
UNIT 4 MINIMUM LEVELS OF LEARNING (MLLs) IN LANGUAGE

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

You have already studied that language plays an important role not only for general communication in our day-to-day life but also as a medium of instruction in schools. The teachers have an important role to play in the development of the four basic skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing among the learners.

In this unit, you will read about the concept of Minimum Levels of Learning and the competencies defined in language for classes I to V. We will also discuss the need for formulating competencies and the basic principles for selecting content for language teaching/learning. How the content-based on competencies according to the difficulty and maturity level of the learners can be arranged, and various forms of content material for language teaching are also provided in this unit.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the concept of minimum levels of learning (MLLs);
- explain the importance of formulating competencies for better learning;
- use competency-based teaching strategies;
- evaluate the achievement of learners on the basis of MLL;
- select the appropriate content from the text book to develop a particular competency;
- develop the instructional material other than the textbook on your own, as per learner's need.

4.3 DEFINING MINIMUM LEVELS OF LEARNING (MLLs)

Mary and Sarat are studying in class-I. You are teaching them language. In the annual examination you gave Mary 70 and Sarat 35 marks out of 100 in the subject. Both of

them were promoted to class-II. Could you say that both of your students were competent enough in language? You might not feel comfortable to answer this. May be the questions that you had asked in the annual examination either through written papers or orally were more convenient for Mary to answer. Further, you cannot even say with confidence that both of them have acquired the desired level of competencies in languages. Because you have not been able to determine a level which each and every student is expected to attain. Once you determine that level you can easily answer the above question. Therefore, it is desirable that as a teacher you should know the levels of learning which students are expected to achieve. **Laying down of standards of learning (quality) which must be achieved by all children (equity) completing different stages of education has led to the formulation of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs). This idea of quality coupled with equity underlines the attempt at laying down of minimum levels of learning at the primary stage. It means that each and every child should have access to education of a comparable quality.**

These minimum levels of learning (MLL) have been defined in the form of competencies for classes I- V in the areas of language, mathematics and environmental studies.

Being a teacher, you might be interested to know what are those learning competencies and which are to be expected from each and every student to attain at the primary stage? You might have come across the three phrases **learning objectives, teaching objectives, and learning outcomes** that are used frequently in the teaching learning process. You must remember that it is at the primary stage where students acquire most of the knowledge and develop adequate skills and competencies. As such, the teaching-learning process must be well equipped to meet the demands of the primary school children. Learning objectives (what the students are expected to learn thus, must be formulated in terms of the expected competencies on the basis of MLL in various subjects at the primary stage. Once learning objectives are formulated, it is your task to prepare a list of teaching objectives (what the teachers must teach) should match with the learning objectives. However, at the end of the session, you may need certain guidelines (expected learning outcomes) on the basis of which you will ascertain or assess your student's performance (achievement).

MLLs attempt to give the teacher a clear cut idea of the expected (i) learning objectives, (ii) teaching objectives and (iii) learning outcomes. Thus, with the help of the MLLs you will be able to —

- i) Emphasise on developing the expected competencies among the learners;
- ii) Adopt a suitable approach and methods in the teaching learning process; and
- iii) Evaluate the learner's achievement effectively by choosing appropriate method/ methods.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answer in the space given below:

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. How does one lay down the minimum levels of learning at the primary stage?

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2. How do MLLs guide a teacher in the classroom?

4.4 MLLs IN LANGUAGE

Language consists of four basic activities translated into the skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The fundamental objective of language teaching is the development of these skills. Therefore, as a teacher, your task in language teaching is to help the students to develop various language skills such as:

- listening with understanding;
- speaking effectively in both informal and formal situation;
- reading with comprehension;
- enjoying reading various kinds of material;
- writing neatly and legibly with logical sequence;
- expressing ideas in writing creatively;
- using language correctly in various contexts.

