

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

CONNECTING TEACHING
WITH LEARNING



Preamble

Throughout India, there is an extraordinary belief, among almost all castes and classes, in both rural and urban areas, in the transformative power of English. English is seen not just as a useful skill, but as a symbol of a better life, a pathway out of poverty and oppression. Aspiration of such magnitude is a heavy burden for any language, and for those who have responsibility for teaching it, to bear. The challenges of providing universal access to English are significant, and many are bound to feel frustrated at the speed of progress. But we cannot ignore the way that the English language has emerged as a powerful agent for change in India. (Graddol 2010)

Teaching of English as a foreign language can take place neither in vacuum nor in the realm of pre-possessed, conditioned and burdened minds. In order to teach English as a second language for comfortable and productive usage not only for professional communication but also for day to day interaction, the traditional formal strategies have to be transcended.

Before developing any strategy, following questions have to be addressed:

- 1→** Is English language to be taught only for dissemination of content?
- 2→** Is the sole purpose to be successful in the examination related situations?
- 3→** Is the focus to be placed only on answering questions raised by outside agencies like text books writers or teachers?
- 4→** Is the domain of English learning limited to text books only?
- 5→** Should our focus rest on cramming certain exercises and their reproduction verbatim?
- 6→** Should we limit our focus on English language learning as one independent course/discipline different from other subjects like History, Political Science, Geography, Biology, Zoology, and Sociology and so on?
- 7→** Should we continue to treat lexical jargon or items as static entities to be learnt as they appear before us in the texts or should we allow creative interplay of contractions, expansions, experimentation, coinage by creating words, sentences as living entities offering ever expanding scope for innovation?
- 8→** Should we limit our focus upon preserving the purity, piety and pithiness of inherited wealth of native speakers or should we increasingly allow leaps and forays into multi cultural and cross cultural equivalents?
- 9→** Should we concentrate on formal English teaching methodologies and strategies without caring for the mental stress which it causes on young learners having different mother tongues?
- 10→** Last but not least, should we continue to teach English through verbose and morose methods of translation and transliteration from vernaculars to English and vice-versa?

It is in this back drop of above stated observations that English teachers have to explore myriad options which English language teaching learning techniques offer us.

The students can only be motivated to learn things that are important and meaningful to them. As educators, we often realize that this generation of learners spend a great deal of time engaging in activities like Instant Messaging, Facebook, Twitter, Reality Television, movies, highly stimulating music, gossip magazines, comics, fashion, computer games, and the Internet. In other words, popular culture is essential to students' personal and social identities. It is ever-present in their daily lives, and gives them meaning and satisfaction. Its ready acceptability and accessibility provide students with frequent and meaningful exposure to English outside academic field, for example, especially in English-language pop songs and movies. Presenting examples of popular culture in an enjoyable, linguistically competent and meaningful way can help to generate a lot of affective responses and imagination from students during English lessons. Therefore, in this post post-modern world, we need to acknowledge that popular culture can be a resource in English teaching.

Teaching and learning of a foreign language has never been an easy task. This

is an area that requires policy, tact and competence on the part of the teacher, and positive attitude and a desire to learn on the part of the pupil. But there are some other factors too that considerably influence the teaching of a language which is not native.

Since the day an Indian child starts his formal education, the sole aim of his parents (and later also of his own) becomes to make him 'perfect' in English because English in India is necessary not only to get a job but also to appear a man of position. Parents -whether well educated or otherwise- wish to see their child with good English. But this dream fails and it has been failing majority of Indian parents and their children for years. In spite of years of teaching of English language and literature, teaching of English in India has not been able to give expected results.

The mental attitude of the Indian people towards English has been a paradoxical one. They share a love-hate relationship with this language that has been fascinating as well as putting them off for more than two hundred years. An average Indian wants to read, write and speak English with fluency, yet he fears the assumed 'difficulty' of this language. Indians believe that English is a difficult language, mastery over which is very difficult to achieve. This negative mental attitude towards English makes Indian student surrender rather than strive to learn the language.

The Backdrop

Disadvantaged Backgrounds

A great section of Indian population that goes for school/college education belongs to the middle class, subcategorized into upper middle, middle, and lower middle. People belonging to the upper middle are able to send their children to public schools where the medium of instructions is English, whereas those belonging to middle and lower middle send their children to government schools or government aided schools where the medium of instruction is either the regional language or the national language. Students of public schools get ample opportunities to converse in English, and they do get to a large extent, the atmosphere conducive to the proper learning of English. On the other hand, students in government or government aided schools do not get proper exposure to the language. As a result, their practice of the language remains weak and so becomes their knowledge of the language.

A student belonging to middle or lower middle class generally does not find atmosphere appropriate to the learning of the language even at his/her home.

