

A Cognizable Voyage Towards Activity-Based Learning on the Track of Engineering English

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Abstract

“The striking thing on learning is that no one can plagiarize it from you”

– BB King

With the herald of liberalization and globalization, the demand for talented engineers is high in many indigenous Multi-National Corporations (MNCs). The CEOs of BPOs complain about fresh recruits from engineering colleges for not ‘industry ready’, because of their skills-shortage. In today’s globalized market, engineering students’ success in the on-campus recruitment is mainly based on their demonstration of indispensable English communication skills. De facto, it can candidly be captioned as the ‘survival skill’ in the competitive professional scenario. Thus, the ever increasing significance of universalized English language leads in integrating English into engineering is an effective way to gratify this huge demand of technically-skilled workforce landing in good jobs through developing an optimum efficiency of students in their Professional English communication skills. If teaching English was a cake walk at schools; at college level, the path was speckled with stumbling blocks galore. The main factors responsible for this disappointing scenario are that i) English language always holds a second place in line comparing with the technical subjects in the technical institutes and ii) most of the students hailed from rural and underprivileged areas, which challenges mainly the language teacher. Students of technical course come with one big dream in unison of becoming a full-fledged professional one day; of working at some coveted post in an MNC but, most of them find their dreams shattered at the very outset when they realize that they lack tremendously in effective communication skills. As motivation becomes low; learning will be slow, it is the responsibility of the English teacher to take the task of grooming such craved students to acquire an absolutely evolving, challenging and rewarding experience employed

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through innovative and interactive strategies to help them empowering in communicative proficiency by overcoming their hinders related to language. Hence this paper aims at highlighting the possibilities of incorporating a pragmatic stratagem, the Activity-Based Learning (ABL) in communicative English as it appeals highly in developing the critical mind of learners for their fittest endurance in real life situations.

* Full Form:

ABL - Activity-Based Learning
MNC - Multi-National Corporation
CEO - Chief Executive Officer
BPO - Business Process Outsourcing

I. INTRODUCTION

**Give the learner something to do, not something to learn;
And the employing is of such a nature as to stipulate thoughts;
Learning naturally results.
– John Dewey**

Contemplating a knowledge-based economy in this competitive techno-savvy world, engineering practice and Higher Education Institutions bear the obligation of delivering graduates outfitted with a considerable list of hard skills and soft skills to satisfy the demand of multinational companies in India. Consistently, every year a huge number of students from various etymological and social foundations look for entrance into these colleges with the expectation of turning into a productive corporate individual one day however, little do they understand that sufficient knowledge on English, an essential imperative for this endeavor. In such milieu, a viable communicator can improve his status and come to occupy more significant situations in his organization.

The eccentricity is that although English is the mechanism of guidance in most of the engineering colleges, language proficiency is not a rule for choice in any such institutes. Thus the students hailing from underprivileged and rural territories or mother-tongue medium schools spot this extra responsibility of learning language very bulky, yet they realize that avoiding learning English language could endanger their future. Henceforth some pupils haste to join in spoken English institutes to trounce this issue but by the course end they feel tricked as they scarcely gain any ground or master anything beneficial in these classes. They don't have the knowledge to comprehend that language gaining being a steady and persistent process and that cannot be learnt overnight through bridge or crash programmes.

In such panorama, the satisfactory way out would be an interactive communication in the midst of students and the educators, the preeminent stratagem to boost learning. These collaborations augment the necessary output from the pupils, who get the chances to utilize communication as a characteristic course of action fairly

to pack the appropriate responses. Retaining open discourses in the class allocates the learners to insight new perceptions of individuals from various cultures and atmospheres. Advancing interaction among the pupils entails dynamic strategizing.

The educationalists have contended that concentrating on agreeable learning rather than individual learning builds up interactive communication, which is a compelling system of learning instead of competition-based outcomes and objectives. Intuitive based learning permits the learners to work in groups and gatherings with from various locales. This adds to the component of assortment and amplifies the openings for the pupils to learn and share thoughts. Henceforth, the inputs and the outcomes of the learners are additionally taken the full advantage and it makes a strong and innate learning condition.

It is referred that certain learning standards appropriate for the neo-millennial students emphasizing that technology redesigned our ways of life, methods for communication and methods for learning. It authorizes awareness in using multimedia, esteeming each various kinds of communication, exercises, skills, activities and articulations. The educators can select an exclusive medium most appropriate for the learners' learning styles. Learning depends totally on the inquiring, sieving and blending occurrences as opposed to retaining a single resource. The tutors attempt to mold the pupils to draw in mutual learning for assorted, implicit, arranged chances over independent unite of disparate and overt information resources.

