

Teachers' Perception about the New English Curriculum:

Reflections and insights from the classroom

Proceedings of Rinpung Experiment XVI



June 2009

Centre for Educational Research & Development

Teachers' Perception about the New English Curriculum- Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

A Publication of
Centre for Educational Research & Development
Paro College of Education,
The Royal University of Bhutan.

Telephones : 975 (08) 272011/272829
Facsimile : 975 (08) 271620
Email : cerdir@druknet.bt

June 2008

© Centre for Educational Research & Development

ISBN: 978-99936-19-05-5

Acknowledgements:

- 1- Mr. Jose K.C Lecturer, SCoE, Samtse, for editing final summary report of the Seminar.
- 2- Mr. Kezang Jamtsho, Pilot, Druk Air Corporation, for recording the minutes of the Seminar.
- 3- Mr. Kinzang Dhendup, Pilot, Druk Air Corporation, for recording the minutes of the Seminar.
- 4- Ms. Tshering Wangmo, Lecturer, PCoE, Paro, for editing final Reflection Papers.
- 5- All the contributors who made the Rinpung Experiment Series XVI possible.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Centre for Educational Research & Development, Paro College of Education, Paro, or the Royal University of Bhutan.

Printed by: KMT Printing Press

Introduction

English Teacher representatives from all Lower Secondary Schools, Middle Secondary Schools and Higher Secondary Schools from Paro, Thimphu, Chukha, Wangduephodrang and Punakha Dzongkhags, more than hundred English Trainee Teachers of Paro College of Education, Lecturers, Curriculum Officers, Dzongkhag Education Officers, Managers, Researchers, Educational thinkers and Practitioners from our Education family converged at the Paro College of Education, Paro, on 7th June 2008 to share the reflections and insights from the classroom on the implementation of new English curriculum and take stock of their newly found possible thinking and experiences commonly shared.

Organized under the auspices of Rinjung Experiment series of the Centre for Educational Research and Development, the theme of the seminar was **The Teachers' Perception about the New English Curriculum-reflections and insights from the classroom.**

The Hon'ble Secretary of Education, Aum Sangay Zam, addressed the opening with such encouraging words such as "It is just so important to hear from the teachers" "When no feedbacks are received, it's assumed that everything is running well" and "how hard it is to transfer from books to children in the class". These words inspired the participants to open to positive criticism and deliberations over the day.

The interactions and deliberations that followed the presentation of the papers were expressions of the teachers' intellectual life and their teaching excellence. The seminar debated the diverse nature of the curriculum to teacher's feeling of their preparedness to teach the new curriculum, resources availability, advantages and limitation of the curriculum.

This Rinjung Experiment had been able to provide the most valuable insights and reflections that are crucial in our continued research effort in the development and improvements of our educational standards in the country. It is quite satisfying; we were able to come up from the depth, length and breadth, from corners of classroom to the outer world and could explore in our own various promising ways the possibilities in this sphere. It was extremely participative and professional.

The day was also special in the history of the Centre, in being able to bring all our efforts together in this common platform and having seen in wide range the possible room for future development of the English studies. With all and every individual in the forum, the Rinpung Experiment series XVI was possible.

As proposed to be an annual event, this seminar would continue in its efforts to observe similar support, sincere collaboration and collective efforts in the development of our English studies through greater interactions, research, and innovations.

In the meanwhile, we take pleasure in presenting to you this compilation of the selected papers and highlights of the seminar.

Ramesh Thapa
Asst. Research Officer

Rinpung Experiment XVI - Context and Objectives

The Rinpung Experiment concept originated from a humble initiative of His Excellency the present Minister of Education, Lyonpo Thakur Singh Powdyel, the then Director of the Centre, from a conviction that educators often need time to get to the basics. Teachers and educators need opportunities to reflect on ideas and issues in a large perspective – beyond the syllabus – because each discipline area provides wonderful possibilities that connect the classroom with the wider social and natural world.

The nascent Centre for Educational Research & Development in its humble ways wanted to offer a forum for interested academics and educators. The Centre launched this humble informal initiative in late 2001 with an invitation, through the Dzongkhag Education Officer, to the English teachers of Paro valley to reflect on the nature of reading.

The Rinpung Experiment, as the forum came to be known, drew like-minded teachers and educational managers from around Paro valley for a couple of hours once a month or thereabouts. A strong academic culture in our schools and institutes naturally establishes institutional self-respect and enables individuals to achieve the best that they are capable of. Everything else follows, naturally. The Rinpung Experiment sessions are expected to be interactive and participative. The sessions are informal and principally academic and professional; the principle is to try and come to grips with the nature and orientation of different academic discipline areas. We want to look at possibilities, not problems.

The Experiment has since had sessions on the nature of reading, the nature of writing, the dramatic impulse, the concept of zero, and problem-solving in Mathematics, concept mapping, action research, inclusive education, the making of a write, the teachers' perception about the new English Curriculum, among others. Sessions on other areas are in the pipeline. The Centre also had the honour of inviting the senior officials of the Ministry of Education to brief them on some of the findings and recommendations for action.

To this extent, the Centre has always provided a forum to educators, researchers, educational thinkers and practitioners by supporting research

programmes for reflective practices and professional development initiatives for enhanced performance by our education stake-holders.

June 2008, it was the wish of the Centre, supported by the honourable Vice Chancellor of Royal University of Bhutan, honourable Secretary of Ministry of education, to host a seminar especially dedicated to the development of new English curriculum in Bhutan.

It was in 2002, the Centre pioneered this crucial development programme, the development of National Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan called The Silken Knot, based on which a full-scale curriculum and professional development programme has been launched by the Ministry of Education. Today, the Centre with our close education stakeholder is proud to have succeeded in bringing major reforms and changes in the curriculum development as well as professional support programmes of our English studies.

The introduction of new English curriculum in the Bhutanese education system over the years has itself been a great achievement. It has made a huge stride in promoting and improving the standard of English in our schools and institutes. It incorporated greater developments in teaching-learning methods from teacher-centred to student-centred that are most suited to our young Bhutanese learners. At this juncture, an opportunity to reflect on the implementation of new English curriculum from teachers, educators, managers, educational thinkers and practitioners had been both welcome and desirable.

To this end, the Centre for Educational Research and Development, Paro College of Education, Paro, invited our teachers, educators, managers, educational thinkers and practitioners to a one-day seminar on the theme English Teachers' Perception about the New English Curriculum: Reflections and insights from the classroom under the auspices of the Rinpung Experiment. The seminar was being conducted on June 7, 2008 at the NIE, Paro.

The Seminar in a broad perspective encompassed the following aims and expected outcomes:

Aims

1. To enable the managers, teachers, educators, educational thinkers and practitioners to meet on a common platform and share their ideas, views, experiences, adversities and practices.
2. To help build and foster a culture of enquiry and exchange in the spirit of Education for Excellence.
3. To take stock of the real life experiences of our English teachers to help build and provide professional support.

Expected Outcomes

1. Enhanced understanding of our own roles in supporting and undertaking comprehensive and systematic educational research and development activities aimed at bringing about improvements in our education programmes.
2. Enriched culture of enquiry and study in educational development keeping with the tradition of engaging in regular interaction with education stake-holders.
3. Pool of experiences and studies for publication and building of Information Centre in promoting and developing English studies.

As this rapid development has been both exciting as well as challenging to us, required as we are to measure up to the demands of contemporary learning and realization of Education for Excellence, the Centre would continue to provide this bigger forum, to support and undertake inclusive and regular research and development activities aimed at bringing about improvements in our Educational programmes. The seminar on Teachers' perception about the New Curriculum will go a long way in our mission of promoting standards, curriculum planning, implementation and assessment, research and innovation as well as in the professional development of our teachers in the country.

Table of Contents

Introduction	ii
Context & Objectives	iii
Presentation I - Jose K. C, Lecturer, SCoE, Samtse.....	1-12
Presentation I - Sonam K. Teacher, Chukha HSS, Chukha.....	13-17
Presentation III - Sonam Yangzom, Wangchhu MSS, Chukha.....	18-23
Presentation I V - Kencho Tobgay, Teacher, Lobesa LSS, Thimphu...	24-30
Presentation V - Janice, Teacher, Rinchen HSS, Thimphu	31-35
Presentation VI - Susan Alexander,Teacher, Ugyen Academy.....	36-38
Presentation VI - Karma Delma,Teacher, Changzamtog LSS.	39-47
Presentaton VIII - Dorji Wangchuk, Nobding,W/Phodrang.....	48-51
Presentation IX - Norbu Tshering,Teacher, Punakha HSS	52-57
Presentation X - Anita Pradhan,Teacher P/ling MSS, Chukha.....	58-60
Presentation XI - Sonam,Choki,Teacher, Bajothang HSS,Wangdue...	61-63
Presentation XII - Pema Choidar, Dechencholing MSS,Thimphu	64-65
Presentation XIII - Radha Kharga,Teacher,Thinleygang MSS.....	66-69
Presentation XIV - Chado Dolma,Teacher, Genekha LSS,Thimphu...	70-73
Presentation XV - Kesang Wangmo,Teacher, Gaupel LSS, Paro	74-79
Presentation XV I - Tshering Yangzom,Teacher, Zilukha LSS	80-83
Vote of Thanks	84-86
General Feedback and suggestions : A Summary	87-91
Participants/Participating Schools in Rinpung Experiment XVI.....	92-96

A REFLECTION NOTE ON THE NEW ENGLISH CURRICULUM VIII-XII

*Jose K. C, Lecturer
Samtse College of Education
Samtse.*

While feeling extremely proud of this opportunity to be a part of the 'Rimpong Experiment', I feel unqualified and so nervous for the **reflections and insights from the classroom**, which this paper is supposed to be, on the new English curriculum. For, our interaction with the new English curriculum in the College of Education is not so varied and direct as it is in the schools so that my reflections on the new curriculum may be far from adequate and could smell of shallowness.

At the outset, let me share with the House that we, in the Samtse College of Education (SCoE) have celebrated the new curriculum through our poetry evenings of 2007 and 'The Poetic Touchstones' of 31/05/2008 – which projected the poems through paintings, explications, fake interviews and dramatizations etc:

1. Underground road to Freedom (Class IV)
2. The Cabbage White Butterfly (Class VI)
3. That Was Summer (Class VI)
4. 'Dreams' by Langston Hughes (Class VIII)
5. The Puritan's Ballad by Elinor Wylie (Class VIII)
6. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' (Class IX)
7. Buddha's Death (Class IX)
8. The Road Not Taken (Class IX)
9. Amalkanti(Class IX)
10. The Highwayman (Class IX)
11. No More Cliches (Class IX)
12. 'Hope' is the Thing with Feathers (Class X)
13. To My Mother (Class X)

While feeling proud of my colleagues' dedicated, concerted, huge exercise of revamping the English curriculum, I would catalogue the following strengths in the curriculum:

- The learning activities are split and specified under the six skill levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

- The themes covered in the new curriculum materials comprise: *self, joy, warmth, family, friendship, world around, values, media and communication etc.* rather than death, betrayal, ignominy and helplessness etc.
- There is a wonderfully gradual centrifugally of themes from chapter One to the last in every text book.
- There is the spectrum-variety in themes, gender-mix, genres and the nationality of the writers.
- It's very thoughtfully academic that there are main texts along with supplementary texts, catering to the heterogeneity that a class often is.

However, I wonder why we have pessimistic, though realistic, poems to begin with in Class VIII: Nothing Gold can Stay by Frost or, the wire-pecking cagedness in The Caged Bird in Springtime? I would rather put Dreams by Langston Hughes, Thoughts on Silence by Mary Jane Sterling or even Desiderata by Max Ehrmann much in the front to the throbbing imagination of the teenager students.

Dreams is a wonderful choice in terms of its stunning simplicity despite its two telling metaphors, which uphold dreams, thus literature as a whole. The metaphors provoke the fancy-pricked students to tap the profundity and richness of whatever is left unsaid. In contrast, Frost's Nothing Gold can Stay, I am afraid, would distract students from poetry owing to the subtlety behind its tricking puny appearance. Let students grow a few more months to grab and relish the connotations of 'gold', 'green', 'Eden' and 'dawn' etc.

The patriotic writings such as, The Country with the Vision to Seek Happiness by Kinley Dorji, Bhutan Puts Farms Before Markets by Tracy Worcester are good pieces for the Level. But Mr. John Chiramal's poem, The Warp and Woof of Bhutanese Womanhood despite its minute, inclusive observations and nice onomatopoeia in 'Tuck and twist and thump.', falter as a poem because of its obstructed flow ('*Its being with a whirling process,*' l. 5 on p. 49; '*So like the can do culinary skills/That enhances a Druk zams worth.*' ll. 11, 12 on p. 49) and compromised sentence structures ('*Like saplings spring from soil*' and '*The Bhutanese women's a gem, /Does the house work, tends the kids,*' of p. 50 of VIII.

I would strongly recommend The Puritan's Ballad by Elinor Wylie a place of pride among the main poetry texts (not in the supplementary reading group) for its wealth of memorable word pictures and figures (*'His hair was yellow as new-cut pine', 'His arms were thick as hickory logs/ Whittled to little wrists; Strong as the teeth of terrier dogs/ Were the fingers of his fists.'*), its classical, epic-like grandeur and its good representation of the sub-genre viz. ballad.

The other entries are very good choices, corresponding to the emotional and aesthetic needs of the students of Class VIII age (say, 13 to 18 years). For instance, Speaking Out by Anant Vinjamoori is a motivator, with a self-identifiable streak of struggle in any teenager's life. The last line of the essay, *It's hard to climb a ladder if you're only looking up.* is resoundingly inspirational, fresh from the reading of the story.

Likewise, the short story, Which Way? by Karleen Bradford is a disarmingly honest narration, inter alia, of the two choices that the persona in it makes. The student is at once touched by the warmth and humaneness of the friends and fellows about us, beyond the lightly hilarious narration of the story.

I cannot resist the temptation of telling my audience that the Class IX poetry is a treasure-basket with "*charm'd casements*" opening to faery lands, though not often "*forlorn*". Maya Angelou's anthem of freedom (I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings) with its autobiographical strains from the very title, the richly ambivalent and ambiguous The Road not Taken, the highly suggestive Amalkanti, in which the namesake-persona fails to conjugate a verb, the pride of English balladry, The Highwayman and the other-Dantaque inspiration-call, No more Cliché's are a simple variety of visions and voices.

Less various and appealing to me are the poems in Class X. Indeed, there are gems like Arnold's Dover Beach with its resounding contemporary picture of "*ignorant armies*" clashing by night, Dickinson's sustained metaphor of hope and Barker's irresistible "*seismic laughter*" in the mother.

Amy Tan in Class XI pleases as well as instructs in a Frostian way – beginning in delight and ending in wisdom – with the lesson encapsulated in the last sentence, "So easy to read." The lesson the students take home is the gospel of composition, which would stand

him and her in good stead in their writings – be it writing and reading portfolios or compositions. The marvelous flow and the masterly focused writing despite apparent digressions hold a writing style worthy of imitation.

The poems too nourish the Class XI graders in their aesthetic growth. Keats's celebration of autumn (To Autumn), Tagore's exemplification of 'freedom' (Where the Mind is Without Fear) and Browning's psychograph of a Duke (My Last Duchess) are a few worthy picks.

The aesthetic level gets more varied and thus demanding in Class XII, thus contributing to students' growth. The verbal thriftiness and the acrobatics with the metaphor of digging, the irresistible visual images (*'Between my finger and my thumb/ The squat pen rests; 'Once I carried milk in a bottle/ Corked sloppily with paper.'*) and the memorable alliterations and assonances (*'snug as a gun', 'curt cuts'*) in Seamus Heaney (Digging) are powerful poetic experiences, God forbid!, the teacher should not fail to provide. Wordsworth's celebration (We Are Seven) of the childhood innocence and the mysticism preached by a "*rustic, woodland*" girl is rare beauty students should not miss. Daruwalla's dramatic monologue (The King Speaks to the Scribe) seeps deep into the Buddhist or Hindu psyche of the students with the doctrine of *ahimsa* softly and poignantly.

Attempts are also made to place the Bard of Stratford – the greatest poet the world has ever had and will have – in the curriculum with his sonnets 18, 29 and 55. Having drunk the milk of the unparalleled Shakespearean literary delight, I may be forgiven if I remark that the inclusion of his three sonnets in the revised curriculum seems like a compromise between his total exclusion from the curriculum and a half-willed inclusion.

May I admit here that I have already earned some measure of unpopularity for invoking Shakespeare back from the yore. Today, I shall most humbly risk another attempt in front of the right forum of the seasoned academicians of the country. I request this House earnestly to advise me suitably, reprimand me thoroughly and enlighten me simply if by chance I ruffle academic feathers and vex majority's conformity. I have no purpose other than the purpose of a Bhutanese *aagay* or *angay*, who urges his/ her grandchildren to wear the classical, elegant *gho* and *kira* at least on some occasions, replacing jeans and T-shirts.

I am Shakespeare's advocate in the syllabus, urged by the pain of E. M Forster, who foresaw Shakespeare's being jettisoned from the ship of culture (Does Culture Matter?). I am moved by A. D Hope's lament on the loss of classical majesty in modern times (Australia). I am disturbed by nightmares of the possibility of poetry being dismissed from the curriculum in successive curriculum revisions. This tragedy of dismissing the Muse from the curriculum is already taking place in the neighbourhood (some Indian Boards and Universities).

I have a consolation that a good number of school teachers and senior educationists attended the discussions and deliberations for the new curriculum. I prefer to trust those discussions to making stray speculations.