Inapt Teaching Methods

Another thing that adds to the failure of English teaching in India is the absence of appropriate teaching skills. The teaching skills that are used for teaching of English in India are not suitable for students, keeping in mind their poor history of knowledge of English language. **Teachers generally employ the same strategies to teach English that are applied to teach History or Civics**, and that too, on all the students without considering their background. Learning of language that is not native requires that basics be made clear and exercises given to the students. But this thing is rarely done. Generally, it is taken for granted that students must know the basics, and then further teaching is carried out as a routine process. As for giving exercises, there is no time because the teacher is always in a hurry to complete the syllabus which s/he thinks is his first duty towards the students.

Overcrowding in Classes

India is a country where a white collar job is a highly desired thing. This desire inspires Indian parents to send their children to schools/colleges

at any cost. As a result of this, a number of students get themselves enrolled every year and this number has considerably increased in past a few years due to the rise in population. This has led to crowding in classrooms. The number of the students has increased but the number of teachers required to teach these students efficiently has not been increased proportionately.

Written over Spoken

The process of learning involves four steps: listening, speaking, reading and writing. But in the formula that is adopted in our teaching of English, **writing and reading are given preference over listening and speaking.** The curricula in various universities are such that students rarely have to do anything as far as the speaking part is concerned. They read (or are read) the text, explained the questions and their answers after the chapter. Sometimes they are informed how they have to write their answers. There is practically no exercise that might make them good at speaking English.

The first aim of teaching a language is not to provide the knowledge of the language to the learner; it is to enable him to communicate in that language. When speaking- the actual practice of the language- is not given proper scope, the purpose of learning the

language, as well as the effort to learn the language fails.

Examination System

Faulty examination system is one of the key reasons of this problem. In our examination system total emphasis in case of English is on written than on spoken English. This system checks only the written expression of the student, and the student being aware of this thing, manages the things to be written. He mugs up the answers to the different questions told as important either by his teacher or 'Sure-short' or by 'Guess-Paper' type cheap books. In this way he manages to pass the paper which is his only aim. Hardly any attempt is made by our examination system to check the spoken expression of the student.

ENGLISH TEACHING

IN INDIA

The question why teaching of English has not been expectedly successful in India is a very crucial one and it cannot be ignored. Times are out of joint- and the onus of bringing English back to its shape lies on the shoulders of the custodians of the language

Teaching English

- Ten Pointers -

1. Know your students

Increase your understanding of who your students are, their backgrounds and educational experiences.

2. Be aware of their social and emotional needs

Understanding more about the students' families and their needs is key.

3. Increase your understanding of language acquisition

Although courses about language acquisition are not required as part of teacher education programs, understanding the theories about language acquisition and the variables that contribute to language learning may help you reach your students more effectively.

4. Student need to SWRL every day in every class

The domains of language acquisition, Speaking, Writing, Reading and Listening need to be equally exercised across content areas daily. Assuring that students are using all domains of language acquisition to support their English language development is essential.

5. Increase your understanding of English language proficiency

Social English language proficiency and academic English language proficiency are very different. A student may be more proficient in one vs. the other. A student's level of academic English may be masked by a higher level of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) compared to their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). For example, a student may be able to orally recall the main events from their favourite movie but struggle to recall the main events that led up to the World Wars. Increase your understanding of English language proficiency.

If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.

Ignacio Estrada

6. Know the language of your content

English has a number of polysemous words. Once a student learns and understands one meaning of a word, other meaning may not be apparent. Review the vocabulary of your content area often and check in with students to assure they know the words and possibly the multiple meanings associated with the words. For example, a "plot" of land in geography class *versus* the "plot" in a literature class. A "table" we sit at *versus* a multiplication "table."

7. Understand language assessments

Language proficiency assessments in your region may vary. Find out when and how a student's English language proficiency is assessed and the results of those assessments. Using the results of formal and informal assessments can provide a wealth of information to aid in planning lessons that support language acquisition and content knowledge simultaneously.

8. Use authentic visuals and manipulatives

These can be over- or under-utilised. Implement the use of authentic resources for example; menus, bus schedules, post-cards, photographs and video clips can enhance student comprehension of complex content concepts.

9. Strategies that match language proficiency

Knowing the level of English language proficiency at which your students are functioning academically is vital in order to be able to scaffold appropriately. Not all strategies are appropriate for all levels of language learners. Knowing which scaffolds are most appropriate takes time but will support language learning more effectively.

10. Collaborate to celebrate

Seek support from other teachers and educators. They may have suggestions and resources that support English language development and content concepts. Creating and sustaining professional learning communities are vital for the teachers' knowledge and empowerment.

