

Report on  
MHRD Sponsored Short Term Programme on  
***“Motivating Undergraduate Students to Acquire Reading and  
Writing Skills in English”***

Organised by Teaching Learning Centre, Tezpur University in collaboration  
with North Gauhati College at North Gauhati College, Guwahati-781031  
**14 – 16 February, 2018**

The short term programme started with the registration on 14<sup>th</sup> of February at 9.00 a.m. and registered 41 participants. The registration was followed by the inaugural ceremony at 9.45 a.m. and the key note speech was delivered by Prof. Jyoti Prakash Tamuli, Head of the department of Linguistics, Gauhati University. Welcoming the participants Prof. Tamuli talked at length about the importance of English Language in the modern scenario. He referred to all the subjects taught in schools, colleges and Universities as consumers of English and underlined the fact that English should not be handled as a content subject but should be learnt as a skill that facilitates learning and communication in the required fields.



Dr. Shikha S. Kashyap, Head department of English and Dr. Dilip Das, Principal North Gauhati College addressed and welcomed the participants. Prof. Anita Tamuli, Head of English Language Teaching, Gauhati University and also the Resource Person of the day addressed the participants. Dr. Bhushita Patowari, Observer from TLC, Tezpur University defined the objective of the programme. The Inaugural session came to an end with Dr. Maloshi Choudhury, Coordinator of the Programme offering the vote of thanks.

## **Day 1: 14-02-2018**

### **Session I and Session II**

Resource Person: Prof. Anita Tamuli, Head Dept. of ELT, Gauhati University

Title of the sessions: **‘Exploring our Classrooms’ and ‘Teaching Writing skills’**.

In session I, while helping the participants to explore their classroom situations the following factors emerged:

- Large classrooms
- Vernacular medium background
- Spelling errors
- Problems with expressions
- Students not interested in learning but interested in getting through the exam by cramming notes
- Students afraid of English
- Very large syllabus
- Problems with students from other language background like Bodo, Garo etc.
- A lot of time needed for taking attendance



To handle this seemingly difficult scenario participants suggested:

- Personal touch
- Group activity
- Graded instruction

In the second session on ‘Teaching Writing Skills’, Prof. Anita Tamuli commented that the curriculum is inappropriate; students are not able to relate to it and so they do not find it interesting.

What does not happen in the classrooms (but should happen): In the general English, the students’ language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) along with knowledge of grammar and vocabulary should be strengthened. For students to be able to communicate practice is of utmost importance, she commented.

### **Session III**

Resource Persons: Prof. Anita Tamuli assisted by Dr. Khamseng Baruah, Dept. of ELT., Gauhati University

Title of the session: **‘Using information from outside sources and documentation of sources’**

Dr. Baruah discussed the following in her session:

- Discussed the ways of using information from outside sources (Quoting directly, quoting indirectly, Paraphrasing and Summarising)
- Discussed how to write a good paraphrase and summary
- Discussed plagiarism and its types
- Discussed different types of sources of references
- Discussed means of evaluating sources
- Discussed reliability of documentation of sources

The participants were provided with handouts and formed into groups to understand and discuss the subject matter.

## **Day 2: 15-02-2018**

### **Session I and Session II**

Resource Person: Dr. Bornali Bhuyan, Head, Dept. of English KRB Girls' College

Title of the sessions: **Teaching Reading skills**

The resource person initiated a discussion amongst the participants on:

- Purpose of reading
- Types of reading
- Reading procedure observed in classrooms



She commented that a misconception exists that a quiet classroom is an ideal classroom but in reality in a non interactive classroom learning do not take place. Hence teachers should refrain from focusing on content and strive to build reading skills in students.

Incorporation of reading skills and strategies into a curriculum:

- Guiding students to learn and use the reading skills(skimming, scanning, extensive reading and intensive reading)
- Guiding students in setting reading goals
- Evaluating and assessing the students' acquisition by teachers
- Guiding to understand the cultural references and giving background information

Dr. Bhuyan brought in anecdotes from real life and classroom situations. She also formed the participants into groups for discussion and commented that working in groups increase students' motivation.

