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Aims and Objectives

What is Aim?

Aims are often used interchangeably with objectives, but the features that distinguish Aims from objectives may be summarized as follows:

- Are broad statements of desired outcomes, or the general intentions of the research,
- Emphasize what is to be accomplished (not how it is to be accomplished)
- Address the long-term project outcomes, *i.e.* they should reflect the aspirations and expectations.

Once aims have been established, the next task is to formulate the objectives. Generally, a project should have no more than two or three aims statements, while it may include a number of objectives consistent with them.

Aims are general statements that provide direction or intent to educational action. Aims are usually written in amorphous terms using words like: learn, know, understand, appreciate, and these are not directly measurable. Aims may serve as organizing principles of educational direction for more than one grade. Indeed these organizing principles may encompass the continuum of educational direction for entire programs, subject areas or the district. The aims express the subject provider's broad purposes in presenting each programme of study in the subject.

The aims are commonly expressed in terms of the sorts of abilities and attitudes the stakeholders in higher education - for example students, academics, employers, sponsors (including Government), professional bodies - can expect of the student who successfully completes the specified programme of education. There can be a multiplicity and diversity of aims. For example, the aims might be stated in terms of some mixture of:

- the meeting of local, regional or national need
- preparation for the prosecution of research

- preparation for the world of work, including satisfaction of professional body requirements
- social goals, such as the widening access to higher education or increasing the degree of student control over course selection or pattern of study
- enabling students to continue to appreciate or pursue independent study in the subject

❖ What is Objective?

Objectives are usually specific statements of educational intention which delineate either general or specific outcomes.

Objectives are subsidiary to aims and:

- Are the steps one is going to take for a specific list of tasks needed to accomplish the goals of the project
- Emphasize how aims are to be accomplished
- Must be highly focused and feasible
- Address the more immediate project outcomes
- Make accurate use of concepts
- Must be sensible and precisely described
- May be explained as expression of an 'individual' statement to convey the intentions

Objectives are of different types. Some of them are as follows:

- Behavioral objectives
- Holistic objectives
- Non-behavioral objectives
- Problem solving objectives
- Expressive activities that lead to expressive outcomes.

The educational objectives set out the intended student learning experiences and student achievements that demonstrate successful completion of a programme of study.

- A statement of objectives should communicate specific intentions for the student learning experience and learning outcomes.
- Intended student learning experiences and achievements are normally expressed in terms of the expected learning outcomes of the academic programme and relate to the acquisition of knowledge, the development of understanding and other general intellectual abilities, the development of conceptual, intellectual and subject-specific skills, and the development of generic or transferable skills, or the development of values, of motivation or attitudes to learning.

❖ Objectives of Teaching English in India:

During the British Rule, 'Downward filtration Theory' was accepted to be taught for upper classes. The famous minute of Macauley (1835) recommended English as the medium of education. English was regarded as the first language even for its Indian learners and the approach to its learning and teaching was almost the same as those of teaching mother tongue (i.e those adopted in England). After independence regional languages have been adopted as the medium of instruction upto secondary stage, now it has been upto the Degree course. In this present setup the aim of teaching a foreign language should be practical. English is no doubt a foreign language, but it has in India till the status of being treated as a second language. We are now mainly concerned with the communicative function of English. We must organize the teaching, adopt strategy and techniques for the teaching of it not as a first language but as an additional language, - now as a second language. If and when Hindi becomes 'lingua-franca' all over India, English then might be studied as a third language (L₃) for international communication. The communicative function of English has been accepted to be of primary necessity and the literary and cultural function is secondary. Maulana Azad opined 'English (has become) an integral part of our educational system' – i.e., it has become an important element of contemporary culture in India. Besides we have many uses and many users of this language in India. In a wider sense language and literature, even culture, are inseparably connected. So we cannot neglect the literary and cultural function of the language. The objectives teaching English in India, especially at the school level has thus been referred to in the successive committees and commissions on education in India. A brief outline of the recommendations and observations on

the position of English in India is given below for charting the trends in changing perception of English teaching in the nation:

