# CHAPTER - IV

TECHNIQUES OF TRACHING COMPOSITION.

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### TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING COMPOSITION.

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#### IV.1 INTRODUCTION -

Some very important changes are occurring in the field of language teaching. The changes are taking place as a result of dramatic advances in linguistic science, research in techniques of teaching progress mode in mass media and great interest in learning foreign languages. In teaching-learning process of subject, the methods used by a teacher hold an important place.

The problem of methods of teaching a subject is of recent origin. It does not mean that the teachers of our forefathers followed no method. They followed their own method. But with the growth of scientific thinking in every walk of life, more emphasis has begun to be laid upon 'method' to be adopted in order to achieve the objective in a systematic way. The question 'what to be taught?' relates to the objectives and the question 'how to be taught?' relates to the method. The questions, 'What should be taught? and how should it be taught?' are intimately connected, because if better methods of teaching are devised, it is possible to learn more.

That is, to obtain the better results of teaching a subject, adoption of better methods is essential.

But the term 'method' is very vague. It means different thing to different people. To some it means just the technique of teaching while to others it sometimes compared with the term 'approach'. It means some people use these term interchangably. But there is difference between these terms. Harold B. Allen tried to distinguish between these terms in his book 'Teaching English as a Second Language'. He defined the above terms as -

"I view an approach - any approach - as a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning." 1

"Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, or no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon the selected approach." 2

"A technique is implementational - that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective." 3

Though these three terms are different, there is no watertight compartment between them. In the teaching-learning process they mingled into each other. Within one approach, there can be many methods. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural.

"Approach describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith-something which one believes but cannot necessarily prove. It is often unarguable except in terms of the effectiveness of the method which grow out of it,"4

expressed Harold B Allen.

Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmoney with an approach as well. The effectiveness of a particular technique must be taken in relation to a method. Method, approach and techniques should go hand-in-hand for effective teaching.

As far as the teaching of composition, there is no particular method of teaching each and every type of composition. The teacher has to adopt the various techniques of teaching composition writing. Techniques depend on the teacher, his individual artistry, and on the composition of the class. In this chapter the research worker has noted down some techniques of teaching every type of composition.

## IV.2 TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING GUIDED COMPOSITION -

The guided composition can be started from the very first year of teaching. In the first year most of the writing exercises confine to the transcription, copywriting etc. Suitable exercises must be devised for

pupils to compose single or even two or three connected sentences of their own. The exercises should be graded. The following steps are useful for teaching guided composition.

### i) Choice of the subject -

Guided composition involves the use of certain essentials. First is the choice of exercise. It should be made carefully. While selecting the guided exercises the principles of simplicity, correctness and background of the learner should be kept in view.

### ii) Preparation of the Teacher -

After selecting the topic, the teacher should first write the passage himself in order to find out the structures and vocabulary required. He should then scrutinise his own writing throughly to eliminate unfamiliar structures and vocabulary.

# iii) Creation of Interest -

After such type of preparation the teacher knows exactly what to teach and how to teach it. Then he must motivate the class to write the passage, by rousing the pupils' interest in various ways.

#### iv) Oral Preparation -

Then sufficient oral work on the given topic should be done before the written work. Oral work in the form of drill is a necessary preliminary to all kinds of controlled work. The arrangement of material, the sequence of difficult details of the topic should be clear to the pupils.

The pattern and items of vocabulary to be used should be practised through oral drill before the pupils are called upon to put the material in written form.

A limited freedom should be allowed to know the pupil's mastery over the known structures. When the work is in progress the teacher's guidance should be readily available where and when desired by the pupils. The teacher should take care of minimizing the errors on the part of the pupils. If properly done, this oral preparation will greatly reduce pupils' mistakes in the written work.

## v) Writing of the Composition -

This can be done in various ways. One of the convenient technique is to ask the pupils to write down the passage with the help of questions. Another technique is to write the passage on the blackboard with some of the words omitted. Pupils will supply the missing words as they copy out the passage.

To write the passage in one form and ask the pupils to write it in the other form is the next type of written composition. e.g. from affirmative to negative, from simple present tense to simple past tense, from direct speech to indirect speech and so on.

