

DEVELOPING A TEACHING MODEL BASED ON WISDOM APPROACH FOR DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES THROUGH TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

In view of the current multiple crises facing mankind there is a shift in emphasis from a knowledge-based education to wisdom based education. The fundamental principle of the Wisdom Approach is “to encourage students not only to recall facts and to think critically or creatively about the content of the subjects they learn, but to think wisely about it, too (Halpern, 2001). According to Sternberg’s balance theory of wisdom students are motivated to learn to balance competing intrapersonal, interpersonal and extra personal interests (Sternberg, 2001). The present paper proposes a teaching model to develop environmental values among students based on the principles of the Wisdom Approach. The Model outlines (a) Focus (b) the Syntax (c) the Social System (d) the Support System and (e) the Evaluative Measures. This paper also reports the results of an experimental tryout of a teaching lesson aimed at developing general and environmental values in the context of teaching English.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In present times of eroding values and advancing materialistic tendencies leading to environmental degrading and even the possibility of extinction of life on this planet, the role of Environmental Education has become indispensable. Environmental Education consists of a process which enables an individual or a learner to become aware of and concerned with environment related problems and acquire the knowledge, skills, determination, attitudes and values to solve these problems. For long term and sustainable impact of environmental education, teachers must not merely convey knowledge related to the environment but build positive attitudes and values related to it. Environmental education can be imparted both as a separate subject as well as infused into the regular subjects of study. Based on the second approach teaching of English provides a rich avenues for the development of environmentally rich values.

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2.0 WHAT IS A TEACHING MODEL? :

A Model of teaching is a design of the entire teaching-learning environment to achieve desired learning objectives. In broad perspective Joyce & Weil consider it as “a description of a learning environment.”(1996)

More recently model-based teaching has been defined as an “implementation that brings together information, resources, learning activities and instructional strategies intended to facilitate” desired teaching-learning goals. A teaching model consists of four fundamental elements:

(i) Focus – refers to the goal or objectives of teaching

(ii) Syntax – involves a description of the process and structure of the teaching-learning activities employed to achieve the goal. It may also indicate certain principles to guide the teacher.

(iii) Social System – indicates student-teacher roles, their relationships and norms of inter- personal behavior.

(iv) Support System – specifies the resource material needed for implementing the lesson and indicates ideational as well as material resources.

3.0 WHAT IS THE WISDOM APPROACH?

The task of education entails evolving a “complete man” one who has multifaceted skills –intellectual, social, emotional and attitudinal, moral and spiritual. To achieve this end, different approaches are continually being evolved. Some of the recent approaches include the Humanistic Approach (Mora & Pinto, 2003; Wang, 2005), the Holistic Approach (Patel, 2003), the Systems Approach (Dayal, 2009) and the Wisdom Approach (Sternberg, 2001; We, 2006). The Wisdom Approach is based on the concept of Wisdom which has been succinctly defined by Sternberg in his “Balance Theory of Wisdom” as the application of tacit as well as explicit knowledge as mediated by values towards the achievement of a common good through a balance among (a) intra-personal, (b) inter-personal, and (c) extra- personal interests, over the (a) short and (b) long terms, to achieve a balance among (a) adaptation to existing environments, (b) shaping of existing environments, and (c) selection of new environments.

The Wisdom Approach, therefore, aims not only at acquiring practical intelligence or optimizing ones self interest but balancing

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of various self interests (intrapersonal) with the interest of others (interpersonal viz. ones social environment) and various aspects of the situations in which one lives (extra personal-viz, ones city, country or environment).

The Wisdom Approach as applied to English Language Teaching implies teaching not only the linguistic and communicative skills but also the application of these skills to dealing with critical interpersonal and environmental challenges. As Brumfit, a well known exponent of the Communicative Approach to Teaching English puts it, “Anyone concerned with language is concerned with human behavior...Amid this welter of conflicting motives and confusing values, language teachers must live-contributing their small offering to world peace and understanding (2001).”

4.0 DESIGN OF A MODEL BASED ON WISDOM APPROACH TO DEVELOP ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES:

The Language Teaching Model presented in this section is based on the elementary framework of the Inter-social Family of Models as presented Joyce & Weil (1996). The present model extends the original model of Joyce & Weil by the addition of

the fifth element of “Evaluation and Feedback” in order to take the students beyond conventional “thinking that is merely critical and not wise” (We, 2006) The five elements of the model viz: (a) Focus (b) Syntax (c) Social System (d) Support System and (e) Evaluation and Feedback are delineated below:

(i) FOCUS: The focus or goals of an English Lesson may be categorized into two broad groups:

(a) Explicit Goals: Developing (i) the four basic language skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, (ii) grammatical insight and (iii) literary appreciation

(b) Implicit Goals:(i) Sensitizing the learners towards critical environmental issues, (ii) developing concern and positive attitudes towards environmental issues and (iii) cultivating decision-making skills in handling environmental concerns.