Learning to Teach

- Aims & Rationale -

The overall aim of this framework is to recognize the importance of enabling the students to cope effectively with the challenges of the rapidly changing and keenly competitive knowledge-based society.

We aim to underscore the need for every learner to attain all-round development through being empowered with the capabilities for lifelong learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovation and adaptation to change.

Further, it seeks to provide a framework that contributes to enhancing the language proficiency of our young people for the following major reasons:

- to enhance the competitiveness of India so that it will be able to maintain its position as an international business centre and a knowledge-based economy, capable of rising to the challenges of global competition;
- to help our young people develop a worldwide outlook through broadening their knowledge and experience;
- to enable our young people to use English proficiently for study, work, leisure and effective interaction in different cultural environments; and
- to help our young people succeed in life and find greater personal fulfillment.

The English Language Education curriculum framework seeks to build on the existing good practices in English language teaching. It also makes suggestions on ways to provide students with wider access to meaningful and effective language learning experiences that will enable them to meet the needs and challenges of society.

In many local English language classrooms, considerable emphasis has been placed on helping learners master the language forms (including vocabulary, text-types and grammar items and structures), communicative functions, and skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Mastery of these learning elements is no doubt important and should continue to be promoted in the language classroom. However, mechanical drilling of these elements in isolated contexts is un motivating and can hardly bring about effective language learning. This, together with the lack of a language-rich environment presents challenges for teachers of English.

To help address these problems and to better meet learners' needs, the following developments are proposed:

- provision of greater opportunities for learners to use English (i.e. the language skills, vocabulary, and grammar items and structures they have learnt) for purposeful communication both inside and outside the classroom through, for example, language learning tasks and projects;
- use of learner-centred instruction so as to facilitate the use of English for purposeful communication, and to encourage learner independence and risk taking in language learning;
- greater use of literary/imaginative texts as a means to develop learners' creativity and promote purposeful communication in English by encouraging learners to freely express their responses; and
- promotion of language development strategies (e.g. self- motivation, thinking skills, reference skills, information skills) and positive attitudes (e.g. confidence in using English, enjoyment of reading) conducive to effective, independent and lifelong learning.

In view of the crucial need to prepare our learners to effectively meet the challenges and demands of the 21st Century, schools are encouraged to:

- continue with the good practices that are already in line with the recommended curriculum developments; and
- adopt an incremental approach to experimenting with and innovating curriculum practices, so that learners have a pleasurable learning experience in English and develop the essential skills and attitudes conducive to lifelong learning.

Learning Targets The main target of English Language is for learners to develop an ever-improving capability to use English...

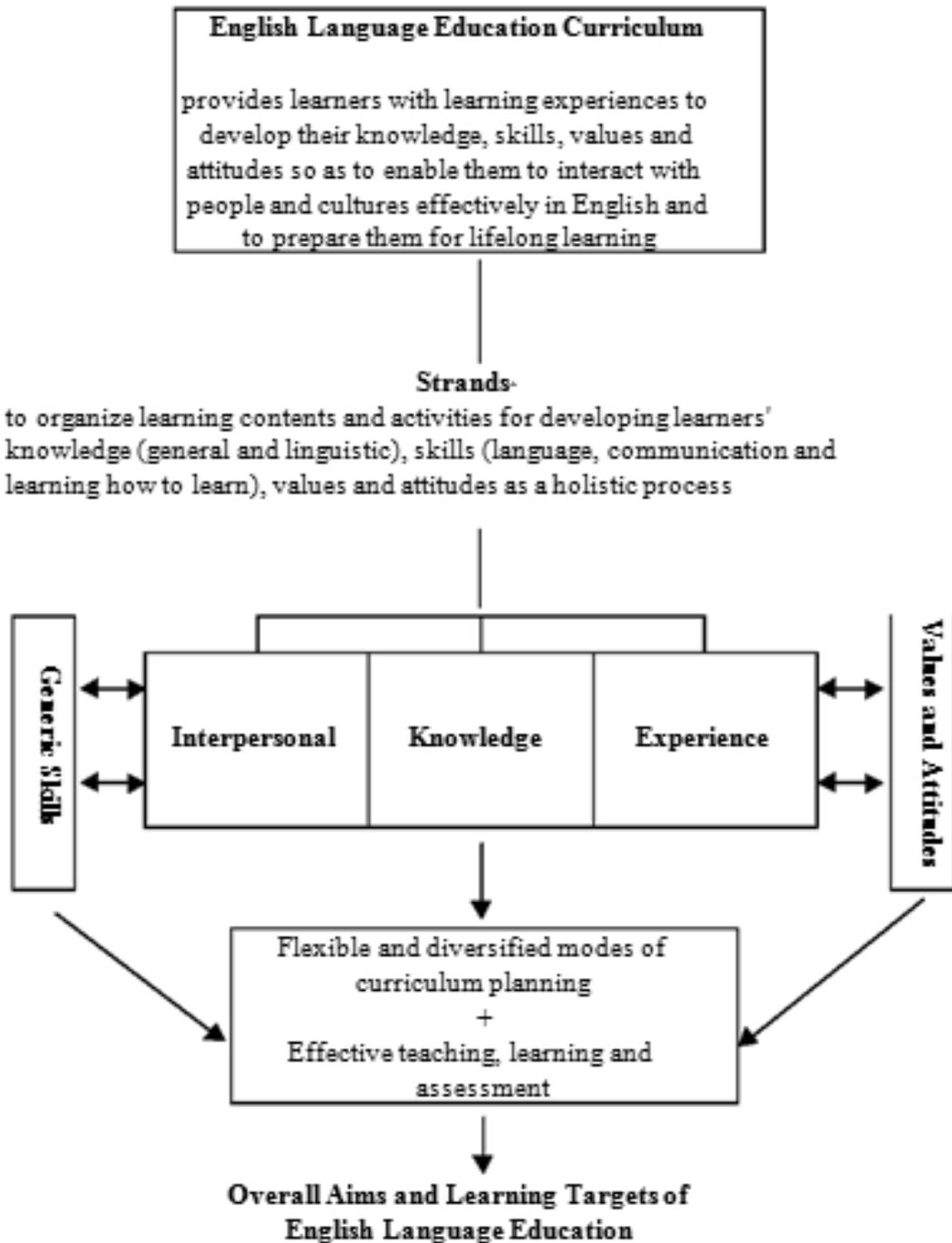
- to think and communicate;
- to acquire, develop and apply knowledge;
- to respond and give expression to experience;

