you read the first sentence please

- 2 *Learner 1: Lot of gold in the sea*
- 3 *Teacher: Uhuh and then the LAST sentence (reading) the treasure in the ocean might just as well not exist ... what treasure? ... Priya?*
- 4 *Learner 2: In the seawater*
- 5 *Teacher: Yes yeah so the SEA water is another name for? ... in this case? Another way of saying ... what? Raman?*
- 6 *Learner 3: Ocean*
- 7 *Teacher: Ocean right and what's in the ocean ... treasure and what's in the seawater*
- 8 *Learner 4: Gold*

Now look at the next extract 1.4 which is quite different from the above extract 1.3. In Extract 1.4 it is clear that the learners have more interactional space and freedom in both what they say and when they say it. It is, in many respects, much closer to casual conversation because learners produce longer turns (in 5 and 7), and because the teacher's comments (in 4 and 6) are non-evaluative, relating more to the content of the message than the language used to express it. While we, as outsiders, are not privy to the precise meanings being exchanged here, it is apparent that the referential prompt question *do you believe in this kind of thing* produced longer, freer responses by learners and resulted in a more equal exchange as might be found in a casual conversation.

Extract 1.4

- 1 *Teacher: I agree... do you? do you believe in this kind of thing? We talked about UFOs and all yesterday (Wait time 2 seconds)*
- 2 *Learner 1: No ...*
- 3 *Learner 2: Well maybe yes...*
- 4 *Teacher: Maybe no why not? (Wait time 7 seconds)*
- 5 *Learner 1: Um I'm not a religious person and that's the thing I associate with religion and believe in super naturals and things like that and believe in god's will and that's so far from me so no...*
- 6 *Teacher: Okay...I understand so and why maybe Monica? ...*
- 7 *Learner 2: Well... I'm also not connected with religion but maybe also something exists but I erm am rather skeptical but maybe people who have experienced things maybe...*
- 8 *Teacher: Uh huh and what about you [do you]*

Thus, we have seen how our choice of questions has a huge impact on learner response and hence classroom discourse.

We should also keep in mind that our questions need to be evenly distributed in our classroom. A teacher who restricts her questions to one section of the class (e.g. front benchers or the more articulate students) may often fail to involve the rest of the class. Opportunities for answering questions or initiating them should be given to every section of the class.

Wait Time

The time that the teacher gives to the students to think and frame an answer is called wait time. Studies have shown that students are often given insufficient time to process a teacher's question before answering it. This often results in responses that are far from complete and more often without adequate thought. Research suggests that increasing wait time from one second to three or four seconds brings about greater learner participation and significantly contributes to higher-quality classroom discourse. Specifically, increase in *wait time* results in an increase in:

- the average length of student responses
- the number of speculative responses
- student-initiated questions
- student-student interaction
- statements and responses based on inference
- interactional space that enables turn-taking to be slowed down
- thinking or rehearsal time

Teacher Echo

Teacher echo refers to the repetition of utterances in the class by the teacher. When a teacher repeats his/her previous utterance or a learner's contribution it is called **teacher echo**.

Teacher echo may have several functions:

- amplifying a learner's contribution for the rest of the class
- confirming correctness
- acknowledging the relevance of an utterance

However, when overused, teacher echo can disrupt the flow of the discourse and reduce learners' interactional space. Therefore, we teachers need to be aware of the function of echo and of the 'dangers' of overusing it. Reduced echo is regarded as a positive strategy that has an important role to play in facilitating learning opportunities in the classroom. There is a strong sense in which reduced teacher echo has the same effect on the flow of the discourse as extended wait-time. Both of these strategies increase the interactional space available to learners and increase opportunities for involvement.

Thus, to facilitate classroom discourse we should try to extend wait time and reduce teacher echo.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Look at the pedagogic goals given below. Suggest question types that would match with each of these pedagogic goals to give us the desired effect in the classroom.

Pedagogic goal	Question type(s)
a) Give practice in grammatical structure	

b) Help improve pronunciation c) Initiate discussion d) Develop oral fluency e) To teach sub-skills of reading (scanning/skimming a text) f) To encourage learners to express their opinion	
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2) What is *wait time*? Why do we need to increase *wait time* in our classroom?

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3) Why do we need to reduce teacher echo?

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Repair

Apart from questioning, the activity which most characterizes classroom discourse is correction of errors. Repair is also called error correction. The term error correction is a broader term which encompasses all types of teacher feedback.

Error correction may be direct or indirect, overt or covert. Teachers have many options – our split-second decisions in the rapid flow of a lesson may have consequences for the learning opportunities we present to our learners.

Just like our questions need to match our pedagogic goals, similarly our choice of specific repair strategies should match our goal. Repair can be language centred repair or content centred repair. Repair is closely related to the context of what is being done. The implication being that repair, like other aspects of classroom discourse should be related to pedagogic goals.

Direct repair: This refers to overt error correction. Direct repair involves correcting an error quickly and directly. Example:

Student: My brother like bikes...

Teacher: not like...likes...he likes bikes

Indirect repair: This repair strategy is covert. In this strategy instead of correcting an error directly, the teacher tries to get the correct response from the learner by

giving hints and cues. In other words the teacher tries to elicit the correct response through questions or appropriate prompts. Example:

Student: My brother like bikes...

Teacher: Your brother....?

Student: like bikes...

Teacher: he...you are talking about your brother...he...

Student: likes bikes...

Form-focused feedback: This is also called language centered repair. It refers to feedback given on the words used, not the message. See the example below:

Student: I am belonging from the Delhi

Teacher: I am from Delhi...not the Delhi...not am belonging...

Content feedback: This is also called content-centered repair. It refers to feedback given to the message rather than the words used:

Student: During summers I go my grandmother's house...I like spending time there.

Teacher: What do you do there?

Student: I likes play football and listen stories of grandmother.

Teacher: ok...that's interesting...grandmother's stories are always interesting...Does your grandma make those stories? Or does she read them from a book?

As we can see here the teacher gives feedback on the message and ignores the language errors of the learners. She further asks genuine questions related to the content of the message. The teacher's aim in this interaction is to clearly promote fluency and get learners to speak.

If our pedagogic goal is to develop fluency then direct repair is not recommended. However, if our goal is to develop accuracy then grammatical input in the form of direct repair is desired. In other words language- focused feedback is appropriate for accuracy based tasks whereas content based feedback allows learners to express themselves freely without getting conscious. For fluency based tasks we should avoid direct repair. Therefore, to facilitate interaction we need to match our pedagogic goals with our repair strategies just like our questioning strategies need to match our desired pedagogic goals.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) What do we mean by repair? What are the different types of repair?

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- 2) Read the extracts of classroom discourse and match them with the type of repair:
- Type of feedback: form-focussed feedback or content feedback
 - Type of repair: direct or indirect repair
 - Teacher's possible pedagogic goal(s)
- a) Student: I goed to the market yesterday...
Teacher: um... goed...? What is the past tense of go?
Student: ...went...sorry..I went to the market yesterday.
- b) Student: I like collect stamps...
Teacher: oh! That's very nice...How many have you collected so far?
- c) Student: Bharat Ratna given to Sachin Tendulkar...
Teacher: ...was given to Sachin Tendulkar.
- d) Student: My mother is my strength...she always help me to solve problems
Teacher: My mother also helps me a lot...

Modifying speech for learners

As already discussed, two third of classroom discourse involves teacher talk. Therefore, to ensure that teacher's discourse in the classroom is able to maximise learning opportunities we need to discuss the importance of modifying speech to learners. Lynch (1996) discusses the reasons for the interest in language modification by teachers for learners.

First, it is important to modify our speech in the classroom because there is a link between comprehension and progress in second language learning. If students do not *understand* the input they receive, it is unlikely that they will progress (Krashen, 1985).

Second, there is a strong influence of teacher language on learner language. One of the most important activities performed by second language teachers is to *model* target language for their learners. In many cases this may be the only exposure to the language that learners receive.

The third reason for speech modification proposed by Lynch is that learners often face difficulties in understanding their teacher's speech. Without some simplification or reduction in speed of delivery, it is highly unlikely that students would understand what we say in the classroom.

Research studies suggest that language teachers typically modify four aspects of their speech which are as follows:

- 1) Vocabulary is simplified and idiomatic phrases are avoided.
- 2) Grammar is simplified through the use of shorter, simpler utterances and increased use of present tense.
- 3) Pronunciation is modified by the use of slower, clearer speech and by more widespread use of standard forms.
- 4) Finally, teachers make increased use of gestures and facial expressions.

It is important to note that the above speech modifications which take place in second language classrooms can be compared very closely with the ones made by parents when talking to young children acquiring their first language. Typically, simpler vocabulary, shorter sentences and fewer idiomatic phrases are used, accompanied by exaggerated facial expressions and gestures.

Tardif (1994) identified five modification strategies:

- self- repetition
- linguistic modelling
- providing information
- expanding an utterance
- using extensive elicitation, where questions are graded and adjusted

Each of these has its own particular role to play in the discourse and must be used more or less strategically according to desired learning outcomes.

Like Tardif above, Lynch (1996) identified a number of ways in which teachers modify their interaction. They include:

- 1) *Confirmation checks*: whereby teachers make sure they understand the learner;
Example: So you mean...?
- 2) *Comprehension checks*: ensuring that learners understand the teacher
Example: Did you understand?
- 3) *Repetition*: whereby the teacher repeats his/her utterance or asks a student to repeat his/her utterance
- 4) *Clarification requests*: asking students for clarification
Example: Do you mean...?
- 5) *Reformulation*: rephrasing a learner's utterance
- 6) *Completion*: finishing a learner's contribution
- 7) *Backtracking*: returning to an earlier part of a dialogue

In most classrooms teachers rarely ask for modifications to learners' speech. We tend to impose our own interpretation. This is the reason why teachers insist on filling the gaps and smoothening learner contributions, as a means of maintaining the flow of a lesson or in order to create a flawless discourse. Unfortunately, by doing so, learners may be denied valuable opportunities for learning. Arguably, by seeking clarification and requesting confirmation, by getting learners to reiterate their contributions, learners' language development is fostered.

In Extract 1.5, for example, one can see that the teacher – by seeking clarification and by negotiating meaning – helps the learners to express themselves more fully and more clearly. In the extract, in which an upper-intermediate class is working on their writing skills, it is clear that learner turns are frequently longer and more complex than those of the teacher (12, 16). Throughout, the teacher adopts a less evaluative role and instead seeks to clarify (11, 13, and 19) and elicit from the learners, descriptions of their writing strategies.

Clarification requests are extremely valuable in promoting opportunities for learning since they ‘compel’ learners to reformulate their contribution, by rephrasing or paraphrasing. There is clear evidence in this extract that the teacher’s unwillingness to accept the learner’s first contribution (in 13, 15) promotes a longer turn and higher quality output in 16.

Extract 1.5

11 Teacher: ...yes... so tell me again what do you mean by that?
(Clarification request)

12 Learner: The first is the introduction the second eh in this case we have the (pause) who you are to eh introduce yourself a few words about yourself and where you live and what I do...

13 Teacher: So... yes? (Clarification request)

14 Learner: ...and then it's the problem what happened ...

15 Teacher: Yes...

16 Learner: ...and you need to explain it and why you are writing because probably you did something like you gave the information to the police but it didn't happen ...

17 Teacher: Uh...so can I ask you why did you write it in your head as you have said a while back? (Backtracking)

18 Learner: I don't know it's like a rule
19 Teacher: Right so it's like a rule... what do you mean? (Clarification request)

For sustained negotiation to occur there is a need for learners to adopt a wider range of interaction modifications, something which teachers could easily provide. Adjustments of both language form and conversational processes are clearly central to the work of the language teacher and essential for learning to take place.

