

**METHODS OF TEACHING DRAMA**

*Dr. R. B. Chougule, Assistant Professor and Head, PG Department of English, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Sub-Campus, Osmanabad, Maharashtra, India*

Teaching drama at undergraduate level is very interesting in comparison with poetry and novel. It enables students to take up the study of dramatic events in their cultural, social and historical development and to give a closer look at a writer's work and to analyze its dramatic aspects. Teaching drama in particular motivates students to think independently and to enjoy the emotions feelings that the play arouses. It enables students to have a total dramatic experience. It is teacher's role to create an access between students and the creative work of art. Teacher has to employ various teaching methods in order to achieve desired effects on the students. Teaching drama offers teacher an opportunity to engage students in learning actively. No teacher can ever use one method alone during teaching drama. In planning and teaching drama, a teacher has to draw on many methods and techniques. These methods include traditional lecture method, subjectcentered method, studentcentered method, reading method, translation method, languagecentered method, discussion method, questionanswer methods etc. The present paper is a modest attempt to study at length the use of methods of teaching drama at undergraduate level.

Of all methods of college teaching, the lecture method is probably the most frequently used. The majority of teachers use the traditional methodlecture method during teaching drama at undergraduate level. Many teachers are socialized into believing that lecture is the normal way to teach. It is through lecture method that the teachers can introduce students to the subject matter and the various dramatic techniques employed by the author. Through it, students are made aware of different forms and styles of drama such as tragedy, comedy, farce, melodrama, burlesque, satire etc. The various kinds of drama like poetic play, realistic play, symbolic play, drama of ideas etc. should be introduced to the students only through the lecture method. Faculties have to decide how they will teach the subjects of the plays. Some faculties introduce students to the subjects directly. However, there is another way of introducing students to the subject of the play through the study of dramatic techniques employed by the author. The dramatic techniques like aside, soliloquy, dramatic ironies, gestures, mimes, unities etc. need close attention and a teacher has to concentrate on all these dramatic conventions during teaching drama. Teachers are asked to offer informal introduction to such basic literary aspects as plot, characterization, theme and form or structure. Besides, students should be introduced to the various theatres such as Shakespeare's Globe, Mediaeval street pageant, Brachia theatre and the modern split stage. It is through lecture method that students are made aware of the various modern facilities like radio, tape recorder, film, television etc. useful for understanding the play.

Thus lecture method, though out-dated, plays very important role in teaching drama. However, it is abused as teachercentered method as it is not involving the students in the activities of learning. So the method has often been pronounced as dead. Yet, for having expired so frequently, its corpse displays a remarkable liveliness. Traditional method helps the students to understand the text in a better manner.

The learners are introduced to the humanistic aspects of drama through lecture method. However, introducing learners to the humanistic aspects of drama will directly render teacher's lecture method as ineffective. To make teaching more goaloriented, literary competence has to be spelt out in terms of specific skills which are teachable and within the grasp of the learner. The study of language offers a helping hand with its extensive investigation into the process of discourse comprehension and production, relocating focus on those syntactic, contextual and cognitive features which generate meanings and

feelings. Reading is not a passive activity; it is interactive in nature. Likewise, meaning is not supposed to be a fixed entity, therefore cannot be delivered in finite terms by any one. The emphasis has shifted strongly towards devising literary exercises that will help learners develop a literary attitude and build up their interpretative skills. A teaching of drama will be effective through the study of language employed by the author. Teaching drama through language may be a useful proposition, but it runs into serious problems when we want to teach drama and not language. Related to the issue are two nonexplicit but overall important questions: can we use translation instead of the original English play and can a teacher give lessons to his classes in his mother tongue instead of English? The immediate answer to both these questions is it depends. To be fair and functional, the desirable thing to do is to read the play in the original and to have the classes in English. If both translation and original English is used judiciously, teaching of drama will generate the desired effect on the learners. Thus, using translations and the mother tongue in the classroom is not necessarily heretic and hated. Facing the situation while teaching drama, one may do is take up a tolerant, an intermediate position. However, use of mother tongue and translation through and through is not recommended during teaching drama.

It is not the task of the teacher to read aloud what is written in the play and correct the answers to the questions. Teach the students to pay attention to the book as a whole. Make them touch it, feel it. Ask them to examine it carefully, to see how it looks like. There are several elements which can set the context of the play that is cover, the writer's name, the title, the presence or absence of preface or foreword etc. All these things and not just the text convey the meaning of the play. The reading method is useful in teaching drama. The students are involved in learning by asking them to read a play loudly. The qualities of compression, mnemonics, emotion and consolation in the play provide some directions about how it might be a paradigm for active, student centered teaching. Teaching drama offers some fundamental cognitive and intellectual skills and that reading a play replicates the way we learn and think. If the teacher asks to read a play or a part of it loudly, the students will feel the emotion aroused in the play. But that does not mean that teacher should be reluctant to reading a play loudly in the class. An effective method of teaching a play is reading it loudly. Reading slows down the pace at which the students encounter the words and it nudges them, continually, from eye to ear. Teacher's reading a play is better than asking students to read. Student's reading a play is embarrassing to the reader and boring to all. However, if used judiciously, both these methods teacher centered and student centered methods are useful in teaching drama.

It would not be consistent to isolate the literary context of a play from writer's experience and culture and from the expectations of the audience it was meant for. The teacher must introduce students to historical, literary, mythological and theological information in order to grasp the meaning of the play partially. The teacher has to give students some historical and biographical background in part so that the students should not wonder why anyone would want to write such a play. For instance, during teaching T. S. Eliot's *The Murder in the Cathedral*, it is a must on the part of the teacher to give informal information about the history of England of King Henry II. The information of the myth of King Kobra helps students to understand Girish Karnad's *Naga Mandala* in a better way.

Teachers can present, explain and demonstrate the subject matter of the dramatic analysis and interpretation, but telling the students about it is not the same as involving them in it. Drama is well suited to the active classroom. Teachers have to motivate students to perform certain events and episodes in the play. Students like to perform events and drama will give them opportunities to perform certain events. The potential power of teaching drama depends on the active student engagement with both dramatic language and meaning.

The recent technological development in information technology will be used to teach drama effectively. The modern technological devices like movies, tape recorder, television and radio enable teachers to enrich and supplement the teaching drama in providing perpetual and auditory experience as a basis for language development, thereby making drama learning easy for learners. How much more

meaningful and how fascinating the world of Shakespeare would become to a student whose teacher made available to him these audio visual aids to learning. If, in addition, the teacher employed dramatization of various scenes, supplemented by a recording of students' attempts; had a model of the Shakespearean stage the possibilities are endless the study of Shakespeare would become very easy for the learners. The teacher should train students to utilize the audio visual aids, as they would use a library book, another supplementary aid to learning.

In a nutshell, teacher has to employ various methods during teaching drama. By employing different methods like lecture method, reading method, translation method, drama method, audio visual method, student centered method and teacher centered method, discussion method, question answer method etc., the teacher can make the teaching of drama more interesting, lively and comprehensible.