

UNIT 8 CONTENT ENRICHMENT FOR IMPROVING LANGUAGE TEACHING

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

For teaching your classes you use textbooks and supplementary readers prescribed for those classes. You do this because teaching according to the textbooks and supplementary readers helps your learners do well in their examination and get good grades or percentage of marks. Do you think that teaching according to the textbook and supplementary readers is enough for learners' language development? You know that the ultimate aim of education is the all-round development of learners. This means that they need to know a great deal more than what is found in their prescribed books.

Being a teacher, it is your responsibility to see that the learners' knowledge does not remain confined to the knowledge contained in the books prescribed for their course.

Activities such as reading newspapers, magazines, novels, biographies, journals and other books of extensive reading increase your command of the language as well as your knowledge. If you are well-read, well-informed and well-equipped, it becomes easier for you to transfer your knowledge to your learners. For this purpose extensive reading can help you in developing your knowledge and command over the language. Try to read books or any printed matter as much as you can, keeping the teaching and learning objectives in your mind.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to :

- describe the importance of content enrichment;
- analyse the significance of the activity approach for content enrichment;
- identify familiar objects around you to teach language;
- explain the importance of developing an understanding of and appreciation for unfamiliar poems;
- evaluate a given story; and
- list interesting books for students of upper primary stage to encourage reading for pleasure.

8.3 ACTIVITIES FOR CONTENT ENRICHMENT

We have discussed earlier that co-curricular activities help teachers teach language effectively. But for further improvement of the prescribed course content, one has to select activities which will enrich the content. Content enrichment is nothing but adding relevant learning experiences to the course content. Content enrichment activities can be conducted with the help of audio-visual aids, the print medium, etc.

A few content enrichment activities are discussed below to help you in the language teaching-learning process.

- i) Activities on postage stamps
- ii) Activities on pictures
- iii) Activities on poems
- iv) Book review activities
- v) Preparing a reading list

8.3.1 Activities on Postage Stamps

Two postage stamps are shown below. How can you use these two postage stamps to teach language?

You are aware that language is used for everyday communication. These two stamps can help us use language for communicating information of a general nature. Have a good look at the stamps shown and answer the questions given below.

Activity 1



Fig .8.1: Illustration of two Postage Stamps

- Q.1) Name the countries to which the stamps belong.
- Q.2) Find out what currencies are used in the two countries.
- Q.3) Are both currencies of the same value?
- Q.4) What is the difference in value of the two currencies?
- Q.5) Locate the two countries on the world map.
- Q.6) Find out the official languages of the two countries.

You can possibly try-out similar activities with your pupils. Collect an Indian stamp and a Bangladeshi stamp and show it to the learners of classes IV and V. All the above questions : or some other questions may be asked. The questions asked may pertain to the dresses worn, the principal foods, celebrations, etc., of the two countries. Allow learners to compare and to differentiate one country from the other. Encourage learners to collect as much information as they can.

Thus, the above activity is an example of how language teaching can be integrated with the teaching of other subjects like mathematics and social studies.

8.3.2 Activities on Pictures

The activities presented here are completely based on pictures collected from a magazine. You can have pictures of your own or can collect them from the market or from magazines, newspapers, etc.

This activity aims at stimulating creative thinking and thus provides an opportunity to learners to write a short paragraph based on the picture-content. Developing creative thinking among learners is an important objective of any educational programme. Subjects like language learning provide plenty of scope to develop creative thinking. As a teacher, you should try to devise ways and means to achieve this objective.

Activity 2

Now study the picture given below.



How can this picture be used for language learning? Follow the given instructions and see whether this activity can be of help to learners in language learning.

Instructions

- i) Give a name to the boy in the picture.
- ii) Look at the dress of the boy.
- iii) Look at the crow in the nest.
- iv) Guess the relationship between the bird and the little birds in the nest.

Use your imagination and answer the following questions.

Q.1) Why the boy is looking at the tree?

- Q.2) What is the bird doing?
- Q.3) Whom the bird is feeding?
- Q.4) What is in the pitcher?
- Q.5) What is the crow doing?

Through these and some more questions about the content and activities depicted in the picture, you can help your learners to build up a short story. This activity is meant for stimulating pupils' imagination. So, try to help the learners to be as creative as they can.