Facial expressions, single interjections, like the ones cited in the above extract, ‘uh’, ‘what’ or direct questions all serve the same function: they seek clarification, compelling learners to reformulate what they have said. Not only is reformulation an essential conversational skill, used extensively by native speakers, it is highly relevant to the process of second language learning in the L2 classroom since it promotes negotiation of meaning, an idea that we will discuss in greater detail in the next section.. By accepting a response that is only partially understood, we as teachers may be denying a valuable learning opportunity to our learners. Thus, instead of constructing a smooth-flowing discourse, it is important not to miss a valuable opportunity to clarify.

We as teachers need to be active listeners, constantly reaffirming, questioning and clarifying learner contributions.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is an interactional feature where in language is ‘fed in’ by the teacher during an exchange, to help learners express themselves more clearly. The term scaffolding describes the ways in which teachers provide learners with linguistic

cues to help self-expression. Scaffolding provides learners with cognitive support through dialogue as they engage in tasks that may lie outside their capabilities.

While providing scaffold to our learners we may engage in the following:

Reformulation, where a learner’s contribution is reworked using language which is more appropriate;

Modelling, where a learner’s contribution is simply restated with appropriate pronunciation, stress or intonation;

Extension, where an utterance is extended, made more comprehensive or more comprehensible to other students.

In each of these the teacher’s role is to ‘shape’ the learner’s contribution into something more acceptable.

As a conscious strategy rather than a passive feature of teacher’s talk, scaffolding can do much to enhance learning opportunities.

In this section we have discussed that we as teachers need to be aware of the value of not accepting a learner’s first contribution and of the need to ‘draw out’ what has been said. Many a times, teachers appear satisfied with any response given by the learners, forgetting the importance of fine-tuning and the need to clarify where necessary. To make classroom discourse effective it is important to use various modification strategies. Scaffolding helps us to increase learning opportunities in the classroom. The skill of taking a learner’s contribution, improving it and feeding it back to the learner requires conscious effort and mental promptness.

Check Your Progress 6

1) Complete the following sentences by using appropriate words or phrases:

a) We should modify our speech in the classroom because if learners do not understand

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b) To ensure that our students understand what we say in class we need to.

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c) Reformulation is

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d) Clarification request is

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2) What aspects of teacher’s speech are generally modified?

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3) Read the following extracts (a-e) and identify the modification strategy which is being used by the teacher in each of them:

a) Teacher: You have just mentioned that you like villages...can you elaborate why?

b) Teacher: Is it clear?

c) Student: I mean...when we go to mall we see things...many things...then we like some...but we not buy...we spend time with friend...roaming, enjoying...then eating and come back...not buy anything

Teacher: yes...you mean we do window shopping...that is we only see things and we do not buy...

d) Teacher: I didn’t understand...can you please clarify what do you mean by a nice job?

e) Student: I like going to my friend’s place and a lot of time with her...we spend together...then download movies and um...sometimes buying....

Teacher: ...and go for shopping...

2.5 NEGOTIATED INTERACTION

The above strategies need to be incorporated in our classroom discourse in a balanced manner so that we can facilitate learning. Matching each of these strategies with our pedagogic goals will give us the desired effect. When we use multiple and appropriate strategies to manage our classroom interaction we succeed in promoting negotiated interaction. Instead of accepting the first learner contribution we need to push the learners to interact adequately. In order to understand negotiated interaction we now turn to the issue of talk management and topic management.

Talk management

Talk management is defined as an “activity” of classroom discourse. It refers to the ways in which the participants (teacher and the learners) conduct their classroom conversation in order to achieve their immediate learning goals. The structure of information exchange determines the way in which the talk is managed. In other words, the types of questions asked and the kinds of responses determine how it is controlled.

The IRF sequence (as discussed in earlier sections) is considered to be the most commonly found structure of information exchange where I stands for teacher

initiation, R for learner response and F is the feedback provided by the teacher. This structure doesn't allow learners to interact freely or to genuinely communicate and express their ideas. In classrooms where the teacher tightly controls the talk it gives rise to an IRF sequence dominated interaction which is extremely limited.

Negotiated interaction helps teachers to break the IRF pattern as teachers engage in jointly generating meaningful classroom talk. For example, the teacher's questions may try to elicit learner responses which are based on their own opinions and interpretations and not facts directly taken from textbook.

We should try to encourage the learner to struggle to express themselves by providing linguistic and paralinguistic cues. In classrooms where negotiated interaction is missing the teachers end up answering their own questions or they stop with the first 'correct' response. This doesn't allow opportunities for other learners to stretch their linguistic repertoire and take part in classroom discourse.

Asking more referential questions that seek information and allow open-ended answers facilitate meaningful interaction as compared to asking display questions that restrict teachers and learners to exhibit their linguistic competence only.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out that asking referential questions alone need not break the IRF chain. Teachers need to pay attention to the meanings of the responses rather than treat questions and responses in a routine and ritualized manner.

Real negotiated interaction can take place only if we focus on the meaning contained in the learners' responses rather than evaluate it linguistically and move on. We need to connect our talk management with effective topic management.

Topic management

We should give freedom to the learners to nominate topics as it provides an effective basis for interactional opportunities. *Topicalization* is defined as a process by which learners take up something the teacher or another learner says and (attempt to) make it into next topic. There are several advantages of letting learners have control over the topic:

- Linguistic complexity of the input can be tailored to the learners' own level.
- It can also create better opportunities for negotiating meaning when a communicative problem occurs
- It can also facilitate the production of more complex and extensive output on the part of the learner

Research has shown that learners benefit more from self-and peer-nominated topics than from teacher-nominated topics as they are more likely to create and sustain motivation among the learners and give them a sense of freedom and achievement in taking some control of the classroom discourse. Even learners who do not participate directly in the interaction by initiating a response benefit unknowingly from their peers' contributions. Thus it not only results in increased opportunity for practice but also enables learning.

In topic as well as turn management we teachers play a crucial role. It cannot be denied that the structure of information exchanged (whether it will be IRF or

not) to a large extent depends on the teacher, his/her questions, ways to manage turns and the degree of freedom he/she allows to let learners take over topic nomination.

Check Your Progress 7

- 1) Answer the following questions in not more than 100-150 words
 - a) How can we encourage negotiated interaction in our classroom and thereby break the IRF structure?

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- b) How can we give greater participation rights to our learners?

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- c) What is *topicalization*? What are its advantages?

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2.6 CLASSROOM INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCE (CIC)

Classroom interactional competence (CIC) is defined as, “Teachers’ and learners’ ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning” (Walsh 2006:132). This notion of CIC puts interaction at the centre of teaching and learning and argues that by improving CIC, both teachers and learners will immediately improve learning and opportunities for learning.

When we interact in the classroom we often focus on the learner’s ability to produce correct utterances, rather than to negotiate meanings or clarify a point of view or idea. Therefore, teachers need to consider how effectively learners interact. In other words, our attempt should be to understand how well a student

co-constructs meanings with other students and the teacher. Thus, CIC demands a shift in focus on individual learner to a collective competence. Proponents of this idea of CIC argue that being accurate or fluent speakers in themselves is not sufficient. Learners need to be able to pay attention to the context of interaction, to listen, and show that they have understood, to clarify meanings, to repair breakdowns and so on.

A focus on interactional competence allows us to concentrate more on the ability of learners to *communicate* intended meaning and to establish joint understandings in the classroom. Essentially, interactional competence is concerned with what goes on *between* participants (of an interaction) and how that communication is managed. Rather than fluency, CIC is concerned with *confluence*: which is the act of making spoken language fluent together with another speaker.

Confluence highlights the ways in which speakers attend to each other's contributions and focus on collective meaning-making. This concept of confluence lies at the heart of classroom communication, where the participants (learners and teacher) are engaged in a constant process of trying to make sense of each other, negotiate meanings, assist and query, support, clarify and so on. Thus, both inside and outside the classroom being confluent is more important than fluent.

CIC allows participants of a discourse to display and orient to learning through interactions that are co-constructed and demonstrate abilities to jointly create discourse that is conducive to learning. CIC focuses on the ways in which teachers' and learners' interactional decisions and subsequent actions enhance learning.

Developing CIC

We need to consciously develop our CIC in order to make our classroom discourse effective and to facilitate learning. A teacher who demonstrates adequate CIC uses language which is appropriate to his/her teaching goals. Essentially, this entails an understanding of the need to use language appropriate to teaching goals that is adjusted in relation to the co-construction of meaning and the unfolding agenda of a lesson. Second, CIC facilitates interactional space. Learners are given adequate space to participate in the discourse, to contribute to the class conversation and to receive feedback on their contributions. Third, the interactionally competent teacher is able to shape learner contributions by scaffolding, paraphrasing, repeating and so on. Essentially, through shaping the discourse, a teacher is helping learners to say what they mean by using the most appropriate language to do so. Finally, CIC makes use of effective eliciting strategies. The ability to ask questions, to refine and adjust those questions and to clarify for learners is central to the notion of CIC.

Enhanced CIC results in more learning oriented interactions and it facilitates interactional space. We can maximise interactional space in our classrooms by increasing wait-time, by resisting the temptation to fill silence (that is by reducing teacher echo), by promoting extended learner turns and by allowing planning time. By increasing learner space, we can allow learners to be able to contribute to the process of co-constructing meanings, which is at the heart of classroom interaction.

Check Your Progress 8

1) What is classroom interactional competence (CIC)?

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2) How do we develop our CIC in order to enhance our classroom discourse and hence learning?

Discuss some of the strategies that a teacher with a good CIC consciously uses it in her classroom discourse.

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3) Based on your reading of the entire unit complete the table below. The first one has been done for you. Interactional feature Descriptions

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| a. Scaffolding | 1) Reformulation (rephrasing a learner's contribution) |
| b. Direct repair | 2) Extension (extending a learner's contribution) |
| c. Content feedback | 3) Modelling (correcting a learner's contribution) |
| d. Form-focused feedback | |
| e. Extended wait-time | |
| f. Referential questions | |
| g. Display questions | |
| h. Seeking clarifications | |
| i. Confirmation checks | |
| j. Extended learner/teacher turn | |
| k. Teacher echo | |
| l. Turn completion | |

2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed the importance of promoting meaningful classroom interaction in order to enhance learning in our classrooms. Classroom discourse directs and sustains classroom interaction. The primary responsibility to promote meaningful and effective discourse in the classroom lies with the teacher. As two third of classroom speech constitutes teacher's speech or teacher talk it is very important to understand how we can optimise our discourse instead of maximising it. We discussed the typical and restrictive IRF structure of classroom discourse and we also discussed a number of strategies that we need to consciously develop in order to break the IRF structure and facilitate learning in our classroom.

We highlighted the importance of promoting negotiated interaction in the classroom in order to provide a rich learning environment. Instead of accepting the first learner response it is essential that we push learners to express more clearly. Focusing on the meaning of the message rather than looking for a 'correct' answer facilitates interaction. Letting learners take control over topic selection allows room for learner participation. Therefore as teachers we need to be active listeners, constantly reaffirming, questioning and clarifying learner contributions in order to co-construct meaning effectively in the classroom thereby maximizing learning opportunities.