Macaulay's Minute(1835) had stressed the importance of English as one "best worth knowing" and "most useful to our native subjects", but his objective of teaching English in India was to "forma class who may be interpreters between us [the British] and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons India n on blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, in intellect". The Charter Act, 1833 allowed foreign missionaries to teach in India. The Christian missionaries were teaching in English but with an express religious objective of converting the natives. The Hunter Commission Report(1883) focused mainly on the primary and secondary education and recommended the use of English as the preferred medium of instruction on the secondary stage. The Indian Universities Commission, 1902, recommended a thorough revision and improvement of the curricula and standards of teaching of English. The Government Education Policy, 1904, asserted that English should not be taught in the primary classes though some mastery over the language was preferred at the middle stage for enabling the learners to cope better in the high school stage where the medium of instruction was English. Direct Method for teaching English was emphasized. The Sadler Commission or the Calcutta University Commission(1917-1919) however stressed the importance of the vernacular, especially the mother tongue even in higher education. The Hartog Committee Report (1929) again deplored the low standard of English at the higher education level, thereby suggesting the need of returning to the earlier trend of acknowledging the importance of English in the Indian education scenario. The Abbot-Wood Report recommended teaching English to middle school learners, but without creating excessive pressure, and maintain English as a compulsory subject in the high school stage though mother tongue may be the medium of instruction. Interestingly enough it also stressed the importance of keeping the objective of teaching English India as realistic as possible. Even in 1937, despite the repeated insistence on the modern Indian Languages, English was retained ad the medium of instruction in the university level and naturally that necessitated the development of proficiency in English from the high school and even secondary stages. The Sergeant Report (1944) repeated the earlier insistence on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction but also recommended keeping English as the compulsory second language, and not an optional subject, in high schools. The Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) reflected the trend of independent India as far as position of English is concerned. English

was to be kept as a second language in the lower secondary stage and secondary as well as higher secondary stage. The report insisted on the importance of studying English in high schools and universities “in order that we keep ourselves in touch with the living stream of ever-growing knowledge.” Regarding the role and position of English in India, the Report said: “it is a fact that English language has been one of the potent factors in the development of unity in the country. In fact, the concepts of nationality and the sentiment or nationalism are largely gifts of the English language and literature in India.” It did recommend gradual substitution of English with regional languages, but explicitly acknowledged the importance of English from a practical; utilitarian perspective. The Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) recommended compulsory teaching of English in the secondary school level and teaching of English as a “core” subject in the higher secondary level. It recommended a three language formula discussed in detail later in this book, where English enjoyed a position of central significance. The Kothari Commission(1964-66) too assessed the need of retaining English as the “most important library language” and an important channel for international communication. Even a modification of the three language formula was suggested but had with English retaining its compulsory position. The Education Policy, 1968, too emphasized on the utilitarian aspect of English education in India. The Acharya Ramamurti Commission Report (1990) emphasized the need of revising and innovating methodologies for equipping the learners with a language competency in English and acknowledged the efficacy of the three language formula that kept English as a compulsory language to be taught. The Report of the Curriculum Development Centre, 1989, suggested a diversification of English teaching in the higher education with advanced courses in language. The importance of English in the Indian educato scenario thus had never been a matter of contention, though there had been considerable debate regarding the stage of introduction of English. The Ashok Mitra Commission and the Pabitra Sarkar Commission of West Bengal both recommended introduction of English at the primary stage, the former suggesting the introduction at class V and the latter recommending the introduction from class III. It is thus evident from this brief overview of the trend of concerns regarding English teaching in India that English retains a position of central significance from the utilitarian point of view, that is, the need to cope with the needs of the daily life in an increasingly globalised world as well as for accessing the huge resource of knowledge through the libraries.

