



INNOVATION ELT CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

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Abstract:

English is a global language and thereby the teacher has to adapt to the multicultural linguistic approach and evolve at holism. Language has to be treated as an art when using creatively and science when defining the nuances of the language. The language teacher must not only be proficient in language, but also innovative in customizing curriculum according to the learner's need. The teacher need to break the barriers of traditional approaches and become a facilitator to develop the four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. The teacher ought to develop autonomy in the curriculum designing and go beyond the textbook and be pragmatic in pedagogical/andragogical approach. The teacher has to empathize with the learners and identify the needs of the learners before designing the curriculum and delivering it in the classroom. There should be more tasks based sessions practised in the language classroom and also meet the contemporary needs of the learner.

Key Words: Orientation, Communication, Creative, Syllabus & Curriculum

Introduction:

Curriculum Innovation is a managed process of development whose most important products are teaching materials, methodological skills and pedagogical values that are apparent as new by potential adopters. The Curriculum is viewed as a composite whole including the teacher, the learner, learning and teaching methodologies, anticipated and unanticipated experiences, outputs and outcomes possible within a learning institution. The Curriculum development concentrates on ascertaining what knowledge skills, and values students learn in schools, what experiences should be provided to bring about intended learning outcomes and how teaching and learning in schools or educational systems can be planned, measured and evaluated.

Designing the Language Curriculum is a part of language pedagogy. The quintessence of the curriculum theory can be understood through the three following basic issues:

- ✓ The tendencies and approaches to curriculum designing
- ✓ The stages of curriculum designing
- ✓ The principles of curriculum designing

The curriculum should be viewed with holistic approach towards language learning where learners are perceived as a whole person with body, mind, emotions and spirit. There should be innovative approaches and pedagogy in the curriculum where students can be taught according to their intelligences.

In Penman's (2005) the different methods for holistic language learning are identified as:

- ✓ Multiple Intelligence
- ✓ Diachronic and Synchronic learning experience
- ✓ Interaction and community
- ✓ New learning environment/s

According to Gardner's (1993) Multiple Intelligence theory, the learners can be taught according to their intelligences and thereby maximize their learning potential. The teacher can ask the learners to prepare an advertisement with a logo, its features in a chart, a pictorial representation and also enacting it in the form of a skit. This activity is popularly known as ADZAP, where one can test most of the intelligences. The students can be shown a film as it is highly motivating, related to students' lives and it provides a source of authentic and varied language learning. Films communicate cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors. It is an effective tool which can be used at bringing the outside world into language classroom and providing a stimulating framework for classroom communication and discussion. The students can be asked to narrate as a story based on a theme. The students can also be given a team building activity where the team's likes and dislikes are identified and their interpersonal skills are explored and monitored. An out of box thinking activity to develop creative thinking and language skills can be given by asking the learners to interpret the picture, for example, the learners can be given a picture of the lotus and ask them to interpret in a different way. There is a great scope for language exposition.

The diachronic nature of learning embraces the previous path and experience of the individual learner and the potential future route the learner would take. The students could be asked to speak about themselves and to tell their future plans as what they see themselves in five to ten years ahead, their strengths and goals. The synchronic learning explores the learning environments in which the learner's explore themselves. The learning aids, the internet, learning styles, their current language level and motivation factors, etc. The teacher can ask

the learners to take a scientific concept and describe it with the help of aids. For example, dry cleaning concept where the students can explain the experiment with the aids.

In Interaction and community method one can explore various methods of communicating that is between the teacher and the learner, between learners and between native and non – native speakers. This provides the learners a framework to communicate and design their strategies. The New learning environments help the learners in gathering as much information as possible. For example, Black Board, projector, WebCT, are like virtual classrooms where the learners can gain optimum knowledge.

According to Richards (1990), the different methods that have been incorporated into the language teaching curriculum are:

- ✓ Grammar Translation Method (1800-1900)
- ✓ Direct Method (1890-1930)
- ✓ Structural Method (1930-60)
- ✓ Reading Method (1920-1950)
- ✓ Audio-lingual Method (1950-1970)
- ✓ Situational Method (1950-1970)
- ✓ Communicative Approach (1970-Present)

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach resulted from the focus on communication as the organizing principle for teaching and also about the nature of language, goals, objectives and the syllabus in language teaching and learning.

Curriculum design involves teacher-learning process. It promotes not only effective classroom learning, but also teacher development. The planning of a curriculum develops the effectiveness instead of an unplanned curriculum. The interdependence of product-oriented (skills-based) curriculum and process-oriented approach (task-based curriculum) are necessary ingredients in the language curriculum design.

According to Richards (2001), the main factors involved in the curriculum designing and development are:

- ✓ Needs analysis
- ✓ Situation Analysis
- ✓ Planning goals and learning outcomes
- ✓ Course planning and syllabus design
- ✓ Providing for effective teaching
- ✓ The role and design of instructional materials
- ✓ Approaches to evaluation

Needs Analysis:

The language learners need to survive in the contemporary global society has to be analyzed. The needs described in terms of linguistic deficiency is the difference between what a learner can presently do in a language and what he or she should be able to do. The needs analysis helps in identifying the needs of the language skills learners task which has to be performed in a particular role. It also helps in determining the communicating abilities, the language acquisition, their attitudes, and their cognitive and academic skills, their political, cultural, and personal characteristics. In my teaching experience, I have identified that the learners' need vary according to their exposure to the language, their environment, their social status and also their interest. The learners' need can also be analyzed through simple processes like test, questionnaire, self ratings, and samples of the learner's writings. Once the learner's needs are established, the teacher awareness of these needs has to be established and the curricular innovation has to be associated with ownership. The teacher should be able to take the responsibility in implementing, sustaining and developing it further into a meaningful version of innovation.