2.8 HINTS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The word 'react' in the context of classroom is often used to describe to the constant interaction that takes place between the learners and the teacher and among the learners themselves.
- 2) Who gets to speak? (participants' turn distribution)
What do they talk about? (topic)
What does each participant do with the various opportunities to speak? (task)
What sort of atmosphere is created? (tone)
What accent, dialect or language is used? (code)
- 3) We need to understand classroom interaction in order to facilitate language learning. The quality of interaction is largely determined by teachers during their face-to-face communication with the learners. As quality of interaction contributes to learning, it is important to optimize it rather than maximizing it. To improve language learning in the classroom, appropriate interaction in tandem with desired learning outcomes has to be encouraged.
- 4) Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1 a. Research in the area of classroom discourse suggests that teacher plays an important role in understanding, establishing and maintaining patterns of communication that foster, to the greatest extent, both classroom learning and second language acquisition. Therefore, classroom discourse needs to be understood to promote learning in the classroom.

- 1 b. Sinclair and Coulthard(1975) proposed that the underlying structure of second language classrooms typically represent sequences of discourse ‘moves’ IR (E/F), where I is teacher initiation, R is learner response and E/ F is an optional evaluation or feedback by the teacher In later versions of the model, F became follow- up. This model is referred to as the IRF sequence or structure.

IRF is the most dominant sequence in most classrooms because of the following reasons:

- Teachers’ and students’ expectations consider question and answer routines as appropriate classroom behaviour. This is how conversation in a classroom is characterized.
- Teachers feel the need to make learners ‘feel good’. The feedback given by a teacher to a student is important and necessary.
- The system of power relations in most classes means that it is the teacher who has more of the ‘floor’ owing to asymmetrical roles.
- Finally, the time constraints facing teachers make them believe that question and answer routines are the most effective means of advancing classroom discourse.

1 c. The IRF sequence has a negative effect on classroom communication because it gives minimum interactional space to the learners. The teacher talk considerably increases and learners don’t get enough opportunities for language use. In order to facilitate learning in the classroom we need to grant greater participation rights to our learners and allow them to play a more central role in classroom interaction. If our classroom discourse is dominated by the IRF sequence then interaction can become very mechanical and also monotonous. We need to be aware of this and we should consciously try to break the IRF pattern by using various strategies.

1 d. Some typical characteristics of second language classrooms are:

- teachers control the topic of discussion;
- teachers control who may participate and when; students take their cues from teachers;
- role relationships between teachers and learners are unequal; teachers are responsible for managing the interaction which occurs; teachers talk more.

2) True/False

a. False

Two third of the classroom discourse constitutes teacher talk

b. False

IRF stands for Initiation, Response and Follow-up

c. True

d. True

e. False

We should try to break the IRF structure by using appropriate strategies.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Some examples of each question type are given below:

a. Display questions:

Who is the prime minister of India?

What is the capital of Britain?

b. Referential questions:

Do you like your school?

Why do you like dogs?

c. Close-ended:

When do we celebrate children's' day?

Is Ram Nath Kovind the President of India?

d. Open-ended:

What is your opinion on euthanasia?

Do you think schools should stop having uniforms?

2) Benjamin Bloom divided the questions into six types and defined each of them as follows:

Knowledge questions that ask students to get information given in their book or in any other source of knowledge. Example: Where is the Gir Forest?

Comprehension questions that ask for understanding. Example: What does the author mean by 'surrender value'?

Application questions that involve using one's understanding. Example: 'How does yoga help build concentration?'

Analysis questions that ask for looking at parts of a situation. Example: 'In what ways is a solar heater better or worse than an electric heater?'

Synthesis questions which ask students to combine their skills to create new ideas. Example: 'What can we do to make roads safe for visually challenged people?'

Evaluation questions which ask people to make judgements. Example: 'Are large dams best answers to water and power shortages?'

3) In order to promote thinking in the classroom we need to ask referential questions which are genuine questions and demand thinking on the part of the learner. Moreover, open-ended questions which have multiple answers also promote thinking and learning.

Check Your Progress 4

1)

Pedagogic goal	Question type(s)
a. Give practice in grammatical structure	Display questions

	Closed questions
b. Help improve pronunciation	Display questions Closed questions
c. Initiate discussion	Referential questions Open-ended questions Application questions
d. Develop oral fluency	Referential questions Open-ended questions Comprehension questions Synthesis questions
e. To teach sub-skills of reading (scanning/skimming a text)	Display questions Closed questions
f. To encourage learners to express their opinion	Referential questions Open-ended questions Synthesis questions Application questions Evaluation questions

- 2) The time that the teacher gives to the students to think and frame an answer is called *wait time*. Increasing wait time brings about greater learner participation and significantly contributes to higher-quality classroom discourse. Specifically, increase in *wait time* results in an increase in:
- the average length of student responses
 - the number of speculative responses
 - student-initiated questions
 - student-student interaction
 - statements and responses based on inference
 - interactional space that enables turn-taking to be slowed down
 - thinking or rehearsal time
- 3) Increased teacher echo can disrupt the flow of the discourse and reduce learners' interactional space. Therefore, we teachers need to be aware of the function of echo and of the 'dangers' of overusing it. Reduced echo is regarded as a positive strategy that has an important role to play in facilitating learning opportunities in the classroom.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) Repair refers to error correction. The term error correction is a broader term which encompasses all types of teacher feedback. Error correction may be direct or indirect, overt or covert.

Direct repair: This refers to overt error correction. Direct repair involves correcting an error quickly and directly. Example:

Student: My brother like bikes...

Teacher: not like...likes...he likes bikes

Indirect repair: This repair strategy is covert. In this strategy instead of correcting an error directly, the teacher tries to get the correct response from the learner by giving hints and cues. In other words the teacher tries to elicit the correct response through questions or appropriate prompts. Example:

Student: My brother like bikes...

Teacher: Your brother....?

Student: like bikes...

Teacher: he...you are talking about your brother...he...

Student: likes bikes...

- 2) a. Form-focused feedback, indirect repair; Pedagogic goal: to develop accuracy
- b. Content feedback ;Pedagogic goal: to develop fluency, encourage learners to speak
- c. Form-focused feedback, direct repair; Pedagogic goal: to develop accuracy, check knowledge of facts
- d. Content feedback; Pedagogic goal: to initiate/sustain discussion

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) a. We should modify our speech in the classroom because if learners do not understand the input they receive, it is unlikely that they will progress (Krashen, 1985)
 - b. To ensure that our students understand what we say in class we need to match our vocabulary with their proficiency level, use grammatical structures that are not too difficult for them to comprehend, avoid idiomatic expressions, reduce our speed of delivery and use appropriate gestures and facial expressions.
 - c. Reformulation is rephrasing a learner's utterance
 - d. Clarification request is asking students for clarification
 - e. Scaffolding is an interactional feature where in language is 'fed in' by the teacher during an exchange, to help learners express themselves more clearly.
- 2) The following aspects of teacher's speech are generally modified:
 - Vocabulary is simplified and idiomatic phrases are avoided.
 - Grammar is simplified through the use of shorter, simpler utterances and increased use of present tense.
 - Pronunciation is modified by the use of slower, clearer speech and by more widespread use of standard forms.

- Finally, teachers make increased use of gestures and facial expressions.
- 3) a. Backtracking
 - b. Comprehension check
 - c. Reformulation
 - d. Clarification request
 - e. Completion

Check Your Progress 7

- a) Negotiated interaction helps teachers to break the IRF pattern as teachers engage in jointly generating meaningful classroom talk. For example, the teacher's questions may try to elicit learner responses which are based on their own opinions and interpretations and not facts directly taken from textbook. We should try to encourage the learner to struggle to express themselves by providing linguistic and paralinguistic cues. For instance, asking more referential questions that seek information and allow open-ended answers facilitate meaningful interaction as compared to asking display questions that restrict teachers and learners to exhibit their linguistic competence only. In classrooms where negotiated interaction is missing the teachers end up answering their own questions or they stop with the first 'correct' response. This doesn't allow opportunities for other learners to stretch their linguistic repertoire and take part in classroom discourse.
- b) We can grant more participation rights to our learners by encouraging *topicalization*. When the learners take control of the discussion they gain more interactional space and this enhances learner participation. Along with appropriate elicitation strategies we also need to allow learners to take control over the interaction.
- c) *Topicalization* is defined as a process by which learners take up something the teacher or another learner says and (attempt to) make it into next topic. There are several advantages of letting learners have control over the topic:
 - Linguistic complexity of the input can be tailored to the learner's own level.
 - It can also create better opportunities for negotiating meaning when a communicative problem occurs
 - It can also facilitate the production of more complex and extensive output on the part of the learner

Check Your Progress 8

- 1) Classroom interactional competence (CIC) is defined as, 'Teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning' (Walsh 2006:132). This notion of CIC puts interaction at the centre of teaching and learning and argues that by improving CIC, both teachers and learners will immediately improve learning and opportunities for learning.
- 2) We need to consciously develop our CIC in order to make our classroom discourse effective and to facilitate learning. A teacher who demonstrates adequate CIC uses language which is appropriate to his/her teaching goals. Essentially, this entails an understanding of the need to use language

appropriate to teaching goals that is adjusted in relation to the co-construction of meaning and the unfolding agenda of a lesson. Second, CIC facilitates interactional space. Learners are given adequate space to participate in the discourse, to contribute to the class conversation and to receive feedback on their contributions. Third, the interactionally competent teacher is able to shape learner contributions by scaffolding, paraphrasing, repeating and so on. Essentially, through shaping the discourse, a teacher is helping learners to say what they mean by using the most appropriate language to do so. Finally, CIC makes use of effective eliciting strategies. The ability to ask questions, to refine and adjust those questions and to clarify for learners is central to the notion of CIC.

Interactional feature	Descriptions
a) Scaffolding	1) Reformulation (rephrasing a learner's contribution) 2) Extension (extending a learner's contribution) 3) Modelling (correcting a learner's contribution)
b) Direct repair	Correcting an error quickly and directly
c) Content feedback	Giving feedback to the message rather than the words used
d) Form-focused feedback	Giving feedback on the words used, not the message
e) Extended wait-time	Allowing sufficient time (several seconds) for students to respond or formulate a response
f) Referential questions	Genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer
g) Display questions	Asking questions to which the teacher knows the answer
h) Seeking clarifications	1) Teacher asks a student to clarify something the student has said 2) Student asks teacher to clarify something the teacher has said.
i) Confirmation checks	Making sure that the teacher has correctly understood the learner's contribution
j) Extended learner/teacher turn	Learner/teacher turn of more than one clause
k) Teacher echo	1) Teacher repeats a previous utterance. 2) Teacher repeats a learner's contribution
l) Turn completion	Completing a learner's contribution for the learner

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UNIT 3 USING THE CROSS-CURRICULAR APPROACH

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Language Across Curriculum (LAC): Ways and Means
 - 3.2.1 Whole Language Perspective
 - 3.2.2 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
- 3.3 Strategies
 - 3.3.1 Thematic Approach to Teaching-Learning of all Subjects and Language in the Primary School
 - 3.3.2 Language Registers
 - 3.3.3 Project Work as an Instrument for Promoting LAC
 - 3.3.3.1 Short Term Project Work
- 3.4 Writing Across the Curriculum
- 3.5 Reading in Subject Specific Content
- 3.6 LAC as a Response to Internationalization of Foreign Language Instruction and to Promote Multilingualism as a Strategy
- 3.7 Role and Place of English in the Processes of LAC in Indian Contexts
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Hints to Check Your Progress
- 3.10 Suggested Readings

3.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the Unit you should

- be familiar with the concept of language across the curriculum;
- understand the centrality of language in any learning;
- understand and distinguish language use and language register of different content subjects viz. Science, Social Science, Mathematics; and
- be able to design activities for promoting language learning through content learning, and use language as an instrument for learning of content subjects.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There is plenty of research evidence to show that in real life children do not compartmentalise learning. In fact, learning progresses from simpler, concrete, general and more holistic forms initially, to more complex, abstract, specific and fragmented learning at a later advanced stage. This has great relevance to the development of reading and writing skills in the initial years of school. This essentially means that language learning is not confined to the area of the language class alone. Much of the language skills that develop at school are within other subject areas. Although this is particularly true of the mother tongue, it is also relevant to schools where there is a transition to the second language, in this case

English, as the medium of instruction. It is important to expose the children to language tasks from various subject areas, right from the beginning so that they are adequately prepared for later reading and writing tasks in school, and in real life.