However, is Shakespeare replaceable from any English Curriculum? The place of Shakespeare in any literature curriculum cannot be overemphasized. Lesley Aers says:

Many teachers believe that Shakespeare's work conveys universal values, and that his language expresses rich and subtle meanings beyond that of any other English writer. Other teachers point out that evaluations of Shakespeare have varied from one historical period to the next, and they argue that pupils should be encouraged to think critically about his status in the canon. But almost everyone agrees that his work should be represented in a National Curriculum. Shakespeare's plays are so rich that in every age they can produce fresh meanings and even those who deny his universality agree on his cultural importance. (Shakespeare in the National Curriculum; Chapter7; para 7.16)

Besides, I think that most other English writers (I mean writers in English) have a bit at least of Shakespeare in them. When we exclude Shakespeare, youngsters (a slender segment goes to Degree Colleges) are going to be denied the experience that the rare, unique Shakespeare art offers, in their entire life, unless they read Shakespeare later – a rare possibility.

The Bard-upon- Avon is, to me, just irreplaceable. **No other author – be it a poet, a novelist or a dramatist - of any clime or time has the range, the beauty and the universality that Shakespeare has.** Having

studied first some Shakespeare literature, and then taught his “*Julius Caesar*”, “*The Twelfth Night*”, “*Hamlet*”, “*The Merchant of Venice*”, “*The Tempest*” and “*The Taming of the Shrew*”, I can say this with some degree of authenticity. Besides, I was lucky that I taught classical writers such as Milton, Donne, Dryden and Wordsworth etc., besides modern writers such as Eliot, Yeats, Shaw, Plath, Spender, Walcott, A.D. Hope, Kamala Das, C.P. Snow, Beckett, Miller, Cronin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Russell, Huxley, Priestly, R.K. Narayan and so on and on, to mention but a few. Therefore, I see Shakespeare’s superiority vividly against this wide spectrum.

I have seen my Level IX, X, XI and XII students getting moved visibly, physically excited in my Shakespeare lessons rather than in lessons on any other writer. I did not see here any language or cultural barrier. Once the students overcame the minor language barrier in, say, two weeks’ time (in Level IX where the bard is introduced), Shakespeare was seen universal and literally swaying the readers. This is true at least in Indian and Bhutanese schools. I don’t know about schools elsewhere.

A few of my friends, however, justify Shakespeare’s exclusion from the Curriculum on four grounds:

- Many world universities have removed Shakespeare from their curricula.
- Shakespeare teaching-learning robs a lot of time, thereby sacrificing much time for language skill practice, which is thus often ignored.
- Shakespeare is so obsolete that he should be in a literary museum.
- Nobody in the 21 Century would greet his friend, “*How art thou?*” in the lines of Shakespeare.

My immediate response to these charges is: *'My dearest friends, Shakespeare is much, much more than these, please.'* My responses to these arguments follow (serially):

1. Do we have the strength of any studies that validate the exclusion of Shakespeare in 'those' world universities, against the fond inclusion of the bard in certain other universities or Boards?
2. The disregard of language skill practice in our classrooms – if that be true – is not *'Shakespeare's'* fault. Will the Director of the College of Education, just for instance, abolish the evening prayer in the hostel only because some of the trainees don't pray properly? My point is: The unfortunate situation in our lessons should be remedied not by removing Shakespeare. **It is not by burning the house that we kill the rat in the house.** I am surprised that some of my friends say **in one breath** that Shakespeare gives great learning opportunities and 'he' should be removed.
3. Thinley Wangchuk, one of my former trainees once told me, *"Sir, I feel prouder and more patriotic every time I visit the Ta Dzong."* After all, visit to the Ta Dzong takes place only now and then.
4. Nobody in the 21 Century would say, *"Notice Neptune though/ Taming a sea horse, thought a rarity."*(from "My Last Duchess" in the new curriculum). Even my 6-year old son knows that literary language is not to be aped in daily conversations.

However, I tell myself that the body that recommended the dismissal of Shakespeare is an august group, who had had sufficient experience of having taught Shakespeare, so as to endorse *'Shakespeare's'* drawbacks in the school curriculum. So, this humble Shakespeare teacher should stop here, without writing a horoscope for a dead child. However, many of us having the same frequency of thought are part of you all as teachers, pleading for Shakespeare's re-induction in the curriculum after a nation-wide academic, confidential referendum on the issue.

Some weaknesses

- The curriculum materials need editing of, for example, inconsistent spelling – practice/practice p.73 of A Guide for Teachers XII; *The fabric unfolds before one's eyes* (the apostrophe missing) p. 50 of Class VIII; *Humble though* (typed 'through')*their background be*, p. 50 of Class VIII just as '*Illiterate through she may be.*' of the same page.
- Though there is wide representation of authors from the international communities, pronouncing their names (Eg. Jean Anouilh of Episode in the Life an Author, Class XII) poses some difficulty.
- $12.5 + 12.5 = 15$ is shown on p. 76 for Class VIII Paper two CA (English Curriculum: Assessment and Evaluation, Classes PP – XII)
- Class XI essay qn is credited 25 marks on p. 97 but 30 on p.98 (English Curriculum: Assessment and Evaluation, Classes PP – XII). The error is seen on p. 107 and 108 under Class XII.
- 'Writing portfolio' is repeated throughout from Class VIII to XII under CA, as shown below. Are there some gradation criteria at these different levels? It will be interesting to hear about it from the actual practitioners, i.e. the school teachers.

ASSESSMENT

Class	Paper	CA	WE
VIII	One	Listening & Speaking : Term I, II (15+15=30 marks)	1. Descriptive essay (40 marks) 2. Friendly Letter (20 marks) 3. Summarization (15 marks) 4. Correct, rewrite, edit and complete sentences (25 marks) Term I, II (35% + 35% = 70%)
	Two	Reading portfolio & Writing portfolio (7.5 + 7.5 =15) in each term i.e. 30 marks	Section A: Short stories(Set 1 – 35 marks or Set II 35 marks on seen texts) Section B: Essay (Set 1 – 35 marks or Set II 35 marks on unseen texts) Section C: Poetry (Set 1 -30 marks or Set II 30 marks on unseen texts). Std's should attempt at least one Set II qns
IX	One	Writing portfolio (10marks)in each term marks i.e. 20 marks	1. A persuasive essay (25 marks) 2. A business letter or an invitation (15 marks) 3.Qns on the origin of words, purposes of language and its features (10 marks) 4. Correct, rewrite, edit and complete sentences (30 marks) Total = 80 (30% and 50% each term)
	Two	Term 1: Reading Portfolio & Listening and Speaking (5 marks each) Term 2: do Total 20 marks	Section A: Short stories (Set 1 – 20 marks or Set II 20 marks on seen texts) Section B: Essay (Set 1 –20marks or Set II 20 marks on unseen texts) Section C: Poetry (Set 1 -20 marks or Set II 20 marks on unseen texts). Section D: Novel (Set 1 -20 marks or Set II 20 marks on seen texts). Std's should attempt at least one Set II qns Total = 80 (30% and 50% each term)

X	One	Term 1: Writing portfolio (10 marks) Term 2: do Total 20 marks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An expository essay (25 marks) 2. A business letter or an invitation (15 marks) 3. Qns on the origin of words, purposes of language and its features (10 marks) 4. Correct, rewrite, edit and complete sentences (30 marks) Total = 80 (30% and 50% each term)
	Two	Term 1: Reading Portfolio & Listening and Speaking (5 marks each) Term 2: do Total 20 marks	Section A: Short stories(Set 1 – 20 marks or Set II 20 marks on seen texts) Section B: Essay (Set 1 –20 marks or Set II 20 marks on unseen texts) Section C: Poetry (Set 1 -20 marks or Set II 20 marks on unseen texts). Section D: Novel (Set 1 -20 marks or Set II 20 marks on seen texts). Stds should attempt at least one Set II qns Total = 80 (30% and 50% each term)
XI	One	Term 1: Writing portfolio (10 marks) Term 2: do Total 20 marks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A persuasive essay (30 marks) 2. Story writing (30 marks) 3. Qns on the origin of words, common theories of language acquisition (10 marks) 4. Correct, rewrite, edit and complete sentences (30 marks) Total = 80 (30% and 50% each term)
	Two	Term 1: Reading Portfolio & Listening and Speaking (5 marks each) Term 2: do Total 20 marks	Section A: Short stories(Set 1 – 20marks or Set II 25 marks on seen texts) Section B: Essay (Set 1 –20marks or Set II 25 marks on unseen texts) Section C: Poetry (Set 1 -20 marks or Set II 25 marks on unseen texts). Section D: Novel (Set 1 -20 marks or Set II 25 marks on seen texts). Stds should attempt at least one Set II qns Total = 100 (30% and 50% each term)*

XII	One	Term 1: Writing portfolio (10 marks) Term 2: do Total 20 marks	1. An argumentative essay (30 marks) 2. Story writing (30 marks) 3. Qns on the origin of words, common theories of language acquisition (10 marks) 4. Correct, rewrite, edit and complete sentences (30 marks) Total = 80 (30% and 50% each term)
	Two	Term 1: Reading Portfolio & Listening and Speaking (5 marks each) Term 2: do Total 20 marks	Section A: Short stories (Set 1 – 20 marks or Set II 25 marks on seen texts) Section B: Essay (Set 1 – 20 marks or Set II 25 marks on unseen texts) Section C: Poetry (Set 1 -20 marks or Set II 25 marks on unseen texts). Section D: Novel (Set 1 -20 marks or Set II 25 marks on seen texts). Stds should attempt at least one Set II qns Total = 100 (30% and 50% each term)

- Similarly the grammar questions from VIII to XII are reflected as: 'Correct, rewrite, edit and complete sentences .' (25 marks). Here again, any gradation guidelines?
- *The table of specifications on p. 104 of English Curriculum: Assessment and Evaluation, Classes PP – XII shows the marks break up for Class XI literature strand as 25 each but totaled to 80. The same error is repeated on p.113 of the said book.

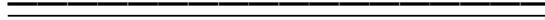
These errors can easily be rectified, as we all agree, 2008 is too early a time not to have errors in the newly adopted English curriculum.

While sincerely congratulating the team of the curriculum architects for having burnt their candles on both ends, producing a commendable corpus of text books, teachers' manuals and the necessary guideline documents, I would retreat from the stage for more informed people, the school teachers to have their say. I would try to epitomize my conclusions and epilogue to this Reflection Note in a 3-minutes skit, which the house may watch please.

Epilogue

Lobsang Eudon sweats every morning, preparing a delicious breakfast for the big family, pack a tasty lunch for her iron-handed husband, Penjor, besides ironing his *gho* and polishing his shoes. In fact, I have hushed up another formidable job: getting their five children ready for the school. So,... she washes the rice (for Penjor's pack lunch) only once, against thrice when she has enough time. Penjor often complains of indigestion.

Penjor one day divorces Lobsang, announcing that some general lack of cleanliness in Lobsang's kitchen (?) is the cause of his indigestion. Dechen comes as his new wife and alas! history repeats – Penjor still has indigestion. Should he divorce Dechen too??



Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Sonam K. Gyamtsho, Teacher
Chukha HSS, Chukha.*

The Prologue

Schools across the kingdom sat for the new curriculum. Voices condemning the new curriculum filled the air. Media, out of hunger for news, promptly provided platform for questions and qualms. Curriculum developers, who sacrificed time and energy, were criticized. Teachers who ignite learning and growth in students through myriad forms of craft, who have colossal influence on what happens in schools, who are decision makers and tone setters, who shape the world of the classrooms by the activities they plan, the focus they attend to, and the relationships they nurture, were inflicted with heavy blows by the society we are working for. The gridlock of society's outlook on education family created a mood of resignation, even despair and the game felt lost when the play has just begun. Who are to be blamed...?

Teachers' views: An exploration of contents and ways.

The contents of the curriculum are very much relevant, suiting to the adolescents' ingenuity. The texts have rich varieties of information that expose our students to different world in different time settings. In general, the new curriculum provides more avenues for learners to widen their creativity and proclivity. It also provides various experiences of learning in different genres. The new curriculum, I strongly feel, is an answer to diverse skills and language abilities that our students possess. It is also liberation for teachers from enormous demands placed by the society as a whole. Further, the new curriculum also presents a very good scope of using inter-textual methods especially while teaching poetry and essays.

The new curriculum presents mosaic of poems, simple and touching stories, myriad of essays, beautiful novels and drama that not only provide a combination of academic skills but also real life experiences. In such a rich curriculum, teachers can employ various ways of teaching. It provides an opportunity for teachers to employ Reader's Theatre, which is a reading resource, a teaching tool and a performing vehicle

whereby students can play with language. We can also use Reader Response Theory which provides platform for our students to develop their analytical ability in reviewing the text.

Beyond these, the new curriculum is also one of the best ways to teach language through literature. Literature in fact is the backbone of learning language. For instance, while teaching essays, we can always teach phrasal verbs such as “**drop off**” “**turn off**”, etc. For such phrasal verbs, teachers can always design activities such as:

Grammar

Which of these are grammatically possible?

- a. I dropped my friends off.
- b. I dropped off my friends.
- c. I dropped them off.
- d. I dropped off them.
- e. They were dropped off.

Teachers can also design an activity whereby students are required to find meaning of the given sentence. For instance;

Meaning:

If you drop something off, what do you do? Choose the best meaning.

- a. You let something fall out of your hand.
- b. You deliver something somewhere.

Further, teachers can also construct sentences for students using phrasal verbs and ask them to read and internalize. For instance, teachers can construct sentences using phrasal verb, “turn off”, for students' reference as in the following examples:

- Can you **turn** the lights **off**? The switch is by the door.
- Somebody forgot to **turn off** the tap in the bathroom.
- You have been watching TV all day! **Turn** it **off** now.
- The TV was on, but the sound had **been turned off**.

In continuation, teachers can also use The Language Experience Approach to teach any of the genres. This approach not only motivates students to yearn for more reading and writing exercises but also instills or ingrains in them the sense of ownership for their own work. What would be more encouraging to students than using their own created stories or poems or essays to teach in the classrooms?

In teaching poetry, since unseen text is given in the examinations, I would say that teachers are given freedom to explore beyond the scope of that particular poem. In doing that, teachers can try to cultivate the imagination and ideality in students as poetry is, of all the arts, the best adapted to classroom teaching.

The new curriculum in fact presents rich contents in which so many ways and methods are applicable. Thus, I feel, teachers are ever ready to handle the new curriculum from various angles.

Learners' Response: A Discouraging Dream.

Teachers sometimes have a hard time proving their worth, even to themselves. Teachers have a lot of faith, hope and optimism in the profession-teaching, and when we lose it, our spirit wavers and deflates. And this happens, when our learners, in spite of our huge sacrifices and preparations, still fail to comprehend the valuable lessons imparted.

I teach English in three sections of twelfth students. Recently, upon the receipt of a letter from CERD, I had informally carried out a brief survey on the strengths and weaknesses of the new curriculum. The responses were not very encouraging. I had worked with them for the last two years using all the possible ways and designing activities suiting to their interests and aptitude. At the end of the day, I must admit that I had met with the hardest blow as a teacher dedicating the entire time in the service of our students. Out of 107 students I teach, 65 students have said that the new curriculum has more weaknesses such as unfriendly texts, difficult to comprehend, vast topics to cover, not exam oriented (Essay & Poetry). Only 42 of them are of the opinion that the new curriculum contains more strength such as different ideas and views, useful information based on real life experiences, easy to understand, more options to choose.

Whatever the causes may be for more weaknesses in new curriculum, it is a sore trial to the teacher. After a lot of sacrifices and preparations, if students still found disinteresting to learn, it is one of the worst drawbacks in the job. It is torture to spend your life's energy, day after day, trying to awaken understanding and appreciation of genuinely important lessons in what seems to be a collection of spoilt, ill mannered boobies, smirking or scowling, yawning or chattering, whose ideals are gangsters, footballers, and Hollywood divorcees. It is like giving a blood transfusion, and then seeing your precious blood split on the ground and trodden into mud. If such students exist in classrooms, should we blame teachers, curriculum developers, or curriculum in particular or education family as whole? Or on the society that has dogmatic outlook for education system?

Availability of Resources: A Challenging Task for teachers.

Many of us face a dilemma when trying to deal with problems, questions, or decisions. Perhaps, it's because of the lack of resources in the schools. A friend of mine, Mr R.N Bhattacharjee, who teaches English in classes XI and XII Science, says that one of the most crucial drawbacks in terms of materials is the "absence of prescribed text books for the Nature of Language". He is of the view that "students solely depend on the subject teacher concerned" for information and it is very challenging for the particular teacher to arrange the required and right information.

New Curriculum: Not without Limitations

The new curriculum is not without limitations. It does possess some limitations but these limitations do not overpower its strengths. In my opinion, these limitations are wonderful opportunities for all of us to work together and dwell upon to bring out further more effective curriculum. Some of the limitations we feel that this new curriculum has are reflected below.

- a. As no questions are to be set in the Board Examinations from the Essays and the poems, students cannot be motivated enough to take them seriously;
- b. There is scope for very little grammar to be taught in both class XI & XII.

