UNIT 5   USING THE COURSE CONTENT

Structure

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Education does not mean just imparting instruction, memorization of facts and their reproduction. Rather it calls for an emphasis on promoting learning based on the needs and interests of the learners. You are aware of the fact that all learners are not alike. They differ from each other because of different personalities, problems and different experiences. A good teacher always observes his/her pupils, notes their reactions, records their behaviour, and studies their interests and attitudes. S/he knows that there is also a difference in the needs and interests of the learners. For example, a five-year-old learner would like a story containing repetition of sentences and sounds. S/he prefers to do concrete activities, whereas an eight-year-old learner is able to reason out and prefers stories of adventure. Hence, lessons have to be planned in tune with learners' needs and interests.

It is a well considered view that the teaching-learning process should lead to the development of competencies and not just the memorization of facts. And in this context textbooks can be used as a means of transacting the curriculum but not as an end. In this unit, we will discuss curriculum transaction in terms of course content and lesson planning. In our discussion on lesson planning, we have given more emphasis to learner-centred approach and activity-based learning as through them the teaching-learning process becomes lively.

5.2   OBJECTIVES

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

● identify the place of course content in curriculum transaction;

● discuss the use of course content keeping in view the learners' needs and interests;

● differentiate between teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches;

● appreciate the importance of learner-centred approach;

● formulate activities using course content to develop competencies;

● appreciate the need of lesson planning; and

● explain how to develop lesson plans using learner-centred approach.

5.3 COURSE CONTENT AND LEARNERS' NEEDS

You can easily find die course content in textbook and in supplementary readers. You can also use other books from the library and involve the learners in various activities. But, remember, whatever activities you carry out, each of them must satisfy die needs of the learner.

Some of the important learners' needs are:

- development of the basic language competencies such as listening, speaking, reading and writing for effective communication;

- sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences;

- development of the habit of self-learning and progress according to their own pace; and

- to relate the new knowledge to the previous one.

Curriculum transaction in the classroom normally takes place using two approaches. One of them is called the teacher-centred approach and the other the learner-centred approach.

5.3.1 Teacher-centred Approach

In the teacher-centred approach, the teacher is important. It is a traditional approach and has certain limitations and disadvantages. The total responsibility is of the teacher rather than of learners. The teacher is active while learners are supposed to listen and answer the teacher. In such an approach, learners' understanding of different concepts and ideas cannot be assured. Learners are not motivated sufficiently to activate their learning. Sometimes this approach leads to boredom among learners.

Let us see how a teacher-centred approach functions in the actual classroom situation. Suppose a teacher teaches English to class III. Using the teacher-centred approach, s/he may conduct the class in the following manner:

Teacher : Children! Open your books on page 13, Lesson No.3 (Children open their books)

Teacher : Now, I am going to read the story of the monkey and the crocodile. You all listen carefully and go through your books also.

    (Teacher reads aloud in front of the whole class).

Teacher : Write down the meaning of the difficult words in your copies which I'm writing on the blackboard.

    (Teacher writes on the blackboard and learners write down).

Teacher : Let us go through the story again.

    (Teacher starts explaining the story. S/he simply tells the meaning of each sentence in the learners' mother tongue).

Teacher : Do you understand the story? Of course, you should have.

Teacher : Look at the blackboard. I'm writing the answers to the questions given in the book. Copy these answers in your notebook and try to memorize them. You all must learn these answers by tomorrow. Tomorrow I will ask you questions. Those who don't answer my questions will be punished.
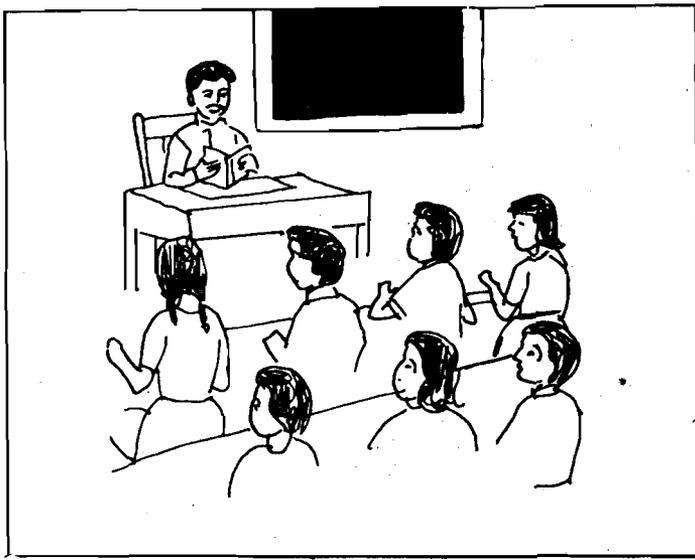
    (Teacher leaves the classroom).