Active-based learning on real or simulated experience proffers recurrent notches for manifestation. They esteem both the educators and the learners in appreciating direct partaking in making vivid frames or allusions for the best learning outcomes. Enunciations through non-stop linked networks of illustration instead of factual. This incorporates a sign with the assistance of associated, positioned simulations abundantly.

PREDICAMENTS AND THE STRATEGIES TO COMBAT IN ELT

For effectual remedial instruction of English, it becomes imperative to comprehend the nature of the learner's academic problems. Only when we identify why a fault has been delegated, we can start correcting it in an orderly way.

- **Lack of Clear-Cut Aims for English Language Teaching:** The essential point of teaching English at this juncture focus on the critical attributes of the language capacity namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. There is a desperate requirement for a more prominent consideration regarding the useful aspect of language, which is identified with present-day needs of the students and the instructor should figure out what his assignment is and what he is attempting to accomplish by educating English. It is the pedagogue to decide how and when to teach a particular subject-topic.
- **Lack of inappropriate environment at home or educational premise:** More than 60% students come from rural areas where they are taught only the simple subtleties of language which is lacking for them to procure capability in language. Such pupils are not at standard with the other more benefitted students. This diminishes their self-reliance intensity to a substantial extent. The semantic skill of even the individuals who originate from English medium

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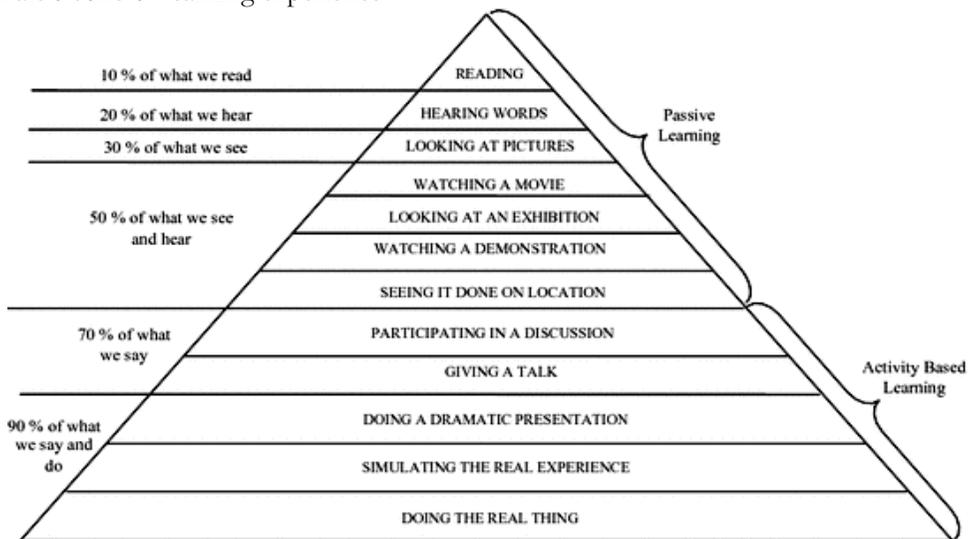
schools is a long way from effortless accessibility, notwithstanding the actuality that they have been on the track to learn the language for 6-12 years. This is the well-cleared fact that in the vast majority of the Indian families or even English medium schools there is no culture of talking or communicating in English.