❖ Objectives of Teaching English at the Secondary Stage:

L.A.Hill argues in *Selected Articles on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language*, “A student can not appreciate the distinctive qualities of the poetical style of a foreign language unless he has a thorough grounding in the everyday language”.

The recommendations of the study group appointed by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1964, clearly brought out the areas of central significance. The emphasis on the four basic skills of the language reveals the importance of the practical and utilitarian aspect of English language teaching at the secondary stage in India. The areas highlighted in the report are as follows:

- i. Ability to read easily, i.e., independently and with a reasonable and proper understanding of books in English written within a prescribed range of vocabulary (generally within 3000 words) and sentence-structure; in easy unsimplified texts on familiar topics, which should be fully glossed and annotated in a known language; gradually to acquire the aptitude and readiness to proceed to more advanced reading-stage where and when the pupil would be able to read simple texts particularly those bound up with personal studies and interests with the help of bilingual dictionaries.
- ii. Ability to understand a talk in English on a subject of general experience and interest, clearly spoken and restricted in vocabulary and sentence structure restricted to the syllabus.
- iii. Ability to write English without gross errors on day-to-day familiar topics – that the pupil can express within the range of vocabulary and sentence –structure that will be taught to him.
- iv. Ability to talk well in English on things and topics that fall fully within the range of his experience and interests and also within the range of active r productive command that has been granted (accepted) I the syllabus.

The Study Group further recommended the following:

The receptive skills(listening and reading) should march in close step with the productive skills for the first two years of a course, standard practice in these early years being to teach command of a new item first in listening, second in speaking, third in reading and fourth in writing. However, reading – the skill of most certain value to most of our pupils – should g ahead faster than the other skills from the beginning of the third year of the course...a rapid advance in reading may help rather than hinder the development of speaking and writing.

The express insistence on enabling the students to acquire the four basic skills of language for day-to-day use, over the objective of developing in them an ability of deep literary appreciation, is what is followed even today at the secondary level. In a nutshell it may be said that the objective of studying English in the school level is acquiring a basic proficiency in the four basic skills of the language and develop a sense of situational and appropriate use of the language. Appreciation of simple literary pieces may also be considered as an objective, but in the higher classes. A functional pragmatic objective that links the linguistic skills with the real life situations and needs of the learner and at the same time promotes critical thinking and a sociolinguistic sense of appropriacy is the prime concern of modern English language teaching.

Objectives of Teaching English as set forth in the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education:

In October, 1974, the ParishadVarta published by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education introduced a pattern of education that put forward the following objectives of teaching English at the secondary stage:

- i. To enable the students to attain working knowledge of the language from the utilitarian point of view. Since the requisite standard of working knowledge of the language must vary according to the varying social condition...it is difficult to spell out the norm of the working knowledge language from utilitarian point of view. But considering that it is prescribed as the compulsory second language for the most – it must be treated as a SKILL Subject.
- ii. To develop the capacity of the pupils to express themselves in English freely, correctly and with proper pronunciation in talks on conversation on ordinary topics.
- iii. To enable pupils to express their ideas of non-technical nature in simple correct English
- iv. To generate in pupils a love of the language and a desire to cultivate it at leisure for pleasure and profit ; though this objective is desirable but should not according to the experts of the Board, be stressed upon for the purpose of examination. Test items in tis respect, should be sparingly accommodated in the question paper with the least weightage.

Objectives of Teaching English as set forth in the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education:

The curriculum of teaching English as prescribed by the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education was first introduced in 1976-77. There were two separate course curriculums for English A or English first language and English B or English second language. The curriculum for English B was subsequently revised in 1989-90(first phase revision), 2004-2005(second phase revision), 2006(third phase revision) and 2012(fourth phase revision). The recent revision explicitly proffers the objectives of teaching English A and English B.

