

State Curriculum Framework-2011

Position Paper
on
English



**School Education Department
Telangana, Hyderabad.**



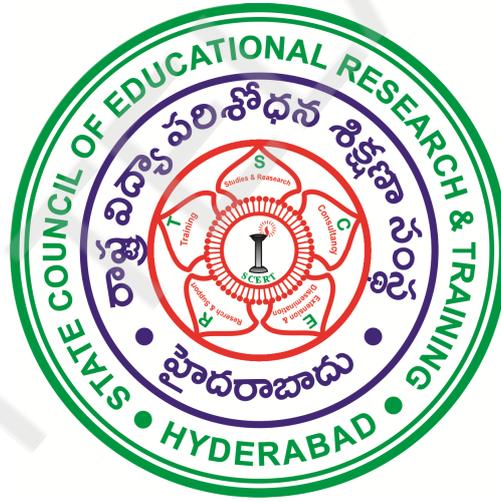
**State Council of Educational Research & Training,
Telangana, Hyderabad.**

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Vision of the State

The vision of the State is that ALL children should receive high quality education and become responsible citizens with an acute sense of the other. They should be aware of their environment and think about it critically. They should listen carefully and speak fearlessly. They should be able to understand what they hear and read; but they should also be able to questions it. Teachers should promote these skills, provide meaningful teaching learning processes in natural and friendly environment that enable children to express themselves freely and ask questions. Teachers are collaborative learners and reflective practitioners. Parents and community should have a sense of ownership and participate in the life of the school. In a world which is becoming increasingly instrumental, materialistic and competitive, school should become a space for reflection, cooperation and promotion of human and ethical values.

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Executive Summary

English in India is a global language in a multilingual country (Chap. 1). A variety and range of English-teaching situations prevail here. In Andhra Pradesh, there is a growing need for quality English education right from class 1, which should be met with by adopting new methods and materials. English should find its place along with other languages in the classroom. The innate language faculty of the child needs a society that unfolds it. (Chap.2) Language changes (pronunciation, spelling, grammar, etc.) according to the needs of the society; and the variety that is used by the government becomes the standard variety. Every child's language should be respected and become a part of the teaching strategies. Since language carries the culture, tradition, and customs of the society, children should be encouraged to appreciate others languages. They should be sensitized to gender stereotypes, individual differences, and learning difficulties.

The goals of learning English are: attainment of a basic proficiency, such as is acquired in natural language learning and the development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition. (Chap.3) The learner should achieve grade appropriate levels of competence to listen to, understand, and respond; competence to respond orally to what is viewed, read or listened to; competence to read, understand, and respond orally, graphically, or in writing; competence to respond in writing to what is viewed, read or listened to; competence to understand and use various words and idiomatic expressions; competence to use language creatively; competence in aesthetic sensibility and social responsibility; competence in the scientific study of language; and competence in metalinguistic awareness.

Every child has innate language faculty using which he/she can acquire a number of languages effortlessly (Chap.4). Though learning a second language is different from this, mimicking the process of acquisition along with explicit teaching will be effective. The children learn better when the focus is on meaning rather than the language form. Holistic treatment of language, input-rich environment, and cooperative learning making use of the multiplicity of languages available in the classroom help children learn English effectively.

English teaching needs to be freed from the shackles of mechanical drills, meaningless exercises, and rote memorization of questions and answers; and blossom in a print-rich environment, where children are given comprehensible input, and where the classroom processes and materials mimic the natural language acquisition situation(Chap.5) Children learn in a variety of ways- through experience, making and doing things, experimentation, reading, discussion, asking, listening, thinking and reflecting, and expressing oneself in speech, movement or writing – both individually and with others. They require opportunities of all these kinds in the course of their development. Though textbook is important for teaching, English language teaching cannot be effective unless the teacher rises above the level of the textbook and start using his/her own materials, the environmental print, other materials like recorded audio/video lessons/programmes, newspapers, magazines, etc.; and guide children to use resources like libraries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, ‘tell me why’ books, world wide web, and available human resources.

Teacher development programmes should aim at not only the teaching competence, but also the teacher’s language competence (Chap.6). National English Language Tests needs to be evolved and used to test the language competence of both the teacher and the learner.

Evaluation needs to be made an enabling factor for learning rather than an impediment(Chap.7). Continuous comprehensive evaluation needs to be adopted and the learner should be freed from examination stress.

Introduction

These introductory remarks and substantial parts of what we say later are based on NCF 2005; 'Syllabus for Language Teaching', the position papers on the 'Teaching of Indian Languages', 'Teaching of English', and 'Curriculum, syllabus and textbooks', NCERT, 2006; and the position paper on languages, SCERT, Andhra Pradesh. The new perspective on language that is advocated here differs significantly from the traditional stimulus-response and imitation based models of explaining the process of language learning.

1. English – A Global Language in a Multilingual Country

1. 1 English as a global language

There are around 6000 languages in the world and about one-sixth of them are from India. All these languages struggle for their existence. Some survive and some fade away slowly. (Linguists fear that these 6000 languages could be reduced to just a few hundred within a century or two.) Among the languages of the world, English has become the global language as it is the most widely spoken language. It is the mother tongue of 350 million people, and is used by another 1150 million people in 100 countries as a 'second language' or a 'foreign language'.

What made English a global language? It is often suggested, for example, that there must be something inherently beautiful or logical about the structure of English, in order to explain why it is now so widely used. 'It has less grammar than other languages', some have suggested. 'English doesn't have a lot of endings on its words, nor do we have to remember the difference between masculine, feminine, and neuter gender, so it must be easier to learn'. But a language does not become a global language because of its intrinsic structural properties, or because of the size of its vocabulary, or because it has been a vehicle of a great literature in the past, or because it was once associated with a great culture or religion. A language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people – especially their political and military power. But international language dominance is not solely the result of military might. In the 19th and 20th centuries the

communication technologies, the press, the media, and the growth of competitive industry and business brought an explosion of international marketing and advertising. Any language at the centre of such an explosion of international activities would suddenly have found itself with a global status. And English was apparently ‘in the right place at the right time’. (Crystal David 2003, *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press pp 10)

1. 2. The status of English in India and Andhra Pradesh

We fought the English to win our freedom; to win the world, today, we learn English.