4.4.1 Learning Competencies

The above mentioned activities have been further specified in terms of competencies. These competencies are listed below classwise, particularly from classes I- V:

LIST OF COMPETENCIES (Statement of MLLs in Language)

CLASSES	COMPETENCIES
	A. LISTENING
Class - I	i. Listen with understanding to familiar and popular rhymes, poems and tales. ii. Understand conversation and dialogues in familiar situations. iii. Understand oral requests and simple instructions in familiar situations.
Class - II	i. Listen with understanding to simple but unfamiliar poems, songs and stories. ii. Understand conversation and dialogues in familiar situations. iii. Understand oral requests, instructions, commands and questions in familiar situations.
Class- III	i. Listen with understanding to narrations, descriptions, word-play and riddles.

Class - IV

- ii. Understand conversation and dialogues in unfamiliar situations.
- iii. Understand oral instructions for playing games, carrying out simple activities.
- i. Listen with understanding to simple speeches in familiar situations.
- ii. Understand conversation and dialogues in unfamiliar situation.
- iii. Understand series of oral instructions for performing an activity.

Class - V

- i. Listen with understanding to recitations, plays and debates (during a school function or competition).
- ii. Understand conversation, dialogues and discussion in unfamiliar situations.
- iii. Understand instructions for performing a group activity.

B. SPEAKING

Class - I

- i. Repeat simple sentences correctly.
- ii. Recite simple rhymes, poems and songs in a group with gestures and actions.
- iii. Answer simple questions requiring yes/no, answers.
- iv. Ask simple questions.

Class - II

- i. Pronounce all sounds of the language.
- ii. Recite poems and songs in a group and individually.
- iii. Answer simple questions requiring full answers.
- iv. Seek information about familiar things.

Class - III

- i. Speak with correct pronunciation.
- ii. Narrate simple known stories with proper modulation and action.
- iii. Describe familiar things and objects.
- iv. Ask more complex questions.

Class - IV

- i. Speak without stopping unnaturally.
- ii. Recite with proper delivery.
- iii. Describe unfamiliar things and objects.
- iv. Take part in simple classroom discussion

Class - V

- i. Speak fluently and naturally.
- ii. Speak on simple known themes.
- iii. Describe situations and events.
- iv. Take part in plays, debates and make formal announcements.

C. READING

- Class - I
- i. Recognize common letters of alphabet in combinations and singly.
 - ii. Read large print and handwriting on blackboards, flash cards, etc.
 - iii. Read aloud simple known words (of generally not more than three syllables).
- Class - II
- i. Recognise infrequent letters and conjunct letters.
 - ii. Read large and small prints.
 - iii. Read aloud rhymes, poems, songs and simple stories.
- Class - III
- i. Read road signs; hoardings and simple notices (as on a notice board).
 - ii. Read the handwriting of other children.
 - iii. Read simple story books and other children's books.
- Class - IV
- i. Read comic-strips and posters.
 - ii. Read handwriting letters.
 - iii. Read children's magazines.
- Class - V
- i. Read simple figures, charts, maps.
 - ii. Read print and handwriting freely.
 - iii. Read newspapers and other printed matter.

D. WRITING

- Class - I
- i. Copy consonants, vowels, matras and conjunct letters.
 - ii. Write (from dictation) consonants, vowels, matras and conjunct letters.
 - iii. Write simple familiar words and simple sentences.
- Class - II
- i. Copy words and sentences.
 - ii. Take simple dictation of known words.
 - iii. Write simple guided descriptive sentences.
- Class - III
- i. Take distinctions of correct shape, sequence, spacing of letters and words.
 - ii. Take dictation with unknown words.
 - iii. Write simple guided composition.
- Class - IV
- i. Write neatly and legibly.
 - ii. Take dictation with simple punctuation marks.
 - iii. Write guided composition using paragraphs and punctuations.
- Class - V
- i. Write with correct format, spacing, etc.
 - ii. Take dictation with all punctuation marks.
 - iii. Write short free composition including simple informal letters and dialogues.