The objectives of teaching English A as set forth by the Council in the booklet Curriculum and Syllabus (XI-XII), Session 2012-2014 are as follows:

- 1.a) To train the students to a high level of competence in comprehension of all types of English texts; descriptive, narrative, discursive, reflective etc.
- b) To train the students to a high level of competence in English composition
- c) To train the students in literary appreciation and the more complex functions of language. As the English A course is taken up by a small number of students, in some sense or other voluntarily, the scope and standard of the course should be at par with that of similar courses of other Indian boards and councils.

The Council further adds –

The proposed new course contains the following new features:

- a) Introduction of course in **English for Specific Purposes**, including various practical application and professional uses
- b) Omission of the History of English Literature and Rhetoric and Prosody, in favour of the above-mentioned courses of practical orientation. Very few of the students need knowledge of literary history or Rhetoric and Prosody in their later lives and careers .Moreover, at the Higher Secondary stage, they can obtain practically no acquaintance with the range of authors and texts discussed.
- c) The selection of literary pieces has been thoroughly revised and updated. It now includes Shakespearean drama on the one hand, and on the other, a large selection of 20th century items including works by the recent authors women writers, writers of Indian and other non-Western

origin and writers from disadvantaged groups, as well as works on such themes as social justice, ecology, science, women's issues etc. (p.33)

The insistence on the "practical application and professional uses" reveals a paradigm shift. The shift of focus from literary to linguistic and more practical use oriented objective brings to the forefront the nature of the objectives of teaching English even as a first language today. The emphasis laid upon English for Specific Purposes too reveals the revised objectives of teaching English first language. The objectives of teaching English first language thus gain a new dimension. Along with the traditional emphasis upon "high level of competence" in literary comprehension and appreciation, a new trend of setting a great premium upon the utilitarian aspects of English language comes to the fore front.

The objectives of teaching English B as specified by the Council of Higher Secondary Education are as follows:

1.a) To effect a smooth transition from the secondary to Higher Secondary level and from Higher Secondary to Degree level; to enhance communicative skills which might satisfy work-place requirements.

b) to enhance comprehension and writing skills with special emphasis on independent writing. These should incorporate coherent description in logical sequence, handling information, reporting a dialogue, composing reports, short dialogues, letters and paragraphs.

The "changes envisaged" by the council are as follows:

To shift emphasis from explanation of texts in classroom to developing writing skills, through exercises from the text. Selection of pieces on a much wider range of subjects and authors while keeping the length of individual pieces short.

Introduction of translation of English for developing vocabulary and skill in using language on one's own.

Comprehension to be based on passages from Rapid Reader and also from poems in the selections for necessarily from prescribed texts.

Objective-type questions, précis-writing and note-making to be dropped.

❖ Objectives of Teaching English as Set Forth in the Kothari Commission:

The main objective of the Government of India in appointing the Kothari Commission (1964-66) was to "evolve an educational system that was rooted in the basic values of the country as well as

it succeeded in fulfilling the requirements of the modern society. The commission's report was supposedly a powerful instrument of social transformation and economic progress. The suggestions on language education were made with this vision in perspective. The recommendations are as follows:

- i. A policy regarding the language study is most essential at the school stage.
- ii. The modification of the language formula must be guided by the following principles:
 - a. Hindi as the official language of the Centre should enjoy as much importance as the mother tongue
 - b. A working knowledge of English will continue to be an asset to the students
 - c. The proficiency in a language depends as much upon the types of teachers and facilities as upon the length of time in which it is learnt.
 - d. The most suitable stage for learning three languages is the lower secondary stage, i.e., from Classes VIII to X.
 - e. Hindi or English should be introduced at a point when there is greatest motivation or need.
 - f. At no stage the learning of four languages be made compulsory.
- iii. The student will study only one language, that is, the mother tongue in the primary stage. At the higher primary stage, the child will study two languages, the mother-tongue and the regional language or the official language of the Centre. At the lower secondary stage, three languages will have to be studied including the mother tongue, Hindi and any other modern Indian language.
- iv. The study of Hindi and English will be indicated in terms of hours of study and level of attainment. This can be done in two levels, one for three years and the other for six years of study.
- v. The study of any language should not be compulsory in higher education.
- vi. the teaching of English should not begin earlier than Class V after adequate command has been acquired over the mother-tongue.