Another devise is to present the orally drilled sentences in the form of a substitution table. Pupils have to use correct items from each column and compose some sentences.

## vi) Practice -

For practice the exercises should be graded according to the class and age of the pupils. e.g. Composition from structure table may be limited only to five or six sentences. In the higher class letterwriting, story-writing should be written with the help of substitution tables.

In the teaching of guided composition drilling work plays an important role. So the teacher should familiarize himself to the various kinds of drills. Question-answer drill, conversion drill, substitution drill etc. are very useful for the teaching of guided composition. The teacher should know all these drills.

The audio-visual aids attract the attention and arouse the curiosity of the pupils. So the teacher should use them at appropriate places.

#### IV.3 TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING COMPOSITION

Free composition is the culmination of controlled written work. In free composition pupils are free to use their own vocabulary, ideas and express themselves through writing. Such composition requires mastery of the structural and vocabulary items. It is free in mother tongue. But English is a foreign language. There are so many difficulties in learning English regarding the pronunciation, spelling, script and so on. So the pupils at school stage cannot write a composition without the help of the teacher. S.V.Shastri and M.A.Shaikh expressed rightly,

"They can write fairly good essays in their mother tongue but when it comes to writing in English they get suddenly lost in a maze of ideas for which they find no expression."5

So there is a little scope for completely free composition in English at the school stage. Free written work in no way dispenses with teacher's assistance. He has to give guidance with regard to collection of ideas, developing an outline, supplying some language material etc. The following types of free composition can be achieved by the VII Standard pupils. So the investigator has suggested some techniques in regard of the teaching of them.

## A) Essay-writing :-

There are so many types of essay writing. They are described in the third chapter with their examples. But only descriptive and narrative essays are within the capacity of the middle school pupils. Subjects for essays should be within the experience of the pupils. Simple writing should be expected. P.S.Deshpande rightly remarks in his article 'Teaching Composition To College Students',

"At an early stage a short narriative can form the staple of the essays. Elaborate written corrections are a weariness to the teacher, and of little use to the student."6

If the pupils are asked to write the composition with the help of questions, the following steps will be helpful.

- 1) Pupils should be asked to read the question carefully.
- Ask them to understand the questions clearly.
- 3) On the basis of answers the pupils have to think up a plan to compose a unified essay.
- 4) Essay should be followed the answers in their serial order.

The teacher may arrange a group discussion on the given topic. If the pupils are trained to speak correctly and to attend to their spelling and punctuation, they will easily write correct English. "The purpose of 'topic discussion' is to help
the pupils with ideas."7 remarked K.K.Bhatia. The
teacher should involve himself in the discussion and
encourage the students to express their opinions and
thoughts on the topic. Searching questions should be
put to them to stimulate their thinking and inglination.
To highlight various aspects of the topic, this will
lead the pupils to prepare an outline of the composition.
In the course of oral discussion salient points and
necessary vocabulary should be written on the board.
The students should be asked to develop the composition
on the points listed on the blackboard.

The essay should be divided into three main divisions. 1) Introduction 2) The main body 3) Conclusion i.e. the beginning, the middle and the end. In the first part of the essay the pupils are asked to introduce the theme of the topic. The introduction should be brief, stricking, interesting and impressive. In the second part they have to organize the ideas in a logical order. Independent thinking should be urged. This develops, creative thinking in them. Pupils should be encouraged to present their ideas in simple ligible and correct language. Essay should be divided

in to proper paragraphs. The conclusion should be effective. It should justify the introduction.

G.K.Chettur rightly stated.

"A good beginning arrests the attention of the reader and induces him to read on. It strikes the keynote of the essay and tells him what to expect. A good conclusion on the other hand, represents the climax of your efforts and sets a seal on the essay."8

The teacher may off and on read aloud in the class useful material for the pupils purpose from news papers, magazines, books etc. The pupils should be encouraged to collect information of their own.

The teacher may ask them to consult certain books, periodicles and magazines. They may be asked to get first-hand information by meeting people of different professions or by visiting places of interest.