E. COMPREHENSION OF IDEAS

(through listening and reading)

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|-------------|--|
| Class - I | i. Recall simple information given in a short spoken text.
ii. After listening be able to answer question of "who" "when" and "where" |
| Class - II | i. Recall sequence of events in a short spoken or written text.
ii. After listening be able to answer questions of "what" and "how" |
| Class - III | i. Locate main ideas in a spoken or written text.
ii. After listening or reading a text, be able to answer questions of "why" |
| Class - IV | i. Recognise simple cause-and-effect in a spoken or written text. After listening or reading-a text, be able to answer questions using "because", "since"
ii. Make inferences from the information given in a spoken or written text.
iii. After listening to or reading a text be able to answer any question using "if... then" and if not then. |

F. FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

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|-------------|---|
| Class - I | i. Become aware of similarities between words on the basis of word ending. |
| Class - II | i. Become aware of similarities between words on the basis of word beginning, word ending and word roots (prefixes, suffixes and word stems). |
| Class - III | i. Become aware of meaning relationship between words |
| Class - IV | i. Understand simple functional rules of sentence construction |
| Class - V | i. Understand simple functional rules of parts of speech. |

G. SELF-LEARNING

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Class - I | i. Be able to use simple picture glossary where available. |
| Class - II | i. Be able to use simple picture encyclopedia where available. |
| Class - III | i. Be able to use children's illustrated dictionary where available. |
| Class - IV | i. Be able to use junior dictionary where available. |
| Class - V | i. Be able to use junior encyclopedia where available. |

H. LANGUAGE USE

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Class - I | Understand and use simple polite formulas. |
| Class - II | Speak politely and be attentive while listening. |
| Class - III | Take turns while speaking in group. |

Class - IV	Learn about difference between formal and informal language.
Class - V	Use appropriate language in formal and informal situation.

I. VOCABULARY CONTROL

Class - I	i. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 1500 words.
Class - II	i. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 2000 words.
Class - III	i. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 3000 words.
Class - IV	i. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 4000 words.
Class - V	i. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 5000 words.

These competencies have been listed classwise. However, the competencies of class I are carried forward through class II to V. Competencies listed under each class are the starting points for building these competencies. These are to be carried out till the end of the primary stage. Further these competencies are interlinked and interdependent. They should, therefore, be seen in an integrated way. You can observe from the above list that just as listening and speaking are interlinked so also are reading and writing and listening and reading.

Suppose, you want to develop the listening skill, such as listen with understanding to simple, familiar and popular rhymes, poems and tales (refer statement of MLL A.1). You may be using the story - telling method in order to develop this competency. After telling the story, you may ask them a few questions of "who", "when" and "where". In answering these questions orally, the skill of speaking is also being developed.

It may be noted that, while telling a popular story you have used some simple and familiar words. By listening to these words the students are expected to learn their pronunciation. Practice in pronunciation calls for the speaking of these words. Similarly spelling them out properly means a practice in writing.

Thus, you will agree that the story-telling in the classroom helps in developing several competencies under different skills among the learners. That is why it is one of the teaching- learning strategies commonly used by most of us at the primary stage. It enables the learners to :

- listen with understanding (Listening skill)
- answer simple questions based on the story (speaking skills)
- read aloud a simple story (reading skill)
- copy simple sentences from the text (writing skill)
- recall the sequence of events of the story in short spoken text (comprehension/ sequential thinking).

4.4.2 Evaluation of Learning Outcomes

Through MLLs we get a clear-cut idea of evaluating learners' achievement at the primary stage. MLLs help us in formulating teaching and learning objectives and also in selecting the teaching strategies in order to achieve these objectives.

It also helps in determining the learning outcomes at the end of your instruction as you can see from the table given below.

Class	Subject	Competency	MLL statement	Teaching strategy	Learning outcomes
I	Language	Listening	A.111	Oral presentation of statement, such as i) Stand up ii) Read these alphabets	i) Student's response to the command, question. ii) Student's knowledge of alphabets.

How can one determine these learning outcomes? The answer is very simple. Before teaching, you might have decided what to teach and how to teach and must have also assumed what your students will be able to learn at the end of your teaching. Your expectations regarding the students' learning are nothing but the learning outcomes. While assessing students, you will find that learning outcomes vary from one student to another. Most of them might have come up to your expectations. For others you have to devise some other teaching strategies (remedial teaching). Thus, learning outcomes, on the one hand tell you what and how much the students have learnt, and on the other hand tell you what more has to be done for those who have not been able to acquire the desired learning.