- c. The drama "Episode in the life of an Author" by Jean Anouilh , that is absurd in nature, is found to be incomprehensible by many of the learners;
- d. If all the poems, essays and stories are to be taught, then there is very little time for the writer's workshop to be taking place inside the classroom frequently. As such, our students do not really have enough practice in writing short stories or other creative articles on their own. And once they are asked to write it outside the class, be it poem, essay or short story, they tend to copy from other sources;
- e. There should be some clear-cut instructions pertaining to the last question- Editing in Language and Writing Paper. How much and what exactly is to be taught to the learners, should be made clear to the teachers in the fields.
- f. Above all, we strongly feel that there should not be any compulsory attempt in Reading and Literature Paper. Students should be given freedom to choose either of the sets as the language ability of the students is always tested in Writing and Language Paper.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the new curriculum is a "balanced and developmental curriculum" in which "students have opportunities to develop equally both their expressive and receptive language capabilities." (Language Aloud...Aloud, p 13) As a teacher, it is my sincere conviction that our future endeavours in handling new curriculum would not be judged by the society from the test scores of our students as they did in our first venture. I feel that the quality of education does not depend on the test scores as assumed by our society. Test score is not the ultimate parameter for measuring quality of education, I feel. We need to appreciate the vibrant curriculum that we offer to our children. We also need to appreciate and recognize the construction and reconstruction work carried out by teachers in unforgiving classrooms, in dilapidated schools because teachers choose teaching for the reasons of the heart. We see our work as a form of public service that has vital social value and we believe that teaching is more than a job and more than merely doing routine work. Teaching is a vocation, a craft to which we are summoned because we have something worthy and important to contribute to the world.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Sonam Yangzom, Teacher
Wangchhu MSS, Chukha.*

Abstract

There has been a general outcry in the system over the perceived fall in standards of educational provision, particularly in English. So it was no coincidence that the Ministry of Education decided to put a special emphasis on reforming the English Curriculum in the Bhutanese Education System. Modern education in the country gives English language an important place along with Dzongkha. Gone were those days where teaching was just one sided. A teacher stands in front of the class with a stick in his/her hand and the students/learners are compelled to mug up whatever is there in the note book or on the blackboard. A student just sits there passively listening to the lectures of the teacher. It was almost like preaching and not teaching. But the scenario is completely different in today's classroom. Both teachers and students are seen very busy with the day's lesson activities. Students enthusiastically discuss with their peers and teachers keenly monitor student activities. Thus, with the introduction of the New English Curriculum in the Bhutanese education system teaching and learning has become more effective and fruitful as more is focused on the four skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking and language. The job of the teacher here is more of a facilitator than a teacher. A teacher designs a variety of activities which will promote active learning while the learners take an active part in their own learning. During our time English classes used to be "**dead boring**" unless the teacher was exceptionally excellent. But now the then "**dead boring**" English classes have become very interactive and interesting with a lot of activities prescribed. In this regard let me discuss the following:

Learners' response to the New Curriculum

Most students feel that the New Curriculum has great merits over the previous one. Some of the reasons shared by some of the students are:

- ❖ The content in the old or previous curriculum is not arranged properly. Where As in the New Curriculum it is in order.

- ❖ Lots of activities are set in today's New Curriculum which means students can be active participants in the class. Students can also be more critical and creative through different activities. There were not many/no activities at all in the old curriculum. It was only the teacher who is an active participant and the students would be just sitting like rocks listening to the teacher.
- ❖ There are also very good topics in the New Curriculum which impart students good messages and give good morals related to their day to day life.
- ❖ The New English Curriculum is just in one text making it easier for students to carry. Unlike in the past there were separate texts for different genre of literature like poem, essay, short stories, etc.

Students feel that the New Curriculum is more helpful and worthwhile comparing to the old curriculum. Dawa Ram a student of Ninth standard says, "The Ministry of Education has come up with a great idea in introducing the New English Curriculum. I feel this will be continued and hope that there will be some more changes made for our growth." On the other hand Sreejana Sunar of class x states, "Though the New Curriculum is learner centred we do not get to study some of the interesting stories, poems, essays and Shakespearean dramas. We don't get an opportunity to enjoy Shakespearean language like our seniors did."

Advantages

With the introduction of the new curriculum in the Bhutanese education system teaching and learning have become more rewarding. For instance:

The writer's workshop:

It is very useful to the students as well as teachers. Here students get to know the tenets/ process involved in writing. It also provides room for students to think critically and analytically. It also exposes students to the strategies of writing and to the many strategies that writers use

to make their writing what they want to say. As they write more and more they will be aware of their own writing processes. In that way they will become effective writers.

Portfolio maintenance:

This is another useful approach to make students more enthusiastic in learning. A student is able to display his/her talent in the course of portfolio maintenance. The portfolio consists of reading, writing and journal writing (for books they have read). This leaves a vast room for students to explore. In reading portfolio a student is expected to maintain a reading log. This will boost students' interest in reading and read more and more. In the writing portfolio a student can discover his/her writing ability through writing articles, essays, composing their own poems and in journal writing a student will be able to appreciate others' literary pieces.

Question pattern:

We feel that the question pattern is good. For beginners it is quite confusing but gradually they get used to it. We feel that the current question pattern enables students to score more marks as the question pattern tests students in different levels of questioning (six levels). Moreover it has varieties of questions like multiple choice, short answer type and essay type. Thereby students do not get bored in answering the questions.

Activities:

Activities prescribed in the teachers' guide make the work of the teacher much easier. We do not have to design our own activities for all the lessons.

Disadvantages

Nevertheless we have observed that there are certain loopholes in the new curriculum. Some of our criticisms are:

Lack of sufficient background reading information:

Although background about the authors/writers are briefly stated at the end of every essay, poem and short stories, information provided are rather too vague to help students to make connection between the writers/authors and poets and their works. For example, there is a poem titled '**I know Why the Caged Bird Sings**' written by **Maya Angelou**. The information provided in the text book just talks about the poets' life but it does not tell the readers about what prompted the poet to write the poem. The background information should be clear and adequate so that students can make meaningful interpretation of the writer and their work. We suggest that more background references should be given so that students can understand more clearly what the literary piece is about, especially a poem. There should be uniformity in selection of poetry in the text which should neither be too short nor too long and the degree of difficulty should not be beyond students' capacity to understand.

According to the new curriculum, in exams, poetry and essay come from unseen text:

Meaning poetry in the text is taught in the class; however questions do not come from the ones they have studied from the text. Rather students are given an unseen poem in the exam which is similar to the one in the text. There are probabilities that students can get misguided or misinformed thinking that since poetry and essay they studied do not come in the exam; they do not take it seriously.

Activities prescribed in the teachers guide:

These are too vast in some particular lessons. It is impossible for teacher to carryout all the activities given though it makes the lesson interactive. Time constraint is the main issue. Within a very short period of time the teacher is not able to wind up all important group activities. In addition most teachers raise the concern that slow learners have difficulty in coping up with other students while doing group activities.

Concept of grammar not clear:

It is good that grammar is included in the New Curriculum but the sad part is that there are no clear cut instructions given for grammar activities. It would have been more appropriate if some grammar exercises have been given at the end of every lesson. So that the concept

would be clearer and more specific. Moreover we felt that grammar taught is too less for higher classes. Very little grammar is taught while vast remain undone. More areas of grammar are to be included in the syllabus with clear instructions for teachers and activities for students.

Exclusion of drama:

It is true that Shakespearean plays are time consuming and not in fashion/ not relevant these days. It is also true that Shakespearean plays required students to adopt higher plane of thinking but does the elimination of Shakespeare from the curriculum do any good? In doing so, are we not lowering the bar for students' horizon of thinking capabilities? While the controversy that 'should Shakespeare be eliminated still remains,' surprisingly drama is nowhere included in Class IX text book; not even One Act Plays.

Lack of sufficient resources:

Although the New English Curriculum is very effective the fact still remains that that there are no sufficient resource materials for teachers in the school. Thus teaching and learning might not be as effective as they should be. It is therefore very necessity to provide required reference materials/resources.

Teachers are overloaded:

Note book corrections, portfolio amendment and other worksWell that's too much for English teachers. To be frank in a period a teacher can correct just around five to eight note books. Correction, especially for English requires a lot of time. When it comes to correction of essays and other literary pieces it is really difficult. Teacher has to take care of the spelling errors, punctuation marks, grammatical errors, sentence structures and so on while making corrections. Thus it means English teachers need more free periods to make correction more helpful and efficient.

Conclusion

The standard of English is often criticized to have declined over years. How much of truth exists in this generalization is ambiguous. But it surely has gained national attention and the Department of Education is genuinely concerned about the burning issue. The important question is- Is the curriculum responsible for the drop in the standard of English in Bhutan? The failure of NAPE has to some extent influenced peoples' conviction. However let's hope that the introduction of the New English curriculum helps us solve this roaring issue.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Kencho Tobgyel, Teacher
Lobesa LSS, Thimphu.*

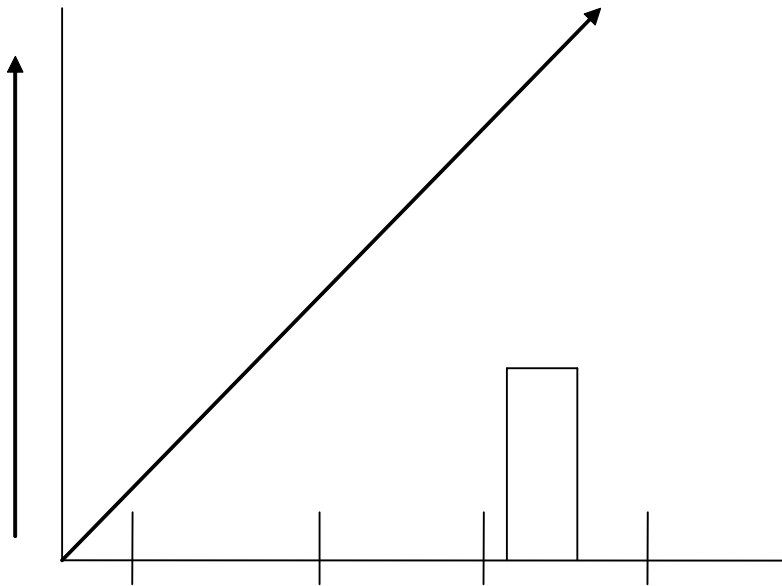
The ever evolving – societal norms and attitudinal behaviors through highly sophisticated mechanisms the broader educational concept occupies as dynamic – the continuous process of discovering and inventing the learning process. The latest curriculum developed by the CAPSD – the English curriculum would erase the lengthy differences that have been created in the ever-growing society. The new curriculum draws a vivid nexus spelling the better needs of our younger society widely considering the needful and ever-growing human perspectives.

The Genesis in the Curriculum

The greatness in the present curriculum narrates the total essence of a child encompassing the full growth of a child- seriously considering the three domains vis-à-vis their attachment to head, heart and body. The new curriculum holds miscellaneous of skill-oriented genres – life skills having deeper values of social needs the growing child would pursue. The text provides good link with the real life connection ensuring wholesomeness in the child's learning process which agrees with John Dewey's statement of "People learn best from what they consider most relevant to their lives.

The new curriculum best suits the philosophy of progressivism – John Dewey's perception of education- greatly stressing on "Learning by doing" where the child is considered as the center of educative process. This curriculum would bring actual improvement of a mankind in a evolutionary sense in time to come.

The new curriculum marches ahead of the NAPE education in providing the quality education to the children. As per Beeby's theory the new curriculum moves towards the meaning stage that had evolved from the dame school stage to the present stage.



Dame School Formalism Transition Meaning

Education Quality

Education Stages – Hypothetical situation

The Bhutanese education would mature faster with the new curriculum. The ever highest educational degree may be achieved if the curriculum adapts the human – social needs. The above hypothetical diagram explains the Bhutanese curriculum – English Education nearing towards the maturity – the meaning stage which caters the modern education through developing the better classroom management. The new curriculum aims at the learner centered class hugely focusing the children's need almost fulfilling the societal expectations in great extent.

The student activities developed in the present curriculum evidences that the learning strategies and skills prepared in the text make the learners learn with their native interest and talents through discovering and inventing the ideas in the text (all the genres) rather than teacher learning himself while teaching the learners.

Learners are richly enriched with the new vocabulary and phrasal/ phrases, brilliantly introducing the literary terms and metaphorical languages styled by beautiful figurative speech widely used in the texts. The text to life connection ensures great enthusiasm in the learners.

Learners' response to the new curriculum

Learners are comprehensively involved in learning-discussion through the activities designed in the new curriculum. The new curriculum approaches to an absolute child-centered learning in which the learners grasp maximum ideas and knowledge through their self-invention and self-discovery in the subjects.

1. Attitudinal responses from the Learners

The new curriculum deals with the values and social ethics of the current society, making the learners realize the essence and moral values towards the Bhutanese culture and at the same time having close nexus with the people around the globe. Example; the text – Which Way, Dreams; Prayer for the Land, our Being; The Wrap and Woof of Bhutanese Womanhood and etc. covers the social themes curled with the values and traditions.

2. Learning Responses from the Learning

The current learners are encountered with an obscurity to rally the text standard – primarily the curriculum was developed in the descending order – from higher to lower classes evading the learners' competency in dealing the subject. However, this gap would be erased when the curriculum is in full swing in all the levels.

3. Interest – The Students Responses

The activities designed are very relevant with interesting activities where in our learners take great interest.

4. Problems – The Students Responses

The new curriculum has critically thought- out the learning enthusiasm and zeal of the learners by encompassing the varieties of learning pedagogies that accelerates the learning interest of our dynamic learners.

Our students are not free from some of the problems they face in the new curriculum. Most of the times during the activity, students are faced with the number of word difficulties limiting their comprehension capability. The immediate alternative they sought is referring the dictionary and using the teachers which consume a lot of time.

Teacher Preparedness to the New Curriculum

1. Pedagogy and Methodology

Today the teachers around the country are well equipped with the latest pedagogy and methodology through various trainings and up gradation – teachers take good initiative in growing themselves attending the various workshops and seminars. However, the preparedness would be accelerated if the concerned teacher practices the strategies and skills that they have learned during the trainings and workshops.

2. Academically

Academic competency of a teacher is very pertinent in executing the new curriculum. The present phenomenon spells that teachers around the country are well trained, versed with fine academic qualification. However, with the new curriculum in force, the teacher needs to have good exposure in literary world- by constantly up-grading the academic through reading books and other means.

Problems and Suggestions

1. Time Factor

The activity designed for fifty minutes cannot be completed in the general school timing.

2. Teaching Materials

The teaching materials in the school are in acute shortage. Most of the classes encounter shortage of textbooks and supplementary readers resulting in the smooth running of the classes..

3. Nature of the Syllabus

The vastness of the syllabus is often felt by the English teachers – the immensity of the present syllabus where the huge materials are poured in our students resulting uncovering of the syllabus. The students are over burdened by the heavy materials to be learnt during the course. This pressure in the syllabus makes both the teacher and students to rush up the syllabus greatly disregarding the activities given in the text.

4. Reference materials

The schools which are far away will usually have to make do with a handful of library references and deprived of internet facilities. For example, the new curriculum doesn't provide any information about the authors and background idea of the text.

5. Teaching Grammar

The present curriculum emphasizes on the technical learning through teaching the grammar as per the level of the students. However, the grammar learning has been made ambiguous with the provision of the varieties of grammar text. It would be easier and more convenient if the grammar items are provided in the text itself or developing separate specified text for the different levels.

6. Question Pattern

The new question pattern creates a lot of confusion and complexities while our students attempt the questions. The 200 marks question exhausts both the students and the teacher – more choices of the questions provide better chances for the students.

7. Unseen Text

The unseen text during the examinations perturbs the teaching learning process during the whole course. The learners and teachers are habitually inclined towards the seen text because of the examination fear – greatly escaping the other important genres. Example; the question pattern of class eight claims; seen text in short story and unseen text in essays and poem where the learning priorities are more focused on the short story. In this trend the learners never revisits the

poem and essays after having learnt in the classes. The teachers also give less weighting to the poems and essays emphasizing largely on the short stories.

8. Vocabulary

The new curriculum text contains very rich vocabulary. However, some of the meanings are beyond their dictionary. Our students would learn better if they are provided with the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary.

9. Transcriptions and Basic sounds

Both the learners and teachers are confused about the correct pronunciation of the authors' names. The teacher and students would pronounce the word more correctly if the transcriptions or the names are provided in the text. The text emphasizes a lot in reading strands-demanding the child to pronounce the word correctly. Therefore the inclusion of a basic sound chapter in the syllabus would help our students in pronouncing the word more correctly and appropriately.

Future of the Curriculum

To revise the new curriculum would bring more good result in the education – both quality and quantity, instilling the Bhutanese children with more - social, cultural and moral values.

The shift of curriculum from old to new would engineer our fellow students to adjust themselves in the ever-growing human society- both in technology and biology suiting the higher values of life.

This new curriculum would take our learners to the center of higher learning fulfilling the country's desire of vibrant economy, quality politicians, and wiser citizens instilled with fine values based on culture and tradition.

References:

1. Beeby, C.E. (1966) *The quality of education in developing countries*, Cambridge Massachusetts:Harvard University Press.
2. Dorji, J (2005), *Quality of education in Bhutan*, Phuntsholing, KMT press.
3. Samtse College of Education (2000) *Handbook of Bhutanese Education System*, SCoE press.
4. Samtse college of Education (2000) *Handbook of Curriculum Studies*, SCoE press.

Reflections and insights from the Classroom

*Janice, Teacher
Rinchen HSS, Thimphu.*

At the onset, I would like to begin my Reflection Note with a heart filled thanks to my seniors and my administration for giving me this opportunity as an English Teacher of Rinchen Higher Secondary School, Thimphu, to present this Note as a Reflection on the “New English Curriculum”.

My Reflection Note opens with the most concerned body of this New English Curriculum i.e.

“The Learner’s Response to this New English Curriculum” As our school is a Private Institution, we have a big bulk of students who do not qualify for the Governmentt. Schools in the Kingdom and hence they are recruited into the few private schools in Thimphu, where they endeavor for their two last crucial years i.e. 10+2 to build a future in their life. I feel that our learners who are exposed to this New Curriculum are at a loss to comprehend. The structures introduced to them deprived of such kind of comprehension skills that this English curriculum expects them to be thorough with.