and within these contexts, to develop and apply an ever-increasing understanding of how language is organized, used and learned.

*Education is not the filling of the pail
but the lighting of a fire.*

- William Butler Yeats

Learning to Teach Framework



Strands

Strands are categories for organizing the curriculum. Their major function is to organize contents for the purpose of developing skills, knowledge, values and attitudes as a holistic process.

Three interrelated strands/dimensions - Interpersonal, Knowledge and Experience - have been employed as content organizers to reflect its major scope of learning. The inclusion of the Experience Strand in the subject of English Language serves the following purposes:

- to emphasize English as a source of pleasure and aesthetic experience by encouraging free and creative personal responses and expression;
- to contribute to the provision of a broader and more balanced language curriculum, along with the Interpersonal Strand and the Knowledge Strand; and
- to offer learners insights into the nature of English Literature and prepare them for this subject, should they decide to opt for it at the senior secondary level.

Generic Skills

The component of generic skills is fundamental in helping students learn how to learn. Altogether, nine types of generic skills have been identified:

- ❖ collaboration skills;
- ❖ communication skills;
- ❖ creativity;
- ❖ critical thinking skills;
- ❖ information technology skills;
- ❖ numeracy skills;
- ❖ problem solving skills;
- ❖ self-management skills; and
- ❖ study skills.

*I cannot teach anybody anything;
I can only make them think.*

- Socrates

Values and Attitudes

Values are qualities that students should develop as principles for conduct and decision. Examples of personal values include honesty, self-esteem and perseverance. Examples of social values include equality, interdependence, and tolerance. Attitudes are personal dispositions needed to perform a task well, for example, responsibility, open-mindedness and co-operativeness.

Values and attitudes can be developed through learning activities. For example, teachers can help students learn to be independent by allowing them to choose a topic that they regard as interesting and appropriate for them to work on. They can also help students learn to be open-minded and tolerant by encouraging them to accept different points of view and different ways of doing things.

Among the objectives of Learning to Teach, there are language development strategies, literary competence development strategies and attitudes related to language and literature learning. They are especially relevant to the development of the generic skills, and the personal and social values and attitudes broadly recognized and valued by all.

Modes of Curriculum Planning

The open framework allows greater flexibility and innovation in curriculum planning. In order to provide different learning experiences, a balanced and coherent school-based curriculum which emphasizes the active role of learners in the learning process should be developed. To help schools achieve this goal, below are some possible modes of curriculum planning for their consideration when devising and implementing their own curriculum.

Developing Modules of Learning

Organizing the content of learning into modules helps learners make better connections in what they learn. By using a wide range of resources (e.g. authentic materials, the media, the Web) rather than relying solely on textbooks, teachers can help develop learning modules to suit the interests, needs and abilities of their students.

The modular approach can also make it easier to link classroom learning to real life experiences. For example, events that take place in the local and international communities can be drawn upon in developing the modules to broaden learners' perspectives and to develop their language proficiency and world knowledge.