English in India has the status of ‘associate official language’. It enjoys various titles such as ‘the language of science, computers and information technology’, ‘the library language’ (India is the third largest publisher of books in English.), ‘the language of industry, commerce and administration’, and more recently ‘the language of opportunities’. It has emerged as an important component in all spheres of life – the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures, transport and communication, information technology, etc. *‘English is today a symbol of people’s aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life’.* (position paper *English NCF – 2005*).

People of our state strongly feel that without the ability to read, write, and communicate in English with competence and confidence, their children will have limited opportunities for academic and career success. They know that English literacy is the key to participating and succeeding in a democratic society and global economy. This is the reason for their demand of early introduction of English in the curriculum. The state government acceded to their demand eschewing the debate on the merits of a very early introduction of English. Today we have a number of children ready to learn English (and a number of problems to teach English!) from class I.

1.3 English and other Indian languages

‘English is the language on which the sun does not set, whose users never sleep.’- Quirk

This quotation sounds so imposing that it may force us think of reducing the perceived hegemony of English. But, there is no need to worry; English finds its place along with other Indian languages. Since language boundaries are porous, multilingualism in the classroom can be taken as a resource and use it to see that English and other languages grow together supporting and strengthening one another. Linguistic purism, whether of English or the Indian languages, must yield to a tolerance of code-switching and code-mixing if necessary. The mother tongue of the learners need not enter the English classrooms as an imposter. It can enter majestically to facilitate learning English, and in the process strengthen other languages too.

Given a variety of inputs in English, and a genuine attempt to understand them, the mother tongue need not be an interloper but a resource. Krashen (1985: 94) points out that “(while) concurrent translation is not effective”, the use of two languages in the classroom can be “done in such a way as to provide comprehensible input in the target language, using the first language to provide background information”. NCF – 2005

Several studies have shown that bilingual proficiency raises the levels of cognitive growth, social tolerance, divergent thinking and scholastic achievement. Societal or national-level multilingualism is a resource that can be favourably compared to any other national resource NCF – 2005

2. Language, Society and Other issues with special reference to English

2.1 Language

Language is the unique characteristic of human beings. We use it for thinking, problem solving, play, dreaming, interpreting, communication of emotions and to share information. We use it not only for talking to others but also for talking to ourselves. That is why 'language' is often referred to as 'the dress of thought'. Researches have shown that the more languages one knows, the better would be their knowledge and scholastic development. *Several studies have shown that bilingual proficiency raises the levels of cognitive growth, social tolerance, divergent thinking and scholastic achievement. Societal or national-level multilingualism is a resource that can be favourably compared to any other national resource.*

From the point of view of the science of language, all languages including what we call 'dialects', 'tribal', 'mixed' or 'impure' languages are equal; languages thrive in each other's company even when each one has its own quality and genius. In a multilingual class, it is absolutely imperative that every child's language is respected and becomes a part of the teaching strategies. NCF – 2005

2.2 Language and Society

Though we are born with innate language faculty to learn languages, it is the society that unfolds this ability and helps us talk. Thus language learning is the result of a complex interaction between innate language faculty and social environment. Language brings people together and keeps them together. Language is a social phenomenon. It is shaped by contact, conflict and incredible cultural complexity. *"Language is a solemn thing: it grows out of life – out of its agonies and ecstasies, its wants and its weariness. Every language is a temple in which the soul of those who speak it is enshrined."* - Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Though we can talk to each other in English and understand each other, no two of us speak exactly alike. The reason can be age, sex, social situation, and where and when the language was learned. The language of an individual speaker with its unique characteristics is referred

to as the speaker's idiolect. Similarly, different groups/classes/ sections of people speak English differently. English spoken by north Indians is different from the one spoken by south Indians. Again, the Englishes spoken by people in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, and Andhra Pradesh are different. These are referred to as dialects/ varieties of English. People often argue over the correctness or the standard of English and they often look down on a particular dialect/variety saying that it is not standard. David Crystal in his article 'What is standard English?' says "Standard English is the variety of English which carries most prestige within a country..... It is used as the norm of communication by its government, law courts, and media." This does not mean that the other varieties are inferior to the one that enjoys the status of Standard English.

2.3 Language: Speech and Script

There is no inherent relationship between a given language and a script that is normally used for it. In fact, all the languages of the world can be written in any one script, or one can write any particular language in all the scripts of the world with minor modifications. (Position paper on Lanugages, SCF, AP) The English alphabet is used to write many Germanic languages like Frisian, Dutch, Afrikaans, German, etc., and many Romance languages like French, Italian, Portuguese, Rumanian, Spanish, etc. In India, the present generation is using the English alphabet to write their mother tongue while sending short messages over their cell phones or internet.

Though the English writing system was developed as early as 7th century, the system from which current English spelling conventions have developed was established in 1400. Much of the irregularity of modern English spelling derives from the forcing together of Old English and French systems of spelling in the Middle Ages. Thus we have spelling inconsistencies, such as 'label - table', 'bubble - double', 'enter - centre'. During the 15th century, when Caxton set up the first English printing press, he brought some printers from Belgium who spoke little or no English and made numerous spelling errors which have been assimilated as Standard English spelling in due course. Thus we have 'any, busy; for 'eny, bisy') The Belgium workers spelt some words with more letters to make them longer as they were paid by the line, or to make margins look neater. Thus we have 'friend, head, season, and shall',

for ‘frend, hed, seson, and shall’. (Masha Bell –How English Spelling became so irregular?) In the 21st century, the ever increasing use of internet and cell phones has brought a sea-change in the way English is written. Single digits, single letters, letter digit combinations, new abbreviations, smileys, and emoticons are used to send small messages, to blog, to chat, or to tweet. For example, ‘I want to go home as soon as possible to see my mates again.’ can be written as ‘I wnt 2 go hm ASAP 2C my M8s again’ in the new English script being used by the present generation.

2.4 Language and Gender

Words matter, and our language choices have consequences. If we believe that women and men deserve social equality, then we should think seriously about how to reflect that belief in our language use. Many languages, including English, have coded in its texture a large number of elements that perpetuate gender stereotypes. For example, in English, we use masculine nouns and pronouns in situations where the gender of their subject(s) is unclear or variable, or when a group to which they are referring contains members of both sexes. Most occupational titles in English are masculine (eg. Carpenter, postman, fireman, etc.). English reflects the social power of men by treating words that refer to women as **marked** while **unmarked** (the default form) words are those that refer first to men and also to both men and women. For example, ‘poet’, which is ‘unmarked’, refers to a man or a woman, while ‘poetess’, which is ‘marked’ refers only to a woman. These can be avoided by careful use of pronouns, and adjectives that specifically describe people.