Check Your Progress

Note : Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

3. State whether the following statements are true or false by putting a (✓) tick mark over the letter T or F.
- i) The Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) has been developed to provide quality education to all the children at the primary stage. (T/F)
 - ii) In MLLs, the effort is to provide quality education without having access to equal education facilities to all. (T/F)
 - iii) Minimum Levels of Learning are nothing but those learning competencies which are expected to be acquired by each and every learner at the primary stage. (T/F)
 - iv) There are three subjects namely Language, Mathematics and Environmental Studies for which the learning competencies are spelt out in some detail in the school curriculum. (T/F)
 - v) MLLs do not give us a clear-cut idea of the expected learning outcomes among the learners. (T/F)
 - vi) MLLs help us to evaluate the learners' achievement. (T/F)
 - vii) Language consists of five basic skills. (T/F)
 - viii) There are only four languages competencies mentioned in the MLL list. (T/F)
 - ix) Learning competencies are interlinked and interdependent. (T/F)
 - x) Developing the listening skill among the students does not help in the development of reading skill. (T/F)
 - xi) Story-telling in the class room helps in developing several competencies under different skills. (T/F)

4.5 SELECTION OF CONTENT FOR DEVELOPING SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

The text book is the primary tool to develop the competencies in the learners. But, as a teacher, you have to see which lesson/textual material from the textbook would be most appropriate for developing a particular competency. An outline plan indicating the various aspects of the teaching learning process would be helpful in this regard.

4.5.1 Preparing an Outline Plan

Look at the outline plan prepared for developing the competency of speaking for Class I in one of the competencies.

Class	Subject	Skill	Competency	Learning Material	Activity	Evaluation
I	Language	Speaking	Answer simple questions	Story/ event dialogue narration	Telling the story or narrating the event with proper gesture	i) Asking questions or recall regarding major characters events etc. ii) Asking the students to tell the story or narrate the event in his/her own words. iii) Asking students to sequence the events.

Similarly, you can prepare many outline plans for each of the competencies as listed under MLLs in language while teaching in the classes.

4.5.2 Developing Instructional Material Other than the Textbook

At times, keeping in mind the needs of a particular group of learners you may have to develop on your own instructional material other than the textbook. For this purpose, the following guidelines could be used.

- i) The content should be drawn from real life situations and the surrounding of the learners. From this point of view, birds, animals, environment, the school, the neighbourhood, adventure etc. can be some of the relevant areas.
- ii) It should satisfy needs and interests of the learner and also should correspond to their mental maturity.
- iii) It should also motivate the learners of different intellectual levels of a particular age group.
- iv) The textual material for the content should be based on the principles of (i) simple to difficult, (ii) known to unknown and (iii) concrete to abstract.
- v) The language should be very simple. Complex sentences should be avoided in classes I, II and III.

- vi) The material at the primary stage should include different forms, such as— poem, story, dialogue, one act play, narration, description, biography, travelogue etc.

Check Your Progress

Note: Compare the answers with the one given at the end of this unit

- 4 Complete the following statements:
- a) Complex sentences should be in classes I - III.
 - b) Content selected should satisfy the of the learner.
 - c) Text-book is a tool to develop the competencies.
 - d) The selected material should the learners of different intellectual level.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed:

- the concept of Minimum Levels of Learning,
- the competencies defined in language for classes I to V,
- need of formulating competencies for effective better learning,
- basic principles for selecting content for language teaching-learning,
- arranging content, based on competencies according to the difficulty and maturity level of the learners, and
- various forms of content material for language teaching.

4.7 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. What is the need to formulate the Minimum Levels of Learning at primary stage?
2. How are MLLs helpful in the teaching of language ?
3. Why should we select the content from the learners' environment ?

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Quality coupled with equity underlies the attempt at laying down MLLs at primary stage
2. — determining learning objectives
— identifying teaching objectives
— measuring learning outcome
3. i) True ii) False iii) True iv) True
v) False vi) True vii) False viii) False
ix) True x) False xi) True

4. a) avoided
- b) needs and interests
- c) primary
- d) motivate

GLOSSARY

Logical sequence: A proper linkage between and among the written sentences and paragraphs.

Creativity : Writing based on child's own imagination rather than or reproducing the sentences or paragraphs that are read by him/her earlier.