Fig. 5.1: A teacher is reading a book and the children are sitting quietly with dumb faces

Let us discuss the way the teacher taught the story in the classroom. Who was active throughout the period, the teacher or the learners? Of course, it was the teacher. Further, s/he did not take any steps to motivate the children nor did s/he has involved the students in any other activity than copying from the blackboard. The needs of the learners were not taken into account.

Was this approach an effective one? Certainly not. We have already discussed that the activities must be in tune with the learners' needs. The teacher-centred approach does not fit into that requirement. You can well imagine that if the teacher is active throughout the entire teaching-learning process simply by making learners just listeners or observers, then how can we be sure that learners have gained the maximum quantum of knowledge?

5.3.2 Learner-centred Approach

You must accept that nobody can learn for anyone else. The person who has to learn must become aware of what s/he has to learn, how to learn etc. In other words, learners should be guided to gain knowledge themselves about what they are going to achieve through the teaching - learning sessions, and how to achieve the target that they have fixed in their mind.

You might have guessed that in the teacher-centred approach while the teacher was reading aloud, s/he might not have been able to give the desired attention to learners' discipline. In some cases, learners might not have given attention to the book and might be busy teasing one another or making funny gestures etc. The learner-centred approach ensures learners' active participation and encourages them to utilize their own experience, and to become more self-directed and self-responsible.

Let us see now how the same topic can be taught through the learner-centred approach.

Teacher : Good-morning children. See, what I have brought for you.

Children : Good-morning Madam. Oh! how funny these are! What are these? Are these masks, Madam?

Teacher : Yes, they are. One of them is of a monkey and the other one is of a crocodile. We will put them on our faces and read the story given in lesson 3.

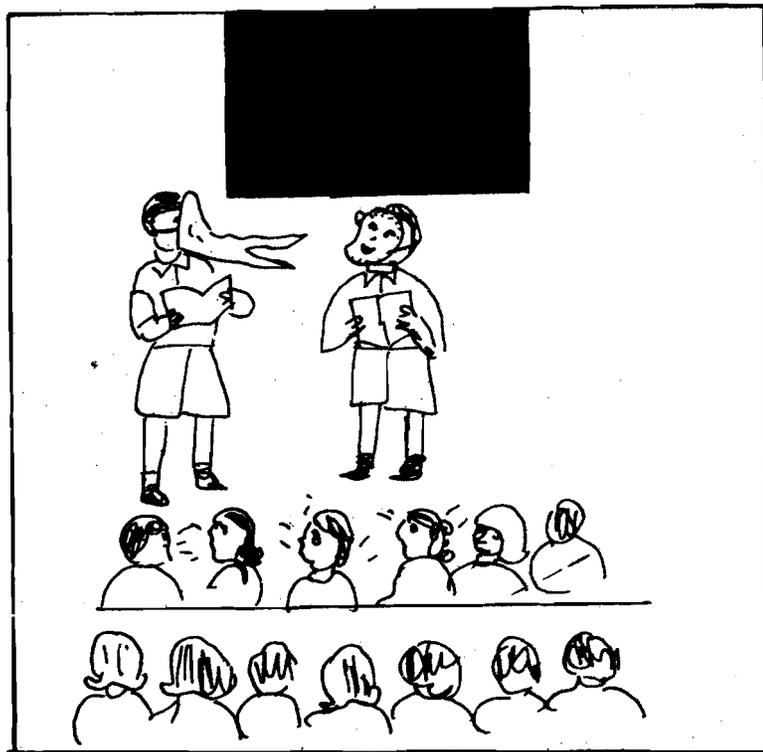(Teacher asks two students to come and put on the masks).

Fig. 5.2: One student with monkey mask and another with crocodile
mask reading the story from the book

Teacher : Now children, see how your friends have become monkey and crocodile. Both of them will read the lesson loudly and you all will follow their reading.

(The two students read the story of the monkey and the crocodile).

Teacher : Did you enjoy the story?

