

Chapter II

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The information age is upon us and, the existing education system must prepare the student for ever changing work place in the future. Obviously the use of web based learning process is recognized as the most promising way of having ready access to knowledge than the conventional method. We need to go for technology driven education as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) help in making quality education accessible and strengthening the relevance of education to the increasingly digital work place. Quality education gives new dimensions to the learning and teaching and making it an active process connected to real life.

ICT have a great potential for enhancing learning levels and empowering quality of education through e-governance. Computer mediated conferencing uses test based systems for interaction between learners and teachers. 21st century has been widely considered as ‘knowledge century era.’ Every nation has a competitive and globalized international environment where research and innovation systems, education and lifelong learning have become critical parameters.

Explosion of knowledge has influenced society and economy to such an extent that many have decided to enhance their attitude in terms of knowledge. With IT and telecom emerging as core competence of the nation, India is emerging as a knowledge society. Efficient utilization of this existing knowledge can create comprehensive wealth for the nation. A knowledge society has two very important components driven by societal transformation and they are large scale development in education, health care and governance.

Advantage of online education

1. **Accessibility:** Attend online classes from anywhere.
2. **Flexibility:** You are not tied to the class schedule and work when it makes sense for you at any part of the day.
3. **Interpersonal:** Your peers will include students all over the country and even the world.
4. **Cost:** It does not require that you relocate to a new place or that you forgo full time work.
5. **Documentation:** Documents and line discussion are all achieved and recorded so that they can be retrieved via e-mail or institution website for reading, downloading and printing.

6. Access instructors respond quickly through e-mail and they are prepared to work with diverse student with a range of life styles and needs.

2.2. ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

English language proficiency of English language teachers, in quite a number of educational institutions is questionable. A language teacher who does not possess the required proficiency cannot create an ideal learning environment. The learners need to experience appropriate input so that they can become engaged with the language learning. The most unfortunate aspect is the lack of any clear-cut and attainable aim of teaching. Good planning and the right techniques of teaching are not followed. The other evils are sub-standard text-books, unsatisfactory evaluation systems and dearth of competent teachers. (Meganathan, 1961-1962).

But lately, things seem to have looked up a bit. It has been realized that unless these evils are removed, it will not be possible to raise the standard of learning and achievement in English. Now all the states mainly at the initiative of the EFLU, Hyderabad and NCERT, New Delhi have adopted in their schools modern and structured syllabus with clearly defined objectives. Teachers should focus their attention on teaching and

encouraging the students to participate in classroom interaction and develop interest in learning the language skills. Students should be given opportunities to participate in debates, group discussion and seminars.

There are four general aims of teaching English. They are:

1. To listen and understand spoken English.
2. To understand what they read in English.
3. To speak in English.
4. To write in English.

These aims correspond to the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are passive or receptive skills whereas speaking and writing are active or productive skills. It is easier to learn receptive than productive skills. Reception involves understanding spoken and written English. Expression involves speaking and writing English. The general aims of teaching English are as follows:

1. To develop certain abilities, skills, attitudes and interests for language learning.
2. To assist the students to acquire a working knowledge of English for all purpose;
3. To develop the habit of self study.

4. To prepare the students to get the benefit of higher education, general, technical and professional;
5. To enable the pupils to speak English fluently.
6. To help the students to acquire communicative competency.
7. To enable them to develop reading habit.

The aims of teaching English at the secondary stage may be summed up as developing in the pupils the following skills and knowledge;

1. to understand English with ease when spoken at normal conventional speed;
2. to speak English correctly and fluently;
3. to read English with comprehension for gathering information and enjoy reading;
4. to write neatly and correctly at reasonable speed;
5. to enjoy reading simple poems and various articles in English;
6. to acquire knowledge of the elements of English for the good command over the language.
7. to translate common English words, phrases and sentences into their mother-tongue for effective understanding and vice versa.
8. to develop interest in learning English with a sense of thirst for the language.

2.3. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

In a general sense the term 'to achieve' conveys the meaning 'to accomplish' or 'to attain.' In the field of education it is referred to the success in the school subjects. The term is defined by many in different ways. The term 'achievement' means relative accomplishment in a specified area of work. Academic achievement is also considered as an expression of the individual who utilizes his innate potentials to achieve success in the examination. Wolman's Dictionary of behaviour Sciences defines that an academic achievement is the level of proficiency attained in the academic work (Mohan and Gulati, 1986).

According to Good (1959) achievement is the accomplishment of proficiency in the performance of a particular task. Achievement is the degree of proficiency of the learner in mastering the school subjects. A test of achievement is one designated to measure knowledge, understanding or skills in specified subject or group of subjects. The test might be restricted to a single subject, such as English yielding a separate score for each subject and a total score for the several scores combined.

Scholastic achievement is the achievement of the individual student in the subjects in which he is interested and possesses the capability of

making his best performance to the best of his potentialities. Achievement also means the extent to which a learner is profiting from instructions in a given area of learning, i.e. achievement is reflected by the extent to which skill or knowledge has been acquired by a person from the training imparted to him. In the Encyclopedia of Psychology, Hans Jurgen (1972) stated that achievement means:

1. General term for the successful attainment of some goal requiring a certain effort.
2. The degree of success attained in a task, e.g. solving a test.
3. The result of a certain intellectual or physical activity defined according to individual and or subjective (organizational) pre-requisites, i.e. proficiency.

Thus achievement is a motivating force which helps the subject to do 'what he has done.' Without a need felt for achieving some goal, performance is difficult, if not possible. The achievement score of a student indicates towards the future success of the individual. It is also true that achievement in any field of life is a function of the interaction of various personality factors. The competence to achieve and 'will to achieve' are the twin factors essential for achievement (Dhandapani, 2005).

Various factors, both intellectual and non-intellectual, may affect in the positive or negative way, the achievement of an individual. The prediction of academic achievement has assumed enormous importance in view of its practical aspect. It is a parameter for admission and promotion in a class. It is also important for getting a degree for getting a job.

Factors influencing academic achievement

Academic achievement is of paramount importance particularly in the socio-educational context. Education has always been concerned with the prediction of academic achievement. It has probably received more public attention than any other single problem in education. Now-a-days academic achievement of students has been the main focus of educationists. It is assuming greater importance and is designed to identify the outstanding talents of the students.

Attitude: Concept and criteria

As a concept, an attitude always refers to an individual's or group's more or less stable and observable tendency or predisposition to perform, perceive, think and feel in relation to something specific. The word "attitude" has been derived from a Latin word 'Optus' means a subjective and mental state of preparation for any action. There is a lot of variation in regard of the term 'attitude'.