- **Influence of mother tongue:** Thinking consistently happens in one's native language and this makes a significant obstacle in gaining immediacy in a language which is not utilized on ordinary assertion. Indeed, the exposition from one's confined language to some other language is conceivable only when one has become dexterous at new dialect. This was seen as one of the serious issues of such androgogues.
- **Inadequate vocabulary:** Lack of word power exposes an individual from unconstrained and incredible articulations. In India most of the individuals read native vernacular papers and magazines. Thus they cannot create rich lexis and verbalizations in English. This lacuna leaves the pupils regularly confused at numerous moments.
- **Apathetic attitude of the parents:** Most of the parents need mindfulness towards the significance of English language and they could do with their kids to give attentiveness more on the technical subjects which would assist them with cracking competitive exams. This demeanor decreases the enthusiasm for acquiring English language and subsequently the androgogues begin disregarding the subject completely.
- **Psychological block:** When such pupils are exposed to the college culture they undergo introverted and apprehensive in front of the pupils who are from better supportive such as schools and wealth. Despite the fact that they may have 'O' grade and reverberated knowledge on science subjects but a minor tangle gets unfavorable and is sufficient to bring down their confidence. Such androgogues become restrained and independent and build up a Psychological block while conversing. They envision mockery and negative disparagement from others and build a cocoon around themselves.
- **Lack of training:** Spoken English always needs practice, but the immense number of the pupils do not possess.
- **Lack of self inspiration and intrigue:** Students do not show any drive at their own level to improve their dismal status. They simply sit around idly in playing a habitual pettiness for their condition.
- **Inappropriate Approach for Teaching-Learning Process:** Language must be gained through a characteristic process of learning, moderately through a counterfeit one and English language is unquestionably not an unusual case. Correspondingly, we normally expand our native language; similarly, the androgogues ought to be apposite in every walk of life, where they get direct understanding of the language.

Instructing English language in a simulated way leads in prompting the more vulnerable establishment of the subject in the pupils. We need to accentuate on linguistic rightness, yet not to the detriment of familiar utilization of language. Syntactic mistakes ought to be acknowledged as a natural part of language obtaining at the beginning step of androgogues, while they can be demand on to master the language at

the later phases of their learning procedure. Along these lines, the ability of communicating viably is an acquired souvenir. Most of us, not gifted with inherent flamboyance, can nevertheless develop the capability. It depends partly on obtaining a comprehension of strategy, practical improvement of competence and certainty.

In the contemporary education system, the authorization of English, a major window in the modern world, is being fortified step by step with the huge advancement of modern communication usages. Existing learning hypotheses, for example, constructivism and behaviorism have been stylish before ultramodern technology. As the magnificence of the English language lies in making a sensitive environment, a language educator should consume different inventive strategies in the classroom and this will make instructing and learning of language simple and unconstrained. One of such approach is Activity-based learning (ABL), which depicts a scope of pedagogical approaches to deal with educating. Its focal point is that learning ought to be anchored in doing some hands-on experiments and analyses, encouraging the learning from the basic or brief exercise to more complex activities. The scope of action based learning is established in the customary notion that learners are dynamic students fairly to be inactive beneficiaries of information, for example the students can get the chance to build their own conceptualization and ascertain answers for issues. In the event of providing chance to them to investigate by their own would create an ideal learning atmosphere, at that point the learning becomes blissful and dependable. An intrepid opportunity to communicate without any restriction consistently adds to furnish the best learning results. This is strongly highlighted in the illustration of Edgar Dale's cone of learning experience.

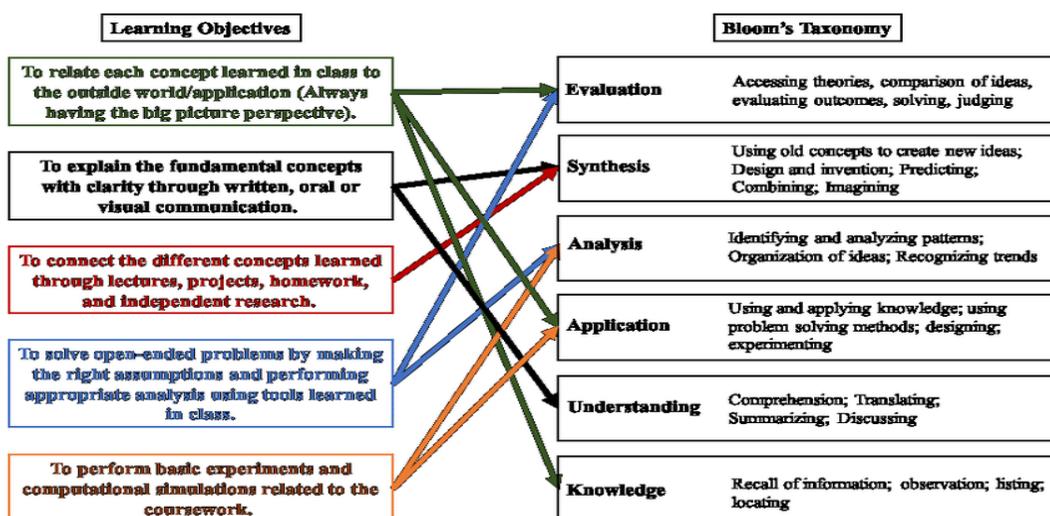


"I hear and it slips my mind. I see and I recollect. I do and I comprehend." – Confucius is the prototype of ABL, where the educator should go about as a facilitator of realizing who makes a platform for students to make inquiries, exchange individual perspectives and appraise others' perspectives and thoughts.