Before we specifically look at language across the curriculum let us take a glimpse at the philosophy of integrating the curriculum through what may be called 'holistic teaching'. Holistic teachers endeavour to place the children's learning within the context of their own experiences. **There is a fundamental belief that when learning is meaningful, children learn.** In fact in a meaningful environment it is difficult to stop children from learning. Within the constraints of the formal syllabus, teachers should try, as far as possible, not to fragment learning or divide and subdivide it into artificial time periods or subject areas. We must recognise the fact that boundaries between subject areas have been artificially created, purely for convenience. There are overlaps and a flow between subjects. In the child's mind there are no compartments. These are artificially created. Whether writing happens in a mathematics class or a writing class, it draws upon the same writing competencies and skills.

Sometimes the difficulty in solving a problem sum in mathematics is due to inadequate understanding of the language. It is essential for teachers to encourage children to read, write, and speak in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers should take advantage of an opportunity to teach a geography lesson during a reading class, if the need arises, or the other way round. Such teachers are aware that natural learning that continuously takes place in the real world is not fragmented. Such teachers make efforts to integrate the children's learning across the various subject areas, to the greatest extent possible.

A distinction has often been made between two sets of language skills – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation are essential for basic interpersonal communication. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, on the other hand, is concerned more with the abilities of thinking and learning effectively from the curriculum processes. There is no doubt that both these sets of language skills need to be nurtured and developed. In reality, however, it is only the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills that receive some attention in the English language classrooms. Snow, Met and Genesse (1992) suggest that "traditional methods for teaching second language often disassociate learning from cognitive or academic development." Most of the time learners receive little or no help to make optimal use of their limited second language repertoire in the content subject classrooms. They are neither taught how to read reflectively in content areas nor are they encouraged to pick up study skills for effective learning. Those who excel in content areas do so largely because of their personal interest in the subject, aptitude and their own achievement orientation. The less interested depend heavily on rote memory. While most teachers concern themselves with presenting information in their subject, very few help students acquire the thinking strategies they need to actively construct meaning.

Content area literacy advocates are directing their attention toward "creating educational environments in which students are challenged to analyse, reflect, communicate and create. In such environments effective strategies for reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking are more likely to develop more naturally

and easily than when these are addressed as isolated elements” (Manzo and Manzo, 1993).

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) How do you think language plays a role in learning of Science and Social Science? Discuss this in the light of your learning experience.

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3.2 LANGUAGE ACROSS CURRICULUM (LAC): WAYS AND MEANS

Language across the curriculum in the context of school, higher education and teacher education takes on a broader perspective where it is expected to serve two purposes. Firstly, adopting LAC as a language policy or strategy should be seen in the Indian multilingual context, where learners know at least two languages formally in school and are introduced to the third language from grade six under the National Language-in-Education Policy / strategy. Secondly, in making use of the multilingual classroom as a resource to teach-learn languages as well as content subjects. All National Curriculum Frameworks (developed in the years 1977, 1988, 200 and 2005) advocate **mother tongue-based multilingualism** and use of the languages of learners in the classroom processes as a strategy and a resource for teaching-learning of languages as well as content subjects. This brings the teaching-learning and knowledge construction by the learners closer to their environment and also becomes an authentic experience for them.

3.2.1 Whole Language Perspective

Language is central to learning. Learning, we believe, has to be happen in some medium and inevitably language is a medium for learning. Goodman (1989:209-210) believes that language exist for two reasons. *‘First, humans are capable of symbolic thought, that is, they let things represent other things-they can create semiotic systems. The second reason is that humans are social beings, dependent at birth and interdependent throughout their lives. Social communication among people is necessary so language is central to human communication and human thought.’* Being social enables humans to think and to communicate and communication makes language a major, central instrument of thought. According to Halliday (1978), “Language is a social semiotic. It is also the medium of human learning which makes human learning quite different from the learning of other species. Humans can share their experiences and insights through language and thus pool their intelligence.” For Halliday (1984) language learning is **‘learning how to mean’**, because in the process of learning language people learn the social meanings language represents. He describes three kinds of language learning that happen simultaneously: **learning language, learning through language and learning about language**. So he concludes, *we learn*

through language while we learn language suggesting that every activity, experience, or unit is an opportunity for both **linguistic and cognitive** development. Language and thinking develop at the same time that knowledge is developed and concepts and schemas are built. Whole-language perspective postulates that the act of learning a language is integrated in terms of language skills and concepts. In other words, language serves as an instrument for learning of content. Thematic approach activities illustrated in the forth coming sections illustrate how language learning and content learning are integrated.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) What does Halliday mean when he describes three kinds of language learning that happen simultaneously: **learning language, learning through language and learning about language?** Can you make distinctions between the three?

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3.2.2 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) came into practice as a means to address the demand of increasing globalization which gave rise to migration of people from one region to another for education, economic and market-based work and also due to political and social turmoil in parts of the world which have forced people to leave their homes/nations. Countries in the west, recognizing the need of their increased multicultural populations have had to devise ways in which they teach subjects (such as Social Science and Science) that are not in the language of their migrant learners. CLIL is nothing but language across curriculum, because it was designed in the non-mother tongue medium context while LAC refers to both the contexts. However, the philosophical underpinnings of both are the same. As Peeter Mehisto, David March and Maria Jesus Frigols (2008:11) assert ‘CLIL is a tool for the teaching and learning of content and language. The essence of CLIL is integration. This integration has a dual focus:

- 1) Language learning is included in content classes (e.g. Mathematics, History, Geography, Computer Programming, Science, Political Science, etc.). This means repackaging information in a manner that facilitates understanding. Charts, Diagrams, drawing, hands-on experiments and drawing out of key concepts and terminology are all common CLIL strategies.
- 2) Content from subjects is used in language-learning classes. The language teacher, working together with teachers of other subjects, incorporates the vocabulary, terminology and texts from those other subjects into his or her classes. Students learn the language and discourse patterns they need to understand and use a variety of content.

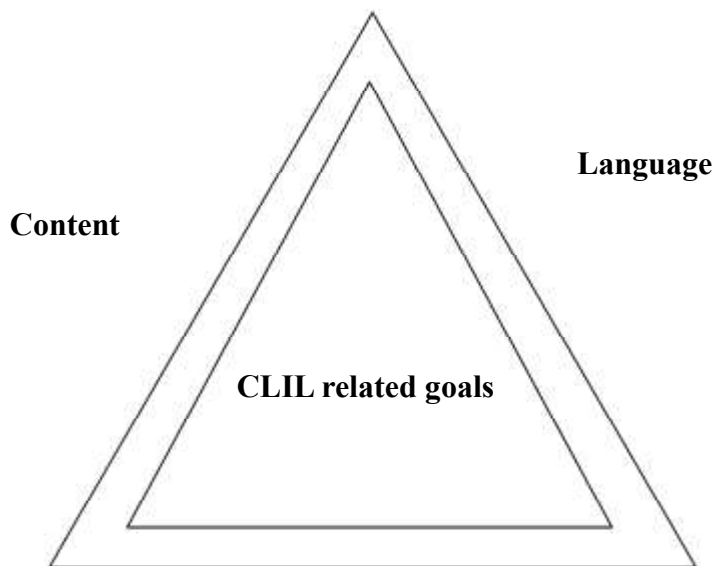


Figure 1 Three goals of content, language and learning skills (Mehisto, P., March, D & Frigols, Maria Jesus, 2008: 12)

There are several benefits of Content and Language Integrated Learning

- i) Learners are exposed to a considerable amount of language through stimulating content. Learners explore interesting content using language dependent activities.
- ii) Content and Language Integrated Teaching (CLIT) supports contextualized learning; languages taught are useful for language that is embedded within relevant discourse contexts rather than as isolated language fragments. Hence students make greater connections with the language and what they already know.
- iii) Motivates students - complex information is delivered through real life contexts for students to grasp well.
- iv) Greater flexibility and adaptability in the curriculum can be deployed as per students' interest.
- v) CLIT is student-centered, one of its goals is to keep students interested and motivated by generating stimulating content, instruction and materials.
- vi) In such classrooms, instead of the lecture method, students learn through doing and are actively engaged in the learning processes.
- vii) Central to CLIL is that learning happens not only through teacher input but through peer input and inaction. Students assume active social roles in the classroom that involves interactive learning, negotiating the information gathered and co-constructing the meaning.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Is CLIL a boon or bane for language teachers? Analyze the merits and demerits of CLIL in your context.

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3.3 STRATEGIES

As a classroom teacher, both the language and the subject teacher can design activities and tasks which lead to language learning in the content subject classroom as well as enable content subjects be used as tools for language learning in the language classroom. This interdisciplinary perspective makes it possible for language and subject teachers to come together in doing the tasks and activities.

3.3.1 Thematic Approach to Teaching-Learning of all Subjects and Language in the Primary School

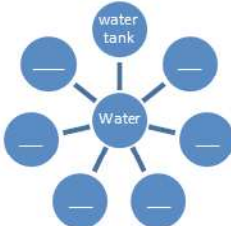
In a way, all learning in the **primary years** of learning is language learning. Vocabulary acquisition is stressed upon the most and serves as the basis for language and content learning. When learners enter school, they know and usually bring at least one language with them as their lived-in experience. This knowledge/skill is used as the basis for further development of language and content. However, the school curriculum is structured in such a way that learners are made to study the languages and subjects as separate entities. Even within language teaching, different languages are taught separately. For example, Hindi teaching has nothing to do with English language teaching-learning. It must be realized that subjects including languages are interlinked. A thematic approach could serve the purpose of bringing together the subjects and break the strict boundaries between subjects and languages as well as between languages. This would make learning authentic. If you take a look at the textbooks at the primary level we can see the syllabus revolves around *the home, neighborhood, my body, friends, my village, town and people in the neighbourhood and their work* and so on. The following thematic activity / unit explains it well:

WATER - for Class III / IV

Learning objectives and indicators:

- i) To familiarize learners of the importance of water for survival of life on earth through experience and tasks;
- ii) To introduce vocabulary (words and word chunks) related to water; and
- iii) To sensitise learners on the importance of water for environmental conservation through songs and stories.

First Language	English as a second Language	Environmental Studies (EVS)	Mathematics
1. A song on water is sung following (i) Choral singing,	1. A song on water is sung following (i) Choral singing, (ii)	1. Asking learners to go around the neighbourhood and find out the water	Activities for familiarising measurement of liquids in

<p>(ii) Snowballing and echo techniques for singing</p> <p>2. Telling a story on water</p>	<p>Snowballing and echo techniques for singing</p> <p>2. Telling a story on water in the first language as well as in the second language.</p> <p>3. Vocabulary building: creating word web on words related to water.</p> 	<p>bodies</p> <p>2. In a group work asking learners to find uses of water for humans, animals, vegetation.</p> <p>3. Difference between liquids and solids.</p>	<p>litre as against kilograms for measuring solid objects.</p>
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Check Your Progress 4

- 1) How do you think thematic approach makes learning authentic? Illustrate with one such activity.