Children : Yes, Madam.

Teacher : Do you find any difficult words in this lesson?

Children : Yes, Madam. There are a few difficult words.

Teacher : Those who found some difficult words, raise their hands. Yes, (pointing towards a particular learner), now you say which words are difficult for you? (Teacher helps learners use the context clues with the help of a few words around the difficult words as has been discussed under Unit 4-Development of Reading Skills. S/he should encourage learners to guess the meaning of the word from the context).

Teacher : Now, close your books and let us try to recall what happened in the story.

S/he may be conducting this activity through anyone of the following ways:

● Teacher asks the students to come to the blackboard one by one, and each one of them writes one event of the story in the proper sequence.

● Teacher may ask questions based on the story and call individual students to give the answer, the teacher writing down on the blackboard the responses of the learners. With the help of the class, the teacher may correct their responses.

● Teacher may ask the children to form two groups-Group 'A' and Group 'B' Group 'A' children are assigned the task of asking questions, whereas Group 'B' children are required to answer them. The process may later be reversed.

(Teacher ensures the individual participation of the learners).

You can make out the difference easily in both the classroom situations. You can see that the learner-centred approach is more effective than the teacher-centred approach in ensuring effective learning. Let us now discuss in what ways the learner-centred approach is effective:

- Learner-centred approach encourages individualized learning. It means that each learner gets an opportunity to participate actively in the learning process.

- Learner-centred approach emphasizes independence in learning. Teacher creates a situation where most of the learners feel free to react and give responses.

- Learner-centred approach minimises discipline problems among learners. In this case, learners create interest within themselves to learn new things.

However, in the learner-centred approach, your role as a teacher is very crucial and demanding. You have to motivate the learners and help them develop a habit of self-learning through various planned activities. The emphasis is not on "teaching" but on "learning". Hence, the entire teaching-learning process has to be activity-based.

If you are facilitating learning among the learners, then your task is to increase learners' participation in the teaching-learning process. It is found that all learners do not understand a particular concept or idea in a specific time or in some particular way. A few learners learn easily, once you teach them a concept, and some learners take more time to learn. This is because of the different abilities of the learners. But, as a teacher, you can take certain steps to increase the learners' participation.

Some such steps can be:

- encourage learners to respond to the questions;

- ask as many questions as possible;

- encourage those learners who hesitate to respond to questions;

- allow learners to repeat the response given by a particular pupil;

- get the response of a pupil corrected by another pupil;

- allow learners to cooperate with each other;

- encourage group activities among the learners; and

- ask learners some thought-provoking questions.

You may now easily conclude that the learner-centred approach is more effective than the teacher-centred approach. Hence, the course content should be transacted through learner- centred approach.

Check Your Progress

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

1. Put a tick mark (√) against the statements which you find correct.

    a)   Education is nothing but imparting instruction.   (   )

    b)   Education demands memorization of facts.   (   )

    c)   Learners differ from each other.   (   )

    d)   There are no differences between the needs and interests of one learners from another learner's.   (   )

    e)   Lesson should be planned according to the needs and interests of learners.   (   )

f) The textbook is nothing but the syllabus. ( )

g) The syllabus is the course content that learners read in a classroom situation. ( )

2. Check your learners' needs according to the checklist given below and put a tick mark (√) against those which you think are correct

a) Learners need language for effective communication. ( )

b) Learners need to share ideas through language. ( )

c) Learners can express their experience without the help of any language. ( )

d) Language learning promotes self-learning among the learners. ( )

e) Language helps learners to read various topics and subjects independently. ( )

f) Learners need language to relate new knowledge with previous knowledge. ( )

3. Complete the following statements.

a) Learner-centred approach encourages

....

b) Learner-centred approach minimises

....

c) Learner-centred approach highlights the importance of

....

....

5.4 LESSON PLANNING

For effective teaching, lesson planning is important. Effective and wise planning ensures the effectiveness of teaching in the classroom situation.

Lesson planning generally is a stage where teacher chooses the topic to be learnt by the learners, formulates objectives, selects teaching techniques and determines the appropriate teaching aids.

Before you plan a lesson, it is advisable for you to check the following:

i) knowledge of the subject;

ii) knowledge of the topic;

iii) knowledge of the general aims of teaching languages;

iv) skill of formulating objectives;

v) knowledge about children (their needs, interests, pace of learning etc.);

vi) knowledge of teaching methods;

vii) knowledge of teaching aids and their uses; and

viii) knowledge of preparing appropriate tools for effective evaluation.