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Afar this, the job of the educator in activity-based learning is to build up the technique of training by recognizing students' results, having noticed the results of picking up legitimate methodologies, choosing the proper activities to stimulate the students and advancing collaboration in doing action. Also, the students have acquiescence for interactive learning to promote the great hierarchical abilities looking for new knowledge. ABL encourages the students to concentrate more and more on increasing inquisitiveness and makes an optimistic situation to react to the instructive settings for various tasks. The androgogues learn in light of the reality that they become extremely engaged. Through this stratagem ABL, the educators attempt to inculcate the learners to follow Bloom's taxonomy of learning domain.

As indicated by Bloom's Taxonomy, a task must be recollected, comprehended, applied, dissected, assessed and formed. Bloom's Taxonomy progresses the advanced order of thinking skills in education. For instance, dissecting and assessing ideas, processes and principles, instead of simply recollecting the information (**Annexure 1**). It is frequently utilized when structuring instructive material and learning processes.



SOME PROPOSED PARADIGMS IN ABL:

Brainstorming: Brainstorming activities give students the certainty to put stock in themselves and their capacity to communicate in English autonomously. It may be done independently on paper or in a group, verbally or on the writing board. It is an immediate modus operandi for congregating ideas and outlooks for enhanced association and reflection. During the session, students share all the thoughts that strike a chord with respect to the idea or subject being talked about. They can employ diagrammatical or graphical representation, concept or mind mapping, Venn diagram, Spider diagram and so on to catch the thoughts and realities presented by the pupils. Fluency and subject knowledge are the significant parts of conceptualizing. In the session, to generate new ideas, all thoughts are taken for consideration without

limitation. The motto is to indulge the students to make an effort to mold on their own and through others' ideas that is, listening others to what their friends say.

Sentence construction: In this activity, the teacher splits the class into two groups and makes use of synonyms; a word is announced by a group and the other group has to give the equivalent meaning, antonyms, parts of speech that particular word belongs to and other extra information or description on that lexis. The same game can be played for learning prefixes, suffixes, coinages of new words, etc. Activity-based instruction, the learner-centric, lays a strong concrete for effectual learning and inspires the students to play a part in class activities.

For example, (i) in the word 'intelligent' is ended with 't' and the following student in the other group should state a word beginning with 't.' (ii) when the word 'delegates' is composed on the board and students are approached to enroll the appropriate words, the related thoughts that may come up are: specialists, persistent, conference, remedy, and conclusion and so on. (iii) A full sentence can be given to students and train them to add sentences associated with the specific sentence to cook up a story like "The children were playing in the ground when the kidnappers come."

The Zigzag Method: The Zigzag is a functioning learning exercise. It is a beneficial line of attack for learning a meticulous material. It helps the students and the educators successfully to cover the entire study material in a reasonably less time. In an enormous classroom it is a helpful device. In this technique, a general current topic is given and students are split into smaller groups. A student from the gathering is fixed to read and turn into an announcer to pronounce the topic in the form of riddles (e.g., the first team is given team-building issues and the riddles and the next team can be given time-management issues and the riddles). Then, every student has been a specialist on their bits of riddles regarding their group topic, they say that riddle piece to the other group students and they should come up with their ideas and at long last, every student has wrapped up, the riddle has been reassembled and everybody in the group knows something significant about each bit of the riddle. As the last part of the session, the mentor may provoke the groups to deliberate a colloquium to the entire class about what they have realized together.

Just a Minute: In this game, the instructor directs the students to outline sentences with mistakes and this will grant them self-confidence and fervor. The mentor asserts a few words and invites the students to say something on that word. The student's may commit mistakes however by training the mistakes could be corrected. The pedagogue should always make sure to heighten the students' demeanor and curiosity to partake in the class tasks. At the end of the game, the instructor should recap how every student has performed and appraise his thoughts, sound knowledge and innovativeness. The pedagogue can channel the way the learners to pick and choose the appropriate words without making them aware of highlighting anybody specifically. This game will make the students not only to focus on minor subtleties while talking however helps them to become powerful public impromptu speakers. It also takes into account, the listeners' utmost concentration and attentiveness.