The received notions of what it means to be ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ are constantly reconstructed in our behavior and are, sometimes unwittingly perhaps, transmitted through our textbooks. It is extremely important that textbook writers and teachers begin to appreciate that the passive and deferential roles generally assigned to women are socio-culturally constructed and need to be destroyed as quickly as possible. Voices of women in all their glory need to find a prominent place in our textbooks and teaching strategies. (Syllabus for Language Teaching NCF – 2005)

Gender equality can be promoted by careful selection of stories/content in which women and men are not described according to a stereotypical sexual division of labour and by including

topics that encourage students to reconsider various issues close to them from a gender perspective, and think about women's human rights as a global issue.

2.5 Language and Inclusive Education

We need to appreciate that all of us have some kind of disability or the other, but we scoff the defects of others. It is as cruel as to beat a cripple with his own crutches. We need to create schools that are accessible to all persons with disability: visual, hearing, orthopedic, or learning. Depending on the profile of difficulties, one could professionally carry out a diagnosis of dyslexia, specific language impairment, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), low vision, hearing loss etc. leading to specific linguistic problems.

If a child is backward in English, it can be a general learning disability or a disability specific to learning English language. Children with learning disabilities cannot try harder, pay closer attention, or improve motivation on their own; they need help to learn how to do those things. Children with a learning disability in learning English may have had difficulty developing literacy skills in mother tongue. They have difficulty re-telling what has just been said; understanding instructions and directions; recognizing and remembering sight words; and remembering shapes of letters and numerals. The brain has an amazing capacity to change and children respond when given the support and encouragement they need. Early intervention and support in inclusive classrooms can really make a difference in giving children the best chance for success.

2.6 Language and Literature

Since the use of language to develop the imagination and creativity is one of the aims of language study, English curriculum needs to include various genres of literature along with contemporary and authentic texts. National Focus Group on Indian Languages observes *'Poetry, prose and drama are potent sources not only of refining our literary sensibility but also of enriching our aesthetic life, enhancing our synaesthetic abilities and enormously improving our linguistic abilities, particularly reading comprehension and written articulation. Literature also includes jokes, irony, fantasy, story, parody and parable which pervade our everyday discourse and in no way constitute an autonomous universe cut off from 'the world's business' (Habermass 1996).* As someone has rightly pointed out, 'Literature is

the immortality of speech'. Our children should experience this as literature finds its way into the secret place of their souls.

SCERT TELANGANA

3. Learning Outcomes

3.1 Goals for the English curriculum

The main goal for any language curriculum is literacy. Here the term ‘literacy’ is not used in its narrow sense of ‘the ability to read and write’ but in its broader sense (as defined by UNESCO) of "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society."

NCF – 2005 says that the goals for a second-language curriculum are twofold: attainment of a basic proficiency, such as is acquired in natural language learning i.e., the spontaneous and appropriate use of language for at least everyday purposes (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS) and the development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition (Cognitive Academic Linguistic Proficiency or CALP) through literacy.

Ludwig Wittgenstein has rightly said, “The limits of my language are my limits of my universe”. By the time the learner finishes her school, she should become an autonomous learner and use her linguistic competence to extend the limits of her universe and achieve her goals. **This is possible only through a language-across-the-curriculum approach that breaks the barriers between English and other languages and subject areas.** Respecting each other’s language (and culture) in our multilingual classrooms paves way for social harmony.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

we have been talking in terms of LSRW skills as the objectives of languages teaching (in more recent times we have started talking about communicative skills, accent neutralization and voice training, etc. in an equally disastrous way). This exclusive focus on discrete skills has had fairly adverse consequences. We now plead for a more holistic perspective on language proficiency. After all, when we are Speaking, we are also simultaneously Listening and when we are Writing, we are also Reading in a variety of ways. And then there are many situations

(e.g. friends reading a play together and taking notes for its production) in which all the skills in conjunction with a variety of other cognitive abilities are used together. (Syllabus for Language Teaching, NCF – 2005)

Since language is not the totality of the language skill but the inner competence manifested in performing these skills, the learning outcomes are stated in terms of the learner's competence to do a language task. For example, 'the competence to participate in conversations and respond in a way appropriate in terms of person, place and the topic of conversation' involves not only the learner's skills in: listening with comprehension, speaking, and non-linguistic communication, but also their sensitivity to the topic of conversation and their tolerance to the other people's opinions.

3.2.1 Competence to listen to, understand, and respond

The learner should be able to use a variety of strategies like listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for pleasure, etc. and make use of not only verbal, but also non verbal/graphical /contextual cues to understand the message; to know the speaker's point of view; to follow the line of argument, etc., so that they can respond appropriately orally or in writing as the need may be.

3.2.2 Competence to respond orally to what is viewed, read or listened to

The learner should be able to order and present facts, ideas and opinions effortlessly using language appropriate to the context/person/topic of discourse while giving a lecture/talk, or while participating in a debate/conversation responding to what is viewed, read or listened to.

3.2.3 Competence to read, understand, and respond orally, graphically, or in writing

The learner should be able to construct meaning by reading critically posing questions while reading, drawing inferences, and relating the text with their previous knowledge /experiences. They should be able to select suitable reading strategy and adjust their reading speed and comprehension level to what they read bearing in mind the purpose of their reading.

3.2.4 Competence to respond in writing to what is viewed, read or listened to

The learner should be able to respond in writing to what is viewed, read, or listened to by organizing their thoughts coherently using a variety of cohesive devices such as linkers and lexical repetitions with a sense of audience and purpose.

3.2.5 Competence to understand and use various words and idiomatic expressions

The learner should be able to understand and use various words and idiomatic expressions as they listen to, read, speak, or write while performing various tasks involving English language. *Language is never used in a uniform fashion. It has innumerable varieties, shades and colours which surface in different domains and in different situations. These variations, known as registers, should form a part of a student's repertoire. Besides the register of school subjects, a student must be able to understand and use the variety of language being used in other domains such as music, sports, films, gardening, construction work, cookery, etc.* (Syllabus for Language Teaching, NCF – 2005)

3.2.6 Competence to use language creatively

Children's minds are imbued with creativity and imagination, so they should be given ample space to develop them. If the classroom atmosphere is encouraging and if suitable tasks that challenge the young brains are given, they will be able to produce oral or written/graphic pieces creatively. It can be a picture, a flow chart, a parody, a script for a drama, a poem, or a prose piece.