After getting answers to all the questions, ask the children to combine the answers appropriately to write a paragraph of about 10-15 sentences based on the picture.

While you practice such activities with your learners, you should give more importance to "what they have written" rather to "how correctly they have written". The emphasis should be on encouraging learners to express themselves freely without being bound by the grammatical correctness of their attempt.

There can be several different answers as you know that individuals differ from one another. Do not expect a model paragraph for this activity. This activity can be used by you and your friends also to write a paragraph or a short story based on the picture given above. Of course, you will find a variety of paragraphs or short stories. You will see that such an activity goes a long way in stirring the individual's imagination and creative thinking.

Check Your Progress

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

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

1. What do you understand by content enrichment?

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2. Name at least five content enrichment activities which are helpful in the language teaching-learning process.

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)

8.3.3 Activities on Unfamiliar Poems

With reference to Minimum Levels of Learning in language, one of our objectives is to develop learners' ability to understand unfamiliar poems by the end of the primary stage.

Unfamiliar poems are essentially those poems which are unfamiliar to a reader or a learner. Whether a poem is unfamiliar to your learners or not can be decided by you only because you have gained knowledge about your learners' level. In order to help

your learners achieve the ability to understand unfamiliar poems, you yourself should be able to do so. Here is an activity which helps you to understand an unfamiliar poem and appreciate the poet's skill. The activity is being presented step by step.

Activity 3

- i) Read the poem given below:

Swinging

Slowly, slowly, swinging low,
Let me see how far I go!
Slowly, slowly, keeping low,
I see where the bluebells grow.
Quicker, quicker
Swinging higher,
I can see
A shining spire,
Quicker, quicker,
Getting higher,
I see all
The sunset's fire.
Faster, faster,
Through the air,
I see almost
Everywhere —
Woods and hills
And sheep that stare —
And things I never
Knew where there!
Slowly, slowly, now I go,
Swinging, dreaming, getting low;
Swinging, slowing down I go —
Till I touch the grass below.

Irene Thompson

- ii) Go through the poem once again.
- iii) Guess what the theme of the poem is (clue : Is the poem about "being on a swing").
- iv) Try to understand the content of the poem.
- v) Answer the questions given below:
- Where is the swing up in the air or low near the ground?
 - What does the poet see when keeping low?
 - What does the poet see when the swing goes up higher?
 - When the girl is swinging - is it morning, or evening or night?
 - Find out the word from the poem in support of your answer.
- vi) a) Pick out words that describe the movement and position of the swing as it starts swinging?
- Locate the words which show a change in movement and position.
 - Pick out two lines that describe the position in which the swing is at its highest point.

- vii) The poet saw something she never knew were there. (Remember the scene and think of any two things that you could find in such a place).
- viii) Pick out the rhyming words from the poem.
- ix) Think what other title can be given to the poem?

Such activities create a situation where the readers feel they are being there (in the poem "Swinging", the reader will feel like being on a swing), hence teaching and learning a poem becomes meaningful and enjoyable.

8.3.4 Activities on Stories

As teachers for the elementary stage, you should be able to select and evaluate the stories that can be suitable for elementary grade learners.

Activities on stories will help you develop your ability to know how to write the summary of a story, the essence of a story or the theme of a short story, how to evaluate a written story and how to make judgement or comments on it.

Writing a summary demands the ability to comprehend a written text and to present it in a "nut shell" form. In summary writing, you are expected to present the gist or theme of a given passage or text in a shortened form. While writing a summary, you should not give any personal comments on the text. You should write the gist or the summary on the basis of the given text.

But evaluation of a written story or a given text calls for the ability to react to the text and give an opinion on the basis of your reaction or judgement. We will discuss more about how to evaluate a given story later on. If you want to criticize a text you have to present its shortcomings.

Activity 4

A story is given below. Read the story and follow the given instructions. If you follow the instructions properly, you would possibly be able to evaluate the story. This story is about the death of King Arthur and is based on a famous poem written by Lord Tennyson.

The Death of Arthur

King Arthur and his faithful knights had been fighting all day, but now they were beaten by their enemies. Man after man had fallen in the fight, and King Arthur himself had been badly wounded. Sir Bedivere was the only one left unhurt, and he carried his king to a little temple in a field, near the great lake.

