



IMPARTING HUMAN VALUES THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Abstract: As stated by Alfred Mercier-“What we learn with pleasure we never forget”. Hence, we should have such a way of imparting value education through English language that a student never forgets it. The main focus of this paper is on the values and morals that play a role in English language teaching and also defines terms such as values and morals from a general educational perspective. The objective of this paper is two fold. On one hand, it describes the need of value based education and on the other hand it focuses on how English language can be an effective tool to inculcate values in students. It also emanates light on how specific values may be taught by language through communication skills and special varieties of language in specific areas. It has also tried to focus on a few strategies that might help in learning English language with better values.

Keywords: Value, Education, English, Language, Morals, Communication.

Introduction:

Learning is a process, but making this process interesting, is a challenge. If the teaching pattern is adopted in such a way that it is offering more than mere lessons on the subject, one can be successful in making learning pleasurable. With English being the global language, it is almost impossible today, to measure the value of learning the English language. One is left with no option but to learn

the language. This lingua franca has official status in at least 75 countries. If one imparts values and morals through this language, it would be a two way process which would include acquisition of English language and value education. As substantiated by Bill Johnston in his book “Values in English Language Teaching” that:

English language teaching is not merely a matter of training students in a particular set of skills. Rather, the occupation of ELT is profoundly imbued with values, and these values are furthermore are complex and riven with dilemmas and conflict. (Preface)

Before taking into consideration, Value education through English language acquisition, one should know what is “Value Education”.

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This subject has come to acquire increasing prominence in educational discussion.

Value Education: Its Meaning

Value education simply means developing appropriate behaviour and habits involving inculcation of certain values and habits. It also refers to a wide gamut of learning and activities ranging from training in physical health, mental hygiene, etiquette and manners, civic rights and duties to aesthetic and even religious training. It fosters positive relationships and is an explicit goal aimed at promoting care, respect and co-operation. The main aim of value education is the ability to make moral judgement based on sound reasoning.

According to Rosana G. Rodriguez and Jose L. Rodriguez:

As a global society continues to expand, we have the choice to co-create a better future for our children by ensuring equity, access and excellence in education as core values that will help transform our world. That choice allows us to become all that we can be as people, through the celebration of our diversity of language, history and culture. It also means that we fully embrace our multilingual society and that we provide full support for all learners which, by definitions, includes excellent bilingual education for English language learners.

(www.idra.org/IDRA_newsletter/february_2008_quality_teaching_many_languages_one_nation_valuing_bilingual_children)

The inculcation of value based education has become a need of the hour. The need of values and morals can be characterised under various points.

1. For self realization and inner development.
2. To promote fundamental values.
3. To promote individual and social development and well being.
4. To shape our world, outlook and attitude.
5. To sustain the society and culture and bring about necessary changes in the society.
6. To direct people to lead a healthy life.
7. To improve overall qualities of life.
8. To train to become responsible citizens.
9. For moral upliftment of every individual.

10. To understand national goals.

These are only to name a few characteristics for the need of values education. In all, one can say that it is values that are the guiding principles of life, which influence one's physical, mental and social health.

Value Education through English Language Acquisition:

When it comes to naming values, they are categorised as love, non violence, peace, co-operation, affection, truth, courage, reverence to elders, compassion, respect for all religions, dignity of manual work, humanity, purity in work, thought and action, tranquility of mind, cleanliness etc.

Specific values may be taught by language through communication skills and special varieties of language in specific areas. As stated by Bill Johnston:

The essence of language teaching, like the essence of all teachings, lies in values. (Page 1)

When one teaches grammar, its structure affects the way one perceives reality. It affects the learners' thinking and perceptions of reality. It also influences the thinking of the learners.

Teaching Values through Communication:

English language teaching can be enriched with communication activities such as group discussions, role plays, debates, etc and they can help in teaching how to communicate with the virtues of openness and humanity in real life. As a part of these activities role plays can be performed in which the facilitators can give real life situations to the students, to have a conversation with a little act. This way while performing, the students would learn the right way of speaking with the correct tone and pitch. In case, the students are rude or are not behaving themselves in the situation given for the role play, the facilitators can check them there and then and inculcate certain values related to the situation.

