

# Some Improved Methods of Teaching English

## Language Laboratory Method

The language laboratory is a self-learning device. Though it was originated in America, it gained its popularity in U.K. in 1960. It provides opportunity to the students to hear the language spoken by a native and to practice speaking the language themselves.

A language laboratory recognises the individual differences in language aptitude of the learners. Therefore, it follows an individualistic approach. It allows enough time for oral and auditory experiences. It is designed in such a manner that a student can practice carefully produced pattern of drills. Thus the teacher is relieved of repetition as in traditional teaching. It has gained popularity in several countries as an important technique of teaching a foreign language.

The main objectives of language laboratory are :

- (i) To develop speaking skills,
- (ii) To develop listening skills, and
- (iii) To develop comprehension skills.

It is the latest method of language teaching. The students learn any language through audio-visual aids in the direction of the teachers either individually or in group. Several audio visual aids are used for making teaching interesting, but their use is not so much effective as it might to be.

According to **Dictionary of Education**, "*Language laboratory is a special facility used particularly in the actual oral-method of language teaching and offers each learner a separate booth connected with a central station which can receive his speech, record it for him to play back and also provide other listening models of language.*" It is generally applied in the developed countries of the world. Keeping in view the importance and utility of the laboratories of science in the developed countries of the world, language laboratories also came into existence for language teaching. The teachers with the help of these laboratories establish co-ordination between individual teaching and group teaching and create interest and activeness in students for learning language.

**Merits of Language Laboratory.** Merits of language laboratory are as follows :

- (i) It is very useful for teaching English language.
- (ii) It is very useful in teaching oral reading.
- (iii) All the students can read orally, pronounce the sound at a time, while in general class-room teaching, only one student can make oral reading.
- (iv) In this method, the students can record their oral reading in tape records and they can improve their pronunciation by playing cassette in tape-recorder and they can improve their pronunciation if there is any error.
- (v) The teacher can check the mistakes in pronunciation of students easily sitting at the table.
- (vi) This method enables students to focus their attention to the subject-matter and avoid the outer din and noise because of the use of headphones.
- (vii) This method keeps every student of the class in contact with the teacher by one signal. Though the students of the class remain separate from one another, they contact their teacher for instruction when they need.

**Demerits/Limitations.** Demerits of this method are as follows :

- (i) It being very costly, does not suit to undeveloped country like India. Language laboratory method can only be afforded by rich countries.
- (ii) The students remain separate from one another, and after some time, they feel boredom. So this method can not be used for language.
- (iii) This method checks the capacity of oral discussion of the students because they don't come in direct contact with their subject teacher.
- (iv) This method does not help in development of writing efficiency.
- (v) The eyes, hands and ears of the students remain busy with the aids in language laboratory method, as a result, they remain deprived of seeing the actions and gestures of teacher.

## Project Method

The project method came into being as a corollary of the interest factor of the students which makes them active. It makes the students actively participate in the process of teaching-learning. The activities in the method are child-centered and he enjoys opportunities of freedom of thinking of doing and of learning. It is expected that the child will interact with the real life situations and learn so as he may be able to put his knowledge into practice in the later stages of life.

The project method has been defined by the scholars as a purposeful activity to completion in a social environment. A project is a kind of life experience which is motivated by a strong desire. This method comes true when, putting it into practice for "*learning by doing*" and "*learning by living*". **Stevenson** has defined it as "*a problematic act carried out to completion in its natural setting*".

*"Project is a unit of work in which the student is made responsible for planning and richness of the work".*

—**Parker**

In fact, the project is a method in which learning while working is emphasised. The teacher works as a guide and assistant. In this method, the consideration of curriculum and teaching method is done from the student's point of view. In this method. "*Learning while experimenting is more important than learning while doing.*"



**Principles of Project Method.** This method is based on certain principles as :

**1. Principle of Experience.** It means that the students gain knowledge by self-experience and this knowledge becomes the permanent part of students mind and they can use this in the practical circumstances of life.

**2. Principle of Objective.** This method is aimful and students are aware of this objective from the beginning of the work itself. Because of this awareness about objectives they take interest in their work and complete it enthusiastically.

**3. Principle of Activity.** The students get knowledge by self-activity and this helps them in their all round development.

**4. Principle of Coordination.** This means that the students do not get knowledge of all subjects separately, but they get blended knowledge of all subjects during the solution of a problem.

**5. Principle of Utility.** In this method, the determined work should be useful to the student in his present or future life. This utility makes them take interest and zeal in their work.

**6. Principle of Reality.** The aim of purposeful education is to provide knowledge to the students related with the real life, that is to produce real life situations in the school, so that they can coordinate themselves with real life.

**7. Principle of Freedom.** It means that the students are left in free atmosphere in this method, so that they may work according to their energy and capacity and attain the objectives accordingly.

**8. Principle of Sociality.** This method also develops a feeling of sociality by working collectively to complete a project. It develops in them the feelings of cooperation, patience etc. and they have become social in life.