Questions Game: This activity enables the students to build up the reasoning and questioning skills. In this activity the educator partitions the class into two gatherings and chooses the topics for their debate. From the first group, anyone member can signify the group and they need to assume a thing in their mind and they should not make known their assumed thing to another group. By posing inquiries, another gathering should detect the answers. The inquiry should be constrained in explicit numbers. Thus the learners can fabricate their critical thinking skills by asking probing questions. Through this activity, the learners come out of their submissive mode of listening, replicating and taking notes. This game kindles the learners to analyze things for themselves, and further rouses to learn and react better.

LEARNING A DETAILED CONCEPT OF AN ACADEMIC UNIT THROUGH ABL

Action based learning can assist an academic concept to be comprehended and focuses on fulfillment of the topic concentrating the students to learn and pertain it. This can be possible in an array of ways: through group discussion, peer conversation, symposium, workshop and so forth. The learning of the meticulous tutorial trails definite phases.

- **Pre-Task:** During this stage the instructor presents the subject and gives clear directions to the androgogues on what they should do at the task stage. The tutor educates the individuals in the group to enthusiastically involve and create it. Pre-task incorporates guidance, association and execution of the idea.
- **While-Task:** During the while-task the students finish the given assignment in interactive method adhering to guidelines given by the instructor. Here, the educator screens and offers support. In While-task the learners additionally follow certain steps such as Planning, Preparing, Practicing and Presenting.
- **Planning:** In the planning stage the students form into groups, examine, design and break down their task. They set up a short oral or composed report to mention to the class what occurred during their task. Then they put into practice what they are going to enlighten in their groups. In the interim the educator is accessible for the learners to explain any questions.
- **Preparing:** In the preparing stage students draft their assignment, check for errors, alter and edit it. They get prearrangement for a formal staging.
- **Practice:** In the practice stage the students perform their role to be launched before the class. Reporting or presenting is the last stage where the androgogues need to report back to the class verbally. When finished with revealing, the instructor and their peer groups survey their work and give output.
- **Post-Task:** This is the last stage where the students take output, recommendations and incorporate the equivalent. They also involve in an inquiry and answer session where they can explain questions raised by others. Hence the students are liberated from language control as it also empowers with the expectation of complimentary composing since students can compose and present as they need without being checked during the task. In all these three phases the learners may not vacillate to communicate their ideas with their team members and gain from them. It gives a golden chance to the

androgogues to learn autonomously without any external pressure, within the classroom context.

Advantages of activity based teaching and learning strategies

- Rote learning is debilitated and practically no extension for it.
- Guide the development trend of students and their needs and build up their talents and the direction of education is correct.
- Provide genuine opportunities for learners to self-study, where the advantages of the showing learning circumstances in their future.
- Endorse the androgogues to take accountability for their own learning.
- Furthermore, the aloofness between the educator and the learner is reduced to a great extent.
- Slow learners feel sure as they talk with their companion and are energized by them.
- Learners gather a differed exposure to language and all others skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing etc.
- Learners are presented to various configurations and examples to comprehend the given subject and to do an action on the equivalent.
- ABL is a solid informative methodology where the learners invest a great deal of articulating. The androgogues can learn by doing as they spend imparting during an activity-based exercise. It supports constant with an androgogues-centric way of thinking and it additionally permits the pedagogue to give information and direction. It adds to the upgrade of communicative fluency while not dismissing exactness. It tends to be conveyed together with traditional approach.

CHALLENGES OF ABL:

Activity-based learning involves elevated level of vivacity, dynamism and resourcefulness. The educator must be innovative in planning the errands to include the pupils in the learning process instead of thinking that the peer groups will finish the assignment and they can sit inert. This methodology requires assets beyond the course materials. A few people are restrained and find hard to cooperate with the faction. Structuring exercises for LSRW abilities are often exigent. A few individuals might be inert and may not engage. Some others in the group chat with their companions yet they do not consent to deliver it in front of the class as a result of their trepidation.

II. CONCLUSION

As change is the only constant, the demands for the learners are changing ever since. Ultra-modern approaches as well as classical approaches of learning has to be blended together to get the preferred results. The conjectural approach should not be espoused for language learning. Learners should appreciate and figure out the complete learning to be transpired. When learners are undertaking their self-individual responsibilities in learning process, the outputs will be successfully compiled.