3.2.7 Competence in aesthetic sensibility and social responsibility

The learner should be able to appreciate the beauty of a literary piece by developing an awareness of literary devices like figurative language, imagery, allegory, and symbolism. They should be able to make informed aesthetic judgements and demonstrate an understanding of artistic expression through analysis.

Language classrooms and textbooks have a lot of scope to make students sensitive towards surroundings, people and nation, and to familiarize them with our rich culture, heritage and aspects of our contemporary life. The learner should be able to develop sensitivity to the issues presented in the text such as conservation of resources, population concerns, human rights violation, deforestation and sustainable development. They should be able to free their

mind from prejudices against other cultures and other religions and unlearn certain misconceptions about people, culture and social issues.

3.2.9 Competence in the scientific study of language

In a language class, the teaching approaches adopted and the tasks undertaken should be such that they lead a child to go through the whole scientific process of collecting data, observing the data, classifying it according to its similarities and differences, making hypotheses, etc. Thus, linguistic tools can and must play a significant role in developing a child's cognitive abilities. (Syllabus for Language Teaching, NCF – 2005)

The learner should be able to recognize and produce the distinctive grammatical structures of English and to use them effectively in communication. They should be able to make sense of various labels /notes used in dictionaries regarding grammar and usage. They should be able to understand the metalanguage used to identify / describe various grammatical items /processes. They should be able to explore language the way a scientist explores universe.

3.2.10 Competence in metalinguistic awareness

Metalinguistic awareness is the ability to view and analyze a language as a 'thing', as a 'process', and as a 'system'. The learner should be able to reflect on the use of language by demonstrating an understanding that statements may have a literal meaning and an implied meaning. They should be able to demonstrate an understanding the subtleties of an utterance's social and cultural context by recognizing irony and sarcasm. They should be able to manipulate sentences by transforming them from one form to another.

4. Language faculty, second language learning, and multilingualism

4.1 Language faculty

All children learn not only the basic systems and subsystems of their language but also how to use them appropriately (i.e. they acquire not only linguistic but also communicative competence) before they are three years old. It is eminently possible to engage in a meaningful conversation with a three year old on any subject that falls within her cognitive domain. It therefore seems obvious that in addition to the rich and caring exposure that they receive, normal children may be born with an innate language faculty as Chomsky has argued. The awareness that there is an innate Language Faculty has two important pedagogical consequences: given adequate exposure, children will acquire new languages with ease; the focus in teaching should be more on content than grammar. (Syllabus for Language Teaching, NCF – 2005)

4.2 Second Language Teaching/Learning

As we have seen above, children (with the help of the language faculty) learn one or more languages when they are exposed to them and when they have opportunities to work with them. This is an unconscious process called ‘acquisition’. But when it comes to learning a second language like English, they fail miserably. In fact, it is not their failure; it is our failure. The reason for our failure can be found by a careful analysis of the classroom procedures we use to teach English and the belief system behind adopting those procedures. For example, teaching the alphabet, words, phrases, sentences in that order presumes that the language acquisition is a process of linear growth, which is not true. **Though learning a second language is different from acquiring the mother tongue, if we can mimic the process of acquisition, along with explicit teaching, the teaching/learning of English will be very effective. According to Brown, second language learning is a process in which varying degrees of learning and acquisition can both be beneficial, depending upon the learner’s own styles and strategies.** Some important guiding principles of language acquisition are:

- The human child is genetically endowed with a language system namely Universal Grammar [cf. Chomsky]; what we conceive as language acquisition is the unfolding of this innate system.
- Language acquisition progresses in a spiral or cyclic mode and not in a linear and additive mode.
- Imitation has very little to do with Language Acquisition; what apparently looks like imitation is the reflection of intuitive construction of linguistic knowledge by the learner.
- Language is acquired not through repetition but through recurrence of linguistic facts in need based and meaningful discourses.
- Language is acquired not through isolated words and structures but through clusters of linguistic expressions involved in the reception and production of discourses.
- Language is not just the totality of the four skills [LSRW] but the inner competence manifested in the performance of these skills.
- Language acquisition always progresses from whole to part and not from parts to whole. This necessitates a holistic treatment of language which has to be ensured by giving discourse level inputs to the children and helping them produce appropriate discourses as output.
- Language acquisition can take place only in a collaborative environment [cf Vygotsky, Bruner] where the child gets ample opportunities to get involved in interpersonal and intrapersonal communication.
- There is always a period of silence in the process of acquisition. Once the child is cognitively and physiologically ready, output is always greater than input.
- There is no fixed order like simple to complex or complex to simple in language acquisition. Parents, relatives and friends do not check their speech for simple and complex sentences before they talk to children.
- Children internalize the meanings of the words through contexts in which they are embedded, participating in meaning making process.
- Grammar is not a route for developing primary or usable knowledge of language, but it can serve as a tool for increasing the language repertoire and for understanding the construction of text “rhetoric” and argumentation.

- Children can produce an infinite number of sentences with limited and known vocabulary as the situation demands.
- Children need a comprehensible and challenging input. Comprehension is essentially a mental process. There may be several things that help an individual while she is listening to other languages (things like the context, the communicational expectancy, familiar words, gestures and so on)

4.3 Multilingualism

Multilingualism is constitutive of human identity. Even the so called "monolingual" in a remote village possesses a verbal repertoire that equips her to function adequately over a large number of communicative encounters. It is natural that our classrooms in Andhra Pradesh are multilingual since all societies employ a highly diversified repertoire to negotiate a multiplicity of situations. Therefore rather than treating classroom multilingualism as an obstacle, we should treat it as a resource and try to use it as a teaching strategy. A child whose voice is not heard will definitely feel alienated and is likely to drop out of the school. Instead of teaching mechanical and boring grammar, we can make use of the multiplicity of languages available in the classroom as a basis for reflecting on language structure.

Given a variety of inputs in English, and a genuine attempt to understand them, the mother tongue of the children and other languages can be used as a resource. Krashen (1985: 94) points out that "(while) concurrent translation is not effective", the use of two languages in the classroom can be "done in such a way as to provide comprehensible input in the target language, using the first language to provide background information". The English teacher and the teachers of other languages should explore ways to give opportunities to children to read parallel texts (newspapers, children's magazines such as Chandamama and Amar Chitra Katha) in their original language and English translation.

