

Language Across the Curriculum: The Recent Development In Second Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

Language is the source of communication, through which we exchange knowledge, opinions, suggestions, commands and all our feelings. In short it is the exchange of information which makes our daily life easy and comfortable. Language is the most powerful emblems of social behavior. It is the language that enables any society to flourish culturally and ethically. In order to focus on the development it is important that one must have confidence and better understanding of the language, so as it is the language that aids us to learn and deliver to the audience. As a part of this development in the field of language, Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) is a recent and current development based on some modern studies and findings focusing on the concept of learning any foreign/second language using appropriate and content based language teaching methodologies throughout the learning hours at our institutes of learning. LAC is assisting especially the students and scholars across the globe for understanding and extension of their knowledge in second language learning. The goal of LAC is to build the language proficient class of students by imparting foreign language across the curriculum. The present paper will try to highlight the importance and achievements of Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) in India.

Keywords: Communication, Development, Language Across the Curriculum (LAC), Second Language & Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

The word development in itself has a wide scope and room in the present day world. Development is something we see and expect in each and every aspect of life, making our life comfortable and easy. A man died 1000 years back shall rather be less astonished than the one died 50 years ago so as there has been a tremendous and fast development in each and every field in the last 50-60 years which is astounding even us who are living in the present age. The topic recent developments in Science, Humanities and Management has a much wider scope and limiting this concept to any particular field is a much difficult task. However, all the developments and advancements taking place around us has one common connecting thread called language. It is this language that helps and propels any development to reach to the global audience for experimentation, acceptance and implementation.

We know what importance and status language holds in our lives, in fact it won't be wrong to say that any development is directly related to the language. Language is the most powerful emblems of social behavior. It is the language that enables any society to flourish culturally and ethically. In order to focus on the development it is important that one must have confidence and better understanding of the language, so as it is the language that aids us to learn and deliver to the audience. Recently a new concept namely Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) has been introduced and implemented for the benefit of learners. LAC is assisting especially the students and scholars across the globe for effective understanding and extension of their knowledge in second language learning. Helmut Vollmer gives a very comprehensive definition of LAC:

Language across the curriculum (LAC) relates to linking different forms and aspects of language education within the school, particularly emphasizing the role of language in all subject-matter learning. LAC has two meanings: in the narrow sense it is a concept suggesting the importance of language work and language training in all non-linguistic subjects. In the wider sense it is a concept demanding a comprehensive model of language education as the basis of a whole school language policy (**Vollmer**)

Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) has been introduced in institutions from the school levels only. It is not mere a dedicated time allotted for the language learning but a concept wherein the students learns language along with other subjects.

So far LAC has been effectively embraced by the large number of academic institutions nationwide and is a readily identifiable means to indicate a student's ability to engage in multilingual learning in preparation for the workplace and graduate study. Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) is a curricular enrichment program that provide students with the opportunity to use their skills in languages other than English in non-language courses. It aims to infuse foreign language across the curriculum, thus building on the skills of language proficient students in courses where authentic foreign language sources are not a regular component of the curriculum but would complement the course material. Thus, students can extend their knowledge of a second language beyond foreign language courses and apply those skills to course materials, research and projects in non-language disciplines. In addition, the inclusion of authentic course-relevant source materials in another language enriches course perspectives and prepares students more fully for the cross-cultural and multilingual demands of a global society (**Compte**).

Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) is a recent and current development based on some modern studies and findings focusing on the concept of learning any foreign/second language using appropriate and content based language teaching methodologies throughout the learning hours at our institutes of learning. The concept is clear as it inspires the learner to learn the language not only in his/her traditional and dedicated language classroom but throughout the entire learning process of other subjects as well. LAC plays a vital role in the overall development of an individual, it helps in proper understanding of the concepts in any field of study. For any educated person it is important that s/he must have a good command over his/her second language. The recent studies have shown that in case of Indian educated people the second/foreign language i.e. English has been taken for granted and no serious attention is being paid towards it, resulting in compromises in quality