Many psychologists have defined the word “Attitude” in their own way. In simplest sense, an attitude is dispositional readiness to respond to certain situations, persons or objects in a consistent manner which has been learnt and has become one’s typical mode of response. An attitude has a well defined object of reference. In other words, the generalized ways of behaving and viewing situations can be termed one’s attitude. According to Thurstone and Chave, (1936) attitude denotes the sum total of man’s inclinations of feelings, prejudices or biases, pre-conceived notions, ideas, fears, treats and conviction about any specific topic.

An attitude is not a response but a more or less persistent set to response in a given way to an object or situation. The concept of attitude relates the individual to any aspect of his environment which has positive or negative value for him.

Attitude is a readiness to react toward or against some situation, person or thing in a particular manner, for example, with love or hate or fear or resentment, to particular degree of intensity. An attitude consists of the meanings that one associates with a certain object (or abstraction) and that influences his acceptance of it. Attitude is a predisposition of the

individual to act in a positive or negative way towards persons, objects, ideas and events (Brandl, 2002).

In the International encyclopedia of the social sciences (Attitude, 1968), it is mentioned that “An attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or a situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner.” Attitude is a perceptual orientation and response readiness in relation to particular objects or class of objects.

A look into the various ways an attitude is defined brings out that attitudes have both cognitive as well as emotional components towards the psychological object. They are, to a great extent responsible for the behaviour of a person towards the psychological object under question. The degree of a person’s attitude may vary from extremely negative through a gradation to extremely positive position. Positive attitudes are developed towards psychological objects which satisfy individual needs where as negative or unfavourable attitudes are developed towards those psychological objects which obstruct or thwart the satisfaction of the individual needs. Attitudes develop, through various sources, such as specific experiences, from others, imitation of models and institutional factors (Travers, 1973).

A positive attitude towards a subject of study will strengthen student's learning and will promote greater efforts on his part or strive towards mastery in that subject. This is expected to result in a higher achievement by the student. An attitude to a great extent is responsible for the particular behaviour of a person, about an object, idea or person. It makes the individual respond in a particular way to the particular stimuli. Therefore, we may understand an attitude, as a determining acquired feeling, prepares a person to behave in a certain way towards a specific psychological object.

On the basis of analysis of the available definitions of attitudes, the main characteristics of attitudes may be summarized as under.

1. The range of attitude is not limited.
2. The attitudes are the roots of the individual behaviour.
3. The attitude is both overt and covert.
4. The attitude varies in direction as well as in the intensity or strength.
5. All attitude of an individual are integrated into an organized way.
6. Attitude is not inborn or innate but it is acquired. Therefore attitude differs from culture to culture.
7. The attitude is lasting and consistent but it can be modified.

Attitude and academic achievement

Attitude and academic achievement are both identified areas for student's growth in the school curriculum. Attitudes determine the directions in which one strives and makes use of what he/she shows and can do. It also determines the character of one's motive power. If the students find English useful in their daily lives, then the students are more likely to consider it to be a creative subject, as it develops the literary activities of the students. It is plausible to consider that the more confident a person is, the better is his/her performance in English language, especially for better communication in academic subjects like English (Perry, 1999).

It may be argued that the attitude of an individual plays a critical role in enhancing one's academic achievement. Learning which is accompanied by specific attitude is meaningful, pleasant and impels one to continue the learning and thereby achieve higher. A person having a positive attitude towards English will try to achieve his/her goals and overcome all obstacles; but one who has a negative attitude towards it, will try to avoid it. Negative attitude will surely hinder the effectiveness of the study. Thus, it may be expected that a relationship between attitude towards English and achievement in English do exist (Barnett, 1997).

Many psychologists have attempted to explain achievement behaviour in terms of the attitudes which the school pupils develop toward the subject (courses), school, teachers, education, reading, peers and toward himself.

Mansy (1993) investigated the relationship between students attitude to school and both academic achievement and socio-cultural status and found out that there were significant differences between boys and girls in attitudes to school and scholastic achievement with girls having more positive attitudes and higher achievement.

Interest: Concept and Criteria

Interest may refer to the motivating force that impels one to attend any activity or it may be the affective experience that has been stimulated by the activity itself. In other word, interest can be cause of an activity and the result of participation in the activity. The direction of our thinking is influenced as our own interests are related to the situation in which we find ourselves. Our behaviour, in turn, is affected by the sensory experiences and perceptual awareness that make possible the changing of relations among ideas and thought processes as these are experienced and expressed. We may not be conscious of the fact that the very dominance

of one idea over another is a selective process motivated by our interest of feeling at the moment.

Interest may refer to the motivating force that impels us to attend to a person, a thing or an activity, or it may be the effective experiences that have been stimulated by the activity itself. Etymologically the word interest in Latin language means it matters, 'it concerns'. An individual is interested in a particular thing, because it matters or concerns to him (Benson,2001).

2.4. E-LEARNING

The technological revolution in the sphere of information technology has led to rapid growth in all fields of knowledge making it an important requirement for educational institutions and universities to improve quality education. Communication technologies are widely used to improve learning situations as well as effective learning and training. From the learner's perspective, distance education through e-learning gives access to more opportunities for further education. It also provides opportunities to develop professional skills for those who want a better career training. E-learning encourages open education, home study and independent study. It is different from the traditional education. With the development of technology in recent years, and the widespread use of computers and the internet, it has become easy to provide education

through the internet. E-learning supplements classroom learning and paves the way for blended learning.

E-learning has been defined in different ways. For example, (Rossett, 2002) defined e-learning as the delivery of content via all electronic media, including the internet, intranet, extranets, satellite broadcast, audio/video tape, interactive TV and CD-ROM. E-learning is the acquisition and use of knowledge distributed and facilitated by electronic means. However, it is noteworthy that these definitions introduce e-learning as a way of transferring the content to the learner through the electronic media. Nicholls (2003) defined e-learning as an instruction delivered on the computer using CD-ROM, internet or intranet with the following features:

- Includes content relevant to the learning objective.
- Uses instructional methods such as example and practice to help learning.
- Uses media elements such as words and pictures to deliver the content and methods.
- May be instructor-led (synchronous e-learning) or designed for self-paced individual study (asynchronous e-learning).
- Builds new knowledge and skills to achieve individual learning goals or to improve overall performance.