### Session III and Session IV

Prof. Padmini Bhuyan Boruah, Dept. of ELT, Gauhati University

Title of the session: **‘Integrating Language Skills’**

Prof. Bhuyan Boruah started the class by asking the participants questions on problems faced while teaching college students as well strength possessed by their students. After listening to the feedback given on the aspects asked Prof. Boruah proceeded to discuss fields where English is required i.e. academic, instrumental,



professional and social. She then discussed the need of mastering the language skills, language components, sound, vocabulary, grammar, structure and meaning. While talking about use of social media by students and its affect on their mental health she initiated a dialogue among the participants. Discussing integrating of language skills in classrooms, she underlined the use of authentic language, communication (a means of interaction and sharing), appropriateness and tracking of the growth in language acquisition of students by teachers. Use of these factors promotes learning of real content she commented. Discussing ‘Content and Language Integration’, she demonstrated how Content based instruction, Task based instruction and Project based instruction provide opportunities to students’ use of all the language skills.

### **Day 3: 16-02-2018**

#### **Session I**

Resource Person: Dr. Mizo Prova Borah :Dy, Director and Head of Languages, SCERT Assam

Title of the session: **Self Assessment and Continuing Professional Development**

The resource person commented that teachers should put all they know into practice and self assessment is helpful for teacher effectiveness. Only when teacher and students learn together assessment becomes easier. For professional growth peer assessment and peer learning is very essential. Comfort groups, sharing of experiences, network, chalking out of strategies are very essential. In a scenario where the content and pedagogy are changing,



the teacher also has to change. Training Institutes should function as hub of learning where sharing,

recording, self evaluation take place. While bringing in these concepts Dr. Bora also sought the views of the participants by forming them into groups.

## **Session II**

Resource Person: Prof Padmini Bhuyan Boruah, Dept. of ELT, Gauhati University

Title of the session: **‘Teachers as Researchers: Doing Exploratory Action Research’**

Prof. Boruah started by initiating a discussion among the participants on what is research. Then she proceeded to explain action research and exploratory action research.

Action research is ‘Addressing questions that arise from your practice by gathering data, analyzing it and sharing what you find’ (Richard Smith, 2017)

Exploratory Action Research involves exploring, acting, reflecting, acting and sharing. Some of the benefits it brings are:

- Greater understanding of one’s own context
- Helps in solving teaching problems
- Teacher becomes reflective and analytical
- Motivates both teachers and students
- Contributes to wider knowledge

Prof. Padmini Bhuyan Boruah welcomes the teacher participants to participate and get involved in such exploratory action researches for the benefit of the students.

## **Session III**

Title of the session: **‘Group Discussion’**

Dr. Swapnarani Bora, Assistant Professor TLC, Tezpur University coordinated the group discussion programme of the participants in presence of Prof. Padmini Bhuyan Boruah, Dr. Bornali Bhuyan and Dr. Bhushita Patowari. A vibrant discussion took place and feedback from the participants were collected (feedback forms).

Language communicates through four parameters or skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. In order to learn a language and achieve competence, it is essential to master all the four skills as well as acquire the language components. The teacher plays a very decisive role in encouraging students to learn



and improve their skills. The workshop highlighted on the strategies to be employed by the teachers to motivate their undergraduate students in acquiring of the language skills and the desired language components.

### **Valedictory Ceremony:**



The valedictory ceremony was graced by Prof. Mrinmoy K. Sarma, Director TLC, Tezpur University as the chief guest and Dr. Eeshankur Saikia, Gauhati University as the Guest of Honour. Prof. Sarma in his address talked about the importance of the topic deliberated in the programme. He also briefed the gathering on the nature and area of work focussed by TLC, TU.

Dr. Saikia, Prof. Padmini Boruah Bhuyan, Dr. Bornali Bhuyan, Dr. Dilip Das, Dr. Shikha S. Kashyap, Sri Jatindra Choudhury, former HOD English, North Gauhati College addressed the gathering comprising of the participants, teachers and staff of North Gauhati College and faculty members of TLC, Tezpur University. Two participants, Dr. Lalit Shrestha (Asst. Prof. Department of Anthropology) and Ms. Snigdha Deka, Research Scholar (Dept. of Humanities, IITG) shared their experiences gathered in the short term programme. The programme ended with the vote of thanks given by Dr. Maloshi Choudhury.