learning and education. Most of the Indian educated class are seen struggling in communicating in English even though their subject competency and intelligence cannot be questioned. English which is a universal language holds a great importance and prominence and it becomes mandatory for any learner to be able to understand and speak English correctly and properly. Derisory knowledge of English is a serious threat and obstacle for Indian educated youth towards reserving a decent place in any of the good foreign universities. “It is a fact that a majority of students are writing their assignments by copying from reference books or online articles so that it becomes the Xerox copies. A huge majority of the students are not able to indulge in self-study because they lack skill in using English language. The present globalized world offers thousands of courses all over the world, but our students are not able to get admitted in foreign universities only because they keep deficiency in using the foreign language.” (KK, 2014). The importance and significance of LAC cannot be ignored as it is directly proportional to the faultless understanding of the latest concepts surfacing in the field of Science and all other subjects. The concept of self-study plays an important role in any learning process, whatever we learn or try to learn is always supported by the self-study drills. Unless and until one has no understanding and command over the second language (i.e. English for Indian students) the scope for self-study shatters and holds no base. At the same time researchers have found that teachers who are themselves not able to communicate in English properly are responsible for the production of unproductive and barren crops. This means that somewhere it is the responsibility and concern of the system (policy making authorities) to pay due attention while framing the diverse curriculums for the Indian students. Unless a teacher is able to deliver and communicate accurately in English s/he will never be able to clear the concepts and issue clear instructions to students. This faulty and broken academic activities result in a lot of doubts and confusions among the students and these poor students are never encouraged to get involved in spot conversations and group discussions. “Unless there is a school language and learning policy across the curriculum there will be wastage of effort and often confusion” (Des, 1975). LAC is to be implemented in every field of learning, a student of medical science must be able to speak and understand English language very well which ultimately will help him/her to assimilate and collect the latest knowledge from the global library easily and swiftly.

Therefore LAC in simple terms is “to support language development in each and every child, in all domains of language use, in each learning activity in school, and to give children feedback about their progress (through appropriate assessment and evaluation). LAC is no longer narrowly seen as the exclusive domain of L1/LS education nor is it confined solely to the conventional four modes of language: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking; all non-verbal means of representation and expression are rightly seen as part of the overall semiotic systems that we have at hand and that we use when communicating. The whole scope of semiotics comes into focus including images or graphs, movements and, generally speaking, all visual forms of representation and expression.” (Corson, 1990). LAC involves a comprehensive approach and complex planning in order to make it a successful programme. It involves a collective effort and determination from both the language faculty and the other faculty members of any institution. The language teacher creates a situation in order to define an event and happenings, for example:

a physics teacher has to define the law of gravity, he explains to his pupils, an apple fell from the tree and hits the ground; however, if the same event is to be explained by the language

teacher s/he would create a situation like, a boy was walking through the forest dense, he was very hungry after walking a for a long time he saw beautiful mountains and a stream flowing across. The boy came across a beautiful apple orchard he bellowed in bliss and entered the garden. The apples on the trees were out of his reach so he aimed a stone towards the apples, he threw the stone and apples fell down to the ground.

The above example reflects the benefits of teaching any subject in the form of a language learning programme. It helps a learner to relish his/her studies and at the same time surges the vocabulary. It makes the learner to learn in a more realistic manner and helps him/her to use the second language in day to day communication more effectively and properly. Not only this, the student excels in academic and professional aspects of communication as well. Surely being an active user of foreign language (English in case of Indians) is an advantage in any field of life, helping the students to indulge in self-study by having vast reading and browsing online. LAC help and assists students and research scholars to pursue their research properly and helps them in writing their thesis in original language. Hathib Ahmad very aptly explains the advantages of LAC:

It helps teachers handle classes with beautiful and meaningful sentences. Teachers can update their knowledge and develop their skills. It also helps them make use of technologies in teaching so that to make the classes more interesting. Globalization has caused for tremendous changes in all the fields of life. It has enhanced the importance of foreign language acquisition. Globalization has created so many job opportunities for today's youth. A youngster from India can gain a job in Europe or America or any other country in the world, if he has got a commanding power in English language. The new trends like call centers and tourism have opened vast world opportunity for those who are fluent in English Language. It also opens a vast world of educational opportunities for students who can be admitted in foreign universities, if able to communicate in English Language efficiently and effectively. In short, Language Across Curriculum facilitates a more flexible and authentic foreign language acquisition. A better using of foreign language provides all the advantages mentioned above (**Ahmad**)

II.CONCLUSION

LAC is a programme that demands much more attention and concern than what it is getting. This concept has not been implemented and put into practice properly, which has delayed the academic goals that were proposed and expected. This means that unless the authorities press hard and take serious and necessary steps in the implementation of LAC programme across the country till then the desired results from LAC would remain a dream and mere hypothesis.

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