According to the survey done by the members of English faculty at Rinchen Higher Secondary School, the observations made were that the learners were unable to read and comprehend the various genres of literature introduced to them. They find it very difficult to differentiate between the types of Poems, the kind of essays, the themes in the stories and moral in the Drama assigned to them in this new curriculum. These types of poems like sonnets, ballads, odes and lyrics should be introduced in the junior classes, for instance in Grade VI on wards and then they will gradually consolidate and understand the content and question pattern better. Another problem identified is that their lack of reproducing their independent answers. This may be the result of their inability to read fluently, the choice of writers, stories, essays, etc and understand certain objectives mentioned in the lesson content. The content chosen for the higher classes needs to be re-evaluated, keeping in mind the standard of the learners and not the teachers. As for the language is concerned the directives are vague –

A very simple example, I would like to cite is; 'Edit the sentences' introduced in the Language Paper of the class X – XII is very crude. We find no directives stated to barricade the type of editing the students need to focus upon i.e.; grammatical errors or wrong spelling, figure of speech, etc.

So there would be a Grammar book for the BHSEC candidates, as guidelines should be clear like,

- Read and comprehend the passage carefully.
- Try to find the errors in the sentences, like spelling mistakes, mistakes in the figure of speech, singular & plural subject, punctuation errors, verb tenses, etc..

The main loophole that has caused a setback to this new curriculum framed by the Education Department is a very weak foundation that has been nurtured into our student at the lower classes such as in classes I – VII

If I may put it in a nutshell, the response to this New English Curriculum, is that the introduction of this reasoning and analyzing pattern should have been introduced in the lower classes and then gradually carried on to the senior classes i.e; classes VIII – XII in the years ahead to come. As my observation, one more aspect is very essential, that is....there should be a link between the subject matter prescribed as a syllabus, for the learners as they graduate from a lower grade to the higher one.

Teachers' feelings of their preparedness to teach this new curriculum:

I would like to elucidate on this topic as a member of this huge teaching fraternity building a future for those whom we mould and make true citizens....

As a teacher of a private secondary institution, I feel there is a mismatch between the level of the teachers and students we have been dealing with in our institution. We spend more time preparing the base of the English Language which they ought to have learnt in the junior classes.

The qualified tutors who have readily accepted this new English curriculum have a greater challenge to face. They may be prepared to teach his New Pattern but the learners that they encounter or face are not in a position to absorb or grasp the core of the subject matter because their level of understanding is not compatible to the new English curriculum assigned to the senior sections in the Kingdom.

About the willingness of teaching this challenging course, there may be a few teachers who may find it tough depending upon their aptitude and experience in handling such a diversified pattern of English Language and learners at the level of class VIII-XII.

Resource Availability:

There is a dearth of resources. The manual provided to teachers as a guideline is not completely apt to assist teachers in their teaching process. If I may state a few drawbacks, they may be;

- The structure of the literature genre is not very precise.
- Details regarding characters, themes, point of views is very limited.
- Summaries, paraphrasing and character sketches, etc, are absent or not very clear to some extent.
- The English Language syllabus as a base for the common exams in the country should be limited and notified to the subject teachers. There should be a definite language text for the senior sections as the ones allotted to the juniors. The common problem senior teachers' face is finding resource materials for the topic "**NATURE of LANGUAGE**" which is very vague since no parameter is set on this topic.
- Fortunately in our school we have the Internet facility. So we are able to download and prepare our resource materials to teach in the class.

Advantages of this New English Curriculum:

- Learners are exposed to a global outlook through this new curriculum.

- They learn new words and in due course enhance their vocabulary.
- They acquire the experience of analyzing unseen portions, enriching their writing skills.
- Creative writing is being encouraged and enhanced.

Limitations of this New English Curriculum:

- The first and foremost limitation is that this new curriculum has been framed, keeping in mind the high IQ and proficiency level of some students only.
- The English Language Syllabus needs to be updated and narrowed down to a textbook.
- Introductory part to the authors and the lesson is missing for some chapters in the literature textbook.
- A regular grammar textbook for classes XIs and XIIs hasn't been framed leaving the learners lost and searching for subject materials.

In reality the use of grammar books is discouraged at the secondary level in schools worldwide, but it is a necessity for our below average students, entering the Private Institutions for a further perusal of their education.

Other Relevance:

- “ Syllabus framing for the higher standards needs to be done judiciously, keeping in mind the adaptability, welfare and holistic development of our low achievers in the few private institutions across the country.
- “ There is a mis-match between the kind of syllabus set for the upper grades and their standard of analyzing the core of the genre given in this New English Curriculum.

- “ Language development and enhancing cannot happen overnight, hence it would be good to introduce and lay emphasis more on the below grade VIII level students, so that they may be well prepared for this form of syllabus in the higher level.
- “ In service training programmes and workshops headed by experts facilitators and resource personnel is required to help the senior teachers teach better.
- “ The form of functional grammar is not sufficing the purpose hence it would be good to practice traditional grammar along with the functional syntax structure.

I hope this reflection note has been worthwhile to the authorities and the floor of this seminar and that it will be of use in addressing the issues of teaching the New English Curriculum.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Susan Alexander, Teacher,
Ugyen Academy, Punakha.*

An Educationist, Cunningham viewed curriculum as “a tool in the hands of the artist (the teacher) to mould the material (the pupils) according to his ideals (aims) in his studio (the school)” .

The New English Curriculum not only develops the intellectual level but also integrates personality in a student which will not only make him an asset but also a good influence on the society and environment around him. The students' activities are not treated as water – tight compartments but is integrated which helps the needs of different students and prepares them for life and not for their profession only.

Besides the development of skills, aptitude and attitudes it helps to bridge the gap between communities and provides a base for the growth of a good citizen.

The English Curriculum also has made use of instructional activity based and is dynamic in helping the students to interact more with their teachers and peer groups.

In the new Curriculum the business of the teacher is not to present the pupils with readymade ideas, concepts, conclusions and attitudes but to help them to use facts in such a way that the students evolve their own ideas and conclusions which will lead to their personality development.

Learner's response to the New Curriculum:

This new curriculum has given the students the opportunity to interact and analyze the things from their own context They have found it different from the old curriculum.

The responses regarding the new curriculum are:

- Students feel that creativity is developed.
- Portfolios and research work helps them to induce their imaginative power.

- Builds up their confidence level not only in approaching open ended questions but also in facing crowds for debates, extempore talk, and actings.
- Students find the two unseen sections difficult to understand compared to the other two seen sections.
- They are of the view that it is difficult to understand the unseen portion in a short time, especially the unseen poem. They think that they will be able to do better if the questions could be set from the text.
- Pretty difficult as 50% of the questions in unseen so this puts them in direct disadvantage compared to other subjects.
- Very complex for those students who do not have good background in language.

Teacher's feelings of their preparedness to teach the new curriculum

A teacher is the principal component of classroom management. He has to play several roles-as manager, philosopher, guide, researcher and a friend. He has the authority, responsibility, accountability and leadership in managing classroom activities. He has to employ an appropriate model of discipline strategies and techniques of teaching.

The new curriculum has been a challenge for the teachers. On the other hand it is quite a difficult task for the teachers to prepare their lessons in order to teach because other than the text book 'Reading and Literature' we do not have other materials or resources to equip ourselves for preparing.

Resources availability:-

- It is a Herculean task for the teachers to prepare their lessons depending only on the text book and a small curriculum guide.
- No specific text book for language is specified. As the language course is very vast, we are not aware in which areas we should focus more.

(i) Advantages:-

- Real interest in the literature and language can be developed in the students.
- Quality and not quantity is stressed in the new curriculum.
- Improves the listening, speaking and writing skills of an individual.
- Students feel that they can give their points of view regarding the stories poems and drama.
- It emphasizes more on self learning and evaluating oneself which helps to improve the standard of writing as well as understanding.
- Students can interact among their peer groups in search of suitable solutions to the different formats of questions.

(ii) Disadvantages:-

- This new curriculum does not attract a big group especially those students who have a poor language background.

Any Other relevance

- Though this new curriculum has lots of advantage however it gives a negative impression of human existence. It emphasizes the futility of human life/human relations in drama and stories as well as the novel.
- Adolescence is a very crucial period and the lessons they are taught will affect their cognitive domain. Some characters like Mary Maloney, Walter Mitty, the Author create delinquency and truancy because their affections and feelings towards humanity are thwarted.

CONCLUSION:

As a whole this new curriculum is a challenge for both the teachers and the students. It is innovative, a break away from the cycle of rote learning. It creates opportunity for independent thinking, develops keenness and accuracy of observation, and stimulates constructive and creative thinking. It widens the mental horizon of pupils and develops cooperation and democratic way of learning. We believe that the new curriculum will usher in an era of enlightened learning in our children.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Karma Delma, Teacher,
Changzamtog LSS, Thimphu.*

Introduction

- The first and foremost Limitation is that this new curriculum has been framed, keeping in mind the high IQ and proficiency level of some students only.
- The English Language Syllabus needs to be updated and narrowed down to a textbook.
- Introductory part to the authors and the lesson is missing for some chapters in the literature textbook.
- A regular grammar textbook for classes XIs and XIIs hasn't been framed leaving the learners lost and searching for subject materials.

In reality the use of grammar books is discouraged at the secondary level in schools worldwide, but it is a necessity for our below average students, entering the Private Institutions for further perusal of their education.

Other Relevance:

- “ Syllabus framing for the higher standards needs to be done judiciously, keeping in mind the adaptability, welfare and holistic development of our low achievers in the few private institutions across the country.
- “ There is a mis-match between the kind of syllabus set for the upper grades and their standard of analyzing the core of the genre given in this New English Curriculum.
- “ Language development and enhancement cannot happen overnight, hence it would be good to introduce and lay emphasis on students below grade VIII level, so that they may be well prepared for this form of syllabus in the higher level.
- “ In service training programmes and workshops headed by expert facilitators and resource personnel is required to help the senior teachers teach better.
- “ The form of functional grammar is not sufficing the purpose hence it would be good to practice traditional grammar along with the functional syntax structure.

In the new curriculum the choice of materials in the text is made gender sensitive. The text includes materials written by both female and male writers and the themes also appeal to both genders. It also has a good collection of materials written by writers of different nationalities. This selection of text represents a conscious and rigorous effort to bring into our classroom an assorted and varied literary experiences presented through different genres which celebrates the dignity of content and the beauty of language. There is also a fair blend of both Bhutanese and international writers and also a blend of the classic and the contemporary.

Resource Available in the School

We have a large number of students in our school but the resources available are not adequate for all the students (e.g. Text books). In addition to that, the collection of books in the library are not relevant for both the teachers and the students. We also lack facilities like access to internet, OHP and computers which enrich presentation skills.

ADVANTAGES OF THE NEW CURRICULUM

One of the advantages of the new curriculum is that there is a lot of participation required from the students. This especially benefits our Bhutanese students who are taught to sit tight, listen more rather than speak and participate. And this new curriculum encourages them to learn through active participation, communication and enquiry. Active participation makes students listen cautiously and makes them alert in classrooms. Students who have always been dormant, who have always paid less attention are now forcing themselves to pay more attention as they are aware of the importance of their contribution in learning.

Our students not only lack the communication skill to interpret their knowledge but also lack the confidence to communicate. This revised curriculum focuses on their presentation and communication skills. Thus, students have shown amazing improvements in their skills to communicate their understanding. They also seem to have built up the confidence to interpret what they want to communicate.

Students are given room to analyze, write and give answers according to their own thoughts. This encourages independent thinking and improves their analytical skills. The continuous writing process makes students practice writing daily which enhance their writing.

Another positive point about the revised curriculum is the mode of assessment. The assessment focuses on four strands i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language. Students are encouraged to participate and their involvement in the four strands mentioned above is taken into consideration by keeping a record of their progress. Since their participation is graded, most students try really hard to understand, learn and participate in class which would not have been the case if they weren't graded. Their record of progress helps us in keeping track of those students who are lagging behind and thus helps us focus more on them.

Another advantage of this curriculum is that it provides opportunity for students to make text to life connection and make their learning simple and relevant to everyday lives. It makes the students look through the text rather look at them.

LIMITATIONS OF THE NEW CURRICULUM

The new curriculum appears to be very challenging as it requires us to develop English language skills and analytical skills in students rather than filling their minds with information and knowledge. This is especially challenging for us due to various reasons. Most students are not confident in thinking for themselves. It is almost like they always worry whether they are right or wrong. And the environment they come from influences their limited thinking. Most students have no basis on how to analyze any substance, due to their limited thinking. Most students have no basis on how to analyze any substance and due to this limited thinking, it is very difficult for us to enhance analytical skills in students.

The main objective of the curriculum is to improve the four strands of learning, i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. To fulfill this objective we are given a guideline and time span to teach every strand. However, in my experience with my students, not every student is able to understand and improve on these four strands on each topic within the instructional time span. This requires time extension for each

topic as I cannot jump to the next topic without my students fully understanding and improving on the four strands. Now the dilemma I and most teachers face in a situation like this is the fear of not being able to complete the syllabus on time. And to be able to finish the syllabus, we end up zooming through some of the topics. This directly affects the students, especially the weaker ones as they are unable to cope. So most teachers are wedged between the struggle to complete the syllabus on time and making sure all the students understand and improve in the required areas. Therefore, a lot of teachers feel that the syllabus is vast (reading materials) and this is also due to our students' level of grasping information. And since the syllabus is vast it also creates difficulties for us to correct students' work and provide them with productive feed back on time.

CONCLUSION / ANY OTHER REVEVANCE

Suggestions

The new curriculum started last year (2007) and so we are the first batch of teachers in Bhutan trying this new curriculum. Who do we turn to when we don't get the expected response to our new method of teaching? We lack the time to try out all the methods to make our students understand each topic. It would be easier if we could consult or communicate with an experienced teacher who has already been working with this curriculum. But since we are the first batch of teachers to try this curriculum, who are we going to turn to for help? I would like to suggest that CAPSD create an internet forum which would consist of all the teachers (with internet access) in Bhutan and teachers around the world who are teaching such a curriculum. So that when teachers in Bhutan face any sort of problems, we can put it up in the forum to get responses and help from those who have the experience and the knowledge to help. This would save us a lot of time as we would not have to learn through trail and error.

I would like to make another suggestion towards implementing this curriculum successfully. The teacher training institute in Paro and Samtse should include this curriculum under their learning course. This would train the trainee teachers before hand to teach under this new curriculum.

The new curriculum has definitely proved advantageous for our Bhutanese students. We the teachers hope that we can help improve the curriculum to suit it according to our students' standard to strengthen their learning even more.

Learners' response has been complied as per the survey conducted on the new curriculum with class 7 and 8 students.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE ENGLISH NEW CURRICULUM (ONE)

Q I. What do you feel about the new curriculum?

According from my opinion the new curriculum is very modified. It can develop learner's reading, listening and speaking skills. Since the new curriculum contains fiction and non-fiction articles, it emphasizes on the growth of thinking power of the students. Students can learn independently through this new curriculum.

Q II. What are some of the advantages of the new curriculum?

Students learn independently through this new curriculum where they can understand and analyse the lengthy topics. Promotes listening and speaking skills, reading skills etc.

Q III. What are some of the limitations of this curriculum?

The new curriculum is adapted from Canada. It is very tough to understand and analyse the poems, Essays, articles, short stories etc. it is difficult to understand the word meaning and difficult to summaries the poems.

Q IV. Are the resources available in school? (Write about the relevance of the resources available in the library).

The library doesn't stack most of the useful and informative books. If only resources available can be in Jigme Dorji Wangchuk Public Library and any other libraries in any other places.

Q V. How has this new curriculum helped you in your learning?

As this new curriculum is very modified/ advanced and contains lot of difficult vocabularies, these can improve our strategies towards the new curriculum.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE NEW ENGLISH CURRICULUM (TWO)

Q I. What do you feel about the new curriculum?

About the new curriculum I feel it is complicated to me. Even some teachers cannot understand. On the other hand we come across many poems, stories, articles etc. which are very interesting, meaningful and knowledgeable. All the poems, stories, articles have a strong theme which makes us to do critical analysis.

Q II. What are some of the advantages of the new curriculum?

Advantage: Some of the students don't get enough time to read and write at home but in school there are many activities like reading, writing and speaking in which we learn and gain more knowledge. Before there weren't such curriculum but now we have different period allocation in which we the students don't get puzzled. We can also share our points of view.

Q III. What are some of the limitations of this curriculum?

For the learner to begin to use the writing mode of discourse requires new skills of reading and writing. It is a struggle for the teachers to assist their students to produce in their own and takes hours of practice and repetition.

Q IV. Are the resources available in school? (Write about the relevance of the resources available in the library).

Yes, the resources are available in school. It makes us to be competent in English. It gives us logic, varieties of information, we learn the facts of historical importance of many things, we come to different authors and their brilliant work.

Q V. How has this new curriculum helped you in your learning?

This new curriculum helped me in different ways like I have improve my speaking, writing and reading skills. I gained much more knowledge of dates, events, places, mostery of subject matter and so many things. I learned how to summarize, how to write handy, story map, how to use my knowledge in different ways, complete and illustrate. Because of this new curriculum I can easily grasp meaning themes. It allows me to meet my goals.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE NEW ENGLISH CURRICULUM (THREE)

Q I. What do you feel about the new curriculum?

The new curriculum is advanced. It promotes the English skills of students such as listening and speaking skills, writing skills, etc. since the new curriculum contains fiction and non-fiction articles, it emphasizes on the growth of thinking power of students. Also students put great enthusiasm on it.

Q II. What are some of the advantages of the new curriculum?

Students can learn independently through this new curriculum. Promotes the listening and speaking skills, writing skills, reading skills, etc. increases the vocabulary of the students.

Q III. What are some of the limitations of this curriculum?

Contains difficult words which most of the students find it difficult to understand. The syllabus is very lengthy and we have less time to complete it. The articles are hard to analyse. Most of the students need guidance when learning the articles.

Q IV. Are the resources available in school? (Write about the relevance of the resources available in the library).

The resources available in school are the library books, and the other informative articles like magazines, etc. It supports the new curriculum as it helps the students to increase their vocabulary and reading skills. It helps the students to brain storm their minds.