Driscoll (2002) defines e-learning as an innovative approach for delivering well-designed, learner-centered, interactive, and facilitated learning environment to the learners.

This process utilizes the attributes and resources of various digital technologies with other forms of learning materials suited for open, flexible, and distributed learning environment. From the previous definitions the following conclusions can be drawn:

- E-learning is involved in using multimedia (audio, image, video, text...) for delivering the content through electronic media (computer, internet).
- E-learning is structured including all elements of the curriculum (objectives, content, activities, and evaluation).
- E-learning is provided in the classroom with the help of the instructor, and it could be designed for learning at one's own pace.
- E-learning is planned and well-designed to meet the needs of the learner.
- E-learning is flexible in such a way that it becomes available for everyone irrespective of time, place and age, and it gives the learner a positive role in the learning process. The instructor facilitates the learning process and the learner proceeds with independent learning.

- E-learning tends to provide an interactive learning environment between learners and the instructor or among the learners and various learning resources.

Types of e-learning

Synchronous e-learning

This type of e-learning requires learners and instructors to communicate online at the same time from different places. This type of e-learning needs modern equipments and good network connection. However, it has the advantage of immediate feedback and live online interaction. To conduct the synchronous E-learning, there are a number of tools that could be used such as video conferencing, audio conferencing, chat rooms, and white board (Bush, 1997).

Asynchronous e-learning

This type of e-learning does not require students and teachers to be online at the same time. The advantage of asynchronous e-learning is that the student will be able to choose the suitable time for his study and helps him to learn at his own pace.

On the other hand, with this type of e-learning students will be unable to get immediate feedback from the instructor and will be more

isolated than synchronous e-learning. But in both types of e-learning the students need to be motivated for learning in order to overcome the negative effects of the separation from one another, and from their instructor (Patricia Bertia, 2009). In this regard Garrison (2003) emphasizes the importance of socialization, collaboration, and active participation to overcome such barriers. A number of tools could be used to conduct asynchronous e-learning such as e-mail and discussion boards. However, with the development in the global network of information, technology has contributed to the emergence of difference methods and techniques of teaching and learning such as virtual classroom. These classrooms offer different tools that make courses more effective. For instance, they provide easy ways for uploading and sharing materials, for collecting and reviewing students' assignments. This also facilitates online chats and debates.

The virtual classroom imitates the traditional classroom with regard to the presence of teacher and students on the World Wide Web environment. An important aspect is that the virtual classroom accommodates any number of students irrespective of age, geographical location and time.

All classroom tasks could be done electronically and could allow staff and teacher of the course to devote their time for improving the quality of the course. Another advantage of the virtual classroom is that it is cost-effective as it does not need buildings and it gives students more room to view and navigate through different sources of knowledge on the internet.

2.5. INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

The internet technology has transformed the communication around the world. The language teachers are continually searching for better ways of accessing authentic materials and providing experiences that will improve their students' knowledge and skills in these target areas. The world wide connections enabled through the internet have changed the way people think about communication information and the programs can be used to enrich the language learning in the classroom.

Electronic mail

E-mail was in use before the internet as we know it today, even existed and is still the most commonly used internet application. Foreign language teachers can integrate e-mail-based activities into their curriculum. International projects that enable students to correspond with native speakers of the target language are easily implemented where

participants have the necessary access, equipment, and foreign contacts. The infrastructure requirements for e-mail are minimal, making it the most available of all internet tools. Distance learning is another curricular area where e-mail is being used. Today's e-mail software can handle text in a wide variety of languages, can transmit diacritics, and can include word processed files as attachments. The software also allows us send sound and images as attachments that enhance the context of the written communication.

Electronic lists

Electronic discussion groups or Lists (sometimes referred to as "LISTSERVs") use e-mail to provide a forum where people of similar interest can participate in a professional dialogue and share resources. Hundreds of lists of interest to language teachers are available on the internet. Some are service lists, such as LLTI (Language Learning Technology International Discussion Forum), which distributes information about all aspects of the technology used in language teaching and IECC (Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections, I-12), which provides a service for teachers seeking partner classrooms for international and cross-cultural electronic mail exchanges. Others are language specific and address topics as specific and diverse as their membership warrants (Chun, 1994).

Language Teaching Forum is a list that cuts across language lines to discuss methodology instructional innovation, professional articulation, and enhanced student learning, among other topics. Participation in electronic discussion lists can be a useful tool for professional development, particularly for educators who are isolated geographically or within their districts from other teachers of the same language. When participating in discussions, certain rules and protocols (netiquette) should be observed. Following list guidelines and learning how to accurately express and gauge the tenor of a post or response (often by smiling faces) are very important skills in this faceless communications environment.

Electronic journals

Several electronic journals target foreign language professionals. Generally, these journals are free and published on a regular basis and do not exist in paper form. There are a number of reasons for publishing a journal online. First, electronic journals can reach a large and diverse audience in a timely manner and without the printing costs of a paper journal. Second, the hypermedia nature of web-based journals enables articles to include links to the related background or reference information located elsewhere on the web. Third, a number of these journals have a technology focus, and electronic dissemination that illustrates many of the

technologies is treated in given issue. Of particular interest are Language Learning and Technology (LL & T) (<http://llt.msu.edu/>) and teaching English as a second language: An Electronic Journal. (TESL-EJ) (<http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/>).

World Wide Web

The web browser, usually Netscape or in Internet Explorer, is the window through which most people view the internet. Thanks to its flexibility and integration of other services, the web represents the broadest and most powerful internet application. It has two main defining elements. The hypertext link allows anything on one page to link to any other page in the world, and the ability to combine objects of many different types makes the web page an excellent format for mixed media. The multimedia nature of the web and the use of the web page as an interface to other services have greatly expanded the power of the internet by making it possible to display information using a combination of formats. This is essential for the delivery of authentic materials, including texts; images; sound recordings; video clips; virtual reality worlds; and dynamic, interactive presentations. For some media formats, additional helper applications or plug-ins must be downloaded and installed to enhance the web browser. In addition, sophisticated programming functions, such as CGI, Java Script, and Dynamic HTML can turn a web

page into an interactive computer program. All this can allow the student to work in interesting ways with the authentic materials found on the page.

Streaming Audio and Video

One way of connecting students with native speakers and authentic A-V materials is by using the technologies of streaming audio and video, which virtually transport the Target Language environment to the Second Language classroom without waiting for huge files to download. Students can listen to live radio stations from around the world or hear pre-recorded broadcast of music, news, sports, and weather. This technology keeps getting better thanks to faster computers and better internet connections. Real player and media player are the two most common streaming formats, and both can be freely downloaded.

