

**Educational Planning to Enhance Teaching and Learning of English Language and Literature  
Based on Analysis of Class XI English Reader of SCERT**

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**Abstract:** There is no doubt that English Language Teaching (ELT) has gained prominence in the recent years. Various textbooks on ELT have been published since the time ELT has emerged as a main area of teaching as well learning English language. These textbooks contain various approaches, methods, and techniques about ELT. The purpose of this paper is to give an idea of some of my suggestions about how to enhance teaching of English language and literature for first year Higher Secondary school students by analysing Class XI English textbook of SCERT through multidisciplinary approach. The quantity of knowledge in any subject to be acquired in higher secondary level is comparatively higher when compared to the secondary level. English is no exception from this. It is often seen that learning English become more problematic to those students who complete their Secondary Education from Malayalam medium schools although there may be exceptional cases. When learners find it difficult to assimilate the language, then it becomes the duty of the teachers to create a flexible environment for the students to understand the language and the content with ease. Teachers must take some efforts to make the students familiar with the language and literature of the English Reader. Learners must also make responsive steps towards learning English. Infrastructure of the school like libraries, language labs, media rooms etc. also play a vital role in helping the process of English language study. Parents too can contribute in the language learning of their students. The combined effort of the school management, teachers, parents and students can help solving the problems of teachers and learners confronted during the course of teaching and learning language study.

**Key Words:** language study, methods, techniques, instructional planning, multidisciplinary approach, interconnecting similar literary ideas or themes

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires”

William Arthur Ward

Though the curriculum and the syllabus of the English Reader of Class XI prepared by the SCERT taught in Kerala Higher Secondary Schools comprise topics related to other subjects, with the aim of teaching the text by adopting multidisciplinary approach, this aim still remains neglected. This paper focusses on motivating teachers to adopt multidisciplinary approach in teaching English Reader. A teacher can increase her teaching efficiency by adopting this method. This will also facilitate the students to have a better comprehension from multiple angles which is also the targeted goal of designing the text. The paper also stresses the need for introducing literary works with similar ideas or themes related to the learning content, to reinforce the concept in the memory of the learners. This will arouse the interest of the learners to study other literary works also.

The scope of the study lies in the fact that multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach can motivate the teachers in the field of teaching as well as pupils in the field of learning. Multidisciplinary approach develops critical thinking and helps in problem solving. The intention of designing the curriculum including topics from multiple disciplines like ecology, geography, computer technology, health, travel etc is to adopt multidisciplinary approach in the process of teaching. Only an initiative teacher can realise this intention and at the same time execute this aim in the class. The success of the curriculum lies in this effort of the teacher in realising and implementing this aim and its reception by the learners.

Library hour assistance must be given to the learners to assist them in language acquisition and literary comprehension. Library is an apt place where we can make considerable changes in language teaching. Availability of a mentor in the library is very much needed. The function of the mentor is to help the students in choosing right books to understand a concept. An instructor should be there in the library. The instructor can in turn get the help of concerned teachers of

specific subjects to classify and list down important texts in each subject. School management must take an effective step in this regard to revolutionise the field of teaching.

A competent teacher makes planning an inevitable part in her life. In the words of Herrell and Jordan, “Instructional planning involves developing a systematic, organised strategy for lessons. Teachers need to decide what and how they are going to teach before they do it. Although some wonderful instructions are spontaneous, lessons still should be carefully planned”. (Eby, Herrell and Jordan, 2009)

Here are my suggestions regarding the enhancement of teaching of English through instructional planning based on multidisciplinary approach on analysing the English Reader of Class 11 of SCERT of the present edition.

The whole text is divided into six units with each unit containing three chapters. First unit titled “Glimpses of Greatness” is designed to provide inspirations to the students by familiarising them with great personalities of the world like Abraham Lincoln, Abdul Kalam, Stephen Hawking and Rudyard Kipling. This will provide the students a model to face the harsh realities of the world and enable them to live life boldly adhering to values and ethics. While teaching these lessons, a teacher can give additional information about the topic in the form of introducing similar works. For example, while teaching “Abe’s First Speech”, the teacher can acquaint the students with the ideas and quotes from world famous speeches like Martin Luther King’s “I Have A Dream”, Winston Churchill’s “Blood, Sweat and Tears”, Jesus Christ’s “Sermon on the Mount”, Swami Vivekananda’s speech at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Nehru’s “Tryst with Destiny”, Gandhi’s speech “Quit India”, Bal Gangadhar Tilak’s speech “Freedom is my birthright”, Subash Chandra Bose’s speech “Give me blood and I will give you freedom” and Mark Antony’s speech “Friends, Romans and Countrymen...”. Abdul Kalam’s *Ignited Minds: Unleashing the Power Within Minds, India 2020: A Vision for the New Millenium* and *Wings of Fire: An Autobiography* are additional works to be introduced while teaching the lesson “I will Fly”. “Quest for a Theory of Everything” by Kitty Gail Ferguson is a lesson based on Stephen Hawking who confronted life boldly even though he was affected with a rare disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. In this class a teacher can recall the memory of students by reminding them about the story of M.P Anilkumar, a MiG 21 pilot in the Indian Airforce who became a tetraplegic in a motorbike accident, which they previously studied in their secondary classes. Here the teacher can also inform them about his works “Airborne to Chairborne” and also his biography “Born to Fly”. Rudyard kipling’s poem “If” which is in the form of an advice to his son to become an ideal man has similarities with William Hazlit’s essay “On the Conduct of Life: Advice to a School Boy”.