❖ Objectives of Teaching English as Set Forth in NCF 2005:

The Executive Summary of the National Curriculum Framework, 2005 clarifies the major paradigm shift in the way language education is perceived in the nation today. Contrary to the

earlier emphasis on development of the ability to appreciate the literary and aesthetic aspects of the literature written in English and the rich cultural overtones essentially associated with it, the current focus seemed to be on the recognition of English as a global language and the diversification of the language due to continual assimilation of regional dialects. Attainment of a basic proficiency was emphasized. The principal observations made by the Position Paper on English in the National Curriculum Framework 2005 are summarized below:

- i. “The goals for a language curriculum are twofold: attainment of a basic proficiency, such as is acquired in natural language learning, and the development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition through, for example, literacy.
- ii. This argues for an across-the-curriculum approach that breaks down the barriers between English and other subjects, and other Indian languages.
- iii. The aim of English teaching is the creation of multilinguals who can enrich all our languages; this has been an abiding national vision. It is argued that higher order linguistic skills generalize through languages and thus proficiency in any skill of any one language practically enriches the other languages that the learner knows. So English teaching must aspire to generate proficiency in basic skills of the language. Elements of a comprehensive culture and social aspects would also be developed through such a development.
- iv. Approaches and methods need not be exclusive but may be mutually supportive within a broad cognitive philosophy (incorporating Vygotskian, Chomskyan, and Piagetian principles).
- v. Higher-order skills (including literary appreciation and the role of language in gendering) can be developed once fundamental competencies are ensured and so emphasis must be given on the acquisition of the basic skills.
- vi. Language evaluation need not be tied to “achievement” with respect to particular syllabi, but must be reoriented to the measurement of language proficiency.
- vii. A student may be allowed to “pass without English” if an alternative route for English certification (and therefore instruction) can be provided outside the regular school curriculum.

- viii. The national curriculum aims at a cohesive curricular policy based on guiding principles for language teaching and acquisition, which allows for a variety of implementations suitable to local needs and resources, and which provides illustrative models for use.
- ix. English needs to find its place along with other Indian languages in regional-medium schools. In English medium schools regional languages must be valorized in the face of the perceived supremacy of English.
- x. English teaching must aim at equipping the learners for the spontaneous and appropriate use of language for at least everyday purposes.
- xi. A “minimum level of proficiency” in English is to be developed for daily communication as opposed to merely passing examinations in it, or knowing its grammar. Other needs for specific domains like the English required for travel and tourism industry would be developed on the basis of this minimum level of proficiency.
- xii. English should be introduced through Input-rich environments. The Executive Summary says, “Input-rich communicational environments are a prerequisite for language learning.”
- xiii. Vocabulary should be built up gradually through reading in higher stages of school education and the materials must cover a range of genres. The materials provide for reading must also be “sensitive to perspectives of equity (gender and societal) and harmony (between humans, and between humans and nature)”[p.11]
- xiv. Sensitization to language as a vehicle of gendering can also be initiated for those groups where teacher and student competencies permit this
- xv. Across the curriculum language teaching must be attempted by relating English with other subjects in higher stages of school education
- xvi. Critical thinking must be promoted through teaching of English
- xvii. Grammar can be introduced after basic linguistic competence is acquired, as a means of reflecting on academic language and an intellectually interesting activity in its own right. Grammar should not be treated as a route for developing primary or usable knowledge of language, but it can serve as a tool for increasing the language repertoire and for understanding the construction of text “rhetoric” and argumentation.
- xviii. English must be taught in an integrated manner in the primary level.

xix. Continuous and comprehensive evaluation is strongly recommended for evaluation proficiency in English.