Search engines

The web is so extensive that good tools are needed to help us find authentic materials that correspond to the topics of the foreign language curriculum. A search engine is an online “private eye” that does this detective work for the user. Search engines use keywords to find any site (documents, files, web pages) that contains the keywords entered by the user. Some even calculate how good the match is so the most likely hits

are presented first. The web is growing and changing so fast that trying to navigate it and locate desired information without search engines, would be a formidable task.

The web has numerous search engines (e.g. Yahoo, Google). Each one searches the internet, creating extensive indexes of all of the words that it finds on all pages in all languages. When it finds links, the search engine examines those pages as well. Although there are language specific engines, all of these tools work well for many languages. Each one performs a little differently, so it is a good idea to read the “help” page to learn the best techniques for doing simple and advanced searches with the engine you are using. In addition to searches, many of them also provide ready-made collections of pages on specific topics.

Remote access to libraries and databases

Many library catalogs, bibliographic resources, and other types of databases are available on the internet through a web browser. Many of these used to be housed in closed systems or on CDs, but more and more are now internet accessible. The ERIC database is an example of an important resource available via the web, making it easy for teachers to locate articles of interest online. There are also other resources which

include an online database on classical texts, lesson plans and teaching resources.

Chat, Audio and Video conferencing, messaging

While much of the internet is about the presentation of information, instant communication with other individuals allows an interpersonal exchange with a friend around the corner or around the world. Such real-time communication takes place via several different types of chat, conferencing, and messaging programs. One such application is Internet Relay Chat (IRC), which enables synchronous conversation among participants anywhere in the world. The users enter a channel and talk by typing messages to all of the other people on that channel; everything that is typed is seen instantly by everyone. Hundreds of channels exist, with names usually reflecting the topics and language discussed. Private closed channels can also be created for use in the classroom. Audio and Video conferencing programs, such as CUSeeMe and MS Net Meeting, are options for engaging foreign language students in voice conversation. Users can talk directly to their interlocutor, using the proper hardware and software and can even see and be seen by the person they are addressing. These applications take a large amount of bandwidth and depend on a good modem connection; network traffic will also affect the results. The development and availability of broadband service through cable-modem

and Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), which are much faster than modem access, is making desktop video conferencing a reality for an ever growing number of people.

Messaging software such as ICQ or Instant Messenger provides an instant connection to the people on a user's list of contacts by letting the user know when those people are online. These programs facilitate quick communication by making a connection to an individual as easy as clicking on a name. These new technologies are already powerful and have the potential for tremendous impact on the ability of students to communicate directly with native speakers in target language environments.

Web course management

Web course management software is designed for creating and managing online courses but can also be used to support and extend a traditional class by making materials with teacher annotation, glossaries, syllabus, and assignments available to the students through the web. The collaboration tools built into this software for communicating with and among students have been exploited by language teachers for interactive homework by having students exchange messages in the target language in a real-time chat session or on a closed bulletin board (open only to the

students in the class). The computer automatically saves these messages for the teacher. Two examples of course management software are web CT and blackboard.

Web Tools

Integrating reading and writing through blogs

Teaching and learning process could be enhanced with the help of the web resources and tools. While the former provide useful inputs in relation to the lesson we teach, tools offer plenty of scope for student participation in the learning process. Blog, a web 2.0 tool, is one such tool. It is a web page that could be created online for free. It is also considered as an online diary. Teacher can effectively motivate students for reading and writing and help them develop these skills.

The teacher blog helps the teacher to provide additional learning materials, set assignment and give instructions to his class. The class blog provides a platform for discussion of the lesson done in the class and thus promote interaction among the students and also feedback to the teacher. The student blog enables each student to publish what he writes on the web and thus provides him an audience-the entire class, not just the teacher alone for his written work. It is also a useful tool for Portfolio assessment by the teacher.

Enhancing listening and speaking skills through podcasts

Podcast, and the name indicates, refers to broadcasting an audio file short one through an ipod, a mobile. Its special feature is that it may be listened at anytime and anywhere, Podcasts could be listened to even with the help of a media player. A podcast is recorded in the mp3 audio format and could be downloaded easily on a computer by subscribing to it. Its unique feature is its authenticity in providing inputs. In other words, students can listen to a native speaker's accent and pronunciation very easily with the help of Podcasts. While ESL/EFL podcasts are readily available, we can create a podcast with the help of a relevant software also, Free web site like 'Podomatic' and software like 'audacity' helps us to create podcasts. Thus they offer opportunities not only for practicing listening but also speaking outside the classroom also – anywhere at any time.

The web site, www.podomatic.com is a free web site that creates space in the web for uploading new audio files. All that teachers need to do is to log into the site and store audio files with in the specified GBs. Another web site that offers software for downloading for free is www.audacity.com. Teachers can install this software encourage students to speak on various topics, record them with the help of this software and save them as audio files to play them anytime.

Internet as educational resource in vocabulary instruction in ESL classroom

Vocabulary knowledge is an important element in second language learning. By learning new words students can increase their language skills. Mastering a vocabulary is more than memorizing the meaning of word. Internet resources in the classroom environment can promote vocabulary learning in the natural process of communicative activity. A wide variety of techniques can be used in the web to practice and learn both vocabulary and grammar. The web is a source of teaching vocabulary and grammar effectively and interestingly.

The various functions of the internet, appeal to different learning style. When a student is bored by books he may become excited by interactive games in the internet. When using the internet for vocabulary learning, students become empowered since they develop self learning and confidence through increased responsibility for their own learning processes. There is a plethora of online tools helpful to do that. The following are some of the websites that can enrich English vocabulary.

Wikis for writing collaborative projects

Wikispaces, PBworks Wiki, Wikieducator, Blogs and the list can go endless. There are many ways in which these websites and tools can be used for writing assignments or collaborative projects. Web 2.0 has set the

trend towards teachers and educators using Virtual Classrooms. Some virtual classrooms like DIMDIM, WIMBA, WIZIQ, eliminate, Second life classrooms are available on the internet. The language teachers from their home will be able to use these virtual classrooms to teach literature or communication skills. Most of these virtual classrooms can be connected to the learning management system (LMS). Generally, educators who use these tools find that course deliver and content management are more flexible and effective.

