



## Activity- Based Language Learning

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**ABSTRACT**

*Due to the insistence of the importance of communication skill in the recruitment process, the need for improving one's language has gained recognition nowadays. English for years has been taught in the examination point of view, and the teachers fail to realize that the language learning experienced by the students is an opportunity bestowed on them to learn it thoroughly. The contributions of the language teachers in imparting knowledge towards learning the language are significant. Every minute must be exploited to make the teaching process activity-based.*

**KEYWORDS :** Activity –based language learning, non-verbal communication, word chain, Kinesics

**I. INTRODUCTION**

In the present day, English Language has transformed the whole gamut of communication because of its global status. This rich language has invaded into personal and business space and has thus assumed special significance. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru has described English as "our major window on the modern world".

In India, due to the colonial regime, majority of the population is better acquainted with the language. But the bookish and rigid curriculum made the child passive where the teacher was a dictator to the receptive child. But now, modern education has various tools to enhance effectiveness of teaching this language, whereby it not only enables the student to gain knowledge but also to enjoy learning experience. In particular, activity-based learning produces the desired outcome as it leaves an indelible impression on the student's mind. It thus serves to quicken perception, strengthen emotions and unify interests.

**2. Activities**

The present paper proposes to explore the various methods of the use of activity-based language teaching in the following chosen areas as an experiment in the classroom:

- Conditional Clause : 'If' Clause
- Tenses : Present, Past tense
- Vocabulary : Word Chains
- Non-Verbal Communication : Story telling

**2.1. 'If' Clause****2.1.1. Activity :**

The students should (i) frame sentences using 'if' clause according to given situations and also (ii) frame a series of sentences using conditional clauses.

**2.1.2. Teacher's Role :**

The teacher divides the students into small groups and briefs situations asking the students to write a sentence with 'if' clause using the below mentioned pattern :

If + subject (relative clause) + present tense verb,

subject + will/won't/can/can't/might/might not + verb + extra information

**For example:**

1. If the girl who is walking on the sidewalk steps on the banana, she will fall down.
2. If the boy who is crossing the road doesn't look both ways, he will be hit by a car.
3. If the car that is in the left side of the picture turns at the corner, it will hit the boy.

She later asks them to frame a sequence of actions by taking the 'if'

clause from the previous sentence and completing the sentence with a main clause and the next student to take the main clause from the previous sentence and introduce an 'if' clause to complete a sentence.

**An example is given herein under :**

1. If it rains, we cannot go out.
2. We cannot go out, if curfew is declared.
3. If curfew is declared, no bus will ply.
4. No bus will ply, if the drivers go on a strike.
5. If the drivers go on a strike, we cannot reach our working spot on time.

**2.1.3. Students' Role :**

For a given situation, the students should write sentences with 'if' clause using their imagination. In the next activity, they should write a sequence of actions by taking the 'if' clause from the previous sentence and completing the sentence with main clause.

**2.1.4. Skill Developed :****This game show format**

1. enables the teams to work together to write 'if clause' sentences quickly
2. encourages them to be imaginative and to learn conditional clauses in a play-way method.

**2.2. Grammar : Tenses****2.2.1. Activity :**

A student in a group says a story or gives directions regarding a route to his group. A listener from each group moves to another group to say the story and to answer the questions asked by them.

**2.2.2. Teacher's Role :**

The teacher divides the students into groups. She gives directions that a student should brief a story to his group with full information. Then she directs another student of the same group to report the same to another group. She encourages the second group to question the speaker to elicit full information.

**2.2.3. Students' role :**

A student should narrate a story in past tense to his group. His group should get all the information regarding the situation by questioning him. One student should move to another group and repeat the story in reported form using present tense. He should answer all the questions asked by that group.

**2.2.4. Skill Developed :**

This activity gives training in verbal communication where it

1. improves pronunciation
2. helps in correct use of present tense
3. perfects usage of past tense

4. hones narration skills
5. aids active listening
6. promotes reporting skill

### 2.3. Vocabulary

#### 2.3.1. Activity :

Students should change one word into another with the smallest possible number of steps by changing only one letter each time and producing meaningful word every step.

#### 2.3.2. Teacher's Role

1. In the first activity, the teacher divides the students into groups and gives words, to produce a list of words of the same category within a span of few seconds and insists that words should not be repeated in the same game. An example chain for food would be: SOUP - PEAS - SUGAR - RICE.
2. In the second activity, she asks the students to solve word chains – a list of words, where each word differs from its neighbour by exactly one letter. An example of such a word chain is Soup= Foul SOUP – SOUR – FOUR – FOUL.
3. In another activity, she organises the students into groups and asks each player of the group to come up with words that begin with a letter or letters that the previous word ends with.

For eg. – Prayer, racial, lamination, negotiate, expenditure and so on. Severe, reverence, central, altar, articulate and so on.

#### 2.3.3. Students' role :

The students should form a list of words of the same category and also form word chains by changing one letter for each step and finally reaching the target word. They should also form a list of words beginning with the last letters of the previous word.

#### 2.3.4. Skill Developed :

**These activities enable the students to**

1. increase their vocabulary and
2. recognize possible letter combinations.

### 2.4. Non-Verbal Communication

#### 2.4.1. Activity

A story should be given to a student to be enacted before the class. The other students should pose various questions to the performer to understand the content of the given story.

#### 2.4.2. Teacher's Role

The teacher gives a story to a student and makes him enact it before the class. She should give instructions to the other students to get all the information by questioning him. She must then ask any student to narrate the story to ensure that they have understood the non-verbal communication.

#### 2.4.3. Students' Role

The student who enacts the story should use correct non-verbal cues and make the class understand the story. The other students should draw all the minute details of the story by questioning the actor. They should be ready to repeat the story when the teacher insists on anyone of them.

#### 2.4.4. Skill Developed :

**This activity enables students to**

- 1) understand a message through non-verbal communication
- 2) recognize wordless messages received through the medium of gestures, signs, body movements and facial expressions
- 3) become aware of 'Kinesics' or body language which forms part of the total meaning of a message communicated.

### 3. Conclusion

These important units of activities will encourage creativity in students where the teacher withdraws into the background and prepares the children to work by themselves through play-way methods and becomes, in the words of Sri Aurobindo "not an instructor or task master, (but) a helper and guide". It paves way for individual instruction, individual initiative and self-education.

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