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3.3.2 Language registers

Each subject, say Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences has its own discourse, lexicon and structures which are distinct and unique. Even within a broad subject there could be distinctions, for example with regard to Science, Biology can be stated to be more descriptive than Physics which is more experimental. The language of Mathematics is logical and involves problem solving. Subject teachers need to be sensitive to the nuances of language i.e., towards what is called language registers viz. science register, mathematics register, social science register and so on. This makes it easier to perceive the discourse of the subject which is mostly conveyed through a language and helps in comprehending the ideas. Let's take a look at the language of NCERT's Science textbook of class IX, Chapter 3 Atoms and Molecules. (NCERT, 2006:32)

According to Dalton's atomic theory, all matter, whether **an element, a compound or a mixture is composed of small particles called atoms.** The postulates of this theory may be stated as follows: (i) All matter **is made** of very tiny particles called atoms. (ii) Atoms **are indivisible particles**, which **cannot be created or destroyed** in a chemical reaction. (iii) Atoms of a given **element are identical** in mass and chemical properties. (iv) Atoms

of different elements **have** different masses and chemical properties. (v)
 Atoms combine in the ratio of small whole numbers to form compounds.
 (vi) The relative number and kinds of atoms **are constant** in a given compound.

Take a look at the underlined sentences, phrases or clauses. They are in the passive voice or in simple present tense. This denotes that the Science register expresses neutrality, i.e., that facts have been proved, experimented or tested and accepted universally as truth. This may have been changed by another scientist later. But at the given point of time this is or was the truth. Language of Science presents the characteristics of Science as objective, neutral, amoral and of proven fact which can be tested anywhere in any condition. A Science teacher should be sensitive to the linguistic features which reveals the characteristics of science and scientific processes viz. observation, formulation of hypothesis, testing and so on.

The following is a corpus-based analysis of NCERT Mathematics textbook of class VI which shows how the language of Mathematics operates and where the use of determiners and prepositions are used to convey the mathematical concept of problem solving and abstraction. The most frequently used words are not the ‘content’ words, they are function words like articles, prepositions and so on. The word ‘number’ appears as the ninth most frequently used word. This reveals how the mathematical ideas and thinking are conveyed in language in assumptions, calculations, logical sequencing and thinking. Prepositions, determiners and conjunction play important role in making the calculations effective. For example, ‘into’ matters more when we do a multiplication.

N	Word	Freq.	%	Texts	% mmas	et
2	THE	410	5.19	1	100.00	
3	TO	179	2.26	1	100.00	
4	IS	165	2.09	1	100.00	
5	AND	164	2.07	1	100.00	
6	IN	153	1.93	1	100.00	
7	OF	143	1.81	1	100.00	
8	A	133	1.68	1	100.00	
9	NUMBER	122	1.54	1	100.00	
10	NUMBERS	113	1.43	1	100.00	
11	WE	103	1.30	1	100.00	
12	DIGIT	72	0.91	1	100.00	
13	YOU	63	0.80	1	100.00	
14	ARE	50	0.63	1	100.00	
15	AS	50	0.63	1	100.00	
16	FOR	47	0.59	1	100.00	
17	OFF	46	0.58	1	100.00	
18	IT	45	0.57	1	100.00	
19	PLACE	44	0.56	1	100.00	
20	CAN	43	0.54	1	100.00	
21	THIS	41	0.52	1	100.00	
22	DIGITS	39	0.49	1	100.00	
23	AT	38	0.48	1	100.00	
24	GREATEST	38	0.48	1	100.00	
25	HOW	38	0.48	1	100.00	

Figure Corpus analysis of mathematics textbook: Frequency counts of chapter 1 Class VI.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) Analyze the language of a Social Science textbook keeping in view the following: (i) Tense and time of the statements (whether they are in present or past tense and active or passive voice) (ii) Whether the doer of the action is given importance or the processes of the action is more important.

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- 2) What do you understand by language registers? Explain with an illustration.

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3.3.3 Project Work as an Instrument for Promoting LAC

Inter-disciplinary project work engages and motivates learners. Many subjects get integrated and language becomes central in carrying out the task. Let's see how project work works as a cross disciplinary tool to learn the content of many subjects as well as concentrate on language usage.

Sl. No.	Project work Theme / Title	Subjects which can be involved
1.	<p>Conducting surveys among students and adults in and outside school. Language engagement involved:</p> <p>i. Designing survey questions</p> <p>ii. Asking questions / interview</p> <p>iii. Analysing and interpreting</p> <p>iv. Writing the report of the survey</p>	
	a. Use of tobacco survey	Science, Health, Social issues and problems, Mathematics (for calculation using statistical methods), Geography (to find where tobacco is cultivated?)

	b. Eating habits survey	Science, Health, Geography and History (history of the food item)
	c. Pocket money survey	Society, Economics and Health (what do we do with the pocket money)
	d. Sleeping and play routine survey	Health and wellness, science, human body and anatomy and society.
	e. Study habits survey	Health and wellness, Science, human body and anatomy, education and school, and society.
	f. Person of the year survey	Social Science, Politics and Society
2.	Holidays and festivals of the area; Language engagement involved: (i) Reading (about the holidays and festivals) (ii) Speaking to local people, (iii) Documenting, (iv) art and visuals, (v) writing	History, culture, economics, religion and society, art (drawing)

Here is an illustration of a short-term project work in detail.

3.3.3.1 Short Term Project Work

A. Project Work Title: Designing a brochure for tourists visiting your town / village.

Level: Elementary & Secondary

Age: 13 – 18 years

Time: One / Two week(s)

General Aims: To produce a brochure for tourists and visitors to our town / village

Subject involved: History, Geography, Economics and Language.

Language Aims:

- i) To know about the history of the place, different buildings, people, language and cultural activities in the village / town.
- ii) To develop the four language skills and strategic competences by using interviewing techniques, collection of data / information about people, places and economic indicators;
- iii) To learn to use appropriate vocabulary relating to History, Geography and Social life of the area and structures specific to a brochure;
- iv) To learn to write in a poster format.

B) The Process

Teacher has a brain storming discussion with the group about the idea / theme and asks learners to chalk out a plan of action for the project. Learners plan and allocate work to each member of the group and collect required information. They work together to design the brochure based on the collected data. The collected information from various sources-interviews, photos of monuments, facts and figures about the village, etc. is scrutinized and made into a poster / brochure to present it to a visitor. The brochure is made by the group using colorful ink, crayons, etc and the same is presented to the class. The following processes can be involved in carrying out the project work.

- i) **Selecting and briefing:** Projects can be initiated when learners and teachers decide on a topic. It is better to encourage students to bring their own ideas and have a whole class discussion to allot topics to each group. Alternatively, the teacher may offer a list of possible topics. Sometime whole class projects can also be thought of.
- ii) **Planning and language generation:** Having chosen a topic for the project, learners now work together to decide upon how to proceed and what kind of language needs to be used. The teacher has to direct this very carefully and here is where the learners need guidance and support. Some of the initial discussions may take place in the classroom paving way for activities in and outside the school. The work can also be divided among learners.
- iii) **Collection of data /information / details:** Learners gather required data/ information from a number of sources. They can consult encyclopedia, read books, interview people, collect pictures and illustrations, record audio/video, visit internet, watch TV, etc. They can write their field notes to remember and organise the data collected.
- iv) **Planning, writing the draft and editing:** Having collected the required data/ information and ideas, it is time now to plan and organise the data and interpret it to write the draft. Since most of the projects in language(s) will be a written report or creative work like play, songs, essays, chapterisation could also be planned. It is also possible to have projects in which learners work together to script and enact a play or direct a play. Editing is an important part of writing the report. Learners should be made aware of the process approach involved in writing a good piece of work.
- v) **The result and presentation:** The goal of the whole project has been achieved when learners work together to produce a report or do an activity. The final product may be a written report, a play, collection of songs or enactment of a play, designing a poster, etc. Learners are asked to submit it to the teacher and/or present it to the whole class or to the whole school during assembly or on special occasions (in case of play, songs, etc.)
- vi) **Follow Up:** The teacher with the group which carried out the project can think of possible follow up activities that would enable students to use language in different contexts. For example, a project could be about the class newspaper. This could be explored as a continuous feature;some

other group could try the next issue of the newspaper / magazine. Teacher should take care that the project should not hamper the other learning activities of students.

C) Teacher’s role

The teacher is the facilitator throughout the life time of the project. She is a catalyst and makes herself available whenever the learners need helping, prompting, clarifying and delimiting. Consultations with the language teacher or other subject teachers (if needed) are of immense support for learners to accomplish the task. The teachers along with students in the classroom discussions should develop a schedule of activities for each group and number of meetings/ consultations that they can have with the teachers while doing the project. Teachers should be able to suggest activities (i.e. projects) that would suit the interest of particular group of learners.

D) Assessing / Evaluating Project Work

Projects are part of the continuous assessment process. We need to ensure that each learner in the group takes active part in the work and contributes to the successful completion of the task. It is also very important that each learner is engaged with the language (uses the language in various ways) while doing the project. The language teacher may keep a check list or a chart to record what has been happening (who does what and how) during the project. Asking each learner in the group to maintain a diary of their work plan, how the information / data was collected and interpreted, the problems faced and the way the report / the final product was brought out, etc. could be of use for the teacher in assessing individual contribution in the group. This is one part of the assessment. The teacher also has to observe and record how each student in the group and each group as a whole made progress in carrying out the project. A checklist or portfolio may be developed to record the progress made by each student and each group. Descriptors to indicate the work done by each learner could be created collaboratively by students and teacher. We may also have specific guidelines (developed by teachers themselves) for assessing the project work as part of the Continuous Evaluation.

Descriptors in the Portfolio/record may look like this

Criteria for assessing the performance	Selection	Collection of Data	Compilation / Interpretation	Reporting and Presentation	Collaboration in the group
A	Suggested the idea or provided an alternative idea		Ideas elaborated coherently and with clarity		The group worked together well. There was cooperation
B	Supported the idea and provides more evidence				
C	Shown interest in carrying forward the idea generated.				
D	Remained passive or non receptive to ideas.				

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) What do you think are the benefits of project work in promoting language learning as well as content subjects?

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3.4 WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Much of the writing that happens in the school is within other subject areas. It is therefore important to expose the children to writing tasks from various subject areas, right from the beginning so that they are adequately prepared for later writing tasks in school and in real life.

Since the mid-nineteen seventies, researchers in the western world have repeatedly pointed out a decline in the ability of students to write well. One reason given is that the students are not asked to write enough. Also writing work in other subject areas of the school curriculum is not often viewed as writing. One does not look at the writing of a mathematics problem or the flow chart of a geography lesson, or a report based on diagrammatic or tabular information as ‘writing’. Yet students spend a very large amount of time doing such tasks. These tasks require the ability to present ideas logically, to choose the appropriate style and form accurately; sometimes they also tap the ability to transcode information from a diagrammatic to the written form.

Writing research in recent years has highlighted the need to look at writing across the curriculum. This is because a very large amount of writing that happens in real life or in the later school years in the second language is to do with other subject areas. It is important, therefore to extend the kind of writing tasks we undertake to include activities from across the curriculum.

Writing in Science, Social studies or Environmental studies (EVS)

These subjects present endless opportunities for writing. Much of the learning that takes place in the areas of learning at this early stage is directly related to the children’s experience: **Children observe, collect, classify, experiment, and enquire about a particular subject area from their immediate environment.** They need to then communicate their findings in suitable ways. They can further extend their own understanding through suitably designed creative writing experiences. Suitably planned work cards are one way of allowing children to do their own, independent investigations and presentations based on these. These could either be done as a part of subject teaching or as a part of project work. To allow for individual interests the children could be given a set of work cards to choose from. In a class of very young children, it is sometimes simpler to have all the children working on the same thing, with some amount of individual variation. Much of the investigative work that children do at the primary school level is teacher selected. The best activities are ‘hands on’ experiences. In the

beginning these activities could begin by focusing on the child's skills of observation. Picture books can serve as very good research vehicles. Some samples of the kind of work cards that may be used are given below.