Use of modern technologies to teach communication skills

Man is using technology in various aspects for all his works from dawn to dusk. People have to update themselves for surviving in this hi-tech world. In short this world is driven by technology, which cannot be denied. It is the vehicle to get access to this modernized world. Though technology cannot play the vital role of a teacher, it can be used as a supplementary tool for enhancing teaching methods in classroom. As the conventional chalk and talk method seems to be monotonous and boring to the students, teachers emphasize on latest technologies for teaching the subjects. Various software and modern technologies are being introduced to make students to get access with their subject easily.

Computer assisted language learning for vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension

Now-a-days vocabulary is gaining more emphasis in the language teaching curriculum. Vocabulary size, reading comprehension and proficiency are inter-linked. There is a relationship between computer assisted language learning and vocabulary acquisition. A learner should know 2000-7000 words to express his ideas fluently. So it is clear that a rich vocabulary is a key element in the proficiency of language.

CALL aims at providing computer based vocabulary development. It is interactive and learner friendly. Multimedia enhanced dictionaries help the learners to understand the meaning of the words more clearly. The online learners have the advantage of computerized texts in multimedia format.

Web tools and resources for vocabulary development and grammar

Good communication skills are very important for any professional career. Verbal talent is not developed on its own, but only by new verbal experience. Verbal talent will develop when a person is thrown into verbal situations that he or she can't understand the language and makes him indispensable to develop a good technique in learning and writing. The internet is the most exciting unlimited English resource that anyone could

imagine and it is right at our doorsteps. The potential of the internet as the internet teaching tool is a relatively new concept but more and more people realize that it can indeed foster a dynamic learning environment. Web resources are particularly beneficial as a teaching aid the makes learning practical. Everybody is empowered by the net because it enables them to study independently. Although learners certainly acquire world knowledge incidentally while engaged in various language learning activities, systematic study of vocabulary and grammar is also required. It also extends on findings internet sources for practicing vocabulary through illustrations. It helps the learners to achieve their objectives with number of practical exercises.

Enhancing listening and speaking skills through podcasts

The inclusion of technology in education and research has completely transformed the education system. Development in computer communication and multimedia has changed the classroom into smart rooms. Teachers have become techno-teacher specially English learning styles have emerged into a new technological phase of learning by breaking the walls of traditional language rules. Podcasts is one such new technology that has recently emerged. It broadcasts audio/video programs. Primarily, it was created for entertainment. But with changing scenario in education it has become an important source for learning, listening and

speaking skills. The technology has taken space in pockets of its users in the form of mobiles, mp3 players, through these the user can download files to listen and speak at any time and place. When we talk about phonetics, phonology or the pronunciation practice with the right accent we need a technology that helps us to meet the needs of user at his/her convenient place.

Moodle

It is the software that helps teachers to conduct a complete course through the web. Web 2.0 tools are unique as they provide opportunities for students to actively participate interact and contribute through the tool used. The growing need for providing individualized training in a large classroom poses various challenges and the only solution to fulfill the individual needs is to use technology beyond the classroom. Language teachers have now understood the need for creating a classroom in cyberspace. Moodle is a software package used for producing internet-based courses and websites.

It is a platform that creates a classroom environment, which helps teachers to conduct full-fledged courses and learners to contribute through the tasks designed by the teachers. Moodle allows us to provide lot of inputs or resources through text pages, wikis, blogs and many more.

Teachers can design any task for example, a cloze passage or a web quest task for developing reading skills, a note making task for teaching writing skills or any other task and upload them to the moodle through various links. Students can access them and upload their response for the teacher to view and give scores. One of the unique features of moodle is that it allows one to use the web tools for such as wiki, blog, chat, message board podcast and even second life for conducting the course.

Teachers can offer training on any skill by using various tools found in moodle. A blog could be used for teaching writing skills. Wiki could be used to make students to interact with others through the web. Podcasts could be given as links for students to learn listening and student's dialogues could be converted into podcasts and uploaded as samples in moodle course. It is worthwhile to mention that this encourages students to actively participate in learning as each and every tool (Wiki, blog, podcast etc.) promote publication through the web.

Wikis

Wikis are wonderful tool for students to work together and produce high quality texts. They are also great if you want to be able to share student's work with parents or the rest of the world, or just limit access to the class. Wiki could be used as a sort of learning record which all the

students could contribute to. This could be based around themes having separate pages within each theme for.

Vocabulary, useful expressions, grammatical structures, or it could be based around grammar and students could research and share what they know about various tenses and verb forms. Wiki also has a lot of communication features .So you could set up online discussion/forum tasks with students so that they could discuss and make decisions about how they want to change or develop it.

Podcast

It is an audio file found in the web, which could be heard even in an ipod, mobile which have an RSS feed and media player, a software which helps us to listen to audio. Podcast provide a lot of resources to teach the language. The ESL/EFL podcasts offer conversations of everyday life, which helps students to learn different expressions and vocabulary. Similarly business English podcasts provide exposure to corporate scenario in which conversations go on. It also serves as a tool too, which helps teachers to train students in speaking skills. The software offered by the web helps teachers to create a podcast for uploading audio files recorded with the help of the windows.

2.6. DIGITAL LEARNING

Electronic gadgets have changed the learning environment with teacher in the classroom. The use of modern technology such as computer, internet, satellite and CD-ROM give the content of teaching.

E-learning facilitates various activities that support the learning. Technology makes the language learning fruitful and interesting. Social software such as blogs, web, podcasts and virtual worlds help in social learning. Quality, equality, access and excellence are important factors in higher education. There is an urgent need for developing interpersonal skills. Technology improves learning experiences. It motivates, develops confidence and self esteem in learning. Electronic gadgets have changed the learning environment. The learners get a sense of learning language and that creates enthusiasm and interest in learning (Chun, 1994).

In India English is used as second language in Schools and Colleges at under graduate level. In universities and colleges the medium of instruction is English. The knowledge of English among the students is not at the desirable level. There is a need to develop the English knowledge for various purposes. Learning can be integrated with e-learning, web tools etc. which provides quality and excellence in learning.

In the present scenario achievement in English language is essential. Technology has its influence on learning and the degree of success attained depends on interest, and intelligence of the learners. These factors are essential for the achievement in English language. When technology is used wisely along with teaching and learning process, learning becomes interesting and imparts knowledge effectively. The teachers must use creative ways of teaching the language and motivate students to develop learning skills which is the focus of all learning (Supyan Hussin,2007).