Learning can be sustained if it stems from first hand experience. Teachers are therefore encouraged to include in the modules activities or projects which can motivate and involve (even very young) learners in "learning by doing", creativity and experimentation, inquiring, problem-solving and decision-making, so that they can develop enjoyment, ownership and commitment in learning.

For the more able learners, learning modules can be enriched by designing activities that can extend and deepen their learning experiences. Similarly, learning modules for remediation purposes can be designed for the less able learners to help them progress.

Integrating Classroom Learning and Independent Learning

Learning is most effective when learners play an active role in the learning process and when they take charge of their own learning. Learner autonomy and independence should start at an early age.

Teachers should see self-access learning as an integral part of students' learning experience. Therefore, they should make an effort to integrate classroom and independent learning when planning and designing their English programmes. In the learning process, teachers can help learners to:

- learn how to learn;
- make choices as to what, when, how and how long they want to learn;
- use a range of language development strategies;
- carry out self-assessment and reflection;
- think and act independently; and
- develop the knowledge, skills and strategies, attitudes and perseverance to take on language learning as a lifelong process.

Flexible Time-tabling

Schools can make flexible use of class time to facilitate teaching and learning. It is not advisable to make students' learning experience fragmented, for example, by designating lessons as dictation, listening, etc. in a rigid manner. Instead, schools can:

- arrange for more double-period sessions per week/cycle and include half-day activity sessions to allow for continuous stretches of time to facilitate action learning, tasks/projects as well as field trips/visits, etc.;

- set regular time per day for reading, to help learners build up their reading skills for lifelong learning; and
- plan their time-table and school calendar flexibly, e.g. adjusting the number and arrangement of lessons (e.g. double-period sessions) in each term to cater for the special requirements of the learning programmes, and exploring the use of Saturdays and long holidays to provide a greater range of learning experiences.

Integrating Formal and Informal Curricula

Integrating the formal and informal curricula is a way to provide relevant, pleasurable and meaningful learning experiences.

Language learning can take place within and beyond the confines of the classroom. Schools can:

- encourage learners to interact in English not only during but also outside class time;
- utilize their resources to enhance the language environment so as to provide learners with enjoyable experiences in the use of the language through various types of extra-curricular activities (e.g. language games, puppet shows, drama activities, choral speaking, designing slogans or greetings cards for special occasions, and recording short radio plays); and
- explore opportunities for experiential learning in the community (e.g. attending talks, dramas and story-telling sessions delivered in English, and inviting guests to exchange ideas and share experiences) to widen learners' exposure to the authentic use of the language.

Cross-curricular Planning

To enable learners to explore knowledge and gain experience in a more comprehensive and coherent manner, teachers can adopt a cross-curricular approach when planning their school-based curriculum. When learners make connections among ideas and concepts, their motivation will be enhanced. The knowledge they acquire, and the skills and attitudes they develop in each subjects, will also be deepened. To develop cross-curricular modules of learning, teachers can:

- collaborate with other teachers to set realistic goals and draw up a plan/schedule of work; and to develop and evaluate the teaching, learning and assessment materials and activities;
- provide learners with opportunities to develop a broad range of generic skills that they can apply in the other subjects, e.g. study skills, critical thinking skills; and
- reinforce students' learning experiences by encouraging them to read about/discuss the topics they are working on in English.

Flexible Grouping

Depending on their nature and purposes, teaching and learning activities can be carried out in groups of varying sizes. For example, 4th standard classes can be split into 5 - 6 groups, or students from different year levels can be grouped together, to cater for a range of learners' needs and abilities, and to facilitate collaborative learning.

Some activities, such as group projects and board games, work well with smaller groups of learners to better cater for their needs and create an atmosphere of trust, to encourage them to make choices and pursue their own interests. Other activities, such as watching videos and dramatization, can be conducted in larger groups to maximize the use of the resources and manpower available and facilitate the sharing of ideas among more people.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The teacher plays an important role in facilitating effective language teaching, learning and assessment. To carry out this role, he/she can make use of this open and flexible curriculum framework to develop language teaching/learning and assessment tasks and activities that contribute to enriching students' learning experiences. These experiences, which are essential to their whole person development, include:

- intellectual development;
- moral and civic education;
- community service;
- physical and aesthetic development; and
- career-related experiences.