Curriculum Design:

The curriculum designing can be planned on the basis of the need analysis and it is possible to promote the target proficiency. The course development should involve the criteria about the course rationale, that is the information why the course is required and what type of teaching and learning is involved in this process. It should be kept into consideration at entry and exit level, i.e. what is the learner's language ability and what should the learner achieve at the end of the course. Then, the course content has to be identified according to the competency needs of the learners.

The Syllabus can be formulated based on the following contexts:

- ✓ Lexical syllabus: It identifies target vocabulary and syllabus that has to be simulated according to the needs of the learners.
- ✓ Functional syllabus: It is organized based on communicative functions such as requesting, complaining, suggesting, agreeing, etc. The communicative competence of the learners can be developed considering these factors.
- ✓ Situational syllabus: It is organized considering the language needed in different situations and it provides the learners an advantage to present the language according to the context.

- ✓ Topic based syllabus: It is organized based on diverse themes and topics. The learner's needs are addressed by making a linguistic form meaningful and also applicable for ESL programs.
- ✓ Competency syllabus: It is framed based on the specification of the competencies of the learners that are expected to master in relation to specific situations and activities. It is prominently used in social survival, life skill, and work-oriented programs.
- ✓ Task-based syllabus: It is organized based on the tasks that the learners need to complete in the target language. It helps the learners in developing cognitive and comprehensive capabilities and assists in second language acquisition.
- ✓ Integrated syllabus: This reflects on the variety of priorities in teaching than absolute choices.
- ✓ Modules: This is a self-contained and independent learning phase with its own objectives. It provides the learners a sense of achievement because objectives are more immediate and specific.

Teachers have to respect the student's views and their personality and plan the teaching accordingly. A creative teacher understands the student's background, learning styles and tries to stimulate their critical thinking skills before weaving the creative web of language learning. Teaching needs to be learner-oriented and not teacher-oriented, where teacher guides, encourages and facilitates active learning.

Classroom Activities:

In a creative classroom, activities do not involve only the teacher lecturing or explaining but they revolve around the students' discussions, reflections, pair work, story telling, singing, dancing which make the students feel free and enjoy while learning the language. Creative English learning becomes a motivating and highly interactive experience involving a degree of playfulness and the potential for engagement in multiple contexts.

A creative teacher involves the students to participate on the following activities in the classroom.

The students are encouraged to:

- ✓ express their feelings
- ✓ talk about their self or the people they like or don't like
- ✓ talk about their experiences
- ✓ narrate stories or events
- ✓ read stories or news and discuss about story or issue
- ✓ read selected passages, and reflect over the language or theme
- ✓ work in collaboration with others
- ✓ actively participate in pair work and group discussions

When the students are engaged in these activities, freedom needs to be given to the students

- ✓ to modify the activity
- ✓ to use the required supporting material
- ✓ to use their imagination
- ✓ to come out with their innovative ideas

In the process, students need to think clearly about the activity and be clear about the objectives of the event or activity. They should be trained to be proactive and not reactive.

The teacher must be able to focus on the significance of non-verbal communication in the language presentation as it is mandatory for effective communication. The teacher need to be a role model to impart the curriculum in an effective manner. The language teacher plays a pivotal role in building the personality of a learner. Though there is learner autonomy in certain approaches in curriculum like task-based syllabus, topic based syllabus, etc., the teacher is a leader and manager. There should be an adaptation to the curriculum by teachers' exposure to the latest methodologies and facilitate the language learners according to their needs. The traditional approach has to be replaced with the contemporary approaches in ELT as it is the pathway for holistic learners. English being as a global language, the language teacher is always faced with many challenges and hence innovative curriculum with holistic language teaching approach is the need of the hour.

Orientation programs and workshops have to be conducted to make the teachers work in collaboration and explore teaching English creatively with the existing syllabus. Practicing teachers have plethora of creative ideas which they have already explored and to be explored. Senior teachers have their experiences to share where as young teachers have surplus dynamic and creative ideas.

This kind of situation does not arise if the following precautions are taken before and after new curriculum is designed.

- ✓ Teachers' workshops or seminars have to be arranged to enable the teachers express their creative ideas and problems in developing language skills.
- ✓ Teacher's experiences and creative ideas have to be taken into consideration.
- ✓ Orientation programmes and workshops to teachers need to to be conducted every year, especially when new text books are introduced to make the teachers familiar with the new teaching methodologies and creative classroom techniques. These programmes have to be arranged at regional, district, and state level. Attendance in these programmes can even be made mandatory for their promotions. Senior

teachers and Best teacher award winners can serve as resource persons along with the experts in the field.

Conclusion:

Curriculum decides the teacher's role and activities to a great extent. Teachers have to develop the objectives specified in the curriculum and syllabus. A creative teacher, of course, always tries to be innovative and can bring life to the bland classroom activities, but the curriculum also should make a provision for the creative use of ideas. The activities suggested should be lively and able to make language learning not a burden but fun. Creative teachers are imaginative, innovative, enthusiastic, and ready to explore the difficult terrain of making resource students as well as gifted students learn competitively. Government, school managements too need to provide a proper environment to the teachers for exploring their creativity and build creative classrooms.

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