There is a need for including English language in the curriculum and the teacher should cater to the needs of the learners in the class room. Developing learning skill has become the focus of all learning. Academic achievement is the main focus in education. Academic success depends on the attitude towards the subject. A positive attitude encourages quick learning. Intelligence is needed to achieve success in learning. Ideal learning environment helps the learners to use their potentials to attain the goal. Learners become critical and their capacity to think is increased. The interest in learning is increased with the use of electronic gadgets. It motivates the learners and they become enthusiastic and show interest in

learning. These psychological factors are very essential for effective achievement in English subject (Laborda, 2007).

Teaching and learning process becomes effective with web tools. Blog a web 2.0 tools can be used for reading and writing. The class blog is useful for discussing lessons taught in the class and it initiates interaction among the students. Student blog enables the student to publish what he writes on the web. Reading and writing skill can be developed by using blog (Luka,2006). Student can learn pronunciation and correct accent with the help of podcasts. Teachers can install this software and encourage student to speak on various topics. It can be recorded and saved as audio files and can be played at anytime.

Internet resources in the classroom can promote vocabulary learning. The following websites can enrich vocabulary,

- Online dictionary
- Internet public library: <http://www.Ipl.org>

www.podomatic.com is a free web site that creates space in the web for uploading new audio files. www.audacity.com is another website that offers software for down loading for free.

So technology has a major influence on teaching and learning of English language. Teacher's teaching supplemented with technology brings out good response in the learners. Self learning and self confidence is increased in the learning process.

2.7. BLENDED LEARNING

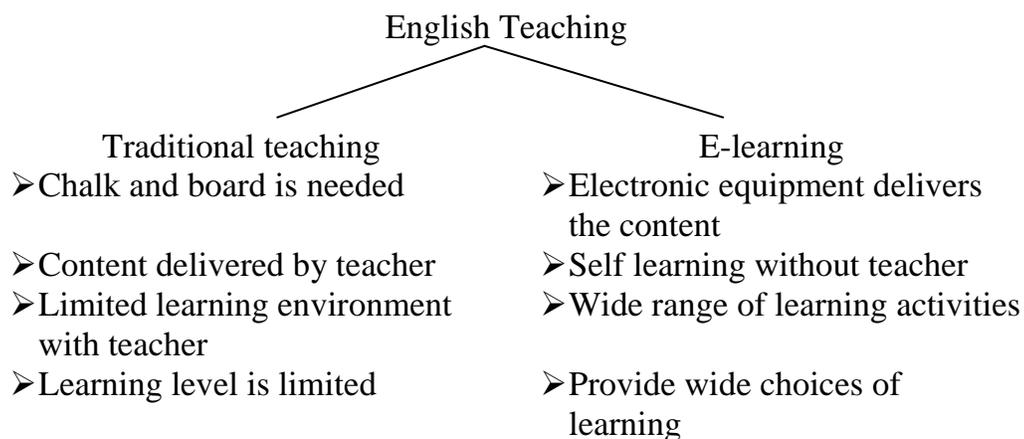
Computer technology like e-learning is available to learners and it provides various methodologies. When curriculum is reinforced with e-learning, it can be utilized to supplement face to face learning in the classroom. Blended learning includes synchronous communication activities as well as asynchronous communication. Studies conducted on the effect of e-learning on student's achievement showed that it improved learner's performance. Blended learning makes the learning interesting, interactive and pleasant. This hybrid or blended learning provides a perfect balance between face to face interaction and media based instruction. It is a combination of face to face learning in the classroom and self paced learning (Brandl, 2002).

According to (Luka, 2006) blended learning is associated with on line media course and giving importance to traditional teaching and learning process. All learning activities can be blended with on line activities and classroom activities which can be used at different levels. Activity level

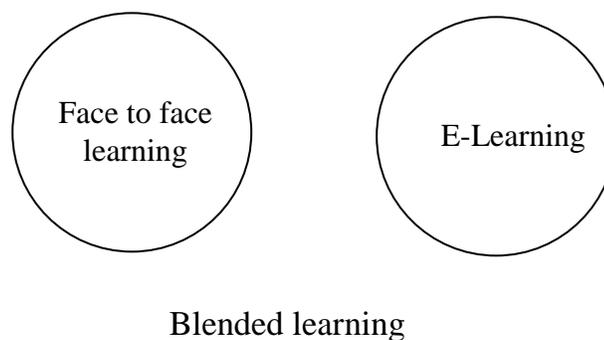
blending brings resource persons at a distance into classroom creating a side by side face to face and on line activity. It is now widely used almost everywhere. Course level blending includes face to face and computer assisted activities that are included in the curriculum. Instructional level is a blend of face to face learning and online activities in between the course of learning. This kind of integrating technology with traditional learning improves effective performance and achievement in learning. Blended learning system is very effective in terms of access to knowledge, social interaction, personalized learning, cost effective and learning at convenient time.

The education system at present does not very much motivate creativity and innovation. Students employability skills have to be improved and the quality of teaching within educational institutions has to be given due importance. Teachers should adopt innovative approaches to improve the quality of teaching. Digital learning, the researcher feels is capable of improving quality in education. We need student centered and skill based learning. The learner must be fully engaged in the learning process. The need of the hour is to enhance the role of teachers in the teaching process. Classroom technologies can create innovative and interactive learning environments. The classroom becomes smart with digital content, when it is fully network connected and multimedia method

of delivery is enabled. Then learning becomes simpler with high level of retention (Warschauer & kern, 2000).

Fig.1. Blended learning**Fig.2. Blended learning-Model1****Model 1**

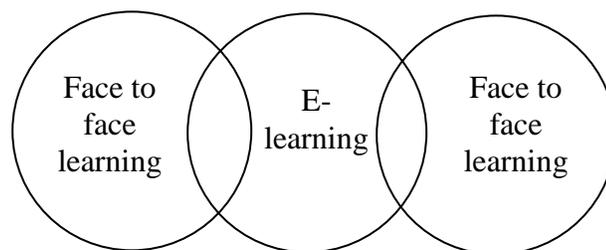
Blended learning model representing independent teaching.



In this blended learning the two methods of teaching are independent. First teaching is carried out in one method. Then after completion the second method is adopted. This model facilitates effective learning.