Students learn virtues like co-operation, respect for others, honesty, sincerity, compassion and many more through communication activities. As stated,

In rhetorical activities, especially debate, one can teach respect for facts, the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, the avoidance of distorting truth, the rules of evidence on which to convict a person, the ill effects of rumour-mongering and distortion through transmission, and critical thinking in general.

(www.crip.org/book/series03/iii-7/chapter_xvii.htm)

Teaching Values through literature: Poetry, Prose and Drama

Poetry:

When students are taught patriotic poems, one can inculcate values like patriotism, sincerity and honesty. In poetry related to nature, the students may develop virtues like love for nature, humanity, religion etc. Their belief in god may strengthen, when they read about nature and life. Through various odes and ballads, the students may be taught to respect legends and follow them. Furthermore, when the students learn poetry and recite it over and over again, these values are strongly rooted in them.

Prose:

Study of literature in the form of short stories and novels forces the students to find moral lessons everywhere.

It is an excellent vehicle for the build up of a taste for literary craftsmanship and artistic creativity as well as excellent laboratory for the vicarious experience in life.

(www.crup.org/book/series03/iii-7/chapter_xvii.htm)

When students read stories and fables having a moral behind them, they learn to monitor their behaviours. Every fable with a moral leaves a deep impression in their minds and imbibe such values in their day to day living. Not only this, when they read novels which are based on different characters, they learn more about human behaviour and human relations, understand the loopholes in a man-woman relationship and endeavour hard to keep away all kinds of complexities regarding relationships in their real life. English language becomes a means for gaining access to world knowledge by adopting the values and morals taught to them.

Drama:

Drama is used as a key pedagogy to enhance the teaching language and to develop the four different skills- reading, speaking, writing, and listening.

(www.singteach.nie.edu.sg/issue36-languageed/)

The use of drama has, undoubtedly, made learning more engaging. The students learn values effortlessly when they are taught through drama. A newfound enthusiasm develops in their learning. When pupils enact a certain drama, they become confident to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions and also to respect others. It is a very authentic learning experience which ignites the imagination of the students. As drama is meant to be student centered, they are the ones playing the major roles and hence they get an opportunity to explore many different situations that put their moral values to the test.

Thus, through literature the students know the value of being responsible, building team spirit, helping each other, being creative, developing tranquility of mind, subdue rude and uncultivated nature, awaken sympathy and promote harmony.

Drama, stories, poems with aesthetic beauty, its emotional appeal, its capacity to give pleasure, its power to instruct is a wonderful tool in teaching virtue and truth.

(www.ict.aiias.edu/vol_24/24cc_277_296.pdf)

Strategies to learn English language with better values:

Learning English language assists in developing intercultural understanding. It is not only a means of improved communication, but also plays a role in promoting global understanding and respect cultural diversity. When students inculcate morals and values through English language learning, it also enhances their language acquisition skills.

Value education and English language acquisition may go hand in hand if one keeps in mind the following strategies:

1. Students should be asked to write the various stories that they have read from a different perspective, bringing out maximum morals and values in them.

2. Students should be asked to write reports on the events that they have experienced and put forth their analytical views of how better morals or values could have been imparted through the particular incident.
3. Facilitators should challenge the young minds to think on controversial topics and see how well they can maintain their values, when they voice their opinion.
4. Students should be told to analyse historical or current issues, which require moral correction and facilitators should evaluate their views.
5. The job of the facilitators is to gauge the understanding and attitudes of the students when they present their ideas through oral skills.
6. Students should recognize culture and develop respect towards cultural diversity and learn to empathise with others.
7. Facilitators should arrange debates, discussions and brainstorming in order to reflect on intercultural experiences where students learn to be a responsible citizens with all moral values and lead their country to success.

Hence, with an activity based teaching, language acquisition and value education can be both taught with ease and learnt with interest.

Conclusion:

Thus, we see how English language acquisition helps in value education. It helps to understand those aspects of culture that are beyond the visible- values, attitudes and beliefs.

How it develops understanding of human rights and acknowledge that, inspite of the community having diverse views, values and morals, it will be strongly rooted in it. Nonetheless, value education would critically reflect on the attitudes, beliefs and values and help to learn to build bridges from one culture to another.

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