King Arthur said quietly: "The men I loved all sleep the deep sleep of death. We shall never again walk together through the gardens of Camelot. And I am dying, Bedivere. I shall not live till morning. Will you do one last thing for me?"

Bedivere was filled with sorrow, and he promised the king to do anything he wanted.

"I want you to take my sword, Excalibur", said Arthur "Do you remember the strange way in which I got the sword? We saw an arm - clothed all in white, strange and wonderful - rise out of the lake. It was holding the sword, and I went across the lake and took it. I have used the sword always, but now that I am dying I want you to take it and throw it back into the lake. Watch carefully, and come back and tell me what you see".

Sir Bedivere did not want to leave the wounded king alone.

"A little thing can harm a wounded man", he said "But I will do what you ask, and come back as quickly as I can."



Fig. 8.3: The dying king with his faithful knight

He took the sword and climbed down the rough path to the lake. But when he got there he could not make up his mind to throw the sword into the water. It was such a beautiful weapon. So he hid it in the bushes by the lake and walked back slowly to the wounded king.

King Arthur asked him at once: "Have you done what I told you to do? What did you see? What did you hear?"

Sir Bedivere answered: "I heard the water washing against the rocks".

King Arthur, faint and pale, cried out that Bedivere was telling him a shameful lie.

"There will be some sure sign when you throw Excalibur into the lake," he said "Now, go again - and do what I told you to do. Watch carefully, and tell me what you see".

Bedivere went down to the lake a second time. He looked at the sword and thought: "The King is sick and does not know what he is doing. It would be a terrible thing for this famous sword to be lost. It should be kept carefully for future people to look at and remember Arthur's greatness". So he hid Excalibur a second time, and went back slowly to the wounded king.

King Arthur asked him what he had seen and heard, and Bedivere replied again: "I heard the water washing against the rocks".

King Arthur's anger was very great.

"Miserable, unkind, untrue" he cried "I am dying, but you will not obey me. I give you one more chance to show your love. Go — throw the sword into the lake! But if you do not obey me this time, I will rise and kill you with my own hands"

Sir Bedivere ran quickly to the lake and took the sword out of the bushes. He waved it high above his head and threw it far out into the lake. And an arm - clothed all in white, strange and wonderful - rose out of the lake and caught the sword. It waved it three times in the air, and then pulled it down into the water.

Sir Bedivere returned quickly to the king, and Arthur saw from his face that he had at last obeyed the order.

"What did you see? What did you hear?" he asked again.

And brave Sir Bedivere answered: "Sir King, I saw an arm - clothed all in white, most strange and wonderful — which caught the sword, waved it three times, and pulled it down into the water".

King Arthur was very weak now, and he knew he would die very soon.

"It is time for me to go", he said, sitting up in great pain and looking towards the lake with wide blue eyes.

Sir Bedivere gently lifted his king, and carried him on his shoulders to the lake. The path was rough and he slipped sometimes on the stones, but he walked as fast as he could, because the king kept saying: "Quick, quick! I fear it is too late and I shall die"

At last they came to the lake, shining like silver in the moonlight, and they saw a boat on the water. Three beautiful queens were standing in the boat, dressed in black from head to foot. They saw Bedivere with the wounded king, and they gave a great cry of sorrow.

Arthur said to Bedivere: "Put me in the boat". And the three queens held out their hands and took the king into the boat. The tallest of the three laid his head on her knees and held his hands and called him by his name. His face was white and marked with blood from his wounds, and he lay there, half fainting.

Sir Bedivere cried: "Ah, my Lord Arthur, where shall I go? How can I live? Now the true old times are dead, and I - the last of your followers - am left without companions. I cannot face the dark years of the future if I have to live among new men and strange faces".

And Arthur answered slowly from the boat: "Life is always changing, Bedivere. God arranges it so. I have lived my life and I am going to die, but you have your life before you. Go your way, and pray for my soul. There is great strength in prayer. And now, goodbye. I am going a long way, to the island-valley of Avulsion. It does not rain there, and no cold winds blow. I shall find peace and quiet in that sunny place, and my terrible wound will heal".