Q V. How has this new curriculum helped you in your learning?

This new curriculum helped me gain a lot of confidence. It has improved my writing and reading skills. Also it has made my English speaking fluent. I think I've acquired the skills that might help me continue higher studies. The new curriculum has promoted my English language to a higher level. It has given me great moral values and has encouraged me to read more books. The supplementary articles has helped me learn independently.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE NEW ENGLISH CURRICULUM (FOUR)

Q I. What do you feel about the new curriculum?

On my view I think the new curriculum is much more good and is also a better way to promote quality education as it is much more effective and it requires self learning which enables learner to develop their skills.

Q II. What are some of the advantages of the new curriculum?

The text is divided into many units and every unit containing many stories and poems is provided with a theme. Even every passage is provided with a rational which enables learners to understand the story thoroughly. And is even provided with supplementary reading to give extra learning from text.

Q III. What are some of the limitations of this curriculum?

It has some disadvantages as the stories, essays and poems are too long and feel quite difficult to understand. On top of that it requires self learning which we find difficult. As it is new for us, we find difficult to deal with.

Q IV. Are the resources available in school? (Write about the relevance of the resources available in the library).

The good books and informative articles helps us to improve our reading skill when helps us to read and understand the text. Sometimes helps in pronouncing the word and understanding the story. Helps to speak English Fluently.

Q V. How has this new curriculum helped you in your learning?

It has helped to increase reading habits with its supplementary readings and it has even improved my speaking, listening and writing skills on English. I learnt to speak correct English with correct punctuation fluently. It often exercised my mind and made active to do every activities.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE NEW ENGLISH CURRICULUM (FIVE)

Q I. What do you feel about the new curriculum?

As we all know that our world is developing and at the same time the English is getting very modernized. Bhutanese children are very poor in English so I think the new curriculum is helpful as it contains interesting writing skills, stories, poems, journals, activities to do etc. and is advanced.

Q II. What are some of the advantages of the new curriculum?

The advantages are that we can improve our listening and speaking skill, collection of stories which will help us in future and also the most important grammar and new words.

Q III. What are some of the limitations of this curriculum?

As this book is helpful to us, I don't think there are limitations but the only limitation is that we can't understand some English words and idioms or sayings.

Q IV. Are the resources available in school? (Write about the relevance of the resources available in the library).

Yes, there are some resources available in our school. We have books according to our standard and we get to select on our own so the resources available in our school is much advanced.

Q V. How has this new curriculum helped you in your learning?

The new curriculum has helped me as well as my friends because it had improved us in our listening skill and writing skill as well as the speaking skill and had taught us lots of new words, idioms, proverbs and lots of stories.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Dorji Wangchuk, Teacher,
Nobding LSS, W/Phodrang.*

Abstract

This paper is a reflection note on the progress of New English Curriculum. It identifies the teachers' and learners' feelings on the new English Curriculum. It is an analysis made after close observation and offers some recommendations and suggestions to take up the new curriculum as a means to cater to the needs of the child (emotional, social, physical, academic and language).

Introduction

'Thoughts unexpressed are ideas, which die unheard, and spoken ideas often die in one generations'

The world is changing at a rapid pace and young people are growing in an increasingly global context. Young people should be informed and educated accordingly, enabling them to adapt themselves effectively both to national and international situations. We need to remain grateful to His Majesty the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck for his wise policy of introducing Modern Education in our country. Now, we are equipped with English language which is in fact the international language.

With the increasing concern on the standard of the English language, the Education Department has wisely taken up steps to build a new bridge over which our children will love passing over.

The scope of this paper is too limited to address all the observations but it will certainly make an attempt to flag a discussion on how the teachers and students feel about the new curriculum and the advantages/limitations of the new curriculum.

Learners' response to the new curriculum

In a positive environment, with an appropriate approach, a marginal performer's output goes up. In a negative environment, with irrelevant approach, a good performer's output goes down.

Thanks to the noble initiative taken by the CAPSD for designing this new curriculum focused on student centered learning, taking care of the excellent choice of texts.

I developed questionnaires to learn about students' response to the new curriculum. The participants were from class VI and VIII. The questionnaire required the children to express their opinion on the new English text, new method and the new things they learn. On an average the children find the new curriculum interesting as well as challenging. The design of the thematic approach from the familiar to the unfamiliar is meaningfully sculptured to reach the needs of the adolescents. This is the very reason, why the children love reading English text. This is what Kinley Tshering said, "I find the topics related to my life. After reading "which way" by Kourleen Bradferd, I feel more confident in making decision".

They find their major role in learning very challenging when their opinions and responses are accepted and valued, it brings a realization in them of their importance in the class discussion. The 60% of the participants feel that they learn better when teacher explains everything. This thought is based on the old practice/approach. Our children are not used to expressing their ideas, since they have been considering the teachers' opinion as everything. In time, hopefully, this 60% of the learners may change their view.

The learners have a very positive outlook in regards to the maintaining of portfolios. It has increased their reading capacity and writing ability. My learners have all become poets and essayists.

Teachers' feelings of their preparedness to teach the new curriculum

"if I ever am a teacher, it will be to learn more than to teach" – Anon

Teachers play a significant role in children's lives. This new curriculum places teachers in the roles of facilitators who promote active learning while students play a greater role in their own learning.

The English teachers feel that the choice of texts for the new curriculum is extremely worthy of high praise. The teacher and the children enjoy reading one text after another. Teachers take the role of facilitators

very effectively, since they can sense the students' enthusiasm to learn all the relevant topics.

The movement away from the teacher-centered classroom to a gender sensitive, student centered learning environment is a great jump over a thorny bush. The teachers seem to cross the bush without a scratch but the long time spoonfed children seem to be falling over the thorns. The children for eg, in the school are not in the position to understand our national language, Dzongkha, needless to say about their understanding of the International language.

Owing to the uniqueness of the thematic approach, the English teachers feel that:-

- The new curriculum is time consuming.
- The standard of the language is quite high for learners in the less privileged places.
- The activities are too long. The time allotted for activities is not sufficient.
- Grammar is neglected.

Resources Availability

Considering the fact that the curriculum is newly implemented, references and necessary resources are not available in the schools. The English dictionaries available in the school do not provide enough information. During the Curriculum Orientation Workshop in 2007, it was suggested if CAPSD could produce a common Grammar book. We the English teachers are eagerly waiting to get hold of that book.

Advantages of the new curriculum

Young adolescents are inquisitive and intensely curious. They are increasingly aware of themselves and of their relationships with others. They want to understand their place in the world. Children are capable of thinking and analyzing critically. Their responses may not be highly valuable but the acceptance of their responses makes all the difference.

This new curriculum is designed in such a manner, that it caters to all the needs of young and rapidly growing adolescents.

It helps the teachers to sustain students' attention during the lesson. It provides an open platform for the children to explore their latent talents and ideas.

Limitations of the new curriculum

“It's the constant and determined effort that breaks down all resistance and sweeps away all obstacles” – Claude M. Bristol

Those learners and the teachers both feel that:-

- The standard is too high for present Bhutanese youth
- The Grammar is neglected
- The weaker group of children cannot put up with the curriculum which expects every child to be a critical thinker.

“The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential” – Eddie Robinson.

Conclusion

“Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work” – Vincent Lombard.

Vincent Lombardi's words on importance of individual commitment in assuring the success of this united task in implementing the new curriculum should be taken to every teacher's heart. This idea may sound facile because of the challenges that we face. However, we can learn to take these problems as opportunities to think of ways to explore and devise means to do our best.

With this, let us pledge to commit ourselves to working hand – in – hand and strive towards developing our children into responsible citizen.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Mr. Norbu Tshering, Teacher,
Punakha HSS, Punakha.*

Introduction

We all know that the new curriculum is set towards achieving a higher standard of English and the overall education system in our country. This curriculum is student centered and it provides a grand learning canvas where the students explore the different genres of literature along with the four strands: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. However, the new curriculum I feel has a very long way to go until it can finally take root in the Bhutanese Education System, but without the effort from the teachers, students themselves and from the curriculum developers, the new curriculum is only going to be a wasted endeavour.

Therefore, I would like to thank CERD for this opportunity as I bring the concerns of my principal and my fellow teachers at Punakha Higher Secondary School to this discussion.

Learners' response to the new curriculum

The learners' response is very important, as it is the basis for building up any new curriculum. The response to this new curriculum has been okay in my school. Nevertheless, the important thing is that the learners' response is dependent on the effort from the teachers' side to have the curriculum function fully and effectively. From what I have gathered from the teachers and from the students, I can say, I have some substantial information to share.

In class twelve the students were asked to write an argumentative essay on the topic, 'The Revised new English Curriculum is better than the old one'. To quote one student she said, 'the old curriculum was only listening, listening, and more listening but the new curriculum provides opportunity for the students to learn and develop their skill in writing, reading, listening, and speaking.' This remark, I feel, provides a valuable insight coming from the students themselves as I feel that the students are aware of the important strands in the new curriculum. One of the students in his essay wrote, 'In the old curriculum, the

students got no chance to explore themselves. They did not get chance to express their feelings in the form of essay, poetry, etc. But in this new curriculum, we study different stories and writings and we reflect on ourselves. We write stories and poems by ourselves because we are taught techniques to read, understand and even write those things. In the old curriculum we had the chance to listen to the lecture but in the revised curriculum we get chances to speak out our thoughts and feelings.' He also said, 'The old curriculum prepared students only for the exams and to pass it but the new curriculum makes the student learn by themselves and makes them successful not only for the present but also for the future.'

Thus in the higher classes, the responses from the students were quite positive. A contributing factor to this response could be their higher maturity level compared to the lower classes. Students enjoy the listening and speaking classes as they provide something new and refreshing compared to the usual literature classes. During the listening classes, the students were shown movies and made to listen to music. Movies like 'My Fair lady' and songs by Bob Dylan received good responses. The students were asked to listen carefully and then write down the lyrics of the song. With the movie, they were asked to write a film review.

The students enjoyed debates in the class on topics of their choice and topics given by the teacher from the curriculum guide. The students became aware of how to declaim a speech and they were given practices to give impromptu speeches, on the topics chosen by the teacher, in the class. Class presentations on certain topics were rewarding, the teacher had to only facilitate as a guide and the students themselves carried on the overall lesson.

However, there are still some problems that we as teachers cannot overlook. The new curriculum consists of a lot of activities where sometimes all the students do not participate, in discussions and presentation. There are some students who respond very well but at the same time, there are also few who do not interact with their peers. We cannot make a general evaluation of whether each student in the class has understood the concept or not just by receiving a few responses from those active students. One of the students has mentioned in his essay that the new curriculum demands all of their time in reading only since they have to read many novels. He said that thus he was not

able to distribute equal time for all subjects. Another student mentioned in his essay that since they had been taught the old curriculum till grade X, it was very difficult for them to get adjusted to the new curriculum.

Teachers' feeling of preparedness to teach the new curriculum

The second important response comes from the teachers. Their feeling of preparedness to teach the new curriculum is very crucial and it has to be positive. Though many have received workshops on the new curriculum, there are still few who have not received sufficient guidance and instructions to help them how to go about with the new curriculum. In my school there are two teachers including myself. Though we have received the teachers' guide, however practical demonstrations would be very helpful for us in understanding our roles in this new curriculum. Our school was fortunate to have Mr Bill Buggie to demonstrate a few teaching strategies in our classes. Therefore, it would be very helpful if future workshops can include the teachers who have not attended before.

I have talked with English teachers in my school and here is what they have to say:

Though the teachers' guide provides quite a lot of information, some teachers feel that on certain topics, information and background on authors are not sufficient. One example is 'Dover Beach', the poem by Mathew Arnold. One teacher felt that the background on the poet was not enough to give her the confidence to discuss about the poet. Besides, the background to that particular piece could also help the teacher to further enhance the discussion. Though many sample questions are given in the curriculum guide, not even a single sample answer has been mentioned which could have actually helped both teacher and students develop the strategy to answer the questions.

Another feeling is that the new curriculum would have a better chance if it were to begin from the elementary level. The students are not used to the new teaching method and are not fully aware of the teachers' role in the new curriculum. This is mostly happening in the lower classes. Therefore, even if the teacher feels prepared to teach but if the students do not involve themselves then it becomes quite a challenge.

This is not a generalized perception but in some classes, there are few students who shun away from group activities and presentations. At the same time, the new curriculum demands a new way of teaching that has not yet taken root in the minds of the teachers. Therefore, teaching Language includes a lot in the objectives but there are no adequate reference books in the school. For example, the objectives say; discuss the origin of words (etymology), common theories of language acquisition and development, features of language etc. To teach these we need some reference books.

The dictionaries used in the schools are not appropriate enough to support the learning of vocabulary at the higher secondary level, as most words that the students come across in their textbooks are not found in the dictionaries. The New Advanced Learner's Dictionary is more appropriate than the Intermediate Learner's Dictionary. There are 23 reference books given in the syllabus book for class 11&12 but hardly any of the books are found in the library or even in the bookshops.

Advantages/Limitations of the New Curriculum

The new curriculum is a very ambitious step from the Education Ministry to revive the deteriorating education standard and specifically the standard of English. However, we know that it is not perfect. Skeptics and admirers have commented and said what they have to say but at the end, it all boils down to what the teachers have to say, as we are the people who have to deal with it. The teachers' reflections from the classes are valuable insights for analyzing the curriculum. After some discussions with my colleagues at Punakha, we have come up with certain advantages and limitations.

The advantages of this curriculum are that it is student-centered and it gives the students the chance to explore new ideas and draw new conclusions of their own. Further, it focuses on writing, reading, listening, and speaking which we believe are more practical and has a better chance of student involvement and interest. It includes certain topics that are familiar to them, which makes it much easier to learn and understand.

For example, the novel (Dawa the story of a stray dog in Bhutan) in class nine has a familiar setting and students face no problem in exploring the novel on their own. Other Bhutanese essays and poems

are also comfortable to deal with and they also give us a sense of pride in teaching them. Further more the new curriculum includes various writers both contemporary and classic and offers rich materials for learning literature. However for these advantages to show credibility the teachers should be acquainted to the curriculum.

There are advantages but there are also limitations with the new curriculum. Since this curriculum started in the middle for the students we are teaching right now (i.e. from class nine), some are confused, they are not able to cope with the role that they should be playing in class discussions and presentations. Some students do not understand the lesson and you as a teacher try to make every student know and understand the topic so it becomes quite a challenge. The evaluation technique through the activities is not enough to check if all the students have understood the lesson. I do not know how far I am correct but for the students to know the over all plot of the story or novel is very important but most of the activities in the teacher's guide do not include such activities to draw the plot summary of the topic. Other than the activities in the guide which are all to be carried out in the class as class activities I did not see the mentioning of home works to be done, though the objectives for writing state that students should be given home assignments.

Next, should or should not the teacher give the background of the poet or writer, there is a brief background about the writer or poet in the text book but should the teacher mention and discuss the writer before beginning the topic as there is nothing mentioned in most of the activities.

The activities demand a lot of time especially in the lower classes therefore monitoring becomes impossible. This I feel is also due to the teacher-student ratio in most of our Bhutanese classes. It becomes quite tiring especially if the class is crowded and every activity demands group discussions.

The periods are allotted for all the different strands but the number of periods allotted for language is only 30, which we feel is quite less to cover up what is expected of us in the objectives.

The research paper given in class 11 is to be completed in class 12 but there are no adequate guidelines to follow especially when it comes to choosing the topics. If a sample topic had been given then I feel it would help a lot. The research is to progress through nine stages of which most stages in the beginning are to be carried out in the class so it again demands a lot of time.

Students are expected to pass in the Listening & Speaking component but if they fail, they are not to be allowed to sit for the final examinations in the English paper. To what extent is this criterion justifiable, because few students may not be good at speaking but may be extremely talented in the writing skills?

These are some of the shortcomings of the new curriculum from our perspective at Punakha Higher Secondary School.

Conclusion

The new curriculum is no doubt a very good one but the question is; how, when and where exactly should it be implemented, needs extra elaborations.

I strongly feel that the curriculum should take its root at the elementary level and then gradually move up to the higher classes.

Lastly, I would like to thank CERD for giving my colleagues and me this opportunity to voice our opinions and understandings of the new curriculum.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Anita Pradhan, Teacher,
Phuentsholing MSS, Chukha.*

Learners' response to the new curriculum

According to the children, the new curriculum has a lot of text to life connections. "A lot of value is visible", said a child.

Teachers' feelings

The manual which is provided along with the text keeps all the English Teachers on track. We know exactly what we are supposed to do with a particular lesson. The detailed planning is very helpful. It creates a kind of uniformity among teachers teaching different sections as well as in different schools. There isn't a remotest chance of going astray. In the old curriculum this was not the case, in spite of planning together, at the beginning of the year.

However, some lessons are too tough for the children even to read out. They have to be helped with every word and every line. This leads to a lot of disturbances in the class because after sometime children lose interest. I was teaching a chapter, "Somebody's son", in class 7 and I just couldnot make the children read the lesson. The language, the setting, the vocabulary are too difficult for the students. When I summarized the story later, children loved it. The time allotted for the various types of activities (given at the end of the lesson) is never enough.

In most cases individual activities are very difficult to do. The children either do not understand the instruction or will not have understood the lesson. At times their limited vocabulary makes it difficult to get the message across to the teacher. It becomes quite difficult for the teacher to give individual attention because of the large class strength. Because of the large strength of the class, record keeping becomes a big headache. Each child has to be assessed in all the four strands, under different activities. For each activity the planning, the checklist as well as the actual work has to be accessed and most of the teachers have more than three sections of classes to teach. This leads to a lot of

recording work besides the main teaching. It is not impossible but how effective it is can be questionable.

The Writing Process takes up a lot of time. Each word, each sentence, each paragraph has to be looked into very carefully during the drafting. Finally when the final work is done and brought to the teacher, the same mistakes are repeated. It becomes quite frustrating.