Second unit titled “Words and Deeds” aims to illuminate the minds of students with right values and inspire them to imbibe these values in their lives. It contains an essay, a short story and a poem. It is better if the teacher gives a short explanation about the World War 1, role played by Gandhi in the freedom movement of India, Gandhi’s role in non cooperation movement and satyagrahas, Gandhi’s ideas about education, his autobiographical work “My Experiments with Truth” etc while teaching the essay “And then Gandhi Came” which is an excerpt from Nehru’s work *The Discovery of India*. Students should be acquainted with famous quotes of Gandhi. They should be familiarised with the concept of Wardha Scheme of education, popularly known as Basic Education, as seen by Gandhi. Since the existing system of education is learner centred, the teacher ought to make this study more interesting by giving the students assignments, projects, quizzes etc. on Gandhi in the class. This might be considered as a real exercise in “Learning by Doing” principle. Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay’s short story “The Prize of Flowers” touches the emotional part of pupils’ minds. Since the lesson depicts the sacrifice of an Indian soldier’s life in a war and the mourning of his mother and sister, the teacher can easily create the replica of the situation in pupils’ mind by asking them to prepare a list of Indian soldiers who lost their lives in war and the great deeds associated with them. Regarding this chapter, teacher can also give a short introduction about Tagore’s short story “The Postmaster” in which the protagonist develops a caring, loving and sympathetic attitude towards a girl named Ratan in the same way Mr. Gupta of Mukhopadhyay’s story does to Maggie. The concept of death mentioned in James Shirley’s poem “Death the Leveller” has close relationship with that mentioned in Shelley’s poem “Adonais” and Kumaran Asan’s poem “Prarodanam”.

Third unit “Beyond the Horizon” is intended to provide the learners multifarious experiences that travel offers. Besides providing them knowledge of variegated customs, traditions and cultures of different places, it helps them to develop the skill of appreciating and understanding natural beauty and instils in their minds a craving for adventures leading to various explorations of Mother Nature. If a small tour lasting one or two hours is arranged to nearby important places under the leadership of an active teacher, it will serve as a practical class in travel literature and will enhance the theoretical enjoyment they get through reading the unit. This reinforces the importance of field trips in teaching. “Sunrise on the Hills” by H.W Longfellow highlights Nature’s healing power. Introducing Wordsworths’ or Robert Frost’s Nature poems in the class will help in reinforcing the content to be learnt. Viewing the world from the perspective of a bird has been one of the most cherished humans’ cravings since time immemorial. Guy de Maupaassant’s short story “The Trip of Le Horla” is about his ride in a hot air balloon. In this class teacher can ask the students to narrate their experiences when looking down the earth from aeroplanes, riders in a park or their ropeway experiences. “The Sacred Turtles of Kadavu” explains a sacred ritual on a Figian island. Here the students are given the notion of rituals, myths etc. After finishing the lesson, they can be given tasks to find out and share myths related to their nearby places or temples or interesting rituals they have heard about in the next class.

Fourth unit “Braving the Hazards” familiarizes the students with various natural as well as man-made disasters and empower them to perform precisely during the time of disasters. “Disaster and Disaster Management” by AnjanaMajumdar has significant relevance in the weather context of Kerala, India and the world. It focuses on creating awareness about geographical concepts through the medium of language. The unit also intends to impart lessons in ecosystem, ecology etc and other aspects like conservation of the environment. The unit conveys the message that apart from physical and material loss, these disasters cause psychological trauma in victims. By taking initiative in participating students in charitable works for disaster victims, a teacher can help the students to purgate their minds and elevate their level of thinking. Charity does not mean giving donations alone. Instead, making them participate in rehabilitation programmes, arranging counselling programmes for the victims etc. will build their leadership qualities and make them more humane. Students can think about the rescue operations and help offered by the government to the victims and develop criticising ability the story “Serang of Ranaganji” by Dr.A. J. Cronin is about facing a pathological calamity, the most dreadful disease namely, small pox. In the context of teaching this chapter, the teacher can spend some time on the topics vaccination, Edward Jenner, Louis Pasteur, Alexander Fleming, etc to arouse the interest in students. A discussion about various contagious diseases, their causes, prevention etc seems good. Before teaching Benjamin Peck Keith’s poem “The Wreck of Titanic”, it is advisable to show selected segments of the movie “The Titanic” where people armed with courage and heroism sacrifice their lives while saving others’ lives. A similar poem “Casabianca” by Felicia Dorothea Hemans can also be taught to them. Another poem with similar theme is “Jim Bludso of the Prairie Bell” by John Hay.