.5.4.1 Steps in Lesson Planning

Lesson planning has been undergoing a change for the past few years. And what is the real blueprint of a lesson plan? Nobody can answer better than yourself. But there are different steps involved in lesson planning. These steps have been detailed below-under pre-teaching activities and during-teaching activities.

i) Pre-teaching activities

Step 1 : Note down the class, subject, topic and the period or time.

Step 2 : Select the teaching points (a few paragraphs or a page or two pages, to be selected according to the time available).

Step 3 : Formulate the objectives (that are to be achieved by the learners with your guidance).

Step 4 : Prepare/collect appropriate teaching aids (such as maps, charts, pictures, audio tapes etc).

Once the pre-teaching steps are completed, the teacher enters the real teaching situation. During teaching, the following steps may be followed:

ii) During-teaching activities

Step 1 : Introduction

The first step in the teaching-learning process is creating a proper atmosphere. This helps in motivating the students to learn. You can do this by reciting a few lines of a related poem or story, showing a picture, asking a riddle or by relating it with the previous lesson.

Step 2 : Presentation

This step requires relating the introduction with the topic to be taught. For example, you may say that you heard a poem or saw a picture of a particular type. "Now we are going to read a similar poem/story", etc.

Step 3 : Transaction

The third step is transaction of the lesson. It can be done by carrying out the teaching-learning activities planned earlier, keeping in view the objectives of the lesson.

Some such activities can be:

● providing a list of meanings in a jumbled order;

● asking a number of questions;

● writing the responses of the children on the board; and

● carrying out group activities or working with partner etc.

Step 4 : Recapitulation

The fourth step is recapitulation, where you summarise the main points of the lesson. In case you have laid stress on the pronunciation of certain words, the student may be asked to read aloud these words again. If it is a story, you can ask them to arrange the sequence of events in the proper order.

Step 5 : Evaluation

The next step in lesson planning is evaluation. The purpose of this step is to evaluate the progress of each learner. Step by step evaluation in between and general evaluation at the end of the lesson will help you assess the attainment of the desired objectives and if needed to prepare a remedial teaching programme. This is what we mean by continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

Step 6 : Follow-up Activity

Consequent upon evaluation, such activities may be taken up which may promote creativity or self-expression. If it is a story, you can ask them to dramatize it or they may draw pictures based on the events of the lesson. You may also suggest to the learners to find out a similar story/poem or collect pictures relevant to the lesson for extension of their learning.

Step 7 : Suggestion

At the end of your lesson plan, for the record you may also indicate the sources from which you have collected the material to supplement the lesson.

Step 8 : Self-evaluation

After the lesson plan is completed and used in actual situation, you should evaluate your own planning in the light of the objectives. You should also note down the departures from the plan originally drawn up. Remember, the lesson plan is a guide and not a dictator. You may change it according to the needs of the class.

5.4.2 Blueprint of a Lesson Plan

As discussed earlier, you are the best person to prepare a blueprint of the lesson plan that you are going to execute. However, for your convenience, the specimen of a lesson plan has been given below. You may follow it and/or may make changes, if necessary.

Remember that different types of lessons, i.e., story, poetry, grammar, etc., demand different types of lesson plans.

i) Lesson Plan

Class : III Subject: English

Topic	:	Who is a kind king? (Story)
		(Lesson 20, New Dalva Readers)
Time	:	35 min.
Teaching Aid	:	Flannel Board, cutouts of a dove, a hawk, a wall with a window, a king, courtiers, a pair or seals, a knife.

ii) Objectives

After learning the lesson the learners will be able to

— read the story with the correct pronunciation, proper interaction and an expressive voice;

— learn the meanings of the following words;

— just, trembling, stroked, swift, frightened, pair of scales, balance;

— narrate the story and answer the questions thereon.

iii) Introduction

Teacher asks the children why we have examinations. With the help of learners' responses, teacher tells them that as we test your activities and qualities through examinations. Similarly, Gods also sometimes test the qualities of a good king. If a king has good qualities, he will look after the people well. Here is a story about one such king.

iv) Presentation

The teacher tells them the story of a very kind king named Shivi.

