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## Teaching of the poem 'To Autumn' for DSE Students of Semester 1 undergraduate students of Calcutta University

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### ABSTRACT

'To Autumn' by John Keats is a fascinating and significant poem written in the Romantic era. This ode stands erect for its magnificence and everlasting charm that has created an impact in the minds of readers all around the globe. The undergraduate students of Semester 1 DSC Paper under the National Education Policy under the Calcutta University syllabus had to read the paper 'To Autumn'. In this research article, the researcher has chosen the methodology of Role Playing in Communicative Language Teaching. The teacher has given the task of preparing the poem 'To Autumn' through a creative and effective process. Through this method of role-playing, the students were divided into different groups and they had wonderfully prepared the poem uniquely. This creative charm was a fascinating experience for various learners of the strata of society. This teaching developed an amazing vista of knowledge and wisdom for amazing learners. This process of teaching thus enhances the minds of the learners so they can rattle their brains for an effective process of learning without the slightest grudge or hesitation. This learning curve inculcates the growth and future of the society.

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**Keywords:** students, teacher, role-playing, learners and teaching

The National Education Policy was introduced by the West Bengal Government in 2023. Calcutta University has implemented this policy from the following year. Discipline Specific Compulsory (DSC) paper was introduced for the Major and Minor students. John Keats' 'To Autumn' was introduced in the syllabus for the betterment of studies.

## **DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC COMPULSORY/CORE**

### **SEMESTER - 1**

DSC 1 (4 Credits – Th 3, Tu 1)

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE (POETRY)

1. HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY (FROM ELIZABETHAN AGE TO MODERN PERIOD)
2. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, SONNET 73
3. JOHN DONNE, 'THE SUN RISING'
4. JOHN KEATS, 'TO AUTUMN'
5. W.B. YEATS, 'THE SECOND COMING'
6. TED HUGHES, 'CROW'

**Figure 1:** It shows the undergraduate syllabus of Semester-1 of Calcutta University of English.

“Communicative language teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom.”

**-Richards, 2006**



In this Communicative Language Teaching method, we have several Classroom activities like Role Playing, Interviews, Group Work and Opinion Sharing. These activities help us to create a passionate aspect of studies for the learners so that they can understand and analyse concepts significantly. The methods they create help us to develop a further aspect of knowledge.

### Objectives of the Research

- To provide a holistic approach towards the poem 'To Autumn'.
- To help us the creative growth of the students.
- To develop communicative abilities in the students.
- To find out the creative potential in the minds of the students.
- To seek guidance and extract new possibilities about a particular topic.

**Research Question:** How can the students teach the poem 'To Autumn' constructively?

The teacher has taught the poem 'To Autumn' to the DSC students of Semester 1. All the concepts on negative capability and Keats' Odes have been provided to the students in the class. The teacher has also provided explanations of three stanzas of the poem 'To Autumn'. Even the critical comments and Keats' letters to his brothers were also discussed. The teacher has also discussed the long answer questions with the students. In this process, the students got details about information on the poem 'To Autumn' from an examination point of view.

The teacher decided to experiment with the teaching process with the students. Students are divided into 6 groups respectively from 58 students. Students are asked to role play on the famous poet John Keats' poem 'To Autumn'. They are told to prepare innovative and creative ways of preparing the topic of 'To Autumn'. They are also asked to prepare their topic within 10 minutes of the stipulated time.



## Research Methodology

In Group 1, 10 students performed the recitation program of the poem 'To Autumn'. One of the students was the anchor. She was the lead role and used to take extra attention. The three stanzas of 'To Autumn' have been divided among nine students thus, each three students recited three stanzas in unison. The chorus created a rhapsodizing effect on the ambience of the class and most of the students were relaxed and thrilled by their performance. They performed spectacularly well and amazed all of us and their performance was spine-chilling.

Group 2 decided to pantomime the poem 'To Autumn'. UK actor and director Matthew Coulton recited Keats' poem 'To Autumn' at Keats House, Hampstead. A video recording of Coulton's 'To Autumn' was uploaded on July 24, 2019, on YouTube. The DSE undergraduate students of Serampore Girls' College decided to play Coulton's recording of 'To Autumn' in the background, and they instantly performed a pantomime. The craze in which they performed was absolutely a learning process for all of us.

Group 3 planned to provide a fascinating tone for the poem 'To Autumn'. They helped a better way to prepare a song with a new tone that struck the classroom's attention. The new tune of Keats' 'To Autumn' struck immense attention towards the class. The spell-bounding symphony caused ripples towards the class premises. They got immense applause from the class that praised their worth and talent. Their tune was enthused by several students in the class. A huge appraisal was made for their scintillating performance.

Group 4 created an innovative skit on the poem 'To Autumn'. In the skit, one of the students dressed as Autumn Leaf describes the ripeness and fullness of the Autumn. Other students described the personification in the second stanza and named themselves as gleaner, harvester, reaper and cyder-presser. While the other students played the "thin sounds of the bleating of lambs, the chirping of the hedge-cricket, whistling of the robin-red-breast and the twittering of the gathering swallows." (Ghosh, 2023) This swashbuckling performance created an interest for the learners to read the poem in extreme detail.



Group 5 decided to plan a language translation method for the poem 'To Autumn'. They have translated the third stanza of the poem 'To Autumn' into the languages Bengali and Hindi collaboratively. In West Bengal, some of the students from the college were familiar with both of these languages.

“Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, —”

(To Autumn, 23-24)

One of the students from the groups in unison has translated in Bengali:

“বসন্তের গান কোথায়? হেই কোথায় তারা

তাদের কথা ভেভে না, তোমার নিজস্ব গান আছে।”

Another of the students from the groups in unison has translated in Hindi:

“बसंत का गाना कहा है? ओह , कहा है वह गाने ?

उसके बारे में सोचो मात, तुम्हारे खुद का एक संगीत है।”

In this way, the students are divided into 5 each and have translated the Hindi and Bengali versions of the poem in chorus. Their approach towards this method has broken off the barriers some things can work out possibly if we apply a creative approach.

The translations of both the languages of the poem 'To Autumn' created a new impact on the students' minds. Their impact on the listeners created a massive response that the poem could also be created and translated with a new perspective. The translations were made by humans without the help of AI technologies.



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Group 6 created a PowerPoint presentation technique. They showed a video clip of 'To Autumn' towards the projector. In that video clip, they presented a reading of 'To Autumn' in the 21st century. They have also shown different strategies of how to conceptualize and memorize the poem 'To Autumn'. Moreover, the presentation also deals with the presentation strategies of the poem 'To Autumn'. This presentation focuses on the difference between the Indian Autumn season and the difference between the Autumn season in England. This presentation also added a quiz on 'To Autumn' towards the audience so that various students could take part in the session. It involved the class in such an amazing manner that the ambience remained with all eyes and ears to their performance.

This amazing performance gave the students an energetic charm that helped them to boost their self-confidence. They could speak freely and it created a massive impact on their creative mindset. They could think well as well as they could pursue a topic with a creative flow. They could apply logic and reason on this topic so that they could work on amazing different ways to deal with any topic with zest and courage. Their growth and development towards this particular topic can be a superb model of self-revealing their inner potential.

Thus, teaching 'To Autumn' through the Communicative Language Teaching method gives us awareness to the students as well as various learners of the society. They delivered an overall and updated version of their concepts of the poem that instilled wisdom and kindness in themselves.



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