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Ineffective Method Of English Teaching

Sir,

It is a pity that the state of English in our country leaves much to be desired in spite of many years' efforts to improve it. Our education system allows different but parallel course of study and syllabi. We have English medium schools which cater to the needs of an elitist group. These schools follow the 'A' level and 'O' level system of England. We have the traditional Bangla-medium schools and colleges which follow a uniform syllabus though the standard of these institutions is not always the same. We have madrasah education which follows a syllabus different from those of schools and colleges. In the latter two systems of education, English is taught as a compulsory subject bearing one hundred or two hundred marks for 10-12 years. Yet the skill of students of these schools, colleges and madrasahs is below the mark.

The cause of this pitiable state of English may be summed up as follows:

English in classrooms is taught in the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) which has already become obsolete. The communicative method which is widely

used as the effective method of English teaching is not still used by our teachers. What I realise as a teacher of English at the tertiary level is that unless and until the Communicative method is followed we shall remain in that stagnant condition. Many students at the tertiary level know grammatical rules and translation of a given sentence, but whenever they are asked to tell something in English or to communicate what they feel or observe around themselves, they stumble.

So, it is seen that, what schools and colleges cannot do for a student after teaching English for ten-twelve years, a language center can do it within six months. So, we have to frame a function-based syllabus where the communicative method is to be incorporated. The English text-books of class VII, VIII and the S.S.C. with the emphasis on the communicative approach are good but the methods prescribed is not followed by the teachers at the time of teaching. But the text book of the H.S.C. course demands scrutiny at present. The recently published Education Commission report emphasized the communicative method in English teaching. But, the implementation of the suggestions of the committee is still awaited.

English teachers of the secondary and the tertiary levels should be trained in the communicative method.

They should be trained in the four skills of language i.e. listening, reading, speaking and writing. Attention should be given at the time of syllabus framing so that these four skills are incorporated. Language teachers must realise the fact that, language teaching is not just lecture giving like other subjects such as Civics, Economics etc. It is a skill like welding or cycling.

We should keep it in mind that, language teaching being a skill teaching needs some teaching aids. These are a good text-book, black board, stick, audio aid and video aid etc. We have to provide all these essential things to a language teacher. A language teacher cannot make his teaching effective without these aids because these are inseparable for the communicative method of language teaching.

The size of the classroom is also important. Applied linguists allow a language class of at best twentyfive learners. A teacher must have a small class if attention is to be given to every learner.

So, we have to consider all these factors before framing a syllabus. It is desirable that, any knowledge or skill is to serve the purpose of the learners. If the knowledge or skill of using language and teaching language does not do that, what is the use of spending so much money on that head?

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