After discussion the teacher should make his pupils to realize the value of first preparing rough drafts and then improving them by revision. Revision helps them to correct the mistakes, to change certain vocabulary items, to arrange the ideas in a better form. Be careful about punctuation marks, because much confussion may be caused by using wrong stops.

## B) Picture Composition -

Making use of pictures given in the Reader or

pictures brought to school by the pupils or the teachers are very useful. Pictures can be in the form of diagrams or sketches drawn on the blackboard or on a poster paper. Any sketching or drawing on the spot becomes highly impressive for the little spectator for whom activity is a big fum. There is an old Chinese saying which is rendered in English as, "A picture is worth ten thousand words." K Bose rightly expressed,

"These aids have so much impact on the visual sense perception that they stimulate the learner to participate in their learning activity with zeal and enthusiasm."9

Composition ranging from a short paragraph to a complex essay may be developed by showing appropriate pictures or matchstick figures to the pupils and putting them concrete questions on their details. Pictures are useful for developing the oral work and verbal situation. Pictures are useful in the lower classes as well as in the middle classes.

Narrative, descriptive composition can be developed with the help of pictures.

While teaching the picture composition the teacher has to ask the pupils to observe the picture carefully, and to make a note of all the objects in it.

The teacher must ask some questions. Pupils will answer these questions. Note down all the answers on the black board. If the answers are in too many short sentences one after another the teacher has to join some of the sentences by using suitable conjunctions. Encourage the pupils to use pronouns instead to nouns to avoid the repeatation. e.g.

The teacher is standing near the blackboard. The teacher is writing on the black-board. The pupils may use 'he' instead of 'The teacher' and 'it' instead of 'the black-board'. While developing a composition on the black-board, the teacher has to be careful to use the right stops and capital letters. He should not forget to divide the description into paragraphs.

For the practice of picture composition the details of pictures may be changed. But the change should be degrees and all at once. e.g. If the teacher has dealt with 'The Railway Station' he may deal with 'The Bus-Stand' instead of 'Visit to the Fair'. The pupils should be made to write themselves what they see in the picture after the change has been affected. No questions and answers need be written now.

The same picture can be used for different purposes. e.g. Suppose the pupils have illustrated

the picture of 'The Fruit Seller' in the present tense, they may be asked to write the same composition in the past or future tense. In this way the same picture can be used to give the pupils practice in the different forms of tenses.

Instead of a single picture, a series of pictures may be used for developing an essay or a story. To show a series of pictures, the teacher has to use flannel board. In the early stage a single paragraph is a full essay. As the stage advances, more and more sentences may be added to write a full essay.

## C) Story-Writing -

A story may be introduced by the teacher with the help of a set of pictures dipicting its different stages. First the teacher has to compel the pupils to observe the picture or pictures carefully. Then ask them to find out how they are connected. Then he has to put some leading questions about the various details and description of the pictures. The answer should be picked up and put together with the necessary modification.

The story can be written in two stages. In the first stage it may be a description of the events shown in the picture in the present continuous tense. The second stage may require the pupils to transform the sentences into the simple past tense.

While writing stories, very short events should be taken first. For the young learners, even three or four connected sentences make a story. Pictures of animals, birds in action stimulate the imagination of the pupils quickly. So they can be profitably used. Story writing is the outcome of the child's imagination and it should be accepted in order to practise the necessary encouragement especially in the early stage of the composition work.

In the higher classes, instead of picture the teacher may give them an out-line of the story along with key-words written on the black-board. The pupils may be asked to develop the story with the help of the given outline and key-words.

For the teaching of story-writing the following hints are necessary.

- i) Read the outline carefully with a view to understanding the nature of the story.
- ii) Follow the order of the points given in the outlines. S. Velayudhan rightly remarked,"Without a close-knit tense we cannot have a story."10
- iii) Do not omit any point. But avoid unnecessary details. Give the skelton 'flesh and blood' and make it look real.

