

Maxims of language teaching

Teaching is an art, to gain mastery of which one should know the maxims. These maxims have been invented not by an educationist, but by a psychologist. In fact they have been developed and they make teaching effective. These are common maxims and are known by the name of 'maxims of teaching method'. Most of these are based on psychological principles. Some of these are:

1. From known to unknown: -

Many things to be taught by the teacher in the classroom are known by the students. The teacher should make use of this known material. The children gain several experiences by being a member of the family, & taking part in sports, travel and in interaction with relatives and other contemporary groups. These experiences are generally disorganized. Giving a definite shape to these disorganised experiences and to move from the known to the unknown becomes a natural educational technique. The use of the known material should be done in all subjects, if the relation of the unknown is not related with the known; no useful teaching can take place. This maxim should be paid attention to while introducing a lesson.

2. From simple to complex: -

The subject matter should be divided into various categories and these categories should be arranged according to order of difficulty. Some topics are easy to learn and others difficult. The simple thoughts should be taken first. Simplest thoughts should be presented at the beginning and then less simple thoughts should be, presented. This is the correct way of teaching. Thus, the teacher should proceed from simple to complex.

3. From indefinite to definite: -

The child is full of abilities and capacities. Many thoughts remain present in his brain, but these are generally dull and unclear. As soon as a child sees a thing, he begins to think about it. He forms indefinite thoughts about it according to his own convenience, interest and need. It is the duty of the teacher to clarify and define the indefinite and doubtful thoughts. The teacher can take help of pictures, models, charts etc. to clarify and define thoughts. Every word used by the teacher should be understood by the students. Every thought expressed by the teacher should get fixed on the mind of the students like a picture.

4. From concrete to abstract: -

The objective of education is to enable a student to gain authority over abstract terminology and thoughts. A person is generally considered literate on the basis of his ability to think abstract, but this ability can be gained only after analysis of concrete objects. A child learns those thoughts faster which are related to the concrete examples. If a teacher wants to educate a child about a new thought, he can do it by relating it to a concrete object. For example, a teacher can take help of maps, charts, pictures

Of rivers, mountains, lakes, etc. to clarify abstract thoughts of enhancing vocabulary of the students.

5. From particular to general: -

By this maxim is meant that an example should be presented at first and the students should be enabled to form a conclusion by themselves. The students do not take interest in general principles. General laws and principles are certainly necessary for the growth and development of mental process, but they should come after specific things and activities examples should be so presented before the students that they are able to guess general laws and principles. A successful teacher is the one who can enable the students to observe specific objects to draw generalisation by themselves. This maxim is considered to be mandatory in teaching grammar.

6. From empirical to rational: -

Empirical knowledge is based on experiment based experiences. It is the result of practical activities. In the beginning a child gains knowledge by practical activities which are called empirical. Rational knowledge is based on logical analysis of experiences. Experiences are analysed scientifically and they are taken as proved facts if they are logical. It is called rational knowledge. In the same way he knows that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, thus the cause of day and night are sunrise and sunset. It is the stage of empirical knowledge, but after the child comes to know the revolution of the earth round the sun, he would know the cause of the natural incidences. It would be the stage of rational knowledge. The teacher should proceed from empirical to rational while teaching. Similarly, he can apply this knowledge in grammar and literature which necessarily form with such facts.

7. From seen to unseen: -

According to this maxim of teaching a child learns things easily which can be seen. So teaching should proceed from seen to unseen. This maxim is the second meaning of the sentence. Generally the present is seen, 10 while the past and future are unseen. So the present should be taught at first and the past and future should be taught later. Similarly, active tense is generally used, so it should be taught first, while the passive should be taught after the concept of active has been cleared. So is the case with direct and indirect narration.

8. From whole to part: -

A child sees a thing in whole. It is the nature of his brain to gain a thing in its whole form than in its parts. Gestalt psychologists have proved it by experiments that anything is seen and understood as a whole. The teacher should proceed from the whole to the part while teaching a lesson. The knowledge of the parts can be given at a later stage. As soon as a thing comes before our eyes, we see it in its whole form and then pay attention to its various parts. In fact, the meaning of understanding parts means to pay more attention to it. So it is necessary to pay attention to the above maxim. In teaching of grammar, we should begin teaching of sentences with the



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Complete sentences, and not its parts like subject and predicate, etc. Thus while teaching, teacher should consider these maxims of teaching so as to teach effectively and attain teaching objectives.