Effective Language Teaching/Learning Activities and Tasks

In designing language activities and tasks to facilitate teaching and learning, teachers are encouraged to consider and apply the following:

Learner-centred Instruction

Students learn most effectively when teachers treat them and their learning as the focus of attention. Learner-centred instruction may be provided through:

- designing learning tasks/activities that cater for learners' age, needs, interests, abilities, experiences and learning styles;
- engaging learners in group work or pair work for genuine communication;
- suitable questioning techniques to stimulate thinking, encourage experimentation and facilitate knowledge construction; and
- encouraging learners to contribute to the learning process by:
 - sharing their views and learning experiences;
 - playing an active role in consulting the teacher; and
 - negotiating with him/her on the learning objectives, along with making decisions in selecting learning materials and carrying out language learning activities such as role-plays, games, debates, projects, etc.

Target-oriented English Learning

Setting clear and appropriate targets and objectives will enable learners to know what they should strive for. Teachers are advised to:

- work as a team to select appropriate learning targets and objectives to focus on for each learning task; and
- ensure that there is a progression and a balanced, comprehensive coverage of the learning targets and objectives for all the strands/dimensions within and across year levels.

Five Fundamental Intertwining Ways of Learning and Using Knowledge

To help learners achieve the dual goals of language proficiency and lifelong learning, five fundamental intertwining ways of learning and using knowledge - communicating, conceptualizing, inquiring, problem solving and reasoning - have been identified.

Teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for learners to practise these five ways of learning and using knowledge in a balanced manner through meaningful and authentic learning materials and tasks/activities such as problem-solving tasks/activities, role-plays, etc.

Task-based Learning

Students learn best through purposeful and contextualized learning tasks. Effective tasks enable students to seek and process information, formulate questions and responses, and make connections. They also provide meaningful and purposeful contexts in which students learn and apply target grammar items and structures. Using theme-based projects is a good way of providing an organizing focus for students' integrated use of knowledge, skills and strategies as well as an opportunity for generating deep learning.

Integrative and Creative Language Use

Language use in real life situations is almost always integrative and creative. Such important characteristics of authentic language use should be stressed in English classrooms. In this regard, the use of tasks, projects or imaginative/literary/information texts is encouraged to facilitate the integrative and creative use of an extensive range of language knowledge, skills and strategies. In the learning process, teachers should:

- stimulate learners' imagination, promote the sharing of experiences and foster intercultural awareness and understanding;
- encourage learners to use English creatively to respond and give expression to real and imaginative experience.

Learner Independence

To enable students to become motivated and independent language learners, teachers should promote self-access learning both inside and outside the classroom. This mode of learning has the benefit of helping learners develop the essential skills, strategies and attitudes for lifelong learning. To facilitate self-access language learning, teachers should:

- create opportunities for learners to make choices or decisions in their learning by providing a wide range of information and creative texts, learning materials and activities such as portfolios, dramas, debates, projects, etc.;
- enable learners to monitor, review and assess their own performance by building self/peer assessment procedures (e.g. answer keys, evaluation checklists) into the learning materials and activities; and
- develop language learning activities/tasks that encourage learners to make meaningful use of the self-access corner/centre in school.

Further, to enhance learners' skills, interest and confidence in reading on their own, teachers should help them develop enabling skills such as phonics skills, vocabulary building skills, reference skills, etc., through meaningful and purposeful games and activities.

Apart from independent reading, it is also important for learners to develop the ability to work out the pronunciation of new or unfamiliar words on their own. Towards this end, teachers are encouraged to make use of language learning activities/tasks that promote the development of phonics skills at primary level as well as the mastery of phonetic symbols at secondary level.

Information Technology (IT)

Effective use of IT can facilitate both classroom and self-access language learning. Through surfing the Internet or using word processors and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) software such as concordancers and educational CD-ROMs, teachers should:

- enable learners to gain quick and easy access to information;
- enhance learning motivation;
- enhance learners' language skills;
- provide opportunities for learners to exercise control of their own learning, think critically and evaluate the data or information on the Internet; and
- develop learners' knowledge management skills and prepare them for future study/work and lifelong learning.

Assessment for the Purpose of Enhancing Language Teaching/Learning

Assessment should be considered and planned as an integral part of effective teaching and learning. To facilitate both teaching and learning, teachers should:

- adopt different modes of assessment, e.g. observation, conferencing, projects and journals, to collect information about learners' knowledge, skills, strategies and attitudes;
- use criterion-referenced principles in judging and describing learners' achievements;
- provide timely feedback and support after assessment to enable learners to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and help them progress towards the learning targets; and
- help learners develop the necessary skills to assess and monitor their own learning, and to give feedback to their peers through collaborative small group learning.