5 Teaching / Learning Methods, Materials and Environment

5.1 Teaching / Learning Methods

Children acquire languages in natural settings where the input provided is rich and meaningful and where the total environment is loving and caring. Methods used in the classroom must approximate as closely as possible to these conditions. In order to create suitable methods and materials, one should keep the following in view:

- Nature of Language
- Child's Linguistic Potential and Competence
- Multiplicity of Languages in the Classroom
- Expected Outcomes/ Academic Standards
- Guide lines of NCF 2005 and NCERT Language Position Papers (avoid rote learning, organize the Teaching Learning Process in meaningful ways, language construction, implications of knowledge, stress free learning environment and assessment etc.)

A teaching method is characterised by a set of principles, procedures or strategies to be implemented by teachers to achieve desired learning in students (Liu & Shi, 2007). These principles and procedures are determined partly by the nature of the subject matter to be taught, and partly by our beliefs or theories about how students learn. Given below are a few such beliefs or theories. Teachers can use any method or a mixture of methods in line with these theories and plan their teaching learning materials, and teaching learning activities to achieve the grade level objectives.

- Every possible effort should be made to approximate to the natural language learning situations.
- Language acquisition always progresses from whole to part and not from parts to whole. This necessitates a holistic treatment of language which has to be ensured by giving discourse level inputs (comprehensible input) to children and getting out discourses from them as output.
- Language is acquired not through isolated words and structures but through clusters of linguistic expressions involved in the reception and production of discourses.

- Language is not the totality of the language skills but the inner competence manifested in the performance of these skills. For example, one may be able to utter a few sentences as a result of mechanical drilling, but unless she knows what to do with them, i.e., to whom to say, where to say, when to say, and how to say them, the learning will be a mere waste. It can be dangerous or embarrassing too if she uses such piecemeal language in the wrong context.
- All normal children can learn languages. The human child is genetically endowed with a language system namely Universal Grammar, which enables her to acquire a language. This is the reason why everybody speaks at least one language without any effort. If the classroom can mimic this first language acquisition situation / environment , the chances of the child learning a second or a third language are great.
- Children in class I may be new to English. But they have a set of ‘loan words’ and cognitive abilities. More importantly, they have already mastered their mother tongue. Failing to use these cognitive and linguistic abilities deprives us of a resource, and alienates the learner, who fails to make a connection between the new language and her mental world. Children can learn better when the teaching of English cuts across the barriers between languages, and between content subjects and languages.
- Children learn better when the focus is not on the language form, but on the meaning of messages.
- Children learn better when they are relaxed and stress-free. The teacher should not impose anything on them. She should only suggest/motivate them (since ‘motivation’ is the key to second language learning) and see that they participate in activities happily and with a real zeal to learn.
- Children’s voices should find a place not just in answering the teacher’s questions but in interactions with teacher as well as other children. They should be allowed to code – switch or code – mix language while expressing their opinions. Mistakes should be tolerated and opportunities should be given to refine the language used, by self – correction and /or peer correction. This improves the self-confidence of children which goes a long way in improving their language competence.
- Children learn better when they are respected. Parents and teachers always worry about ‘what a child will be tomorrow’ but forget the fact that he/ she is already ‘someone’ with

immense cognitive and linguistic abilities, and great enthusiasm to learn. If the teacher believes in this potential and facilitates learning with a loving heart, learning and teaching become joyful experiences both for the learner and the teacher.

- Children learn better not in a competitive environment but in a cooperative environment. ‘Cooperative Learning’ helps children learn better as they feel free to ask/answer questions and discuss tasks without any inhibitions or fear of punishment/losing face. Moreover, it develops their social skills, communicative competence, and paves way for independent learning.
- Children learn better through experiential learning. A trip to a post-office, a railway station, a bank, etc., allows children to see/collect samples of English in the environment, so projects involving collection, analysis, and interpretation of data/experiences/observations give children opportunities for learning English through firsthand experience.
- Children learn in a variety of ways- through experience, making and doing things, experimentation, reading, discussion, asking, listening, thinking and reflecting, and expressing oneself in speech, movement or writing – both individually and with others. They require opportunities of all these kinds in the course of their development.
- It has been found that ‘intelligence’ is not a single entity but a mixture of many such entities, so different children may have different types of intelligence. And they learn better when the learning activities and their type of intelligence match. For example a child with spatial intelligence learns well when what to be learnt is presented as a diagram, drawing or a film whereas a child with interpersonal intelligence learns better when what is to be learnt is given as a group work. Hence the teacher should plan her lesson and teaching learning materials so as to provide a variety of multisensory, abstract, and concrete learning activities that match the varieties of intelligence and the consequent learning styles.
- Different children use different strategies to learn. An insight into these strategies and creating an awareness among children about their own strategies help children learn better. *Usually the teaching of a strategy includes helping children ‘think about their own thinking’ in relation to the task at hand. This usually requires them to pose questions in their mind as they work through the task. For example, ‘Where do I begin?’ ‘Is this*

working out OK?’ ‘Do I need to check that answer?’ ‘Do I understand this?’ ‘Do I need to ask for help here?’ This ability to monitor and regulate one’s own thinking is called ‘metacognition’. Students need to be taught metacognitive (regulative) skills to increase their rate of self-monitoring and self-correcting, which in turn increase their rate of learning (Peter Westwood, 2008).

- ‘Story reading’ and ‘dictation’ are seen as whole-language activities.
- Extensive reading and the encyclopedia approach (an approach that encourages associations with other words and contexts) to vocabulary teaching are believed to be helpful for the children to build up their vocabulary.
- Children’s language should be respected by everyone in the class and the teacher should see to it that the children do not look down on the language spoken by children (belonging to certain communities) with an accent different from the one spoken by the majority of people in the area. This can be done by using the multiplicity of language or its dialects /varieties available in the classroom as a good resource to enrich the language of children.
- The mother tongue can be used for discussion and understanding, along with an engagement with English. Krashen(1985:94) points out that “while concurrent translation is not effective, the use of two languages in classroom can be done in such a way as to provide comprehensible input in the target language, using the first language to provide background information.
- Research studies have established a close relationship between multilingualism on the one hand and language proficiency, scholastic achievement, cognitive growth, and social tolerance on the other, so multilingualism is seen as a resource and a teaching strategy. Parallel materials in more than one language, multilingual dictionaries and activities that involve children of different languages to share vocabulary, workout grammar rules, etc. enable us to do this.
- Bottom-up and top-down(holistic) approaches to letter-sound mapping and print decoding have been given their due importance and the arbitrariness of ‘English Spelling’ is reduced by associating letter chunks with their corresponding sounds (ignoring the exceptions).