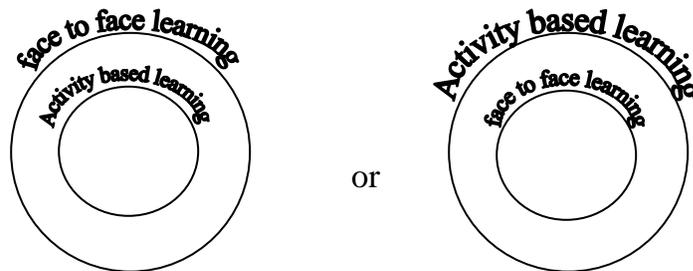
Fig.3. Blended learning-Model 2

Blended learning model representing equal amount of blended and face to face interaction.



In this model theories are explained in the classroom and it is supplemented with e-learning. This blending is more effective for classroom teaching.

Fig.4. Blended learning-Model 3



It is an activity based learning model and face to face model.

In this model activity based learning model and face to face model utilize a blended learning design. It is preferable for activity based teaching or skill based technique.

Student – centered learning

Student- centered learning has a new approach and it takes into consideration the students interests, abilities and learning styles. They are different from teacher-centered learning where the teacher takes the active role and students are passive listeners. The students choose what to learn, how to learn and how to assess their own learning and the learners actively involved in the learning process.

Teachers should adopt innovative approaches to improve the quality of teaching. Activity based and learner centric environment is preferred to outmoded chalk and talk method. The education system must aim at holistic approach. A lot of educational activities can be conducted in the classroom through on line system. New technologies offer many innovative ways to improve learning of the language. E-pedagogy and outcome based learning in the curriculum ensures efficient learning.

We need student centered and skill based learning. The learner must be fully engaged in the learning process. A self regulated learner can learn for himself and this leads to knowledge, higher order planning and comprehension by monitoring, questioning and evaluation.(Toyoda, 2001)
Task based language teaching offers natural learning in the classroom and

this learner-centered approach enhances the communicative learning of the learners. Every student gets a chance to learn language at his own pace. There is a need for educational reform and the curricula should include certain principles and follow the guidelines in order to promote effective learning at all stages. Curriculum design is directly connected with syllabus design implying that all essential parts of curriculum theory, its approaches, stages and principles may be applied equally to syllabus design.

The curriculum for English must include modern theories of sound language acquisition and recent trends in using technology in teaching and learning process. The language curriculum should bring out desirable outcomes in learning. The main aim of teaching English as the second language is to communicate effectively, gain information and learn about other cultures. There is also a need to vary language use according to the situation. The learning should be meaningful with content-based instruction to improve cognitive aspects of learning and interaction in the classroom. Developing communication skills is also important for academic achievement and cultural enrichment.

Adopting a thematic, integrated and content-based approach in learning, aims at various stages of learning, at elementary level,

intermediate level, secondary level and higher secondary level. The learners should experience the challenges in learning the language which is essential to achieve the potential. The learners should participate in the learning process and demonstrate their creativity. The curriculum should be such that they learn and develop through a variety of contexts the life skill which is essential for effective social interaction. It also should include communication skills such as listening, oral communication, written communication, cultural awareness and critical thinking with increased level of complexity in the proposed curriculum. Students should get adequate exposure to content related information besides acquiring language skills and emphasis should be placed on learning English for various purposes.

The new curriculum should include oral presentation to enhance fluency and accuracy in oral communication. Group work should be stressed. E. learning can be used to supplement face to face learning and this motivates self learning. New curriculum should minimize rote learning and enhance autonomous learning, thinking skills and communicative competency.

Implementing new curriculum results in drastic changes in acquiring knowledge, attitude, methodology and use of instructional

materials. Staff development programme is needed for the instructors to get familiar with teaching activities and improve their communication skills in English. A curriculum is considered to be coherent when the learners achievements correspond to the curriculum aim and when there is a logical relationship between the objectives stated and the process planned and developed in the classroom.

Digital classroom creates active learning environment and learning is independent and interesting. Integrating technologies into language curricula has become a reality as students around the world increasingly need both English and technology skills for their future career. Since communication is the heart of all forms of educational interaction, it is likely that its impact on educational system and the learners will be significant.

Large numbers of libraries are being digitized. Being the products of this digital age, learners get themselves familiarized with e. learning. Most young people not only in the west but also in developing countries like ours make routine use of internet, e-mail text, messages and social software like wickis, blogs and social book marking. Their familiarities with these new forms of exchange enable them to be extremely proficient in learning.

With the advent and rapid expansion of ICT, education has become more students centered, individualized, interactive and relevant to learner's needs. It is a lifelong learning. Many technologies are used in e-learning including blogs, classroom response system, collaborative software, computer aided assessment discussion boards, e-mail, educational management system, educational animation, e. games, electronic performance support systems, e. portfolios, hypermedia, PDA's podcasts, multimedia CD-ROMs, virtual class rooms, web based teaching materials, web sites and web 2.0 communities, wiki, Google scholar, you tube, model, RSS Feed, virtual learning environment etc. Most e. learning situations use combinations of the above techniques for effective learning of the language.

Students need English and Technology skills for their future career. Electronic gadgets are used to meet the digital needs of diverse learners in the 21st century. Text- Video and voice tools have become relatively inexpensive and easy to use. Laptops are used by students and they have proved highly successful in improving their academic skills.

Integrating technologies into languages curricula has become a reality as students around the world increasingly need both English and technology skills for their future career and prospects. New technologies

provide multiple avenues for language development. So learning situations should be encouraged to enable learners to discover their talents, realize their physical and intellectual potentialities to the fullest and to develop character and desirable social and human values to function as responsible citizens. Various multimedia software should be used in learning solution so that it is relevant to changing needs and the personal needs of the learners.

Technology can be useful in linking work experience with academic subjects. Students learn new basics and that helps them to use technology to communicate ideas and information orally as well as in writing. Using Information Technology in classroom learning is accomplished through creating opportunities for meaningful interaction, providing students the roles for their own social, cultural and linguistic exploration. Education should provide more time for learning through electronic media. An active learner traverses the complete learning cycle. Today with rapid growth and development that brought about by science and technology, the information or news from world over, comes to door steps. In this progressive, informative world, mass media television is playing a vital role in teaching and learning process.

Computer based communication had revolutionized life of our knowledge society and knowledge economy. Personal computer with

internet has brought out changes in the society. The electronic communication and digital net working are transforming the way of work. Using e-learning in the classroom along with traditional learning creates simple, motivating interactive and learner centric environment. In blended learning teachers and students interact freely in the classroom. This form of interaction helps the learners to develop specific leaning activity. Such an interaction encourages competitive atmosphere in the class room. This kind of increased motivation results in good quality of work and improvement in learners' attitude towards learning. Technology rich environment in the class room with the traditional teaching is widely preferred now.