School-based Curriculum Development

When planning and developing their own English Language curriculum, schools and teachers are encouraged to consider the following:

- aim for a balanced and comprehensive coverage of the learning targets and objectives within and across year levels, ensuring that the activities or tasks that learners are to participate in stress the integration of skills and a balance of learning experiences in the three strands/dimensions - interpersonal, Knowledge and Experience - rather than focusing on isolated skills or just one strand/dimension at the expense of the others;
- plan and devise appropriate and purposeful language learning materials, activities, tasks and projects to develop learners' language abilities, critical thinking skills, creativity, strategies of learning to learn, and positive values and attitudes conducive to lifelong learning;
- make greater use of formative assessment (e.g. observation, conferencing, journals, portfolios) to inform teaching and learning, and avoid over-reliance on pen-and-paper tests;
- make flexible use of class time to facilitate a task-based approach and life-wide learning (e.g. the inclusion of more double or even triple periods per week/cycle in the school time-table to allow for continuous stretches of time for English language tasks/projects as well as field trips/visits);
- work closely together as a team to plan the English Language curriculum, to develop learning materials and activities/tasks, and to collaborate with other teachers on cross- curricular projects;
- set and work on clear and manageable curriculum goals or focuses (e.g. pleasurable reading, creative writing, enhancing classroom interaction) over a specific period for the whole school or a particular year level; in the process, teachers will generate knowledge and gain experience of developing a progressive curriculum that serves to bring about pleasurable, meaningful and productive language learning experiences; and
- collect and reflect on evidence of effective teaching and learning experiences to inform curriculum development.

What Can Students Gain?

School-based language curricula developed on the basis of this framework will benefit learners in many ways, including:

- increased motivation in learning English through the use of IT, imaginative/literary texts as well as tasks or activities which involve meaningful and authentic use of the language;
- greater confidence in using English as a result of an increase in opportunities to use the language both inside and outside the classroom;
- an increase in English proficiency as a result of greater opportunities to use the language for purposeful communication;
- collaboration among learners through engaging in projects, discussions, role plays, etc.;
- learner independence through self-access language learning, project work or tasks that encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning;
- development of generic skills (e.g. critical thinking skills, creativity, IT skills), values and attitudes (e.g. self-reflection, affectivity, open-mindedness) conducive to lifelong learning; and
- access to life-wide learning experiences as they are encouraged to move out of the classroom into society and put what they have learned to use.

What Can Teachers Gain?

It is firmly believed that through adopting the English Language Education curriculum framework as a basis for planning and designing their own English curricula, teachers themselves will gain in terms of professional development. The benefits include:

- growth in professional knowledge - the teachers are able to understand learners' progress towards the learning targets and objectives, and to improve teaching and learning by designing or adopting appropriate activities or tasks to help learners make further progress;
- networking with other teachers of English as well as teachers from other disciplines - this is the result of collaboration or team work, as often required in the promotion of language learning or cross-curricular tasks/projects;
- greater sharing of teaching resources and good practices - as a result of greater cooperation among teachers for the purpose of teaching and materials development; and
- an increase in teachers' confidence and professional satisfaction when learners show greater motivation in learning English.

Life-wide Learning

Learning is by no means limited to the classroom. It can take place at any time, in any place (including the home and the community) and in any form. To help create a language-rich environment to support life-wide learning, teachers are encouraged to:

- interact with learners in English both within and outside class;
- provide opportunities for learners to interact with one another in English;
- provide greater exposure to authentic use of English (e.g. using the media as language learning resources, visiting international schools or business/charity organizations);
- encourage learners to seek and create opportunities to learn and use English in natural and realistic settings (e.g. searching for information on the Internet, watching movies/TV programmes in English, and interacting with people from non-Indian backgrounds);
- maximize the use of space and resources in school, e.g. ensuring learners' easy access to computer facilities for language learning, setting up an English Corner or posting authentic materials and learners' work on the bulletin boards/the walls/the Internet to facilitate wide reader access; and
- provide learners with enjoyable and life-wide learning experiences by promoting learning through formal and informal curricular activities such as essay competitions, drama activities, verse speaking, debates, short radio plays, visits and community services.

Connections with Other Disciplines

English Language Education helps to:

- promote and facilitate learning in the other subjects;
- further develop learners' language skills and world knowledge, which enables them to better meet the specialized demands of the other subjects;
- provide learners with the chance of developing a broad range of generic skills that they can apply in the other subjects, e.g. study skills, critical thinking skills, creativity;
- reinforce learners' ability in learning English through the knowledge, skills and learning experiences that they gain in the other subjects; and
- broaden learners' experience through language learning activities or tasks

The following table presents some examples showing the links between English Language Education and the other subjects. They are by no means exhaustive but will adequately serve the purpose of illustrating such connections.