**9. Principle of Frugality.** Under this method the students have to finish work within a specified time so they try to gain more knowledge in a limited time. In fact, while deciding about a project, this principle is kept in mind.

**Chief Characteristics of Project Method.** The chief characteristic of this method is as following :

- (i) The project should be individually and socially useful.
- (ii) The project should be purposeful and economical because of this feature, this method is thought better for senior students than junior ones.
- (iii) This method evokes curiosity and eagerness among students towards learning without exercising any force on them.
- (iv) The project chosen must be relevant to the students in one or the other way, so that they may remain attentive and take interest in it.
- (v) This method should be challenging and interesting and include various activities in itself.
- (vi) The material required for the project should be in the range or limit of students, that means, they should not face any problem in their use.
- (vii) The project should develop cooperative attitude in the students.

**Procedure.** Generally the project method has the following steps or levels to complete it :

- (i) At first, the teacher gives birth to such circumstances in the class which enable a students to select a suitable project. This can be created by

- debate, story telling, taking students on educational tours, showing models or pictures to them. This is called creation of the project.
- (ii) Now the students have to select the project. Before starting work, the students present their project before the teacher individually or collectively. Then the teacher guides them to select the project with keeping in view the fund, time and available means in mind.
  - (iii) The third step is planning of the project. The students make a outline of the project for its completion. Now the project is distributed among the students separately according to his interest ability capacity etc.
  - (iv) After the completion of the project the teacher and students conclude how far they have achieved their objectives. In fact, it is a kind of self-criticism, which is an important part of training.
  - (v) After evaluation of the project, the students write the activities in the project note-book. This recording includes selection of the project planning discussion, division of duty books and material in use, difficulties faced to complete the project and acquired experiences and direction.

**Advantages of Project Method.** This method had following advantages :

- (i) This method is based on the psychological principles of individual differences.
- (ii) It lays emphasis upon learning by experience and learning by doing.
- (iii) It is based on the famous psychologist Thorndike's rules of learning.
- (iv) Both individual and collective teaching can be carried out by this method.
- (v) Natural blending and coordination of various subjects can be done easily by applying this method.
- (vi) Social qualities such as cooperation, sympathy and coordination can be developed in the students by this method.
- (vii) This lays stress on democratic principle that all students have freedom to express their views.
- (viii) This is helpful in developing personality of the students by beautifully blending physical and mental activities.
- (ix) Under this method the students get education of practical life which can fulfil their needs in this social life.

**Disadvantages.** In spite of based on psychological theory this method is not void by some shortcomings which are as under :

- (i) The knowledge got from the projects is unorganised disorderly and sudden.
- (ii) Skilled and experienced teachers to guide the projects are not easily available.
- (iii) Students sometimes feel troublesome to work under this method and often do not take interest in it.
- (iv) The condition of completing the project within a specified time diverts the project from its basic objective.
- (v) This is not suitable from economic point as much money have to be spent on it.

- (vi) The knowledge of the whole subject-matter of English is imparted with this method.
- (vii) This method creates hindrance in the whole programme of work.
- (viii) Revision of the gained knowledge is not done in this method.
- (ix) Dull students do not take interest in it and want to escape responsibilities by inquiring from other students.
- (x) Suitable text books are not available according to this method.

### Look and Say Method

In this method complete words, rather, than single letters of the alphabet are presented before the child who observes them not as a combination of letters but as single units or "word pictures". The pupil is given practice in learning the words connecting them with the object pictures and then saying them. Spellings has no place in this method.

The look and say method seeks to teach English with the aid of eye and ear very useful devices (charts, flash cards) can be used in this method. It is based on the assumption that the real and meaningful unit of English language is the word, not the isolated letter and eye should be trained to recognise word as a whole. Word pictures are associated with objects and actions with actions. According to **Dictionary of Education**, "Look and say method is a method of teaching, reading in which the words are first presented as whole and later analysed into part." Words are presented with the help of audio-visual aids.

**Merits of this Method.** Merits of this method are as follows :

- (i) It is a natural method because we begin to talk in words not in letters.
- (ii) This method is claimed to be the easiest and quickest method of learning to read English.
- (iii) This method overcomes the difficulty of irregular spellings.
- (iv) This method creates a direct association between words and their objects.
- (v) This method follows the psychological principles of proceeding from the concrete to the abstract, and from the known to the unknown.
- (vi) This is very economical method and ensures a rapid progress in reading.

**Demerits.** Demerits of this method are as follows :

- (i) This method has all the limitations of direct method.
- (ii) This method ignores the spellings of words until a very late stage, when the pupils begin to feel learning of spelling to be a very hard job. It tends almost to kill the "spelling sense" in the pupils.
- (iii) Some words like 'that', 'what', 'how' etc. cannot be represented in pictures. This creates difficulty for the teacher.
- (iv) Much labour is required to associate every word and every sentence with a picture.
- (v) This method causes an over dependent on picture and other aids.
- (vi) The pupils can not acquire the ability to tackle new combinations of letters, by their own intelligence and understanding.
- (vii) Sometimes a serious confusion creates among pupils because of overlapping the pictures and their details altogether.