Technology enhanced learning improves the efficiency of the learners. They understand the concepts better and retain them longer. Technology in the classroom provides easy access to various web resources for the present day learners. Learning has become a source of burden and stress on students these days. Learning has become an isolated activity, which does not encourage children to link knowledge with their lives in any vital way. There is no creative thinking and insights and vital dimensions of the human capacity to create new knowledge are bypassed. So learning situations should be encouraged to enable learners to discover their talents, realize their physical and intellectual potentialities to the

fullest and to develop character and desirable social and human values to function as responsible citizens. Multimedia software can be used in learning solution so that it is relevant to changing needs and the personal needs of the learners.

Technology can be useful in enhancing communication skills. Students learn new basics and that helps them to use technology to communicate ideas and information orally as well as in writing. Using information technology in classroom learning is accomplished through creating opportunities for meaningful interaction, providing students the roles for their own social, cultural and linguistic exploration. Computer based communication has revolutionized life of our knowledge society and knowledge economy. Personal computer with internet has brought out changes in the society. The electronic communication and digital networking are transforming the way of work. This transformation has a tremendous effect on the need and opportunity to learn.

In using technology in the classroom both teachers and students construct knowledge collaboratively and the student is an active partner in this process. The teacher has to assume his new role as guide and direct the process of learning. The competitive atmosphere in the class room gives way to one of co-operation and collaboration. RCET research has

revealed that using technology in language learning has developed deep understanding of key concepts, as the learners were able to elaborate on specific concepts and make connections between concepts.

Classrooms universally note very high levels of motivation among all their students. This increased motivation and engagement results in higher quality of work and more complex student thinking. Further, teachers are consistently surprised at the way in which they can work with individual student or small groups. Because learning is more individualized and students can make choices, they tend to be more engaged and more responsible for their own learning. Teachers reported that the technology rich environment seems to move class room culture away from the traditional and instructional model of teaching and learning and closer to a “learning community” model. Classroom culture grows more collaborative and the learners are exposed to technology-rich environment. Technology in language learning enhances learning experiences and supplements classroom teaching.

Language curriculum design

Curriculum designing is important for planning the teaching-learning process. The results of a planned process are usually more effective when compared to the results of an unplanned process. Planning permits the teacher to organize the activities for learning in the classroom

and create a situation where all the skills are interrelated. A well designed curriculum promotes not only effective classroom learning but also teacher development as well which should be considered as one of the most important factors for improving higher education.

Language curriculum design is a part of language pedagogy and so curriculum design should be given importance for enhancing language proficiency of the learners. Curriculum theory has not found wide application in English language teaching in educational institutions. The essence of curriculum theory can be understood through the three following basic issues such as the tendencies and approaches to curriculum design, the different level of curriculum design and principles of curriculum design.

Curriculum theory should include the aim and the objectives of learning; and on the other hand, stating objectives without working out the way of achieving them does not seem to be either rational or reasonable. So product-oriented and process-oriented are important factors to be considered in planning language curriculum design. This includes skills-based curriculum and task-based or procedural curriculum which is a vital principle of language curriculum design. Language curriculum design is regarded as a decision-making process and it involves policy making,

needs assessment, design and development, teacher preparation and development and programme management and evaluation.

Policy determination is based on the objective of the learning process. The aim of language learning is to achieve language proficiency based on the development of the four macro skills. It is quite natural that the level of language proficiency will be different for different learners and will depend on the learners' needs both from the point of view of their linguistic needs and their communicative needs expressed in communication situations.

Needs assessment may also be made on the basis of the following approaches. Product-oriented analysis related to the findings about target proficiency. Process-oriented analysis related to the identification of needs of a learner in the learning situation including cognitive and affective variables such as learning attitude, learning style, motivations, personality, wants, etc. It is necessary to avoid subjective approach to needs assessment. A learner-centered curriculum should be based on the findings of the learners' needs analysis.

On the basis of the established aim and identifying the needs analysis it is possible to identify the proficiency objective and from them

the objectives for each year/term or level can be framed. Programme objectives can also be classified as product objectives, which are real world objectives connected with the learners' target language proficiency and performance. Pedagogic objectives are the experiences the learners will undergo in the classroom. Curriculum objectives having been identified, we can specify the learning content and the means necessary to gain the objectives. These means are usually the procedures, tasks or learning activities developed in the classroom with the aim of promoting the target proficiency. The content is usually understood as language items to be learnt (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) within the framework of the topics. It is necessary to include in the planning the learning process, the objectives of the content intended to be learnt and the activities planned to be done to achieve the objective planned.

Evaluation usually deals with the learners' performance in terms of mastery or non-mastery of language programme objective. The performance is measured versus desired performance by means of testing, using the quantitative and qualitative criteria. There exists different approaches to evaluation; it can be product-oriented (summative evaluation) and or process-oriented (formative evaluation). All these types of evaluation are complementary and not mutually exclusive, their interdependence being of great importance to obtain valid findings.

The curriculum development and implementation depend on teachers and the teacher preparation plays a very important in the whole process of curriculum design. Teachers' action research is thought to be an invaluable tool in curriculum innovation and improvement.

Program evaluation in many cases may result in curriculum research which is directly benefits curriculum development. Evaluation is defined as the systematic collection and analysis of the relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum and assess effectiveness and efficiency curriculum development would consist of a process of continuous adjustments. Curriculum evaluation consists in the interaction of formative and summative evaluation.

The basic principles of curriculum design considered to be coherent when learner's achievements correspond to the curriculum aim and when there is logical relationship between the objectives stated and the process planned and development in the classroom. An example of incoherent curriculum may be, when communicative language teaching is designed within the framework of a language-centered curriculum.

It is impossible to design a curriculum once forever. No curriculum can be perfect and it will always need some improvements, adjustments or

fine tuning to meet the learners needs in the best possible way. But it is necessary to keep in mind that the change of one of the curriculum components will inevitably change the other components. The skills-based and task-based approaches are of great importance through the integration of skills-based and procedural curriculum. It is worth mentioning that curriculum design is directly connected with syllabus design and the syllabus design being regarded as a contextually diminished view of curriculum design, implying that all the essential points to curriculum theory, its approaches, stages and principles, may be applied equally to syllabus design. Taking into account all the above aspects to curriculum theory it is possible to come to a conclusion that its application to our teaching practice would result in both further teacher development and in the improvement of the whole English language teaching process.