- iv) Connect the points artistically, in proper natural order.
- v) Begin the story attractively.
- vi) Introduce a dialogue where necessary. It should be natural and interesting. Velayudhan expressed, "Dialogues or conversations between the characters are an important part of a story"11
- vii) Use the proper sequence of tense. Except the dialogues, the story should be written in simple past tense.
- viii) Use proper punctuation marks and capitalization.
  - ix) Build proper paragraphs. The story completed should look real and not a story just completed by supplying merely the missing words.
    - x) Supply proper title and if possible write out the lesson of the story. It should be rather catching.
  - xi) Don't make the story too long.
  - xii) Write easy short but correct sentences.
- xiii) Use a simple, conversational style.
  - xiv) After completing the story, read it carefully and correct the mistakes if there are any.

# D) <u>Comprehension</u> -

Reading comprehension involves two distinct but

related abilities, viz., reading and comprehension. The teacher has to make use of a number of devises to bring the students to the core of the writer's thought. K. K. Bhatia expressed,

"Helping the students develop the habit of a number of devices to bring the students to the core of the writer's thought." 12

The role of the teacher is to act as a guide, showing his class how to uncover all that is there in the subject matter, all that is to be examined in the construction, patterns and planned paragraphs in which the material is presented.

In comprehension the questions are appended to the passage to see how far the students have grasped the given material, the arguments, phrases and main proportion therein. The students therefore, should read the given passage carefully, make sure of the central idea and answer the questions which are related to the main theme. Thorough and accurate understanding is possible when one grasps the parts as well as the whole of the passage.

One of the important problems of comprehension is vocabulary or the different words that occur in the given passage. So it is very necessary to build up a large vocabulary to be able to tackle comprehension. So the teacher has to enrich the pupil's vocabulary.

After reading the passage the pupils have to grasp the meaning of the passage. They have to understand the questions clearly. Then only they can answer the questions. They have to answer the question in their own sentences. For the teaching of comprehension the following techniques are helpful.

- i) Tell the pupils to read the passage slowly and carefully till they understand the meaning of the passage as a whole.
- ii) Then ask them to read the questions thoroughly, attentively till they have understood its substance.
- iii) Then with the questions in their mind tell them to turn to the relevant portions of the passage read them again.
  - iv) Sometimes pupils confused to see difficult words.
    So ask them to understand their meaning by the context.
    - v) Then the pupils have to find out the answers one by one from the passage. The answers should be in their own words. They should not quote the same words and the same sentences from the passage. Answers should be brief and to the point. They should be written in simple language.

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grammatically correct.

- vii) If the pupils are asked to give the meaning of words or phrases, they should express them as clearly as possible in their own words. The explanation of the phrase or word should be brief.
- viii) To supply the title to the passage, thinking over the central idea is necessary.
  - ix) Some questions are located on the intelligence and common sense. The teacher has to provide practice of such type of questions also.
  - x) At last ask the pupils to revise their answers and examine them carefully to see that they are clear and complete. Tell them to correct all mistakes regarding spelling, grammar, punctuation etc.

# E) Translation -

Direct method came as a reaction against the old translation method. It prohibited the use of mother tongue. They said that translation recalls the language of the mother tongue and is the reference an obstacle to the learning of foreign language. But in a short time educators draw out the demerits of The Direct Method. They come to

the conclusion that the judicious use of the mother tongue is very helpful in the teaching of English.

The use of mother tongue cannot be completely shut out from the English lesson. R.K.Jain also aptly pointed out,

"The habits of one language - habits of word-order, habits of sentence and phrase-patterns, habits of using certain words differ and that it is not possible to get a command of the habits of one language by using continually quite different habits of another language."13

Translation work may deal with a single word and single sentence also. But in the higher classes when sufficient ground is prepared in the mother-tongue and English as well, the learner should be set forth on a new quest i.e. to translate some paragraphs. Translation of some continuous passages in a work for the senior stage.

In the process of teaching translation, first of all the teacher has to give the word translation practice. It is a If a word is to be taught only by an explanation in the mother tongue, it must be strengthened at once by repetition and practice. Then the teacher has to proceed towards thesentence translation. If a pattern of the mother-tongue is very different from the English pattern for the same idea, the contrast should be made clear by translation drill.