Flowers

Ask students to collect two different types of flowers and bring them to their next class. Tell them to make the chart given below:

Observations	Flower A	Flower B
Colour		
Shape		
Width		
Special characteristics		

Ask students to look carefully at the flowers and complete the above chart. Then use the information to write a paragraph that explains how these flowers are alike and how they are different.

Insects

- 1 Find out how many legs an insect has.
- 2 How is an insect different from a bird?
- 3 How is it the same?
- 4 Draw a beautiful insect you saw. It could be in a book. Imagine that this insect became your friend. Write a paragraph about what you did together.

Jungles

- 1 Name three jungle animals
- 2 Why are jungles so thick with plants and trees?
- 3 Write the names of any real jungles.
- 4 Write the name of a jungle story you have heard.
- 5 Imagine you went to a jungle. Write a story describing your experiences.

A Mammal

- 1 Who do you think is the cleverest mammal in the world? Draw a picture of this mammal.
- 2 Write a riddle about this mammal and see if your friends can guess it.

My Five Senses

- 1 Name the five senses that you have.
- 2 Does everyone have five senses? What about animals like dogs, cats, cows, and goats?
- 3 If someone gave you a wish that you could have another sense what would you like? Write a funny story about what you would do with your sixth sense.

Kangaroos

- 1 Where do kangaroos live?
- 2 Why do you think a mama kangaroo has a pocket and a mama rabbit does not?
- 3 Supposing your mama had a pocket for you to sit in, write about one day that you spent in the pocket of your mama.

My Family

- 1 Make a list of the people in your family.
- 2 Find out who has the largest family in your class.
- 3 Do animals have families?
- 4 Write about some things you like about your family.

In the above work cards, we have integrated writing activities with other subject areas. The writing can be imaginative, creative or factual. When children are given open-ended activities, it is important that the teacher should guide them about where they will get the information.

3.5 READING IN SUBJECT SPECIFIC CONTENT

When we use the language across the curriculum framework in our subject teaching as well as language teaching, the activities are authentic and practical for the students. This natural process of language learning makes the learner internalize the vocabulary, patterns and pronunciation of words more effectively. Reading promotes language learning implicitly and enables learners to think about and internalize the underlying form i.e., grammar and phonology of the language naturally. The sub skills of reading given below are useful in reading any text, be it a literary text or any subject text.

- i) Recognizing vocabulary, picking out key words.
- ii) Deducing the meaning from familiar lexical items.
- iii) Understanding the background and foreground of the information.
- iv) Understanding and having the ability to determine the conceptual meaning of the text.
- v) Understanding the communicative value (function) of sentences and utterances.

- vi) Recognition of literary devices used in the text.
- vii) Understanding cohesions between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices.
- viii) Ability to determine the writer’s purpose, intent and point of view.
- ix) Analysing text by gathering information available beyond the text.

Authors like Lunzer and Gardner (1984) suggest that there are certain ways in which information is organized or structured in content area subjects. Each of the text types has its own characteristic generic headings or **information constituents** and we expect these constituents to go together. This “going together” of related information constituents contributes to coherence or sense of a text. For example, a text that belongs to the topic type **physical structure** will deal with these information constituents – parts, location of parts, properties of parts and function of parts. This topic may be on the structure of a plant. All these descriptions would deal with different parts of the object, what the part looks like, what they are called, how they are made and where they are situated, what the function and purpose of a particular part is and how it works.

Similarly, experiments and practical activities cannot be undertaken without apparatus, material, procedures or steps, results and interpretation. Although the apparatus and materials would vary from experiment to experiment as would the results and interpretation – the information constituents or generic headings would remain unchanged.

Check Your Progress 7

- 1) Read a unit / chapter from the Economic or Geography textbook of class IX and make notes of important points.

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3.6 LAC AS A RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONALIZATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND TO PROMOTE MULTILINGUALISM AS A STRATEGY

Language across the curriculum perspective was born out of the compulsion to respond to the needs of learners who were made to study through a foreign language instruction. The need now has been realized in mother tongue medium or any other context too. Countries like India where learners who learn their subject in mother tongue as also in English medium or a regional language (not their mother tongue) need language support. This provides opportunities for learning the language as well as the subject. However, there is an increasing

need for recognizing the centrality of language in subject learning. In the Indian context we need to provide opportunities for our learners to use the languages known to them in meaningful contexts. **Supplementary and complementary roles of languages** known to the learner will be of use to promote learning. This does not mean just one-to-one translation. Using the language of learners as a resource and a strategy to teach-learn the content will lead to language and content learning better. The following activities/tasks illustrate how multilingualism as a strategy could be realized in our classrooms

At the primary school

- i) Telling the same story in two languages (known to children of the class). This helps children to comprehend the story better.
- ii) Thematic vocabulary in two or more than two languages known to children: Asking children in groups to find words relating to a particular theme viz. Home, School in two languages or more. This helps them think about the possible words in the languages.

At the secondary level

- i) Watching a television programme or a serial in the mother tongue and writing an episode wise summary of the same in English or vice versa.
- ii) Collection and translation of folk songs from mother tongue and translation of the same into English.

3.7 ROLE AND PLACE OF ENGLISH IN THE PROCESSES OF LAC IN INDIAN CONTEXTS

The English language has a unique role today in the educational scene of this country. It is taught as a language across the country and it is also the medium of learning in number of schools. There is also an increasing demand for the language (NCERT, 2005). Teaching of Science, Mathematics and Technology through Indian languages medium also present difficulties when translating the terminologies originating from Latin, Greek, and so on. This demands serious attention by the teacher who needs to find ways to use the languages (as a tool) to make learners comprehend the concepts. All the languages available in the classroom come in handy to support learning. The position paper on Teaching of English (NCERT, 2006) while making a case for whole language perspective for teaching-learning of language stresses the need for **supplementary and complementary roles for languages**, particularly for English as a second language. **English does not stand alone**. It needs to find its place

- **along with other Indian languages**

- i) in regional-medium schools: how can children's other languages strengthen English teaching/learning?
- ii) in English-medium schools: how can other Indian languages be valorised, reducing the perceived hegemony of English?

• **in relation to other subjects:**

A language-across the- curriculum perspective is perhaps of particular relevance to primary education. Language is best acquired through different meaning-making contexts, and hence all teaching is in a sense language teaching. In the initial stages contextual meaning supports language use, at later stages meaning may be arrived at solely through language. (NCERT, 2006: 3-4)

Check Your Progress 8

- 1) Can you cite an example for semantic mapping to learn a science concept?

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- 2) Write a lesson plan to process based writing for Geography lesson?

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Check Your Progress (Overall Assessment)

- 1) Define language across curriculum in Indian language medium context with an illustration. Also illustrate how LAC can benefit learning of languages and subjects in an English medium classroom.

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- 2) How does thematic approach benefit learning across the languages and subject?

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- 3) Write a lesson plan in Science for class VIII using LAC as one of strategies.

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3.8 LET US SUM UP

In real life children do not compartmentalise learning. In fact learning progresses from simpler, concrete, general and more holistic forms initially, to more complex, abstract, specific and fragmented learning at later advanced stage. Boundaries between subject areas have been artificially created purely for convenience. But the reading and writing skills that are available with the learners may not be adequate to do the required tasks in science, mathematics or social science classroom. As language pervades all areas of learning, it is essential for teachers to encourage language skills like reading, writing and speaking in all areas of the curriculum.

Teachers, across different subject areas of the curriculum, need to collaborate with the language teacher to integrate content and language teaching.

3.9 HINTS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

Language plays a role for learning the content. Any idea has to be conveyed through a medium and the medium may be visual or / and print. Thus, language becomes inevitable in learning the subject. You may narrate your experience in learning content subject.

Check Your Progress 2

Read Section 3.2.1 to answer this question.

Check Your Progress 3

Read section 3.2.2 to answer this question.

Check Your Progress - 4

Thematic approach makes learners work with ideas and language and thus it becomes experiential learning. The interconnectivity of the theme makes learning realistic and authentic. Also read section 3.3.1 to answer the question.

Check Your Progress 5

Read section 3.3.2 to answer the questions 1 and 2.

Check Your Progress 6

Project work makes learners work with the ideas and language and thus it becomes experiential learning. The interconnectivity of the subject makes learning realistic and authentic. Also read section 1.3.3 to answer the question.

Check Your Progress 7

Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 8

Do it yourself.

3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 4 MONITORING INSTRUCTION -THE REFLECTIVE TEACHER

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Monitoring in the classroom
- 4.3 The importance of monitoring in the classroom
- 4.4 How can we monitor our own class?
 - 4.4.1 What are your Beliefs about Teaching Language?
 - 4.4.2 What are the Learners' Beliefs and Attitudes about Language Learning?
 - 4.4.3 How did Tasks/Exercises Work in Class?
 - 4.4.4 Classroom Observation
 - 4.4.5 How do Students Learn in Class?
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Answers

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should have gained

- an understanding of the concept of monitoring as an ongoing activity
- an understanding of the nature of monitoring of one's own teaching
- an appreciation of the value of monitoring one's own class
- familiarity with aspects of instruction that can be usefully monitored
- familiarity with some of the tools and procedures that can be used for monitoring.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Planning for classroom instruction has to be flexible. What actually happens during lessons cannot be fully predicted and controlled. Thus planning effectively means being prepared with ideas and resources to deal flexibly with situations that emerge as existing plans proceed. The teacher has to judge the situation from lesson to lesson and indeed from stage to stage within lessons, and make appropriate decisions and choices. For this she needs to seek and obtain information in the form of feedback about ongoing instruction. She has also to use this information to fine-tune her teaching so that best use is made of the opportunities the classroom context provides. In this unit we shall focus on this extra effort (paying special attention to what is going on) that is demanded by a flexible approach to teaching. We will also see that monitoring in the long run helps to make the teacher a reflective practitioner "one who is learning from experience, understanding ideas more deeply and thus growing professionally.

Watching and keeping track of something that is happening is something that we do quite naturally and almost unconsciously as part of our everyday lives. Sometimes this is deliberate and conscious. For instance, while crossing a road

with heavy vehicular traffic or driving on such a road, or while cooking something unusual or special we tend to pay close attention both to what is happening around us and to our own actions. However, while engaging in routine and habitual activities (the daily walk to the bus stop, locking doors and turning off lights every night, etc.), we hardly pay any attention to the detailed actions or steps. However, we are monitoring here too, because as soon as something unusual happens or something goes wrong we immediately become fully aware of what is going on. This process of watching or observing something as it happens is called monitoring. In our discussion here, we will be focusing more on the monitoring that is done with a higher level of conscious attention. However, a valuable base level of informal and unconscious monitoring is always present when we engage in any purposeful activity. Systematic monitoring is a matter of building on that base, not a correction or remedy applied to something that is faulty.