The other problem is that the children do not want their mistakes to be seen by anybody. So they tear up all the corrected pages. In some cases they staple the pages together so that nobody discovers their first few attempts at writing. In order to out do each other many children resort to copying from various sources. One child, who must have probably read an essay on a cat or a dog at home write this and come I have a tiger at home....Some children when they are asked to do demand writing in class can barely scribble few lines but the next day they come with beautifully written work.

When do we teach Dictionary work and grammar? Should it be done with the lesson, after the lesson or is it to be taught independently? It needs to be clarified because after the lesson the focus is more on comprehension, creativity and critical thinking. It will be better if few grammar activities are included after every lesson. Once again which dictionary are we supposed to use? The intermediate dictionary which is issued now doesnot contain the words which are in the new texts.

We are used to using the formal kind of English in class room situation and now words like 'yeah', 'jerk' appear in the text.

Resources

It is quite difficult to find more information about certain writers. The little note which comes with the lesson is not enough for in depth knowledge. It would be good to have some kind of references on them. It would be good to have a sample of Journal, Reading Record, Portfolio, and Friendly Letter either in the Manual itself or as a booklet in the Library. It would be very helpful if a sample question paper is attached to the manual along with the Blue Print.

Advantages/Limitations

The new curriculum is different. The emphasis on the four strands makes it complete. But are we forgetting the spelling skills here? The other good thing is that it is slotted under different themes, written by different authors which make it interesting.

The question pattern is very confusing; children till class VIII just do not seem to get the hang of the two sets of questions. After so many explanations in the class the children still make a lot of mistakes. In few cases even the good students were not able to score high. Wouldnot it be much better to stick to just one set of question, Essay types could be made from Short Story and MCQs and Short Answers from Poem and Essay which are both unseen.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Sonam Choki, Teacher,
Bajothang HSS, W/Phodrang.*

One of the major challenges for us as an English language teacher is to improve the English standard not only in one or two schools but the whole country.

Keeping the main focus on improving English language, Ministry of Education has come up with the change in the curriculum. This new curriculum includes all the four strands namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking which really proves to be helpful in improving English standard in our students.

As directed by CERD, the English language teacher of Bajothang Higher Secondary School has come up with the following Reflection Notes on "English teachers" perception about the new English Curriculum-reflections and insights from the classroom".

This reflection note focuses on

1. Learners' response to the new curriculum

Learners actively participate in learning through peer discussion, group discussion and classroom discussion. Learners even direct themselves to independent learning and self exploration where effective learning occurs.

2. Teachers' feeling of their preparedness to teach the new curriculum

Teachers are comfortable with the quantity of the content to be taught. They do not face much problem delivering the lesson.

3. Resources availability

Particularly for the Nature of Language, there isn't a prescribed syllabus for different grade levels and adequate information is not available. The only reference available (Definition of language and features) is used irrespective of the class level. Information regarding the text in the guide book is inadequate as teachers sometimes fail to provide enough related examples. On the other hand, English Teachers' Guide provides ample enriching activities.

4. Advantages of the new curriculum

a. Teaching-Learning Method

The Teaching-Learning Method in the new curriculum has changed from the teacher centered approach to student centered, where the learners are actively and constructively engaged. Teachers just need to act as a guide or facilitator in the learning process and provide necessary feedback as and when required. Example, students' presentation, research work, group work etc.

b. Incorporates Higher-Level of thinking

Unlike the old curriculum, the new curriculum incorporates higher level of thinking such as symbolism, genre, and elements of short stories/novel. Students can now easily identify the elements, they can draw plot lines on any literary work, and students have good idea on different genres.

c. Relevancy

The ideas in the present curriculum are in the logical/ realistic way, it is very much related to our day to day life. The themes and the values instilled by the text are relevant to our daily life.

d. Languages

The usage of language is mostly simple and understandable. It is up to the level of the standard/grade. In other words, language is accessible to the students. Moreover, maintenance of vocabulary book helps them to build their vocabulary.

e. Portfolio

Maintenance of portfolio/reading journal has improved the reading and writing habit in students, Students do some review and are put in the portfolio. As a result students have inculcated reading as well as writing skills.

f. Learning Activities

Learning activities given for each topic in teacher's guide is sufficient. Activities are framed according to different levels of thinking (Knowledge, Comprehension, and Evaluation)

5. Limitation of the new curriculum

a. Time

Though the activities are rich and abundant, it is time consuming, resulting in poor follow up of the activities.

b. Assessment of student's work

Considering the size and number of students in the class (30-37) and number of periods per week (33-34), it is not possible for the teachers to give equal importance to portfolio as well as students' notebook. So teachers fail to give proper follow up for the work done.

English is the most important world language today, so the changes brought by the Ministry of Education in the English curriculum have more of benefits than limitations. Compared to the old curriculum, classes with the new curriculum are more interactive and have positive learning environment. Thus, we are confident that New English Curriculum will further promote and improve the standard of English.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Pema Choidar, Teacher
Dechencholing MSS, Thimphu.*

Points to focus	Reflections & Insights
1.Learners' response to the new curriculum:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is effective only for the high achievers. 2. The high achievers respond quickly but the slow learners take time. 3. It encourages opening up; the slow learners might withdraw from participation. 4. It is time consuming. 5. The different topics motivate the students. 6. The students enjoy the novel for Cl.9 7. The students find it difficult to carry out the activities on their own. 8. According to some students, the language is bit difficult for them with so many new words and phrases.
2.Teachers feelings of the new curriculum:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is enjoyable to teach. 2. It is challenging but we learn a lot with students. 3. It is the student-centred approach to encourage & drill the stds. for language acquisition 4. The syllabus is very vast with too many activities in each unit. 5. It has relevant syllabus to uplift the standard. The effect can be seen ten to fifteen years from now 6. The children find it difficult because of the sudden change. 7. The upcoming primary students of new curriculum would benefit the most. 8. This curriculum will improve the standard in the long run.
3.Resources availability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very limited resources; - Need new supply of advanced learners' dictionary for students according to the need of the text. - The reference books are usually not available in the school. e.g. Origin of Language for class 9 Nature of Language for Class 10 - The information on the new writers and some poems are not available even from the internet - The texts, supplementary readers & CA booklets are not supplied on time.
4.Advantages:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child-centred approach 2. It is an advanced strategy to stimulate their cognitive skills/provokes their thinking skills. 3. The students get to participate more to acquire the skills of language development. 4. It makes the students more creative/it fosters creativity.

<p>4. Advantages</p>	<p>5. The students learn a lot of vocabulary. 6. It has many of value-laden units and topics. 7. It provides avenue for more interaction among the stds. and the teachers. 8. Most of the topics have the text-life connections for the Bhutanese students. 9. It is good for the learners. 10. The appendices, glossary and the mode of assessment in the manual are found very useful. 11. The inclusion of the learning objectives serves as the useful guide to teachers. 12. The activities are well organized and systematic. 13. Teachers' background note for some chapters in the Class:8 manual is a ready reference and useful.</p>
<p>5. Limitations:</p>	<p>1. It is time consuming especially with a large class strength. 2. It gets more difficult for the slow learners due to the large class strength. 3. A very few teachers have attended the workshop on the new curriculum. 4. In one of the Class 8 poems -asking for metaphor when there is only simile.</p>
<p>6. Any other relevance:</p>	<p>1. Need a variety of poems as the examples of different types of poems. Mostly lyrics are prominent in this syllabus. 2. Some errors in the spellings need to be corrected in the next edition. Eg: Cl 10 reading & Lit. p.70, the word 'Akemia' could be 'luekemia' considering its symptoms in the text. 3. The essays 'The Layaps go Home' and 'Beauty and Body Image in the Media' are too long. We are unable to complete in a week.. 4. In of the class 8 poems, metaphor is asked in stead of simile. 5. A copy of pamphlet with necessary corrections need to be issued to every school. 6. Compile a copy of pamphlet as a guide to each school to correct the spelling & printing mistakes;</p>

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Radha Kharga, Teacher,
Thinleygang MSS, Thimphu.*

This new English Text book for class seven to ten contains activities for each of the four Strands: Listening and speaking, Reading and Literature, writing and Language. This is completely a new approach taken by a committee of experts which includes secondary English Teachers, representatives from CAPSD, CERD, BBED, EMSSD, the two NIE's, Sherubtse College and the University of New Brunswick NB, Canada.

The books are written on the principles of student centred learning. Since the texts contain simple English, it becomes easy for the students to understand what the teacher is teaching them in the class unlike the Shakespearean texts. Students are actively involved in their learning hence there is more retention in students. Questions at the end of the chapter are related to our own context. The texts to life connection questions can help the students analyze their own life and also improve their thinking and valuing skills.

1. Learner's response to the new curriculum.

- ✓ Language used is simple and can read and understand in case of simple stories and essays.
- ✓ Since the words and phrases used are simple, at times students can find meanings easily in their dictionaries. Teacher need not give the meanings frequently.
- ✓ Questions are given in the same text. By answering these questions, they will be able to understand the text better.
- ✓ Different teaching methods and strategies are shown in the text which activate the students in the class.
- ✓ Learners find it difficult to grasp the literal meaning of some of the lessons like the essay "More than meet I" by Thsering Gyeltshen in class VII Text. They do not seem to enjoy this essay,

as the language is difficult, too high for their standard and has lots of difficult words.

- ✓ Learners get stuck when asked for felt response. More often than that, they land up giving out-of-context responses.
- ✓ Poems like 'The warp and woof of Bhutanese Womanhood' (John M. Chiramal) (Class VIII) and 'Rural Dump heap' (Melnille cane) (Class VII) fail to arouse interest in the learners as they are too abstract and require several readings to grab the connection between phrases. The language is also too complex and has lots of figurative meanings.
- ✓ Essays like 'Home made Sound Effects' (Gray R. Graves) and 'Tricks of the Trade' (unknown in class VIII) leave the learners in confusion as they cannot perceive what messages the essays are trying to convey.
- ✓ Learners seem to enjoy the short stories more as they are more in tune with their life. Stories like 'The Nest' (Robert Zacks) in class VIII, 'The Cherry Tree' (Ruskin Bond) in class VII, 'The White Knight' (Eric Nicol) in class X, are enjoyed by the students. In all these stories, the characters are young like themselves, so learners find it easy to communicate with them and understand their actions.

2. Teachers' feelings of their preparedness to teach the new curriculum.

- ✓ Although the syllabus is now more learner-centered, teachers need to put in extra effort to prepare themselves for the lessons.
- ✓ Teachers need to put in a lot of effort to make the learners grab the meanings, especially the figurative ones and respond effectively to questions asked. Especially while teaching lessons which are abstract, philosophical and need extra effort in teaching.
- ✓ Teachers frequently end up getting frustrated, when having to explain the whole lesson instead of the learners bringing out the meanings themselves.

- ✓ At times, it is very challenging and lack of resources makes it very difficult to teach the students effectively.

3. Resources availability

- ✓ Shortage of resources hinder effective learning in the class.
- ✓ Grammar books and internet are not easily available.
- ✓ Some authors, poets are new to us and the students. Since the library does not have adequate books, teachers find it extremely difficult to get information for the students.
- ✓ Guidebook alone is not sufficient. A lot of necessary information cannot be found in the guidebooks.
- ✓ For Class X novel, no guide is given and it is difficult for the teacher to make the students understand the settings and events in the novel.

4. Advantages/Limitations of the new curriculum.

Advantages

- ✓ Equal focus has been given to the four strands so that children can improve these skills.
- ✓ It is mainly a student-centered text. It encourages active participation in the class.
- ✓ Helps learners to interact more and work as a team.
- ✓ The entire portion is in Modern English and this allows our students to read and understand better than the old curriculum.
- ✓ Some lessons are a great source of inspiration like. For example, the short story, 'The Girl who couldn't see herself' (Leena Dhingra) in class VII encourages the learners to be satisfied with what they have.
- ✓ The themes are all based 'on real life-sacrifice, love, hate which all make the learners enjoy more.

- ✓ Learners are encouraged to read more and are exposed to various forms of literary pieces.

Limitations

- ✓ The curriculum for class VII, VIII and X are quite long and time consuming
- ✓ Difficult to adhere to the time allotted for each activity as some learners are slow in responding effectively.
- ✓ Language level for some text i.e. class X novel, is too high and abstract which hampers learning.
- ✓ No adequate references available and this make teaching difficult at times.

5. Any other Relevance:

- ✓ No separate text for grammar and structure. The reference for Class IX and X is above their standard. Till Class X, only the basics should be taught to them so that they can be fluent in structure when they go to class eleven.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Chado Dolma, Teacher,
Genekha LSS, Thimphu.*

John Dewey rightly said, "Easy and familiar are equivalent as are the strange and the difficult. Too much that is easy gives no ground for inquiry, too much which is hard renders inquiry hopeless". The newly developed curriculum in Bhutanese education system over a year is not a change that evolved overnight but it is a carefully carried out plan which I think is challenging yet meaningful. It has made a tremendous achievement not only in urban area but also even in remote schools. Serving in so-called remote school has given birth to so many thought provoking feelings concerning learners.

1. Learners' response to the new curriculum:

English has, in fact, been the medium of instruction for many subjects except Dzongkha still then the students have great difficulties in speaking English. I must say that the new curriculum has given a lot of room for improvement. Learning is active but slow. It is a work of utmost patience but it works. The student learns in the best possible way. Still then being in a remote school, the students out here are still backward as compared to the ones in the town. Having to learn all these four strand together hand to hand, language learning becomes automatic process of free flow of ideas and enjoy learning as leisure activity.

2. Teachers' Feelings of their preparedness to teach the new curriculum: The paradigm shift from teacher centered to the student centered learning environment has actually made teachers' role (in classroom) much easier than a decade back. In the new curriculum, the teachers are responsible for designing activities and promote active learning while students take active parts in their own learning. It is rightly said that "If ever I am a teacher it will be more to learn than to teach." One thing good about the new curriculum is that the teachers guide is very well organized. Therefore, there is no way that the teacher should feel unprepared to teach a lesson.

- 3. Resource availability:** Availability of resource is however, like the backbone of human being, which without, a person is unable to stand. We know the futility of teaching a class without resources. The problem of receiving textbooks after every new curriculum has been implemented is the only common problem in the nation as a whole. We have received our text books only after completion of first block.

Textbook: About the textbooks, in class VIII, since we are less in number we have enough textbooks, however we still do not have enough textbook in class VII, which I think, is a hindrance to students learning.

Grammar books: It is good that we are stressing more on language. However, we still have less number of books, which again is a barrier to learning.

1. Advantages/ Limitations of the new curriculum:

Advantages

- 1. Arrangement of text and themes:** Given below is the pattern of themes arranged for class VIII.

Examples: Theme 1.....Who am I?
Theme 2.....My world: Relationships and Family
Theme 3.....Our community
Theme 4.....Things that matter: Values and ethics
Theme 5.....Look Around You!
Theme 6.....Reaching beyond: courage and Heroism
Theme 7.....What We Hear And See: Media and communication.

As said, "Thousand of miles starts with one single step" If we have a closer look at how the themes are arranged then we can say that the themes glide from simpler to complex and than to more complex, which I feel is the most important component to encourage the learners to learn at least little at a time. Not only the themes but also the texts within the themes are arranged in a similar manner.

2. **Activity:** Like the stone steps in the marsh that guides the way, activities guide the students from lower thinking level to the higher level of thinking (Blooms taxonomy).
3. **Genre:** While the different genre of literature like the poem, story, essay, Article, Epic. Lyrics etc have been in existence since the dawn of human kind, but never before the implementation of the new curriculum had the students of class VIII got a chance to learn about them in such details.
4. **Four strands:** The activities are all useful with lots of fascinating insight into the four strand of language. The materials recommended here aims at improving the entire four strands in language. It is also good that the objective of each strand at each level is clearly noted.

Limitations

As far as I am concerned, I found the new curriculum very appropriate to the learners. Still then, I would like to share with you the problem faced by the students in remote schools; they take the supplementary readings as a part of the texts. Therefore if the concerned department could attend to the above problem by designing readers like the one that we have in Dzongkha or like the one in lower classes. The second thing is regarding the assessment, it is said that we have to asses all the four strands and now we are worried and confused about where the marks allotted to each strand should come.

Example: Assessment for Paper I (Language and writing)

Writing portfolio ----- 15%

Whereas suggested breakup says 15% for listening and speaking and 35 for examination, so there is no rooms for writing portfolio mark.

Listening and speaking	Examination	Listening and speaking	Examination	Total
15%	35%	15%	35%	
				100

Assessment for Paper II (Reading and literature)

Reading portfolio --- 15%

Whereas suggested breakup says 7.5 for reading and 7.5 for writing and 35 for examination.

Reading and literature	Examination	Reading and literature	Examination	Total
Reading - 7.5 Writing - 7.5	35%	Reading - 7.5 Writing - 7.5	35%	
				100

So we are confused where to add this portfolio mark.

In addition, we think that we have to the uniform maintenance of record (portfolio) through out the schools in Bhutan.

Last but not the least, we are happy to be a part of your one day program, because we could also hear what the others have to say.

Reflections and Insights from the classroom

*Kesang Wangmo, Teacher,
Gaupel LSS, Paro.*

Introduction

His Majesty, king Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth hereditary monarch of Bhutan had reminded the younger generations of Bhutanese children about their crucial role in the nation building. In his visit to the schools in the country, he had often emphasized and stressed this crucial role by saying that, “The future of the nation lies in the hands of the children”, and that they deserve the best educational experiences when at school. It is evident that the government recognizes the potentials of our school children in the process of nation building and therefore there is a reformed English curriculum, which is quality laden, contextual with realistic themes that are highly stimulating which can shape our young Bhutanese children into not just educated in mastering the four literary skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening but also social and moral skills which are indispensable qualities for growth and development of good human beings.