(ii) SYNTAX: The process of implementing the Wisdom Approach includes the following phases: (a) Recognizing the existence of a problem (b) defining the nature of the problem, (c) representing information about the problem, (d) formulating a strategy for solving the

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problem, (e) allocating resources to the solution of a problem, (f) monitoring one's solution of the problem, and (g) evaluating feedback regarding that solution. (Sternberg 1985; 1997, 1999, cited in Sternberg 2001; 2003) While transacting the above phases in the classroom the teacher must exploit all possible opportunities for pair work and group work during discussions, role play/dramatization, evaluation and feedback, etc. Group work is considered essential in the Wisdom Approach because arriving at solutions "from only a single point of view can lead to ego-centric rather than balanced understanding"(Sternberg 2001:238)

(iii) SOCIAL SYSTEM: This aspect essentially revolves around the roles of the teachers and students.

(a) Role of the teacher: It is important that for the Wisdom Approach to be effective the teachers must serve as the role model of Wisdom themselves. As far as classroom teaching is concerned the teachers must act as facilitators and wise helpers of students in the process of learning rather than domineering providers of information. In the Wisdom Approach a good teacher of English is not merely one with good command over the language and dexterity in

pedagogical strategies, but he is one who "will work to create classrooms that places where people can think, question, speak, write, read critically, critique freely, work cooperatively, consider the common good and link consciousness to conduct" (Ayers 1995, cited in Irwin-De Vitis and De Vitis 1998; 2007)

(b) Role of Learners: In the Wisdom Approach students are not merely passive listeners and obedient task-doers as in the conventional approach. They play the role of active protagonists in the exploration of issue leading to collective development of s, environment related concern attitudes and values. It has been pointed out that "students will need not only to take a more active role in constructing their learning, but also to take responsibility of their own thinking outcomes." (We, 2006)

(iv) SUPPORT SYSTEM: The support system includes all possible resources including ideas, activities such as group work, pair work, individual work etc., and material (worksheets, role cards, a-v aids, and internet resources, etc.)

5.0 AN EXPERIMENTAL TRY-OUT ON VALUE-BASED TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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An experiment was carried out on 45 teacher trainees in a series of five lessons of English methodology integrating (i) language skills (ii) pedagogical skills and (iii) value development strategies. The basic structure of the lesson centered around viewing of a video presentation on language teaching which was supplemented by pre-

viewing for brain storming and motivating the trainees and post-viewing leading to discussion and evaluation. Values were sought to be inculcated both through the lesson content and pedagogical strategies.

The Table no.1 provides the detailed account of the findings of the experiment:

Tests		Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
Pre-Test (N=45)	Mean	1.3	2.05	2.25	2	2.75
	SD	1.93	1.29	1.23	.82	.89
Post-Test (N=45)	Mean	6.5	5.55	7.5	5.18	6.91
	SD	1.93	1.53	1.94	1.39	1.49
Diff. of Pre-Test Post Test Means		5.2	3.5	5.25	3.18	4.16
t-value		14.4	11.19	14.25	14.64	13.3

Table No.1 Findings of the Experimental Try-out

It can be seen that the t-values calculated were significant at .05 level which indicate substantial improvement in the awareness and competence of the trainees in value-based teaching of English.

6.0 SAMPLE LESSON

A sample lesson based on the developed teaching model is presented below:

Lesson Title: *Good Fences Make Good Neighbours*

Language Function focus: Request & Argument

Level: Intermediate

Time: 45 mins.

Objectives:

(1) Explicit: To develop

- a. oral communication skills.
- b. listening comprehension skills
- c. vocabulary
- d. writing skills

(2) Implicit

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- a. To develop respect for each others' freedom
- b. To inculcate courteous behavior
- c. To sensitize them with the problem and gravity of noise pollution
- d. To cultivate responsiveness and decision making ability

Resources:

- (i) Handouts containing a dialogue (ii) Pictures (iii) Audio Clips (iv) Scientific Facts related to tolerance of noise (v) Govt. legislation related to Noise Pollution

Procedure:

Step 1: Distribute the handout of the dialogue to each student.

Step 2: Ask students to read the dialogue in pairs (role play 5 mins.)

Step 3: Present the problem through PPT (OHP or Board work), pictures, audio-clips etc.

Suppose

- (a) You and your friend are preparing for an exam to be held next morning
- (b) Suddenly your neighbor started playing loud music to celebrate wedding ceremony of their son
- (c) You and your friend find hard to concentrate

Step 4: Divide class into groups of 3-4

Step 5: Ask students to make a decision between the following situations and state their decision between the following given situations and state their reasons. They will work in group. (10 mins.)

- (a) Take the noise unnoticed, tolerate calmly
- (b) Fight with the neighbour
- (c) Report to the Police
- (d) Move to your friend's home

Step 6: Ask students to present their views/ideas (10 mins.)

Step 7: Make a conclusion and evaluate students' thinking

- (i) Which decision is more convincing/positive?
- (ii) What other better solutions they can come out with?

Step 8: Teacher's remark

Step 9: Ask students to think of similar examples that they come across in their daily life and to bring out some constructive solution.

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