Teaching Point	Teacher's Activities	Learners' Activity
Reading with comprehension	Teacher helps a student read the sentences from the story Teacher puts the cutout of a dove on the flannel board with action on "suddenly flew in, through the window"	The student reads the sentences "sudenly a beautiful ...window..." Children grasp the meaning of these words through the teacher's action. They may also write their meaning with the help of the teacher, if necessary.
Questions on story	Who came through the window? What was the colour of the dove? What is the opposite of "beautiful"? From where did the dove fly in? Did the dove fall in the King's lap?	Dove White Ugly Window No, it came straight into his arms.
Dramatization	Teacher asks two learners to play the roles of king Shivi and the dove. She helps them narrate the conversation with action.	Two leaners play the role of Shivi and dove.
Developmental Reading	Teacher helps the children and the story.	Students read different portions of the story one by one
Illustration	Teacher places the cutout of a king on the flannel board and asks: What is the name of the king? What are the two adjectives used about the king? What is the opposite of "just"? Why did everybody love him? Why were the Gods jealous of him?	Learners enjoy seeing cutout on the flannel board and tell the answer "Shivi". "Great" and "just" "Unjust" Everybody loved him because he was great and just and ruled his kingdom wisely and well. Because everybody loved him
Illustration	Teacher places the picture of courtiers on the flannel board. She asks one learner to read the sentence "one day he was talking to the courtiers," and then teacher asks the learners to guess the meaning of the word courtier.	Student reads the sentence Students infer the meaning of the word "courtier".

(Teacher can continue lesson in this way with the help of the flannel board and engaging the learners simultaneously in dramatizing the conversation).

v) Recapitulation

Teacher divides the class into two teams and encourages them to ask questions. She uses the blackboard as a score-board. The team giving the maximum number of correct responses is declared 'winner'.

vi) Evaluation

Teacher may ask the students to use the cutouts and narrate the story or she may ask them to arrange the sequence of the following events in proper order.

1. The king stroked the head of the dove.

2. King Shivi was kind and just.

3. The dove was trembling with fear.

4. A beautiful white dove flew in through the window.

5. One day he was talking to the courtiers.

Note: These guidelines may be suitably modified for developing a plan of a lesson from your textbook.

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.

4. Put tick mark (√) against the correct statement; and a cross mark (×) against an incorrect statement.

  a) Effective and wise planning ensures the effectiveness of teaching in the classroom.   (   )

  b) Teachers' knowledge of the subject is essential for effective teaching.
                                                                             (   )

  c) Teaching and learning objectives are not to be formulated before actual teaching.   (   )

  d) Teacher should be able to prepare teching aids for children.   (   )

  e) Appropriate tools are not essential for effective evaluation.   (   )

5. List the steps that you have to take as pre-teaching activity.

  a) ....

  b) ....

  c) ....

  d) ....

5.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the relevance of the course content and learners' needs for teaching language at the primary level. We have also talked about the teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches. We have appreciated the importance of the learner-centred approach in the teaching-learning process, since in this approach learning is given priority over teaching. We have also seen that for effective classroom teaching, teachers should be able to adopt suitable methods and appropriate evaluation exercises. The importance of planning as a prerequisite for teaching a subject, especially in language, has also been highlighted and in the light of die learner-centred approach steps for effective lesson planning have also been emphasized. We have pointed out that to transact the curriculum effectively, the course-content and the textbook have a major role to play, but the role of a teacher is much more important. How you, as a teacher, can develop a wise lesson plan for effective language teaching has also been taken care of.

5.6 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. How do you differentiate between teacher-centred approach and learner-centred approach?

2. Justify that learner-centred is a more effective approach.

3. Suggest at least five ways to increase learners' participation in your class.

4. What is the need for lesson planning?

5. What type of knowledge is needed on the part of the teacher before lesson planning?

6. List the steps to be followed by a teacher for lesson planning?

7. Plan one lesson for teaching a poem and another for teaching a story. Teach your students according to both the lesson plans. Write down how the two plans are different? Discuss the results with your friend-teachers.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. c), e), f)

2. a), b), d), e), f)

3. a) individualised learning

   b) independence in learning

   c) discipline problems

4. a) ($\sqrt{}$), b) ($\sqrt{}$), c) ($\times$), d) ($\sqrt{}$), e) ($\times$)

5. a) Note down class, subject, topic and time.

   b) Select the teaching points.

   c) Formulate the objectives.

   d) Prepare appropriate teaching aid.