Children need to hear the right words in the right context to understand the concepts better as Sinha (2003) said, “English is a living language. It is not only a library language but a language for the person on the streets as well.” The new curriculum has that formal and informal expression representing a living language for our students.

Currently, I am teaching class 7 and 8 and had an opportunity to attend English orientation (Class V – VIII) and facilitate TOT Workshop of New English curriculum in the Bhutanese Education System is a great welcome at the right time where the standard of English in schools is being poorly talked about. It will definitely bring a fully ripe fruit of success in the standard of English in our schools.

Learner's Response to the New Curriculum

The beauty of English language can be seen vividly used in the New Curriculum Text and this taste has already got into the minds of our young children. About 83% of class eight children like English and around 60% told me they begin to like English subject after the introduction of this new curriculum.

These are the learners' response of how new curriculum helps them to like the subject.

- 1. Improved Reading:** - The inclusion of different genres in the text is a great attraction for students. Kezang Dema (Class 8A) says, "There are many interesting and valuable stories and poems that make me to read the text". The new curriculum consists of many contemporary stories, essays and poems with many attractive phrases and vocabularies. They provide the students with enough ground to think critically through brainstorming and prediction lessons. In addition, all the writing in the new texts touch all kind of realistic themes and carry real life messages of the youths or students who have very little knowledge about life and its way. "I like reading the new text because there are many writings of my feelings expressed that I want to tell as well", (Pem, 8A).
- 2. Writing:** - There are many types of writing styles provided in the text and this indirectly influence children's writing. "The story starts with once upon a time/long ago in lower classes books, now we can see the story starts with different situations, mood, dialogue and setting. I am copying these ideas and I like new curriculum' (Ugyen Chenzom, 8B). Besides many of the students told me they have started maintaining personal diary after reading Anne Frank's Diary. "She wrote it when she was my age and I feel I can also write like her', (Tshering, 8B). An almost forgotten trend of writing poetry has come back in the Bhutanese classroom after introduction of new curriculum. "I like reading and writing poems and that is the best I like about this new curriculum" (Phenki, 8B).
- 3. Listening/peaking:** - "The new curriculum is improving my speaking because it encourages me to speak my opinions and are never wrong. Now I am not afraid to speak wrong English", (Kinley, 8 B). There are some essays and stories which have beautiful lines that children say they can use in their different situational talks. "I find it easy to talk to tourists of different things as there are many things I learn about other countries and people in the new text" (Namgay, 8A). All the students in my class agreed their English language has drastically changed after reading the new curriculum which has lots of figurative words, expressive expression, and lots of listening and speaking activities.

To get a deeper insight into learner' understanding of the curriculum, I gave class eight students to choose any one of these alternatives with reason.

1. A good curriculum, but not a good teacher
2. A bad curriculum, but a good teacher.

Without wasting time, all the students chose the second alternative and supported it by saying a good teacher can make a bad curriculum good.

It gave me a feeling that our students understood and recognized the power of the teacher in bringing an adverse or benefit of the curriculum in creating quality education. Against this backdrop, I think appropriate and calculated investments have to be made continuously to ensure that teachers are moving in the right path.

Teachers' Feelings

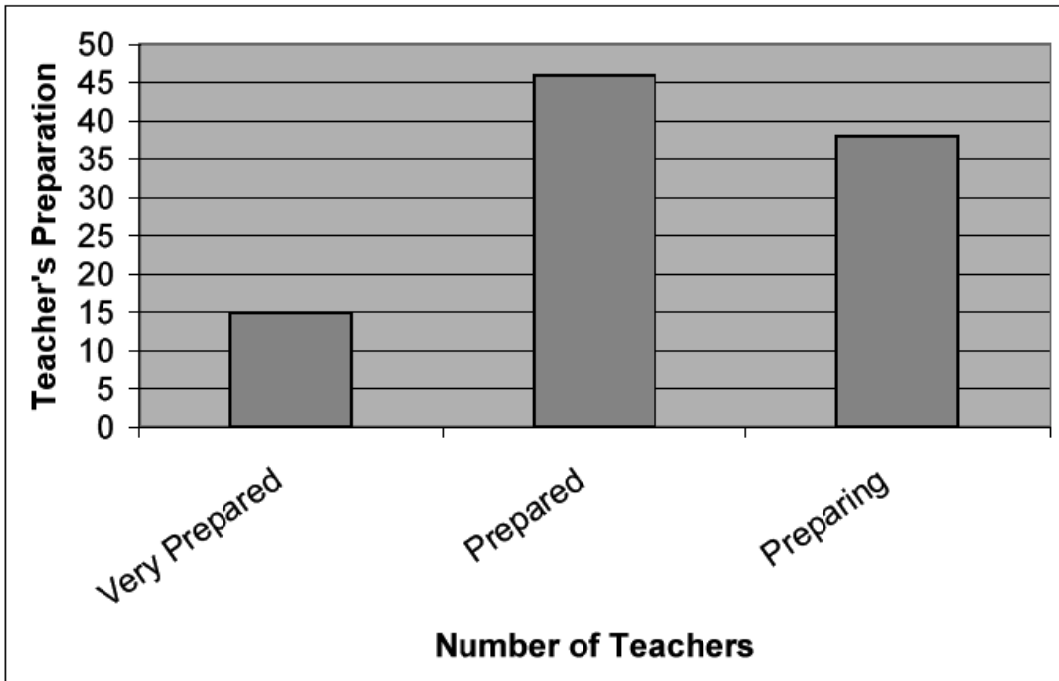
The English teachers in my school felt they were prepared to teach the new curriculum after the orientation program; however they faced the real challenge in the actual teaching. The teachers upgraded themselves reading the text and guide now and then, frequently asking doubts from the colleagues and sharing and clearing ideas from the friends in the other schools. Now, they feel and I also feel that we are prepared to teach the new curriculum but would have become thoroughly prepared if these things were considered.

1. The duration for the orientation could have been longer, so that English teachers become thorough with the texts and guides.
2. If the materials (texts and teachers guide) had arrived in time.

Teachers' Preparedness to Teach the New Curriculum

I talked to thirteen teachers teaching English in class PP to eight to find out their preparedness to teach the new curriculum.

What the English teachers say in my school ?



Resources Availability

The availability of resources play a part in determining the quality of education, be it material or human resources. However, it wasn't a good story when it comes to talk about the materials in the school. The school suffered in implementing the new curriculum in the beginning of the year because of the lack of text books. The texts arrived very late and the grammar books are still shared.

There are supplementary books which are still due to arrive. The availability of the following books would greatly help in teaching and learning of new curriculum.

- # Cambridge advance learners dictionary
- # Enough grammar builder book (1-5)
- # English Curriculum Framework
- # Ready-made assessment tools to assess the four skills
- # Supplementary readers

Advantages of the New Curriculum

In 2005, Erwing Konig wrote, "If a child can't learn the way we teach, may be we could teach the way he/she learns". And the new English curriculum provides what the children are interested to learn.

1. It is filled with child centered activities.
2. It exposes children to many new vocabularies and beautiful expressions.
3. All the activities of the curriculum encourage critical and analytical thinking through personal connection and prediction activities.
4. There is an opportunity to make text to life-connections and vice-versa. It is a plus point of this book.
5. All the activities, stories, poems and essays are developed, taking care of the standard and the age of the children. Eg. "Somebody's son" (class 7 poem) is appropriately included in 7th standard.
6. Maximum grammar activities compared to the old curriculum.
7. Activities in the guide provide learners to different synonyms and antonyms. For example: 'Certain choices' (Class 8 Poem) the word 'choice' leads to many words like decision, consequences etc.

8. Difficult to find the meaning of some words and phrases in the dictionary. (From students.)

Suggestions:

1. The new curriculum has included many poems and this change is liked by students as well as by the teachers. But there are some poems which even the teachers need more orientation. Therefore, it will be a great help if teachers can have frequent workshop or SBIP on teaching poetry.
2. Need some sample answers for some questions in the guide to guide the teachers to follow the correct teaching.
3. To provide foot note or glossary of native or informal words used in the text.
4. Fair selection of resource person facilitating the workshop.
5. To continue curriculum workshop to review its implementation.

Conclusion

I see the new curriculum has taken care of “Don’t limit a child to your learning for he was born in another time” in selecting themes and designing the activities because there are eternal and realistic values in modern stories, essays and poems.

To implement any new work is a task that is daunting and challenging but it is also not a task that is impossible. It is do-able and this should be a reason good enough to give us enough hope and faith in this new curriculum in churning it into a better curriculum, better Bhutan, a nation that does not just pride in the philosophy of Gross National Happiness but also see GNH in every activity we pursue in life.

I have always enjoyed learning and teaching English and would like to thank the Ministry, all the curriculum developers and new curriculum for making English subject very enjoyable and valuable.

Reflections and Insights from the Classroom

*Tshering Yangzom, Teacher,
Zilukha LSS, Thimphu.*

The new curriculum is mainly a student centered learning that promote active learning in children. The text has rich and varied literary pieces presented through different genres which help students develop reading, writing, listening and speaking. It has also included new approach to the assessment of students' performance based on different portfolios.

I would like to reflect on some of the areas below

Comparison between **Old** and **the New Curriculum**

No.	Area	Old Curriculum	New Curriculum
1	Text	<p><u>Druk English Series Book 3 for class VIII</u></p> <p>“The text consisted of chapters and each chapter had a unifying theme like practice of language structures, questioning and responses, oral and written expression.</p> <p>*It was designed to reinforce and extend skills in reading and writing, Listening and speaking so that children can think clearly, learn and express themselves in appropriate ways.</p> <p>*Consisted of stories, poems, newspapers, language study points and language use.</p>	<p><u>English Reading and Literature class VIII</u></p> <p>“The text consist of unit with a theme (who Am I? Self, My World: Relationship, Our Community, Values & Ethics, Our World, courage and Heroism. Media and communication) and under each unit there are main texts and supplementary Readings.</p> <p>* It is designed in such a way that skills in each strand of Listening & Speaking, Language, Writing, and Reading & Literature are developed. Children are able to communicate with eloquence and receive the communication of others with respect and clarity.</p> <p>* Introduced varieties of poems (Symbolic, Free verse, Narrative Poem), Essays such as Expository, Narrative and Personal. Short Story, Article Diary. Folk tale, Biography. Report etc.</p>

2.	Teachers' Activity	<p>*Teacher centered classroom Most of the activities are designed by the Teacher. Teachers talked and explained texts while students sat passively or made notes on what the teachers said. As a result they were not able to practice speaking and writing nor were they being taught how to read.</p>	<p>Gender sensitive, students-Centered Learning environment. Activities are already designed and teachers act as a facilitator and a source of knowledge of language and literature. Students play active play in their learning.</p>
3.	Students' Activity	<p>*Only pair and group activities are included.</p> <p><u>Listening & Speaking-</u> Role play, reporting, group discussion on questions and answers.</p> <p><u>Writing-</u> Letters, stories, descriptions, reports, note taking, answers for questions.</p> <p><u>Reading</u> - Reading passages</p>	<p>*Individual, pair, whole class and small group discussions are included.</p> <p><u>Listening & Speaking-</u> Presentation, role play, reporting, Extempore speech, debate, responding to series of questions, dialogue, interview and oral summary.</p> <p><u>Writing</u> - Poem, short story, dialogue, report, writing and alternate ending to the story, formal letter writing, personal anecdote, and speech and rewriting the poem.</p> <p><u>Reading-</u> Poem, short story, folktale, article, questions, essay, listing major characters and describing their traits.</p>

4.	Assessment	Exam oriented approach and children are assessed on their class participation, homework, class work and class test.	<p>Introduced new approach to the assessment of students' performance (a movement from the formal or exam oriented approach to informal or alternative assessment) In the new curriculum the emphasis is given to improve the language skills-reading, Writing, Listening & Speaking. The target of assessments are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. to assess the performance level of the students b. To monitor the overall student achievement. <p>The portfolios are to be maintained for each student and must be assessed and marks are awarded as the part of Continuous Assessment.</p> <p>Writing Portfolio (15%) – Journal writing for books read – best pieces of writing selected by the students on teacher's guidance.</p> <p>Reading Portfolio (15%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - record of reading - critical responses to book read - text5 talk/book talk <p>Listening Speaking (30%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - small group discussion - presentation - debates
----	-------------------	---	--

5	Blue Print	Question are prepared using blueprint but are mostly recall and comprehension. As result children were deprived of opportunity to broaden their thinking skills.	The New Curriculum demands Bloom's Taxonomy...Questions cover all the levels of thinking i.e. Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. This lead students to higher thinking skills, self reflection, see his or her motivation, risk taking and responsibilities etc.
---	-------------------	--	--

Learner's responses to the new curriculum

The new curriculum is very challenging. Children are introduced to varieties of literary [pieces and they mostly enjoy short stories as they see themselves as characters. The also enjoy poetry because of choral and echo reading. Good values and ethics are imbibed from texts. However students of our school are also learners and they find it quite difficult to cope up with vast varieties of texts and activities. The other reason is the new curriculum was introduced and implemented from class IV and children find it quite difficult but it might not be same in other schools. Here the main concern is the coverage of syllabuses.

The new English Curriculum lack resources like references (book of different country's dresses, and animals of the world), cassettes or CDS of Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan, Kats Stevens, poetry guide for class VII & VIII and more advanced dictionary. Most of the vocabulary in the texts is not in the New Oxford Intermediate Learner's dictionary they are using at [present. If possible, cameras to handle media and Communication Unit in class V text (e.g. Light, camera, action and creating your own newspapers)

Suggestions

1. Assessment is very bulky and time constraining (120 students x 5x3x3 portfolios, lesson planning, note books correction) Portfolio for each student are to be maintained, assessed and marks to be awarded as the part of CA. However, how to assess and the frequency to be provided clearly so that it will be convenient to assess.
2. Decrease the number of activities
3. Language teachers to be given less responsibilities
4. Provide more information's on the texts in teacher's guide.

Vote of thanks

Ramesh Thapa
Asst. Research Officer, CERD.

The publication of *The Silken Knot: Standards for English for schools in Bhutan* by the Centre for Educational Research and Development in 2002 marked the turning point in the history of our new English curriculum development in Bhutan. This timely and welcome intervention guided and directed our efforts in engaging and empowering our young men and women to achieve the best that they are capable of.

Today, as we are going through one of the most momentous periods in the history of our country, The Royal Government of Bhutan remains committed to providing the best education to young men and women of our country. To this end, the Ministry of Education has initiated numerous programmes encompassing educational goals, curriculum planning, implementation and assessment, research and innovation as well as the professional development of our educators. The cumulative effect of all these initiatives has been a phenomenal increase not only in quality education but as well the education coverage of the country.

While we have good reasons to be gratified with our success in the domain of educational provision, we strongly feel, it is still the collaborative efforts of all our educators, researchers, educational thinkers and practitioners that would navigate our nation's educational standards. Therefore, it is only through these efforts we can measure the quality of our output in the performance and achievement of our young learners.

This *Rinpung Experiment* has been able to provide us the most valuable insights and reflections that are crucial in our continued research effort in the development and improvements of this curriculum. Its quite satisfying, we were able to come from depth, length and breadth, from corners of classroom to this outer world and could explore in various promising ways the possibilities in this sphere. It was extremely participative and professional.

Today's day will be special in the history of CERD, in being able to bring all our efforts together on this common platform and having seen in wide range the possible room for development of our English studies. With all of us here today, we made this Rinpung experiment XVI possible. The Centre would like to appeal to all of us here today, the continued effort, the similar support and sincere collaboration in our common mission of serving educational progress in the country. The Centre would continue to provide this bigger forum more actively, to support and undertake research and development activities aimed at bringing about improvements and addressing immediate challenges in our education programmes.

This Experiment would not have been possible without the untiring and titanic efforts of our Chairpersons. We extend our deepest gratitude and thanks to Mr. K. C. Jose, Lecturer, who has come all the way from Samtse College of Education, Mr. Chandra Shekhar Sharma who came from College of Science and Technology, Phuentsholing, Mr. Karma Dorji, Chief. Education Monitoring Officer, Thimphu and Ms. Sunita Sary, Teacher, from Kuenga Higher Secondary School here in Paro.

We are deeply indebted to all our Dzongkhag Education Officers, principals and educational officials from other departments and agencies. We thank you all for your kind presence.

We extend our sincere gratitude and thanks to all our teachers who came from as far as Paro to Punakha, Wangduephodrang and Thimphu to Phuentsholing. We are very grateful for your kind support and participation. Without you, this entire seminar would have not been possible. We are very thankful to you all for sending us the Reflection Document in the stipulated time, your hard work is highly valued, and back to schools, we extend our heartiest thanks and regards to all the teachers who have worked hard together to come up with wonderful reflections.

We are also very grateful to our Director, Paro College of Education and Mr. Kezang Sherab, the entire crew in the Department of English, and all the individuals in management and administrative support division who have always been supportive of this programme and provided critical support. Our Administrative Officer, Tashi Phuntsho, Administrative assistant, Ms. Sangay Wangmo deserves our special commendation for

ensuring the smooth conduct of our seminar. We are also thankful to Mr. Tshewang Tashi, Upendra, Dawa Pem here in the college and Mr. Kelzang Jamtsho and Mr. Kinzang Dendup from Druk Air Corporation for their wonderful arrangement of this programme. The trainees and lecturers here in the College, you have made your own contributions by your presence and support. We thank you all too.

With this, we came to the end of *Rinpung Experiment XVI* very successfully. Long live the seminar! May our English studies be mighty symbol of our education development.

Thank you

General Feedback and Suggestions: A Summary

While addressing the gathering of teachers, the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Education took the opportunity to thank the outgoing Project Director, Dr. John Steward for his support and contributions made towards the development of New English Curriculum and welcomed the new Project Director, Dr. David Wagner.