- ‘Instructivists’ believe in direct teaching whereas ‘constructivists’ believe in construction of knowledge. Each of these views has its merits and limitations. Taking the best of the two views, the basic skills involved in early reading, such as word identification and decoding, may be best served by direct teaching, while higher-order critical reading and deep comprehension may be served by construction of knowledge. Direct teaching can be useful in the development of ‘study skills’, ‘remedial teaching’, and ‘strategy training’ where students are taught through clear modeling/demonstration, how to approach a particular problem, for example, finding the meaning of an unfamiliar word in a text, writing the summary of a passage, note-taking, etc.
- Since one of the goals of English language teaching is to make the child an autonomous learner by transforming language into an instrument for knowledge acquisition, ‘resource-based learning’ has been emphasized at stage 3 and 4. Teaching learning processes and materials help children use library catalogues, make electronic searches on the world wide web (or any other database), use interactive CD-ROMs/ recorded materials/ live telecasts, send and receive emails/SMS on cell phones, etc. which are important for autonomous learning.

5.2 Teaching / Learning Materials

5.2.1 Textbooks

‘I have always felt that the true textbook for the pupil is his teacher.’—Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

There are great teachers who can do away with textbooks and do a great job. But for many an Indian teacher, a textbook is an essential part of English language teaching. It saves time, gives direction to lessons, and facilitates a wide variety of activities in the classroom. A good textbook, for a teacher with limited language proficiency is often a good tool to improve her own language competence. The way teachers say ‘I like this textbook’ or ‘I don’t like this textbook’ suggests that every teacher has some expectations about the textbook, though they differ from teacher to teacher.

For the learner, an English textbook is an important thing – important to do homework, to prepare for the examinations and to learn on her own. It is an interesting thing too, because it brings with it stories, plays, poems and some interesting pieces of information on a wide variety of topics. The way some students treasure some of their textbooks long after they have completed their studies suggests that the textbook is more than a teaching-learning medium.

Richards (1998: 125) says “The most commonly found elements in second and foreign language classrooms around the world are *teachers, learners, and textbooks*. While the roles of teachers, teaching, and learners have been the focus of a vast body of discussion and research over the years, much less attention has been given to textbooks. Yet in many schools and language programs the textbooks used in classrooms *are* the curriculum. If one wants to determine *the objectives of a language program, the kind of syllabus being used, the skills being taught, the content the students will study, and the assumptions about teaching and learning that the course embodies*, it is often necessary to look no further than the textbooks used in the program itself.” However, there are many limitations.

1. Textbooks cannot provide the basis for a comprehensive language course.
2. Textbooks are often culturally inappropriate
3. Textbooks are not compatible with a learner-centred philosophy of teaching.
4. Textbooks should not be needed by good teachers, who can create their own materials.

We propose to prepare textbooks that reflect the second language teaching/learning philosophy given earlier, and the themes suggested by NCF – 2005. But a text book assumes its value in accordance with the teacher who uses it in the way a digit assumes its value in accordance with its place in a number. Its value can be increased multifold in the hands of a competent teacher or decreased to a big zero in the hands of an incompetent teacher.

The English textbooks should have the following features.

- They should match the cognitive levels and socio-cultural background of children, and uphold and encourage all the secular values enshrined in the constitution.
- They need to be sensitive to perspectives of equity (gender and societal) and harmony (between humans, and between humans and nature)

- They should reflect local arts such as Burrakatha, Voggukatha, Harikatha, etc.; local customs, culture and traditions; and provide opportunities for children to talk about them using their own languages along with English.
- They should contain good narratives which can be used to give the richest kind of linguistic input to the learners.
- Lessons should be based on a wide variety of discourses like, songs, stories, poems, conversations, autobiographies, essays, letters etc., which lead to thought provoking questions that sensitize children to various issues, and in the process help them develop their language competence.
- The lessons should represent different regions, ages, interests, cultures, people, and rouse interest among children to read extensively. They should have language tasks such as extending poems (adding lines) and stories; concluding stories; writing conversations; puppetry; dramatization; mono action; reviews; descriptions; translations; project works; riddles; cultural songs; proverbs; idioms etc.
- They should contain (particularly in stages 1 and 2) attractive and thought provoking pictures and illustrations appropriate to the lesson. Printing and paper should be of high quality.
- They should have spaces to promote individual, group, and whole class activities. The language tasks (priority should be given to self-learning tasks) should lead to observation, exploration, discovery, and research. They may also consist of quiz, matrix, puzzles, language games etc.
- Enough space should be allocated in the textbooks to enable the learner to record his/her self assessment and answers to language tasks.
- They should have a good glossary, cross references, references to other resources, and an index of vocabulary and language items.
- They should be suitable for continuous comprehensive evaluation and help learners achieve the class level competencies.

5.2.2 Additional Materials

“There is at least one characteristic that is common to every *successful* language-learning experience we have ever known, and that is that the learner is exposed one way or another to an adequate amount of the data of the language to be learned” (Rutherford 1987: 18).

The reference to “adequate data” suggests that a single textbook presented over a year is inadequate. **The emphasis should shift from mastery learning of this limited input to regular exposure to a variety of meaningful language inputs.** So, the English classroom should be rich in stimulating materials like posters, notices, charts, photographs, wall magazine, class library, self learning materials, interactive CDs, games, puzzles and such other materials which contribute to *print rich environment*. The teacher should draw the learner’s attention to these materials and the *environmental print* she sees outside the classroom and use it for classroom interaction. Thus, the learner can be encouraged to interact with the *environmental print* and collect her own samples / examples and contribute to the English classroom.

As said earlier, comprehensible input is very important for the early production of language, but not many Indian teachers can give it and engage the young learners in joyful activities. NCF – 2005 suggests the use of the following materials/processes to complement and supplement teacher inputs.

1. Story reading (as opposed to teaching stories as texts) can be developed into a classroom methodology within a Whole Language perspective (Jangid 2005). Reading stories out aloud, Repeated reading, Choral reading, Story Retelling, and Rewriting activities can draw on and build on the existing language proficiency and skills of teachers. Regular story reading triggers the acquisition process in children, and will encourage reading in both the teacher as well as the pupil.
2. The use of Reading Cards and the provision of class libraries allow individual learners to choose their level of difficulty, and progress at their own pace in silent reading after some initiation by the teacher
3. ‘Talking Books’ (cassette plus book) model speech as well as reading for both the teacher and the learner
4. Adopting ‘task-based’ methodology that lead to the negotiation of meaning and meaning focussed activity in the classroom which requires only the basic linguistic competence in the teacher.