There are two types of translation, e.g.

Translation from English into vernacular and translation from vernacular into English. The former is easier than the later. Pupils in the middle classes cannot translate mother-tongue into English because the lack of mastery over the foreign language. So for them the translation from English to vernacular is proper. In India the study of English is from the utilitarian point of view, the pupils must be given grounding in translation from English to mother-tongue to avoid further complications of interferance of mother-tongue into English. It minimizes the incidence of errors. Moreover the teaching of English aims more at comprehension than expression.

This can easily be developed by this type of translation from L<sup>1</sup> into L<sup>2</sup>.

There arises some difficulties in the process of teaching. First is that in English there are very few inflections, second is that the order of subject, object and verb is not the same in the both languages, third is the lack of vocabulary, fourth is that always literal translation is not possible, e.g. Pandit Nehru was born with silver spoon in his mouth. So pupils have to train in all these things to overcome these difficulties.

Apart from the above preparation the teacher

should follow the following techniques in order to teach effective translation.

- i) The teacher should give practice in the use of structures and vocabulary contained in the passage.
- ii) Tell them to read the passage carefully a few times. to The first reading will give them idea of the meaning of the passage. Second reading will concentrate them on the meaning of each sentence. Third reading will enable them to think how to express the meaning of every sentence in the mother-tongue.
- iii) Tell the pupils to translate the passage orally.

  The sentence (not word) should be the unit of translation.
  - iv) After reading encourage the pupils to write a rough draft of translation.
  - v) Tell them not to try to translate literally every sentence of the passage. Mother-tongue has its own peculiar idiom, structure and sentence-order which will be different from the idiom, structure and sentence-order of the English language.
- vi) Ask them not to frighten by unfamiliar words.

  In many cases, the context will help them in finding the meaning of the word.

- vii) Ask them to add the words that are necessary for rendering the structures of the mother-tongue into English.
- viii) Ask them to maintain the sequence of ideas and spirit of the original piece.
  - ix) When starting out to the translation a sentence from the mother-tongue pupils should first mark the subject and principle verb of the sentence.
    - x) Pupils should be trained to watch the tenses of the verbs in the sentence they are translating, in order to use the mother-tongue verb to give exact meaning. The tense of the verb is the same in both languages.
  - xi) Encourage the pupils to use correct punctuation marks in their translation passage. W.M.Ryburn said rightly,

"No piece of translation should be considered complete till the punctuation has been carefully dealt with."14

Pupils should be asked to revise their draft.

Such type of constant practice enables the pupils to translate the passages without killing the beauty of language. Like any other skill proficiency in translation can be attained only by dint of intensive, guided practice. This skill requires the use of Carefully prepared graded exercise.

xiii) Mistakes should be corrected. If the translation reads like isolated sentences, they should make small changes to make it a connected composition.

"Pupils should have impressed on them that they are translating thoughts and not words, and that translation is not simply a matter of substituting the words and phrases of the language for those of another."15

remarked Ryburn aptly.

Translation is a training in exactness and in grappling with difficulty instead of avoiding it. So the teacher should pay his full attention towards this type of composition.

## F) <u>Letter-writing</u>

There are so many kinds of letter i.e. the family letter, the friendly letter, the formal and official letter, the business letter etc. The pupils in VII Standard are getting the confidence in writing. They haven't mastered the English language. So they cannot write all kinds of letters. 'Teach one item at a time', is the slogan of recent education. So it is not necessary to deal with each and every kind of letter in the VII Standard. The teacher has to familiarize only the family letters and friendly letters to them.

The kinds of letters, parts of letters are discussed

in detail in the third chapter. The motto of this chapter is to provide only some techniques of teaching letter writing. The teacher may follow the following techniques for teaching the letters.

Letters may be written in various forms and for various purposes, but there are certain general rules that are applicable to all of them i.e. handwriting, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, proper building of sentences and words, proper writing of all the parts of the letters. So the teacher should give preliminary oral drilling for these rules. Ligibility is very important in letter writing because illigibility may lead to a misreading and may have serious consequences. So the teacher has to insist on good hand-writing. Good spelling is as important as good hand-writing.