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In the luminosity of the functionalities of English language in the 21st century, there is a dismal need to teach English as a fundamental life skill. Life skills are the abilities an individual can realize which will support him/her to be fruitful in carrying on with a gainful and fulfilling life. The burning prerequisite of this eleventh hour is to equip the engineering students for the employment market by teaching them career-oriented English language skills. In the age of globalization, also the teachers of English need to experience a change in outlook and customize their encouraging teaching methodology according to the necessities of the students.

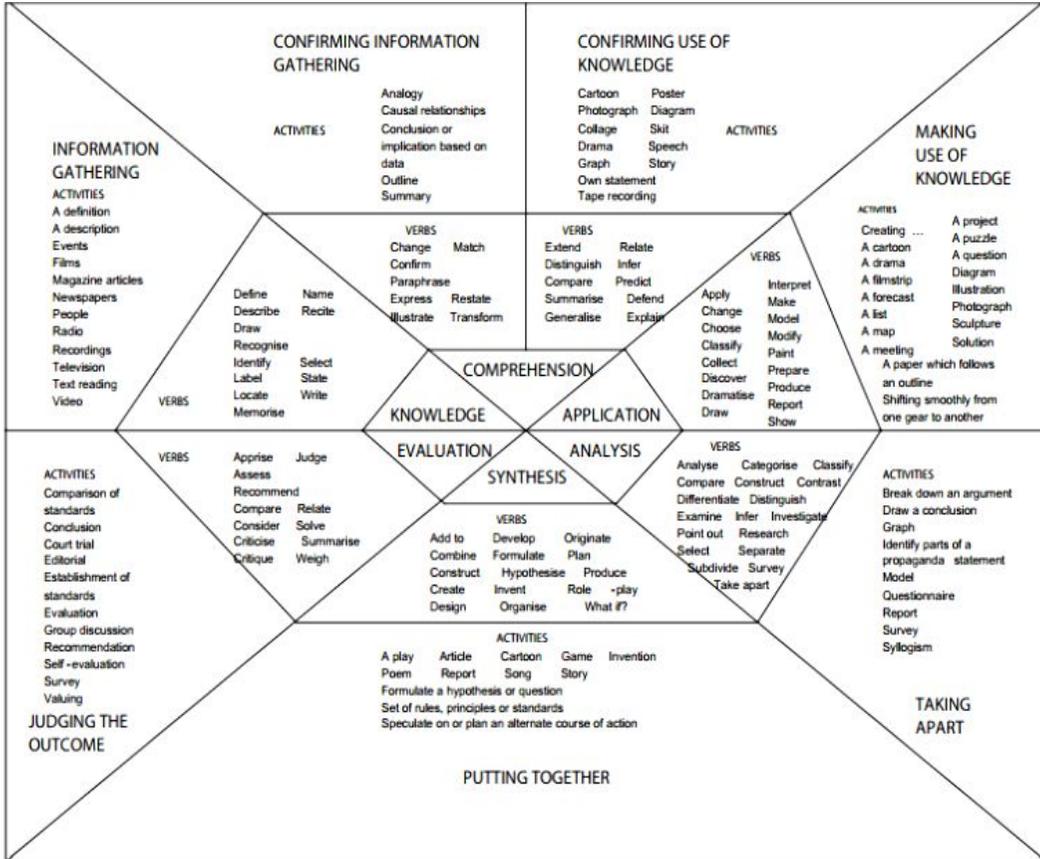
Instructing English to these young innovative personalities could be a genuine fun on the off chance that the pedagogues do it in the privilege sporting way. The educators ought to be eager to come down to the degree of androgogues and ensconce confidence in them by playing the role of a facilitator instead of the conventional job of a teacher. They ought to scrutinize the present and future language needs of learners and instruct them appropriately. It is conceivable to expel these barricades and empower androgogues successfully for better outcomes, if the mutual teaching-learning process ensues amidst the curriculum constructors, the educators, the students as well as the administrators. In such scenario, as the panacea for all demands,

**Give him fish; he will eat for a day;
Teach him to fish; he will consume for his entire life.**
- A Chinese Proverb

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ANNEXURE 1
BLOOM'S TAXONOMY: LEARNING IN ACTION



Task-Oriented Question Construction Wheel based on Bloom's Taxonomy © 2004 St Edward's University Centre for Teaching Excellence