She said that as the New English Curriculum had been found to be good and appreciated although many were of the view that the trainings and familiarization workshops were inadequate both in terms of duration and quality. As such, workshops such as this would be very beneficial as it gives our teachers a platform to not only make suggestions for improvement but also share their experiences and challenges faced in teaching the new curriculum. The Ministry is open to positive criticism and suggestions and all participants were urged to participate actively and to make the best use of this opportunity to give their feedback and clarify their doubts.

The importance of the role of the teachers in inculcating healthy habits in our children, the development of effective communication skills by encouraging the love for reading, creating awareness on hygiene and waste management were also emphasized by the Secretary.

Mr. Lhendup Drukpa, CAPSD explained to the House that the new curriculum was initiated after a nation-wide needs-study and analysis conducted by the CAPSD and in response to the cries on the declining standard of the English language. Student-centered approach was taken up as an immediate solution so that the desired English standards are achieved. About 250 teachers from across the kingdom were involved in making the new curriculum.

Strengths

In that the new English curriculum envisions a global outlook and encourages discovery, creativity and analysis. The students of the

present curriculum pay more attention, communicate more freely and thus participate actively in the lessons. Besides, all the language strands – listening, speaking, reading and writing – are integrated in the new syllabus. This apart, the curriculum areas are all life-related and life-relevant, besides having inter-textual links. It promotes the learning of language through literature. The activities are split according to the Bloom's skill levels. The portfolios across the levels encourage research, creativity, imagination and thus child-centredness.

A spectrum of curriculum materials are incorporated in the new syllabus along with the teacher's manuals as well as assessment guidelines.

On the issue of unseen texts in the examination papers, the House was divided in their opinions. A few teachers felt that the unseen texts would drain students' interest, besides their possibility of ignoring the prescribed texts after the lessons. Are our students ready for answering questions based on unseen texts? In this regard, Mr. Jose K. C of Samtse College of Education clarified that the seen texts in the curriculum should act like the props and planks used in the beginning of a concrete construction. Just as they are removed once the concrete structure is dry, the seen texts should no further be depended on by teachers and students, who by then should be able to approach the unseen texts independently. It is high time we changed or had a paradigm shift in the issues of exams.

Weaknesses

However, most teachers remarked that the new syllabus is of too high a standard for the low achievers. In the words of a teacher, it was like using a degree syllabus in the High School. There was a big jump from the current preparedness of both the Bhutanese teachers and students such that the transition, though well-aspired, was too difficult. Given the over-crowded classes, loaded teachers, scanty resources and the current low standards of the students etc., could the Bhutanese teachers of today peacefully take a back seat in his/ her lessons, leaving the entire lesson responsibly to the students? Mr. Lhendup Drukpa conceded that congested classes interfered with the proper implementation of the new curriculum, which could, however, be discussed in NBIPS. Some teachers, however, felt that such a transition was good and worth a try despite the initial burdensomeness.

Highlighting the mismatch between the ground preparedness and the new syllabus, Mr. Jose, SCoE presented a skit in which a highly demanding husband continued to have indigestion (chiefly because his overloaded wife washed the rice only once) even after divorcing his first wife, his indigestion continued. He invited the House to consider whether our problem had been the syllabus (which needed a change, like the wife in the skit) or the unpreparedness of our grounds (our school situations). Mr. Lhendup Drukpa from CAPSD echoed the same sentiment when he asked the House whether the new curriculum was responsible for our children's not being able to understand poetry and other texts, as felt by some teachers or was the problem with the teachers.

An example in point, Mr. Karma Phuntsho said, is his – an English-History Paro NIE pass-out – having to teach Mathematics, neither English nor History. Another teacher wondered whether the Bhutanese teacher of today (and, of course, the Bhutanese students at large) was adequately equipped for a totally student-centered lesson, given the over-crowded classes, loaded teachers, scanty resources and the current low standards of the students etc.

The most repeatedly expressed concern in the workshop comprised:

1. Inadequate resources in most schools, ranging from the basic dictionaries to library to Internet. Thus, even the motivated teacher got frustrated.
2. Too many activities, *per se* good, in the new syllabus for the time realistically available to the teachers. Assessing students' portfolios, journals, reading logs and maintaining CFA for them, albeit academically rich, are too demanding for our teachers.
3. The grammar and language stream in the syllabus across VIII – X levels are too vague, without proper guidelines.
4. The question pattern in the written examinations is confusing and the instructions unclear, especially the choice between Set I and Set II in Sections A, B and C. So, to the teacher, question setting proves a hard thing to accomplish.

Some workshop participants also observed that though the Teachers' manuals do touch on various contents, the information and guidance in them are scanty and at times incomplete. Certain words being used are hardly found in the dictionaries available to the teachers, let alone the non-availability of adequate dictionaries and other essential resource materials in most of our schools. The correct pronunciation of some words, especially the names of the authors pose another hurdle for teachers and students. For example, some teachers were confused about the connotations of "nakedness" and "Gabriel" in D. H. Lawrence's novel The Giver. While accepting the fact that, everything cannot be given in the curriculum and the teachers and students are to be researching and creative, at times their best efforts often fail. In this connection, it has been pointed out that websites like *www.Swissedu.com* helps, to some extent, anyone in search of such academic help.

Responding to a query about no *Subject* in formal letter-writing in the new syllabus, Mr. Lhundup Drukpa cautioned the teachers that it was always good to retain all the components of letter writing. Better defined directions in letter writing could be expected as we get more professional in due course of time.

Commenting on the question of how prepared the graduates of the two teacher training colleges are to handle the new syllabus, the lecturers of the colleges assured the House that due attention has always been given to preparing the trainees to the current school syllabus of the time. The lecturers, Ms. Karma Pedey, PCoE and Mr. Jose of SCoE cited examples of the variety of training activities the two colleges are carrying out, geared towards such a preparedness: poetry dramatizations, verse recitations, fake poet interviews, Shakespeare Nites, 'Debate-skit sandwich' and so on.

Whereas the new curriculum caters to ensuring the ownership of learning by students themselves, to a rich spectrum of literature readings in terms of nationality, gender of writers, themes and their centrifugally etc., Mr. Jose K.C, SCoE remarked that pushing Shakespeare to the curriculum museum was unwarranted on any ground. It was like, he said, abolishing the Evening Prayers in the school hostel just because the hostellers were found not to be doing the Prayers properly. While a few participants supported him and wanted Shakespeare back in the curriculum, some others opposed to his views.

SUGGESTIONS

Ms. Nancy Strickland, Project Coordinator, CCO, Thimphu suggested we request media like the BBS to play some of the curriculum materials, which would provide students with correct pronunciations besides enhancing their comprehension and enjoyment of the materials. Students could also tape their own reading, to be advised later by teachers.

The Colleges of Education could also produce some teaching learning materials on the new curriculum such as, for instance, audio cassettes, besides drilling the student teachers in the new curriculum. We could also have sample portfolios, reading logs and letter writing etc. Besides, the CERD could create a permanent forum along the lines of the *Rimpung Experience* for teachers' academic growth. The Education Ministry could devise an *Internet forum* for teachers' ongoing academic and professional discussions.

To the request of the teachers that they (language teachers) be given fewer teaching periods and responsibilities, Mr. Karma Dorji, EMSSD reminded the teachers that other subjects were also important. He suggested there be proper synergy between the CAPSD, BBE and EMSSD while both framing the syllabus and implementing it.

The weaknesses in the Teachers' Manuals be addressed soon by including adequate language and grammar materials and sufficient background on the writers of the literature texts or by supplementing them with separate language and grammar books.

This apart, the issues of scarce resources, overloaded teachers, high standards of the syllabus are to be studied and addressed at the earliest possible.

The concern of high standards could be addressed by implementing the syllabus from the PP level and gradually progressing it to XII.

A workshop on assessment be organized covering both quality question setting and assessment methods.

Mr. Karma Dorji, EMSSD complemented the teachers of the workshop for knowing the new syllabus so thoroughly well within the short period of just two years. Their presentations were an ample testimony to this knowledge. This indicated our teachers' enthusiasm in the profession that they chose.

Participants/Participating Schools in Rinpong Experiment XVI:

1. Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Education, Thimphu, Bhutan
2. Aum Nancy Strickland, Canadian Cooperation Office, Thimphu
3. The Project Coordinators, CIDA, Thimphu
4. Director, Paro College of Education, Paro
5. Mr. Karma Dorji, Chief, EMSSD, Ministry of Education, Thimphu
6. Mr. K.C. Jose, Lecturer, College of Education, Samtse.
7. Mr. Chandra Shekhar Sharma, Lecturer, College of Science & Technology, Phuentsholing.
8. Lecturers and Management Staff, Paro College of Education, Paro
9. Ms. Tshering Dolkar, Curriculum Officer, Royal Education Council, Thimphu
10. Mr. Chogyel Tenzin, Curriculum Officer, Royal Education Council, Thimphu
11. Mr. Lhundup Dukpa, Curriculum Officer, Royal Education Council, Thimphu
12. Ms. Deki Yangzom, Curriculum Officer, CAPSD, Paro
13. Mr. Kezang Jamtsho, Pilot, Druk Air Corporation, Paro
14. Mr. Kinzang, Pilot, Druk Air Corporation, Paro
15. Ms. Dawa Pem, ICT Officer, Paro College of Education, Paro
16. Mr. Tashi Phuntsho, Asst. Adm Officer, Paro College of Education, Paro
17. Mr. Upendra, System Administrator, ICT, Paro College of Education, Paro
18. Mr. Tshewang Tashi, Music Instructor, Paro College of Education, Paro
19. Mr. Rinzin Wangdi, Bajothang HSS, Wangduephodrang.
20. Mr. N. K. Chapagai, V. Principal, Dawakha LSS, Paro
21. Ms. Karma Wangmo, V. Principal, Pasakha LSS, Chukha
22. Ms. Sonam Wangmo, Gaupel LSS, Paro
23. Mr. Kinley Gyeltshen, Principal, Punakha HSS, Punakha
24. Mr. Yesh B. Ghaley, Principal, Chukha HSS, Chukha
25. Mr. Nima Sherpa, Principal, Dawakha LSS, Paro
26. Ms. Sunita Sary, Teacher, Kuenga HSS, Paro
27. Ms. Tshering Yangzom, Teacher, Zilukha LSS, Thimphu
28. Ms. Karma Delma, Teacher, Changzamtog LSS, Thimphu
29. Mr. Kencho Tobgyel, Teacher, Lobesa LSS, Thimphu

30. Ms. Kesang Wangmo, Teacher, Gaupel LSS, Paro
31. Mr. Dorji Wangchuk, Teacher, Nobding LSS, Wangduephodrang
32. Ms. Chado Dolma, Teacher, Genekha LSS, Thimphu
33. Ms. Sonam Choki, Teacher, Bajothang HSS, Wangduephodrang
34. Mr. Norbu Tshering, Teacher, Punakha HSS, Punakha
35. Ms. Susan Alaxender, Teacher, Ugyen Academy, Punakha
36. Mr. Sonam K. Gyamtsho, Teacher, Chukha HSS, Chukha
37. Ms. Janice, Rinchen HSS, Teacher, Thimphu
38. Ms. Anita Pradhan, Teacher, Phuentsholing MSS, Chukha
39. Ms. Sonam Yangzom, Teacher, Wangchhu MSS, Chukha
40. Mr. Pema Choidar, Teacher, Dechencholing MSS, Thimphu
41. Ms. Radha Kharga, Teacher, Thinleygang MSS, Thimphu
42. Ms. Anu Goley, Teacher, Wangdue LSS, Wangduephodrang
43. Ms. Kinley Yangzom, Teacher, Wangdue LSS,
Wangduephodrang
44. Ms. Choney Zhangmo, Teacher, Choden LSS, Thimphu
45. Mr. Kinzang Tshewang, Teacher, Gedu MSS, Chukha
46. Mr. Sangay Tenzin, Teacher, Chungkha LSS, Chukha
47. Mr. Tashi Wangchuk T, Teacher, Chungkha LSS, Chukha
48. Ms. Karma Choki, Teacher, Tshimalakha LSS, Chukha
49. Ms. Dorji Dema, Teacher, Tshimalakha LSS, Chukha
50. Ms. Sonam Choden, Teacher, Gaselo LSS, Wangduephodrang
51. Ms. Tashi Pema, Teacher, Shari HSS, Paro
52. Ms. Sonam Dekar, Teacher, Shari HSS, Paro
53. Ms. Dechen Zangmo, Teachers, Shari HSS, Paro
54. Ms. Chencho Dema, Teachers, Shari HSS, Paro
55. Ms. Kinley Wangmo, Teacher, Shari HSS, Paro
56. Ms. Tshering Lhamo, Teacher, Shari HSS, Paro
57. Mr. Dakar Dorji, Teacher, Shari HSS, Paro
58. Mr. J. C. Kumar, Teacher, Shari HSS, Paro,
59. Mr. Kinga, Teacher, Shari HSS, Paro
60. Mr. Chhimi Tshewang, Teacher, Shari HSS, Paro
61. Ms. Chimi Lhamo, Teacher, Shengana LSS, Punakha
62. Ms. C. K. Sharma, Teacher, Loselling LSS, Thimphu
63. Mr. Ramesh Kumar Katwal, Teacher, Dungna LSS, Chukha
64. Mr. Ritu Gazmeer, Teacher, Kelki HSS, Thimphu
65. Mr. Pema Dorji, Teacher, Chamgang LSS, Thimphu
66. Ms. Chogyel Zam, Teacher, Chapcha MSS, Chukha
67. Ms. Kusum Latha Sharma, Teacher, Yangchenphug HSS,
Thimphu

68. Mr. Karma Phuntsho, Teacher, Jibjokha LSS,
69. Ms. Chimi Yangzom, Teacher, Wochu LSS, Paro
70. Ms. Pema Zangmo, Teacher, Wochu LSS, Paro
71. Ms. Dorji Dolma, Teacher, Wochu LSS, Paro
72. Ms. Chimi Yangzom, Teacher, Wochu LSS, Paro
73. Mr. Chencho Wangchuk, Teacher, Tashidingkha MSS, Punakha
74. Ms. Kuenzang Wangmo, Teacher, Khasadrapchu MSS, Thimphu
75. Mr. R. Ananda Krishna Kumar, Teacher, Nima HSS, Thimphu
76. Mr. Kezang Dorji, Teacher, Kamji LSS, Chukha
77. Ms. Ugyen Choden, Teacher, Phuentsholing LSS, Chukha
78. Ms. Chimi, Teacher, Phuentsholing LSS, Chukha
79. Mr. Sanjiv Kr. Alay, Teacher, Lango LSS, Paro
80. Mr. M. K Chapagai, Teacher, Dawakha LSS, Paro
81. Ms. Rinzin Choden, Teacher, Motithang HSS, Thimphu
82. Mr. Indran Lal Bhattarai, Teacher, Reldi HSS, Chukha
83. Ms. Tashi Chhoezom Namgay, Teacher, Phuentsholing HSS, Chukha
84. Ms. Tshering Dema, Teacher, Darla MSS, Chukha
85. Ms. Pratima Rai, Teacher, Khangku MSS, Paro
86. Mr. Rinzin Dorji, Teacher, Samtengang MSS
87. Ms. Leki, Teacher, Drukgyel HSS, Paro
88. Mr. Tshewang Tenzin, Teacher, Drukgyel LSS, Paro
89. Ms. karma Dema, Teacher, Khuruthang MSS, Punakha
90. Ms. Sangay Dema, Teacher, Khuruthang MSS, Punakha
91. Ms. Karma Wangmo, Teacher, Pasakha LSS, Chukha
92. Ms. Munnu Rai, Teacher, Kabesa LSS, Phunakha
93. Ms. Choki Yangzom, Teacher, Changangkha LSS, Thimphu
94. Ms. Sonam, Teacher, Jigme Namgyal LSS, Thimphu
95. Mr. Rajiv, Teacher, Gaselo MSS, Wangduephodrang
96. Mr. Sonam Tshewang, Teacher, Lungtenzampa MSS, Thimphu
97. All English Elective Teacher Trainees, Paro College of Education, Paro

Centre for Educational Research & Development

Mission: *Serving Educational Progress*

Goals

- To support and undertake comprehensive and systematic curriculum development activities aimed at bringing about improvements in our education programmes.
- To foster a culture of enquiry and analysis in the continuous search of knowledge through regular interaction with research centres and institutes of repute.
- To study the current educational practices and developments in relevant fields and provide findings to the concerned agencies in education for consideration of policy options in relation to relevant educational goals, content, and methodology;
- Provide a forum for educators and researchers to support action research and professional development for enhanced performance by our education stake-holders.
- Promote a national pool of scholarship and professionalism in the best traditions of research and development, for the flowering of the Bhutanese mind.

The major thrust areas of the Centre are research, publications and the professional support. To date, the Centre has developed a set of national standards for English for schools in Bhutan called *The Silken Knot*.

It has carried out a study on and made recommendations for the improvement of primary education and initiated modest programmes like the *Rinpung Experiment* and professional development activities, apart from participating in the *National Educational Assessment*, among others.

CERD has been working closely with CAPSD especially in the review and revision of the English curriculum – PP-XII, and supporting the Dzongkha Development Authority in the production of bilingual dictionaries.

The Centre has followed the evolution of our education system and published *The Call: Stories of Yesteryears*, and begun an educational journal called *Rabsel*. CERD has launched the publication of *Yontoen: the CERD Occasional Papers* recently. Encouraging and initiating action research being one of its thrust areas, CERD invites contributions from our fellow-teachers, scholars, parents, students, and indeed, from anyone who has a stake in education, highlighting issues which have a bearing on the education of our children and the system as a whole. Please send in your research papers, both hard and soft copies to:

The Research Officer
Centre for Educational Research & Development
Paro College of Education, Paro
Or E-mail them to cerdir@druknet.bt