The word monitoring has associations with inspection and evaluation by an 'external' authority. The traffic policeman, the health inspector (at a food processing plant), the referee for games like football and hockey, are all monitoring in this inspection mode. They are external agents who have been vested with some power or authority. However, there is another quite different mode of monitoring that people engage in, without any 'official' power to do so being given to them. Consider a scooterist going through heavy traffic. S/he is monitoring what is going on all around him/her very carefully and constantly adjusting his/her path (speed, direction, lane, etc.) in response to this information. Similarly, a doctor who is monitoring the progress of a patient will study the 'data' and make various decisions about treatment and review them after a day or two or maybe after a few hours. In both cases the person who is doing the monitoring uses the information as the basis for action, and this action relates importantly to that person's own plans and operations. In this unit we consider the processes of monitoring when the teacher is getting feedback about her own teaching. Monitoring helps her become more aware of what is going on in class and she can use this awareness to modify (improve) her teaching.

4.2 MONITORING IN THE CLASSROOM

We have seen some general examples of monitoring ongoing activities above. Now let us see how monitoring occurs in the setting of the classroom lesson; after all a lesson is a planned sequence of activity leading to a goal. Here are some examples of teacher activity in class that are linked to the monitoring function.

Example 1 A science teacher is explaining a new concept (e.g., friction). She presents two detailed examples to help clarify the concept. She notices that many students are puzzled and are glancing at one another anxiously. She decides to take up a somewhat informal example, one that was not in her plan initially. (And fortunately this seems to 'work'....)

Example 2 A language teacher is dealing with a poem from the Reader. During the discussion, a student of 'average' ability (one who rarely says anything in class) offers his interpretation of a symbol. This is novel, and also quite insightful for a child of that age. Some other students seem to find this perspective interesting. The teacher sets aside the interpretation-explanation she was leading

the class towards (in her plan) and spends about ten minutes exploring this new possibility. She is especially concerned about accepting and encouraging students who are quiet and shy, and building up their confidence.

Example 3 A language teacher dealing with a prose extract, has allowed about 15 minutes for discussion in small groups in her plan. The class does not seem very enthusiastic, and the groups take a long time to settle down. But after about 12 minutes she finds that most groups are getting into fairly serious discussions, and that there is a high level of participation on the whole. She decides to let the discussions continue for another ten minutes. As a consequence the 'reporting back' stage is setback to the next lesson. This teacher was keen on taking full advantage of discussion questions that the students obviously found interesting, and promoting widespread participation.

What do we find in these examples that might be stated as a general 'principle'? It is that teachers are not rigidly following detailed plans they might have thought of very diligently. They are modifying their plans **based on the feedback** they get about what is happening, and what students are doing. However, they are not just giving up and trying something different away from the plan. The changes appear to be purposeful in response to the real situation in the class.

Thus we can say that monitoring is a typical and normal aspect of the teacher's classroom behaviour. However, this does not mean that monitoring is always a highly conscious and systematic process. In fact it is usually not so. Monitoring is more likely to be done without the teacher being fully aware of it - something that is more or less automatic. Now this is very different from doing it casually or carelessly. Let us recall the skilled scooterist or driver on a busy road. S/he is getting information and acting on it all the time, but may not be conscious of it - because this observation and response has been so well practised that it is virtually automatic. Here again we must remember that this 'automatic' behaviour is not a matter of fixed or rigid habits, it remains highly flexible.

In the same way, a teacher who is monitoring her class and acting on the information, may not be quite aware of it. Suppose we asked a teacher shortly after a lesson, to write down specific instances from the lesson where she got relevant information from monitoring and then took a clear decision to change her plan. She would probably say she cannot remember any specific stage where she did this. Suppose on the other hand, that when she was relaxed and had some free time, we asked her do the following exercise. [If you are a practising teacher now, please do this in relation to a class you taught recently.]

Think back to some incident or development that occurred in class that you had not expected. For example - a sudden noise in a corner when the class was listening to you attentively;

- an error made by a 'good' student;
 - a brilliant answer given by a 'weak' student.
- 1) What exactly happened?
 - 2) Why do you think it happened that way?
 - 3) How did you handle it?

Here we have given the cue that **unexpected event(s)** should be the starting

point. The teacher will probably be able to recall one or more specific stages of the lesson. (As we know from general experience, unexpected events are always easier to remember). The teacher would also probably be able to state what her response to the situation was, what consequences it had. In other words, she would normally be able to comment on the incident(s), and even offer some sort of interpretation. What this suggests is that even though a teacher might say that she did not do any conscious monitoring, when encouraged to think back to the class and reflect on it, she will often show evidence of having ‘taken in’ information about various aspects of the class - and these could easily be aspects that she did not intend to pay special attention to. One reason for this is that teachers do have some plan for a lesson. What will be done and what is supposed or expected to happen has been **thought about before hand**. Teachers, thus, generally monitor at least some aspects of the classes they teach, though not very consciously most of the time.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Some common activities get very little attention from us while others are attended to carefully. What is the difference between the two?

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- 2) Even in the case of activities that do not usually get much attention, the level of attention can suddenly increase. Why does this happen?

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4.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING IN THE CLASSROOM

As we have seen above, an informal level of monitoring is going on while the teacher is conducting a lesson. This is an interesting and encouraging phenomenon. However, we must be careful not to assume that all teachers monitor carefully and successfully all the time, and their teaching is therefore very relevant to the needs of their students.

Far from it! In fact in all areas of education, and language courses are no exception, there is the persistent problem of the curriculum-in-operation not being very effective or satisfactory. Even newly designed courses, supported by sophisticated materials and appropriate teacher orientation reveal many inadequacies, especially

when followed in a variety of institutions. The explanation lies in the fact that the teaching-learning process is not a simple and straightforward matter of predetermined and neatly organized inputs leading to clearly predictable outcomes. As we know from everyday experience, even simpler operations can go wrong. For example, when assembling a household gadget following a manual, or when baking a cake using a recipe, following a set procedure does not always guarantee success.

It should not surprise us therefore, that in our teaching-learning endeavours, there is nearly always a gap between our intentions and what is realized. The processes activated in class (cognitive, motivational, interpersonal, ...) are influenced by various factors, thus making outcomes highly unpredictable. This does not mean that we give up and accept that teaching cannot be planned and organized and made (more) effective. This complexity of the teaching-learning situation presents us as individual teachers with a challenge - that of monitoring several aspects of the actual situation and going as far as possible to take account of the information obtained as a lesson progresses. A plan for teaching should not be followed strictly like a recipe, but used as a starting point for further 'situation-specific' decisions.

This need for modification or adjustment of plans is what our earlier discussion of flexible planning points to. What learners in a given class will actually do (or be prepared to try to do seriously) - and this is their contribution to the lesson - cannot be controlled, or even predicted accurately when planning in advance. Hence the teacher must keep getting 'up to date' information (especially about the learner involvement and progress) and 'fine-tune' her planned inputs accordingly.

Monitoring is the means of obtaining feedback on an ongoing basis so that teaching can be made sensitive or responsive to the immediate situation in the class. We have already seen that a predisposition to monitor (informally) is present in teachers.

Monitoring needs to be carried out in a more conscious and systematic manner if it has to help with 'improving' instruction. Monitoring of instruction can, of course, be done by others (outsiders) as well. This has advantages and disadvantages. Here our focus is on self-monitoring. This process as noted above, helps immediately in the (more) effective handling of given lessons. In the long term, it plays a major role in enhancing the teacher's professional skills. The rationale for self-monitoring can be summed up as shown below.

- i) A teacher who has an awareness of teaching and its different components is better prepared to make appropriate judgements and decisions in teaching.
- ii) Critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching. Critical reflection, as we saw earlier, involves examining our own experiences as a basis for decision-making and self-development. It involves asking questions about how and why things are the way they are, the value systems they represent, alternatives available, etc.
- iii) Much can be learned about teaching through self-inquiry. Very often class visits by outsiders are not feedback-oriented but are judgement-oriented. Moreover, rather than depending on external sources for information, the

approach that seems to have a lot of potential for self-development is one where teachers monitor and collect information about their teaching either individually or through collaborating with a colleague and making decisions about what alternatives to adopt. Lawrence Stenhouse, a well-known expert in curriculum-research, is of the opinion that all well-founded curriculum research and development, whether the work of an individual teacher, of a school, of a group working in a teachers' centre or of a group working within the coordinating framework of a national project, is based on the study of classrooms. It thus rests on the work of teachers. He further adds: 'It is not enough that teachers' work should be studied: **they need to study it themselves**'.

- iv) Another related concept to self-monitoring is the view that experience by itself is insufficient as a basis for professional growth. We know that for many experienced teachers, many classroom routines and strategies are applied almost automatically and do not involve a great deal of conscious thought and reflection. Experience is the starting point, but for the experience to play a productive role, it is necessary to examine such experience systematically. For this, systematic procedures are needed. A more detailed discussion of these points is available in Richards and Lockhart (1994).

Self monitoring then is 'illuminative' because it involves raising the consciousness of teachers as to what is actually happening in the classroom as opposed to what is supposed to happen. It is also formative in purpose since the information we get about the process and product of teaching-learning can be immediately fed back to alter or improve our own class. Therefore it involves descriptions of what happened, and why and how this self-awareness helps in developing deeper insights into the complexities of a classroom. Therefore monitoring plays a major role in a teacher's self-development. Monitoring therefore involves systematic observation and explanation of classroom processes.

Task: If you are already a teacher, can you identify changes, however small, you have made to your teaching? Why did you make these changes? How did these changes come about?

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) What would be two examples of changes in a plan that a teacher can make fairly smoothly during a lesson, as a result of the feedback received through monitoring?

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2) What is the basic reason for the gap between intentions and outcomes that seems a characteristic of teaching?

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4.4 HOW CAN WE MONITOR OUR OWN CLASS?

Having examined the need to monitor our own classrooms, we shall discuss in this section: **what** aspects of teaching-learning should we monitor and **how** can we monitor them.

To recapitulate very briefly what we have discussed earlier: self monitoring is simply the practice of teachers themselves observing and reflecting on what takes place in class with a view to bringing about desirable changes in teaching and learning.

What does teaching-learning consist of? No matter what kind of class it is, it seems to have certain factors that are common.

Task: What does a typical class involve? List some aspects that come to your mind from your experience. Some are mentioned to start you off.

- selecting activities/tasks/exercises
- presenting learning activities
- setting up a group or pair-work task
- giving instructions for a task/exercise
- teacher explaining, clarifying, discussing
- learners responding to teachers
- learners responding to other learners(continue

The list of factors is likely to include factors that relate to (i) different **stages** of teaching-learning, (ii) the main participants in the class i.e. teacher and students, and what they bring to a class by way of their beliefs, attitudes, expectations, assumptions about teaching-learning and (iii) the physical features of the classroom.

You would have realised while doing this task that each of these factors overlaps to quite an extent with other factors. This does not matter. This in fact means that a lesson is a complex combination of different factors and is therefore holistic. Very often it is quite difficult and sometimes impossible to isolate factors and examine them individually. This does not mean that we cannot look closely at a few of the aspects at a time. What we would like to examine actually depends on what stage we are in at a given time. We might also want to look at the same phenomenon from different perspectives i.e. from our own perspective (that of the teacher's), from the perspective of students, and so on.

We will now discuss how we can monitor our own class systematically and in a principled way. In talking about it, we will try and cover as many aspects of a class as possible. For example teachers' and students' beliefs about language, and language learning that affect the actual learning in the classroom, the roles of teacher and students, classroom interaction which is a major factor in language learning, the nature of language learning tasks- including tasks used for assessment and so on. We may not, as we saw earlier, deal with these in this order or even separately. There are overlaps among the different aspects and therefore there would be overlaps in the way we monitor them.

We can collect information about the different aspects of teaching and learning using a variety of different procedures. These procedures incorporate a formative element by allowing us to get continuous, on-going feedback about the class, about the different aspects of ELT curriculum in process. They seek to provide the teacher with insights into what actually happens when teaching and learning is taking place.