Depending upon the competency to be achieved, the teacher should make use of any or some of the following materials to teach effectively and help children learn with pleasure.

- photographs, toys, dolls, crayons, water colours, pencils, sketch pens, models,
- Big books, parallel texts, pictures, cartoons, stick figures, comics,
- jokes / skits / riddles /sequence songs / sentence chains / proverbs / quotations
- Reading fluency flash cards / alphabet dominoes / stick figures / charts
- Chocolate/soap/medicine/health drink wrappers
- Classroom English/ courtesy formulas/ greetings /formulaic expressions.
- Poems, rhymes, haikus, cinquins
- Reading cards / graded readers/ picture books / picture story books /tongue twisters
- Conversations /Informal talk /pre recorded audio / video materials
- bilingual story books, bilingual dictionary, picture dictionary
- Narratives (fables, fairy/ folk tales/ legends/ pourquoi tales, short stories)
- Simple advertisements on TV/radio
- Explanations of how things work (e.g., how a fan/bulb works)

The teacher, while selecting teaching learning materials should consider their difficulty level in terms of

- the length of the text, text authenticity, text density,
- the number of speakers, the speed of delivery,
- the explicitness of text structure,
- the level of background noise/background knowledge,
- the pupils' familiarity with the speakers' accents,
- the register and sophistication of the language used, and
- the frequency of shifts in topic focus and points of view.

Materials brought in to the classroom should be enough for the entire class and every learner should get an opportunity to touch/see/play with the materials as per the requirement of the activity.

5.2.3 Additional Resources

Since one of the goals of English language teaching is to make the child an autonomous learner by transforming language into an instrument for knowledge acquisition, children

should be encouraged to learn on their own from a variety of resources. Hence a plethora of resources should be put at the disposal of the children. The resources suggested below can not only help children to learn English, but also help teachers with limited competence to improve their language competence, which in turn can improve the effectiveness of English language teaching /learning processes in the classroom.

- class/club/school/public library
- textbooks of higher classes in the same stream and other streams (CBSE, ICSE)
- pictorial dictionaries, learner's/standard dictionaries, dictionaries of idiomatic English field-specific dictionaries such as the dictionary of biology, etc.
- thesauruses, encyclopedias, children's knowledge library, 'Tell me Why' books self-help books, 'Do it Yourself' books, personality development books
- big books, picture cards, reading cards, graded readers, special charts like 'Spark Charts'.
- magazines like Chandamam, Amar Chitra Katha in English and regional languages newspapers in English and regional languages
- children's literature(books written for/by children) and other literary genres
- bilingual texts and bilingual dictionaries appropriate to the region
- talking books (books with audio CD/cassette), recorded audio/video lessons or programmes
- self-learning courses through video/audio materials or interactive CDs
- dedicated radio and TV programmes like 'meekosam', 'Mana TV', etc.
- encyclopedias / dictionaries / thesauruses available in electronic format
- English learning resources available on the world wide web like <http://www.askoxford.com> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish>, Wikipedia, etc.

The children should also be helped to find some human resources to supplement/ complement the classroom teaching. This resource is always ignored or neglected. The learner's kith and kin or neighbours can be a useful resource if properly identified and tapped into. English club/forum in the school can also be another important human resource.

5.2.4 Teaching Learning Environment

The objectives of teaching English can be fulfilled and the learning process can be joyful only when suitable learning environment is ensured.

- 1) The environment and learning process should be child centred, child friendly, and activity based. The English classroom should be rich in stimulating materials like posters, photographs, wall magazine, class library , self learning materials, interactive CDS, games puzzles and such other materials which create English atmosphere.
- 2) The teacher should adapt/adopt methods and materials to suit the needs of the learner. The dictum is ‘Nothing is taught until it is learnt’, however good may be the methods and materials used. Teacher should feel that everyone in her class asks the question “If I can’t learn the way you teach me, why don’t you teach me the way I can learn?”
- 3) The teacher should raise above the textbook and appreciate the fact that language can be taught using any /every material available in the classroom or outside the class room. The textbook is only a skeleton that represents the syllabus. The teacher should give it flesh, blood, and life by bringing into the classroom a wide variety of stimulating material like photographs, pictures, riddles, movies, models, art, craft dance, drama, and anything under the sun that facilitates teaching learning process and makes it a joyful experience.
- 4) The methods and materials should create an environment that promotes the creativity of the learner and facilitates learner autonomy
- 5) The learner should be able to interact with peers, teachers and materials freely in a collaborative environment.
- 6) The learner should be encouraged to maintain her Portfolio and enrich it all along the academic year.

6 Teacher Preparation: Teacher training and development

It is an accepted fact that it is difficult to teach a language even if you are proficient in that language. And one can imagine how difficult it would be to teach a language like English with limited language competence. National Focus Group's Position Paper on English observes that the success of any classroom activity or innovation stems from the teacher's resources in the language. So far the pre-service as well as in-service training programmes are focusing on the teacher's teaching competence, taking for granted their language competence. Making the situation worse, the training programmes are conducted in English to improve the teaching competence of the teachers. Since teaching methodology involves principles of psychology, philosophy, and logic, the content burden and the language burden force the teachers to switch off their minds and sit passively in the programmes. National Focus Group's Position Paper on English says, *"When proficiency is given its due place, there is freedom to provide the ideational or development component of teacher preparation in the teacher's own language, ensuring comprehension as well as debate. Teacher training through English has often found the language of its academic content an obstacle to understanding; this leads to jargonisation of teaching methodology. The Assam experience (Dowerah 2005) shows that academic content can be delivered in the teacher's own language."* Therefore, the teacher development programmes should aim at both language competence and teaching competence; and the latter can be imparted through the teacher's own languages, where necessary.

Some of the reasons for the poor quality of English teaching/learning in the state are given below.

1. Most teachers have no English proficiency as they were the products of government schools. Some teachers who have English proficiency have no pedagogic proficiency.
2. The academic supervision is also weak for the same reason.
3. Most teachers adopt the same procedures used by their teachers which often result in poor quality of education.
4. Most teachers have no knowledge of language objectives, so they teach English as a 'content' subject.
5. The performance of the teacher is not assessed. There is no system of reliable, valid, and accessible **performance assessment tools** and administrative mechanism to assess the quality/performance of education the teacher imparts. Though the teacher

has a B.Ed. or D.Ed. degree/diploma, unless s/he practises teaching in the classroom consciously, they cannot be proficient and they cannot deliver the goods. Lack of supervision and assessment procedures are making the teachers reluctant to practise what they have learnt in their training colleges.