Fifth unit “Harmony of Life” gives the learners a vivid picture of the importance of the concept of health and inspires them to pursue a healthy life instead of a wealthy life because health itself is the greatest wealth in our life. Living in a mechanical world where most of the teenagers spend their life in front of televisions, mobile phones, movies, laptops or computers which steal their invaluable time and health, this unit provokes them to engage in exercises like walking, jogging etc to have a sound health and sound sleep. This unit glorifies health. It is also an exercise in travelling. Anton Chekhov’s story “Gooseberries” is about different people pursuing happiness in their own ways. It is also about preserving indigenous culture. As an extension activity, the teacher can ask them to create a botanical garden preserving indigenous plants, fruit trees, medicinal plants etc. The help of a gardener, botanist etc can be provided by the school in undertaking this venture. By engaging in gardening, pupils learn to attain happiness from noble things. The famous educationist Rousseau’s dictum “Go Back to Nature” is brought into reality here. While teaching Wordsworths’ sonnet “To Sleep”, the teacher can introduce similar sonnets related to sleep written by other poets. In “Going out for a Walk”, Max Beerbaum views walking from another angle. Activities like physical education classes, physical exercises, yoga and meditation for mental health etc. must be implemented during the course of this unit. Students must be allowed to engage in physical games like musical chair, running race and other light activities which develop their kinaesthetic movements. Another interesting but challenging task that can be given to the students in maintaining their health is to test how many of them can attain Body Mass Index (BMI) within a span of four months by involving in physical exercises like walking, running, jogging, skipping, dancing etc. BMI is an important factor which speaks about a person’s health.

Sixth unit “Leaps and Bounds” glorifies the revolutionary changes brought about in our life by science and technology. It discusses the merits as well as the demerits of the influence of science and technology in human life. We live in an internet dominated world with internet controlled people. Teacher can explain the pros and cons of internet. In “The Cyberspace”, Esther Dyson describes the concept of cyber space. Here the teacher can make use of getting assignments done by the students in the form of e-mails and acquaint them with power point presentations. Andrew Sullivan in her essay “Is Society Dead?” introduces in a sarcastic manner the youths representing the i-pod generation. A counselling programme by a counsellor or teacher herself can be arranged for the students informing them about the traps of recently emerged blue whale games and momo games which claimed the lives of many in India. In Thaisa Frank’s “Conceptual Fruit”, the author writes about gratifying the wish of a differently abled girl named Greta in shaping a virtual house for her with the help of a computer program. The teacher can recall student’s memory of Annie Sullivan teaching her blind and deaf student Helen Keller using Braille system. A passive reference about the computer aided design AutoCAD used by architects, engineers and town planners to sketch 3D objects like doors, furniture, houses, and bridges can be discussed. In relation to this unit, an exercise to enrich the vocabulary of the students using internet can be executed in the class. This in an era where most of the students are part of social media like Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram etc. Shashi Tharoor’s Tweet about his new book *The Paradoxical Prime Minister* on Narendra Modi has become viral in the social media drawing out and acquainting such words as “floccinaucinihilipilification” and “hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia” from erudite to mediocre people. Other words related to his tweets are “farrago”, “quotidian”, “rodomontade”, “arcana”, “frisson”, “apposite” etc. Introducing such words in the class can arouse a curiosity in the students to search for more such words and the teacher can motivate them to list down and discuss those words in their class at least one every day. Students may be encouraged to look up such words from literary books, journals, or newspaper and find out their meanings and use them in their academic writing. This exercise will in turn promote their reading habit too.

Every innovative idea has its own limitations. Multidisciplinary method of teaching English in Class XI requires more time than usual method of teaching. Field trips and other activities seem to devour much time. English being only one among many subjects to be taught, it is impossible to devote more time to one subject. It will be like neglecting other subjects. Another limitation is that pupils in Higher Secondary classes tend to devote more time to Science subjects as they are in stress to clear their medical or engineering entrance exam. In that case a lack of seriousness towards this method of learning in their second language class can be expected. Even after aware of the existence of these limitations, if a teacher while teaching English Reader integrates ideas from multiple disciplines, it will elevate the thoughts, develop the knowledge, strengthen the memory, and above all inspire the learners.

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