He smiled kindly at the unhappy Bedivere, and the boat sailed slowly away. Bedivere stood beside the lake, remembering his life with Arthur, and watched the boat until it disappeared from sight.

Questions

- i) What is the title of the story?
- ii) Briefly give an outline of the happenings in the story.
- iii) If you like the story, justify your answer within two or three sentences.
- iv) Write one or two sentences on what you liked best about the story.
- v) Write one or two sentences on what you did not like about the story.
- vi) Give reasons why you will ask others to read this story.
- vii) What other title would you like to give to the story? Why?

8.3.5 Preparing a Reading List

To develop language skills (especially reading skills), it is desirable that learners should read texts extensively. Hence, it is your task to help them collect books to read. The best way is to provide learners with a reading list. While selecting books for a reading list, you must keep the following points in mind.

- i) The themes of the text given in the books should be in tune with learners' needs and they must be of interest to the learners.
- ii) The language used in the books must be according to the level of the learners.

- iii) A variety of books should be chosen. They should include stories of adventure and mystery, fairy tales, folk tales, animal stories and simplified editions of children's classics.
- iv) Select those books which are easily available in the locality.
- v) The cost of the books should be reasonably low.
- vi) The books should contain colourful pictures.

A reading list is given below. It contains books which are of great interest to young learners.

READING LIST

Simplified and abridged editions of many classics are available at reasonable prices. Some Teaching titles are suggested, below:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| i) David Copperfield | Charles Dickens |
| ii) The Count of Monte Cristo | Alexander Dumas |
| iii) Tom Sawyer | Mark Twain |
| iv) The Three Musketeers | Alexander Dumas |
| v) Little Women | Louisa H. Alcott |
| vi) Black Beauty | Anna Siwell |
| vii) Pickwick Papers | Charles Dickens |
| viii) Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare | Charles and Mary Lamb |
| ix) Swamy and Friends | R.K. Narayan |
| x) Premchand's Stories | Pratibha Nath |
| xi) My Grandfather's Private Zoo | Ruskin Bond |
| xii) A Flight of Pigeons | Ruskin Bond |
| xiii) Brave Boys of the Past | Manoj Das |
| xiv) Treasure Island | R.L. Stevenson |
| xv) Heidi | Johanna Spyri |
| xvi) King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table | Johanna Spyri |
| xvii) Gulliver's Travels | Jonathan Swift |
| xviii) Around the World in Eighty Days | Jules Verne |

You should prepare a similar reading list of the books available in the language of your region.

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.

3. Encircle "T" if you find the following statements are "true" and if you find them "false" then encircle "F"

- a) Teaching according to textbooks and supplementary readers is enough for learners' language development T/F

- b) The ultimate aim of education is the all-round development of learners. T/F
- c) It is your responsibility to help your learners improve and enrich their knowledge. T/F
- d) Activities such as reading newspapers, magazines, novels and biographies help you increase your command over a language. T/F
- e) It is the teacher's task to enrich the course content through various activities. T/F

4 What are the activities which help you in content enrichment?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)

8.4 LET US SUM UP

This unit deals essentially with activities through which you can possibly enrich the course content. Textbooks and supplementary readers are not sufficient for language development among learners. Hence, you as a teacher has to select appropriate poems and stories to enrich and enhance the teaching-learning process in language at the elementary stage. Various activities are given in this unit which will certainly help you in this task. In order to help learners read various books extensively, a reading list is also given. Similar lists can be prepared by you for the language being taught in your area.

8.5 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Why should you enrich the course content for language teaching?
2. What activities can you adopt for content enrichment and why?
3. Select two unfamiliar poems for Class V learners and teach them.
4. Collect some story from any book and evaluate it on your own.
5. Prepare a reading list for Class V learners.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Content enrichment is nothing but adding relevant learning experience to the course content.
2. a) Activities on postage stamp
b) Activities on pictures
c) Activities on poems
d) Book review activities
e) Preparing a reading list

3. a) False, b) True, c) True, d) True, e) True
4. a) Activities on postage stamps
- b) Activities on pictures
- c) Activities on unfamiliar poems
- d) Activities on stories
- e) Preparing a reading list.