6. There are no performance-based penal / incentive schemes / procedures and the teacher effectiveness is left to chance.
7. The success of any professional development programme largely depends on the internal motivation of the participant. (lawyers, doctors, auditors, etc. improve their professional competence regularly to survive the competition) The in-service training programmes and other programmes which are aimed at improving the quality of education are not effective because the teacher is not internally motivated. And s/he is not externally motivated because of job security, lack of proper supervision, and lack of incentive / penal system.
8. The teachers' dependence on 'guides', 'question banks', 'marks gainers', etc.,(and lack of supervision on their use)is making them lazy. Teachers dictating / writing from these materials is a common sight in any English classroom. Thus English teaching is reduced to dictating/writing from guides.
9. The cascade system of teacher training is not effective because of the transmission loss.
10. The success of the cascade system of training largely depends on the strength of the resource persons at various levels. But there is no mechanism to identify, assess and select strong resource persons.
11. Most training programmes are based on the needs felt by the employer (or higher-ups) but not on the needs felt by the participant.
12. Most training programmes are aimed at improving the teachers' teaching competence but not their subject competence.
13. There are no effective tools of assessment to measure the entry and exit behaviour of the participants.
14. There is neither teacher support mechanism nor the mechanism to follow-up the training programmes conducted.

The quality of English Language Education can be improved by taking up the following measures. The measures are suggested based on the assumption that 'teachers should be motivated internally and/ or externally to improve their competence and to improve the quality of education they impart.'

1. A set of academic standards as well as professional standards should be prepared for English teachers at three levels viz, primary, upper primary and secondary. At each

level, standards can be set for three stages of proficiency viz, basic, advanced, and proficient.

2. Reliable and valid test tools should be developed based on the standards laid out as said above. The testing and certification should be given to a reliable player in 'Testing & Assessment Services' such as ETS, Prometric, etc.
3. Portfolio assessment of teachers and the assessment of children's performance should be a part of the teacher certification.
4. Teachers should have the facility to opt for the test at their convenience. They can be allowed to take tests any number of times allowing 30 days, 60 days, 120 days gap between two consecutive appearances for basic, advanced and proficient tests respectively.
5. The tests should be preferably on-line.
6. Support system involving teachers, teacher educators and other resource persons should be evolved. Forming on-line groups and subject forums, and organizing seminars help teachers develop their competence.
7. Suitable incentive /penal system should be planned to motivate teachers to opt for the tests at various levels/stages.
8. An effective academic supervision and support system involving teachers (who have 'proficient' certification) should be planned to assess the teacher, the learner, and the teaching learning process.
9. Professional development programmes should be planned taking into consideration the needs felt by the participants, the employer(or the teacher educators), and the needs necessitated by new content/methods. They can be conducted in the teachers' own language, where necessary, to ensure comprehension as well as debate.
10. Good teacher handbooks/modules, multimedia materials, on-line resources, self-learning materials/strategies, etc., should be developed/used to compensate transmission losses in cascade mode of teacher development programmes.
11. The programmes should help teachers prepare for the tests and in the process help them become autonomous learners. They should aim at exposing teachers to the wide variety of resources available on-line and in their surroundings.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of finding out the extent to which the desired changes in behaviour (cognitive and affective) have taken place in the learner. The purpose of evaluation ‘ **is not** to motivate children to study under threat or to label them as ‘slow learners’ or ‘bright students’ or problem children’(NCF – 2005). It should promote learning by giving the teacher and the learner such information that can be used to modify the teaching learning activity they are engaged in. It should be continuous, comprehensive, and non-threatening. NCF – 2005 laid great emphasis on Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). CCE refers to a system of school based assessment that covers all aspects of student’s development. It emphasizes continuity in evaluation and assessment of broad based learning and behavioral outcome of the learner. In this system, the achievement of specified skills- both scholastic and co-scholastic (life skills, interests, attitudes, values, aesthetics), change or progress over time are assessed. The learner is assessed through a variety of techniques and tools namely-- observation, interviews, standardized testing, report cards, portfolios and documentation of talks, anecdotes, learning logs, etc. Assessment can be done by peers, teachers, and also by the learner herself.

Evaluation in language should be periodic, preferably at regular intervals of 4 to 6 weeks of actual instruction. Evaluation should be both oral and written. Periodic tests should carry a weightage of fifty per cent – twenty-five per cent each to oral and written. The marks should be taken into account in the final grade. (Syllabus for Language Teaching, NCF – 2005)

National Focus Group in its position paper on Teaching of English suggests benchmarking English language proficiency and evolving standardized National English Language Tests, a bank of tests that learners and teachers can use for self-evaluation by opting to take them.

The purpose of CCE is to:

- make evaluation an integral part of teaching-learning process

- use evaluation for making improvement in students' achievement through timely diagnosis and quick action for appropriate remediation;
- decide for timely actions for students' growth and better learning outcomes in congenial environment;
- achieve and maintain desired standard of achievement;
- provide scope for self-study and self-evaluation;
- provide opportunity to use multiple techniques of assessment such as
- observation, interview, oral and written tests, etc.; and
- make available a number of opportunities for effective and meaningful interactions between teachers and students. (DEP, SSA – IGNOU, 2006)

CCE is not

- testing/examining the students in a formal manner every day/week.
- giving excess homework / assignments or project work.
- invoking fear in the learner in the guise of assessment by the teacher.
- minutely assessing the learner for behavior

8. Recommendations

- There is an urgent need in the state for quality English language education and the education machinery should rise to the occasion by taking appropriate measures.
- The new perspective of language, language teaching, and language testing should be adhered to religiously.
- English teaching should be freed from the shackles of mechanical drills, meaningless exercises, and rote memorization of questions and answers; and blossom in a print-rich environment, where children are given comprehensible input, and where the classroom processes and materials mimic the natural language acquisition situation.
- Multilinguality should be the aim in English medium as well as regional-medium schools. Similarly, language-across-curriculum perspectives should be adopted.
- Teacher development programmes should aim at not only the teaching competence, but also the teacher's language competence. National English Language Tests should be evolved and used to test the language competence of both the teacher and the learner.
- Evaluation should be made an enabling factor for learning rather than an impediment. Continuous comprehensive evaluation should be adopted and the learner should be freed from examination stress.

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