"Much obscurity is sometimes caused by not putting the stops in places where they are needed or by putting them in wrong ones."16

remarked N.K.Aggarwala and F.T.Wood.

So the teacher should habituated his pupils to put correct punctuation marks in correct places.

Capitalization is one more quality of letter-writing.

So practice in these rules should be provided by the teacher.

The following hints should be provided to the pupils for letter writing.

- i) Tell the pupils to prepare in mind or write on the paper the points which they want to touch in their writing.
- ii) Encourage them to use the style which suits to the thought. Simple ideas should be expressed in a simple and not in grand eloquent style. The style should be suitable to the correspondent. Pupils have to write as they speak. Letters should be subjective and personal in friendly correspondence.
- iii) Ask them to have a suitable beginning, effective body and proper ending of the letter.
  - iv) Pupils have to write clearly and briefly. They should be courteous in their writing.
  - v) Tell them six parts of the letters and to write them correctly.
- vi) Unconventional abboriviations should be avoided.
- vii) Let them to write every idea in a saparate paragraph. Saraswati Raghavachari expressed rightly, "A long, continuous, narrative, without division into paragraphs is clumsy, and lacking in literary form."17

- viii) The concluding portion of the letter must be carefully studied. The superscription should match the salutation.
  - ix) After completing the task revision work is necessary. It helps the learner to correct all kinds of mistakes.

For the teaching of letter-writing the following table serves the purpose of providing the pupils a clue to write correct letter writing.

TABLE No. IV.1
FORM OF THE LETTER

Person	Salutation	Superscription	Signature
Brother, Sister, Cousin	Dear/My dear brother/ sister	Your loving Brother/Sister	Ramesh Jyoti
Father, mother grandfather, grandmother	Dear/My dear father/mother grandfather/grandmother	Your loving son/daughter/ grandson/ granddaughter	Dinesh Anita
Uncle,Aunt	Dear/My dear Uncle/Aunt	Your loving nephew/niece	Laxman Laxmi
An intimate friend	My dear Sohan/Sunita	Your loving friend/ Your sincere friend	Vijay Vidya

For the effective letter writing the teacher should also acquaint them with some initial and concluding sentences, e.g.

#### Initial sentences

- i) I am glad to hear ....
- ii) I have a piece of news for you.
- iii) A thousand congratulations.
  - iv) Thank you very much for your letter.
  - v) Your welcome-note reached me this morning. etc.

### Concluding sentences

- i) Awaiting the favour of your reply.
- ii) Hoping you will give favourable consideration to my letter.
- iii) Hoping for a favourable reply.
  - iv) Wishing you speedy recovery.
  - v) Looking forward to seeing you. etc.

The teacher should familiarize them some examples of headings both in block style and indented style. Especially in the lower classes the teacher should provide the guiding points or questions for the letter writing, e.g. if the pupil is asked to write a letter to his father asking for the permission to join a trip, the following questions can be provided.

- i) When will the trip go?
- ii) Where will the trip go ?

- iii) How many boys will join it?
  - iv) How much money do you want ?
  - v) When will you return ?
  - vi) Ask for permission and money.

After such ample guidance only the pupils can write the letters correctly and effectively.

#### IV.4 CONCLUDING REMARK

While dealing with the teaching of various kinds of composition writing, teacher cannot use any particular method. He does not have to stuck himself to any method. He has to use the effective techniques according to the nature of the composition work. He has to follow oral techniques as well as written techniques. He has to provide, ample practice regarding the spelling, sentence pattern, ideas, grammatical items etc. He should give some hints for his pupils to write composition work. So in this chapter the researcher has acquainted with some techniques of teaching guided as well as free composition. Regarding the free composition, she has illustrated the techniques of six types of compositions, i.e. essay-writing, picture-composition, story-writing, comprehension, translation and letter-writing. Remaining three types are not within the capacity of the pupils. i.e. precis

writing, paraphrasing and dialogue-writing. So the investigator doesn't feel them necessary to illustrate here.

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