Other Subjects	Examples of Links
Regional Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ compare and discuss the cultural events, literary works, life-styles and values of their region and the West.
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ plan surveys, present research findings, and prepare arguments using statistics.
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ discuss ideas and clarify purposes prior to and in the process of an investigation; and ▪ read or research information on science-related topics (e.g. energy, the earth, the solar system) or works of science fiction.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ explore and communicate ideas and information on or about the development or impact of modern technology.
Personal, Social and Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ read and discuss texts that examine issues or topics such as interpersonal relationships, the relationship between the individual and society, civic education, environmental protection, etc.
Arts Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ engage in different forms of creative writing (e.g. poems, short stories, play/film scripts) or give a dramatic presentation of a short play or a scene from a play; and ▪ discuss or critique an advertisement, a poster, a film or the illustrations in a text.
Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ engage in learning tasks or activities that examine the pros and cons of various health and physical activities.

Phases of Development

In view of the crucial need to prepare our learners to effectively meet the challenges and demands of the 21st Century, schools are encouraged to:

- continue with the good practices that are already in line with the recommended curriculum developments; and
- adopt an incremental approach to experimenting with and innovating curriculum practices, so that learners have a pleasurable learning experience in English and develop the essential skills and attitudes conducive to lifelong learning.

To help schools achieve these goals, Spellbee International and I.N.D.I.A. TRUST are firmly committed to providing resources and assistance in the form of knowledge support, collaborative research and development projects, teacher development programmes, etc. With such support, schools are encouraged to plan and further develop their own English Language Education curriculum. A proposed schedule is presented below, outlining focuses for English Language Education curriculum development in the short (2014 - 2017), medium (2017 - 2020) and long (2020+) term phases:

Short-term (2014 - 2017)

Schools and teachers focus on:

- increasing motivation in learning through
 - the promotion of reading (e.g. shared reading of Big Books, story-telling, reading campaigns and awards)
 - information technology (IT) (e.g. writing e-greetings cards, interactive story-reading and games)
 - a diversity of activities such as show-and-tell, puppet shows, language games, tasks/projects, etc.
- enhancing teaching and learning through
 - greater use of language arts (e.g. songs and rhymes, short stories, drama, poems, advertisements) to promote creativity
 - greater use of IT (e.g. resources on the Web, Web publications, global school projects on the Internet)

- the use of formative assessment
- collaboration in developing teaching/learning/assessment plans and materials
- the promotion of quality teaching, learning and assessment through flexibility, experimentation and innovation
- fostering independent and lifelong learning through
 - the promotion of a culture of reading among learners
 - the promotion of language development strategies, IT, self-access language learning (SALL) and project learning
 - the development of generic skills, values and attitudes to promote learning how to learn
 - the development of a positive, open-minded attitude towards and respect for different points of view and cultures
 - the provision of more opportunities for learners to extend their language learning experiences beyond the classroom by participating in activities which involve the use of community resources (i.e. life-wide learning)
- developing their school-based English Language Education curriculum which
 - is in line with the framework
 - suits the needs of learners and society
 - makes cross curricular links and encourages collaboration
 - among language teachers, school librarians and other teachers

Medium-term (2017 - 2020)

Schools and teachers continue to work on the focuses listed in the short-term phase and

- strengthen the teaching-learning-assessment cycle by using criterion-referencing principles in judging and describing learners' achievement
- further enhance team-building and experience-sharing among teachers
- develop modules of learning to foster closer links across subjects and to encourage a flexible, coherent and integrated organization of learning experiences
- develop different modes of curriculum planning and ways of implementation
- develop a balanced and coherent school-based English Language Education curriculum that caters for the diverse needs of learners and society

Long-term (2020+)

Schools and teachers continue to work on the focuses listed in the short- and medium-term phases and

- attain proficiency in designing quality teaching, learning and assessment materials and activities
- build a good network among schools for sharing of resources and good practices
- formulate and implement a comprehensive and effective school-based assessment policy

--- CONCLUSION ---

To enable students to be effective learners of English capable of meeting the challenges and demands of the 21st Century, teachers play an important role in providing the impetus for learning.

To do so, they need to provide a wide and varied range of learning experiences that serve to deepen students' interest in developing not only their language proficiency, but a broad range of generic skills, as well as values and attitudes conducive to their all-round development.

It is essential that teachers work closely together to engage in the continuous process of developing and renewing their own school-based English Language Education curriculum, taking into account the short-term, medium-term, and long-term curriculum development focuses proposed in this framework.

According to the proposed schedule (or phases) of curriculum development, there are a number of initiatives for teachers to work on now and in the years to come, notably helping students to become motivated learners of English equipped with the skills of learning to learn, developing independence and creativity, and fostering life-wide and lifelong learning.

We firmly commit ourselves to providing resources and support to help schools to develop. We encourage you to build on your existing strengths and devise for your students a progressive and appropriate language curriculum to master at their own pace.

*Teachers are expected to reach unattainable goals with inadequate tools.
The miracle is that at times they accomplish this impossible task!*

- Haim Ginott