The main procedures suggested in the unit are diaries (also referred to as journals and field-notes), observation, checklists and inventories, and self-assessment forms.

4.4.1 What are Your Beliefs about Teaching Language?

- a) Let us first look at our own beliefs and attitudes which influence the way we behave in the classroom. Whether you are presently a teacher or not, as a student you would have seen different kinds of teachers, for example, teachers with different styles. Teachers' style is inevitably influenced by their attitudes and beliefs; for example, the nature and role of knowledge, in the case of language learning– their view of language and the nature of learning and teaching.

According to the views one holds about these and other related issues, one could be what Douglas Barnes calls a **transmission** teacher or an **interpretation** teacher. These two basic types are not exact opposites, but are tendencies towards one extreme or the other.

In very general terms, a *transmission* teacher maintains a high degree of control over the learners in order to impart knowledge which she embodies. The subject matter is central and the teacher of this type will reward contributions from learners which she approves of. The teacher also judges whether the learners have come up to the expectations set prior to teaching. On the other hand, an *interpretation* teacher prefers to disperse responsibility for learning among learners and creates conditions that are conducive to learning. The teacher organises classroom activities, sets up learning tasks and assists learners in doing these activities. She also allows for individual learning styles and therefore for differential learning.

Task : The beliefs and attitudes of the teacher are realised in classroom action. Are you a *transmission* teacher or an *interpretation* teacher? Why? Can you think of one or two specific instances from your class which substantiate your answer? Which aspects would you like to analyse further?

- b) You can analyse your own beliefs about teaching with the help of a checklist suggested below. Select 5 statements that most closely reflect

your beliefs about how English is learnt and how it should be taught.

- 1) Language is a set of grammatical structures and words which are to be taught systematically in class.
- 2) Language is meaningful communication and is learned by practice in informal situations.
- 3) When students learning English as L2 make errors, these errors should be corrected immediately and later explained through examples.
- 4) When students learning English (L2) make errors, it is best to ignore them as long as we know what they are saying.
- 5) Students learning English (L2) usually need to master some of the basic listening and speaking skills before they can begin to read and write.
- 6) It is important to repeat and practise a lot for learning a language.
- 7) The most important part of learning a second /foreign language is learning the grammar.
- 8) It is easier for children than adults to learn English as a second language.
- 9) It is not necessary to actually teach students how to speak English. They usually begin speaking on their own.
- 10) Everyone can learn English.

Adapted from Richards, J. and Lockhart, C. (1993). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

From the statements you have selected, can you state what according to you is language learning and teaching? Do you wish to analyse it further?

4.4.2 What are Learners' Beliefs and Attitudes about Language Learning?

Learners, too, bring to learning their own beliefs, goals and attitudes which influence how they learn. We know that learning is the goal of teaching, but learning is not the mirror image of teaching. We may want to know what assumptions and expectations learners bring to classrooms.

You could draw up an inventory as shown below and give it to your students for their opinion. Find out from students to what extent they agree with each of these statements:

- 1) English is much more difficult than other languages.
- 2) English is the most important language in the world.
- 3) You need to know a lot of words if you want to know English.
- 4) We need to practise every day to improve our English.
- 5) Teachers should explain grammar rules of English in the class.
- 6) It is enough if the teacher gives grammar exercise(s) as homework.
- 7) It is important to speak English very well.

- 8) It is better if the teacher corrects all our mistakes.
- 9) I like group work because when I make mistakes my friends don't correct me.
- 10) It is not correct to ask the teacher when you have a doubt.
- 11) I know the rule but I forget it when I speak.

Adapted from Richards, J. and Lockhart, C. (1993). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

(You could modify this list depending on what aspects you would like information on.)

You could speculate about the kinds of learners who will agree/disagree with the above statements. Is it likely that statements 3,4,5,8,10 are chosen by the same learners? Why? Are any of the characteristics reflected by the statements at odds with your beliefs? Would you like to investigate it further?

4.4.3 How did Tasks/Exercises Work in Class?

You might be interested in how well the tasks/exercises/activities you set up measured up to the criteria you had in mind. You could list a set of criteria as suggested below and observe and record your views as the class progresses.

The Tasks	At the end of 20 minutes Yes/No	At the end of the class Yes/No
1. Were based on real-life needs.		
2. Provided opportunity for skill-practice.		
3. Provided for different levels of learners.		
4. Allowed interaction among learners.		
5. Promoted information sharing.		
6. Encouraged learners to reflect critically.		
7. Encouraged learners to evaluate themselves.		
8. Were interesting/informative/challenging.		

The criteria given are adapted from Nunan, D. (1989). *Understanding Language Classrooms*. London: Prentice Hall.

Which tasks/aspects of tasks would need to be modified? Why?

4.4.4 Classroom Observation

- a) If on the other hand you would like to monitor your class as a whole, you could use this observation schedule adapted from Scrivener, J. (1994). *Learning teaching*. Heinemann.

Observation Schedule [Make observations after 20 and 40 minutes]

The Tasks	Yes	Not sure	No
1. All instructions were clear.			
2. The class understood what was wanted at all times.			
3. Every student was involved at some point.			
4. Students were interested in the lesson.			
5. The teacher made sure all students understood.			
6. Materials and learning activities were appropriate.			
7. Class atmosphere was positive			
8. The pacing of the lesson was appropriate.			
9. There was enough variety in the lesson.			
10. There was the right amount of teacher talk.			
11. Error correction and feedback were appropriate.			
12. There was genuine communication.			
13. Group work was well organized.			
14. Explanation of points of language was clear.			

At the end of the class you could note down any comments you may have about each of these statements and the class as a whole. What did you learn from this exercise? This exercise is based entirely on your own retrospective observation. Another exercise you could try is to record your class on an audio-tape recorder. Play it at the end of the class and then make your comments.

- b) You could also write a diary on the following lines to keep a record of how things were planned and implemented in class. Before the lesson, think about your plan and ask yourself the questions in the First set. After the lesson, ask yourself the questions in the Second set. At the end, answer the questions in the Third set.

First set - Before the lesson

- 1) Is the lesson that you have planned interesting?
- 2) Does it provide opportunities for students to be actively involved?
- 3) What classroom arrangement will you use? What materials do you need?
- 4) Which skills will you focus on in the class?
- 5) What might the students learn? Write the aim of your lesson.
- 6) Are the instructions clear?
- 7) What provision have you made for students who finish slowly/quickly?

Second set - After the lesson

- 1) What evidence was there that (a) the students were interested (b) the lesson was smoothly/badly organized?
- 2) Which learners were not involved? Why?
- 3) Write down some example of the language that the students used. Was it meaningful?
- 4) What will you do next to follow up the lesson?
- 5) Which of your aims were achieved? Were other things achieved instead?
- 6) When did the students give their own ideas? Did you accept their ideas? Did they have a fair share of time to talk or did you dominate the class?

Third set

- 1) What have I learnt?
- 2) How would I like to improve/change/develop my teaching in the future?

4.4.5 How do Students Learn in Class?

- a) When you need to monitor student learning, it could be done by observing the min class - working in groups or pairs or individually. Since observing the whole class may not be very easy, you might want to focus on a few students on a given day or on one group/pair on a given task. The following checklist might help.

Checklist for Informal Assessment

Dimensions of Student Behaviour	Student's names			
Use these letters to code performance:				
F = frequently				
O = occasionally				
R = rarely				
N = never				
1) Substantiates own views				
2) Argues logically				
3) Shows creativity/originality				
4) Responds to others' views/ideas				

5) Asks relevant questions				
6) Attempts to answer questions when asked				
7) Obstructs discussion (monopolises, is discourteous/disruptive, etc.)				
8) Uses L1 (mother tongue)				
Comments				

- b) If on the other hand you want students to monitor themselves and give you their views on it, you could give them a self- evaluation form as suggested below. This could be repeated every fortnight or month to see any progress in their learning indicated by their entries.

Checklist for Self-Evaluation of Learners

- 1) How much time outside class have you spent
 Speaking English?
 Listening to English?
 Reading English?
 Writing English?
- 2) Who have you spoken to this week in English? (not including your teacher) Do you feel your conversations were generally successful?
 Yes/No Why?
- 3) What films/TV programmes/radio programmes have you seen/listened to this week?
 What did you think of it?
 Did it help you with your English?
 If yes, how?
 If no, why not?
- 4) Have you written anything in English this week? If yes, what?
- 5) Write down 10 new words in English that you have learnt this week.
- 6) Do you feel confident using these words when you speak/write?
- 7) Where did you learn them?
 Other context (please specify)
- 8) What progress do you feel you have made in English this week?
 a lot quite a lot a little not at all
 speaking. ...
 listening
 reading
 writing

- 9) What are you going to work on/try to improve next week?
speaking
listening
reading
writing
How are you going to do this?
- 10) Now rate your progress for this week on your own personal scale from 1-11
(1 = lowest 11=highest) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) How can monitoring be of help in the professional growth even of teachers who are already quite experienced?

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.....
.....
.....

- 2) What are some of the aspects of the teaching-learning situation that a teachershould be able to monitor without much difficulty?

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.....
.....
.....

4.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have looked at the general notion of monitoring, or observing events (especially our own actions) as they are occurring. We have seen that teaching is an activity that is usually monitored informally by teachers. The principle of flexibly planning instruction so that it can be made responsive to the actual teaching-learning situation indicates that monitoring has an important role to play. It helps the teacher with the ‘final’ stages of implementing a curriculum in a particular class. The practice of monitoring in the long run helps to make the teacher into a reflective practitioner -one who is not only doing a technical job but also learning from experience. We have also noted some of the aspects of the teaching situation that can be monitored by the teacher, and looked at the procedures and instruments that a teacher can fairly conveniently use. (A number of tasks for you to attempt - assuming the role of a teacher usually - have also been suggested. These were meant primarily as exercises to sensitize you and help you to relate concepts introduced here to your experience.

They are not ‘text-based questions’ with correct answers.)

4.6 HINTS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Activities that are routine and habitual are carried on more or less automatically or ‘unconsciously’.

Examples: i) washing ones hands and drying them with a towel.

- ii) Moving past rows of desks, handing out sheets or booklets.

Activities that are not well practiced or are new tasks in new situations call for concentration and attention,

Examples: i) Carrying a tray with tea cups filled to the brim.

- ii) Going from desk to desk in an examination hall checking hall tickets, seat numbers, etc.

- 2) In routine activities while things are proceeding normally attention remains minimal, but if something unexpected happens (something goes wrong) full attention is given to the activity.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1)
 - i) A detailed explanation of some point with various examples can be cut short if there is a clear indication that most students have understood.
 - ii) An idea that is clearly of great interest to students comes up during a lesson, and the teacher decides to take up a discussion or task related to it immediately (and not a day or two later as in her plan).
- 2) The teacher’s plan and intentions are necessarily based on assumptions about the learners. Even if she knows them well, it is impossible to predict how they (30 or 40 of them) will react during a particular lesson on a particular day. They will invariably ‘push’ some aspect of the lesson in some unforeseen direction or the other.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) As a teacher gains experience on the job, more and more of her teacher behaviour tends to become routine and habitual. One learns from experience by reflecting on it, and hence the value of monitoring for the experienced teacher. It can help her teaching (probably quite good by general standards) to become even more effective for more of her diverse learners.
- 2)
 - the teacher’s beliefs and assumptions
 - the learners’ attitudes and expectations
 - the difficulty and manageability of certain new task types
 - the quantity and quality of interaction among the members of one or more of the groups set up in class.
 - the level of satisfaction or sense of progress that students themselves feel.

