Newsletter

Department of Communication Skills

Marwadi Education Foundation

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Innovation in Education

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Editorial

Education and innovation are inevitably connected as education enables innovations and innovations strengthen education. Technology has been playing a pivotal role in bringing drastic changes in every domain of human life and education is not an exception. When teaching-learning process itself is taking a new shape, it is a high time to talk about *Innovation in Education*.

There was a time when teaching aids were limited to a few chalks, a duster and the textbook. With the emergence of vicious mode of education called competitive education, a text-cum-guide came into existence. Over a period of time this text-cum-guide almost replaced the text. Then, the era of tuition or coaching classes came into existence prevailing in the major parts of our country. It was during this phase of education that use of technology crept into the field of education. In the present time, there is no educational organization that can do away with the infrastructure that facilitates the technology. However, how to make the judicious and optimum use of technology is a moot question.

As a result of aforesaid changes, the role of a teacher has also been changing significantly. With the advancement of technology students are well informed and their ways of learning have changed immensely. A teacher has to be a tech-savvy and at the same time vigilant enough to make sure that technology is used as a means and not the end. Innovation for a teacher is a prime condition to bring the shift from transmission of information to dissemination of knowledge. Teacher's role might become obsolete if s/he fails in innovating the ways and tools of teaching. As the problems and challenges are new, there is an unquestionable requirement of newer approaches to deal with the unprecedented situations.

Department of Communication Skills at MEF is working conscientiously to address these issues vis-à-vis issues related to innovation in English Language Teaching-Learning. The emphasis is laid on innovative and inclusive pedagogy of the global standards meeting the local needs. There is an urge to find and foster the 'better way' of educating and get educated.

Considering this profound urge and need for innovation, the theme of the second issue of the departmental Newsletter is 'Innovation in Education'. The issue includes insights and observations pertaining to the innovation in education by the faculties and students. Department of Communication Skills throbs with various activities which energize and strengthen the spirit of the department. These activities, initiatives, research and trainings carried out by the department are chronicled in the Newsletter.

We heartily welcome feedback, criticism and suggestions for the betterment of our endeavor.

Pooja Mehta and Mihir Dave
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From Head's Desk

In a century that is clearly marked by proliferation of information and knowledge, advancement of science and technology and evolution of alternative platforms, any department or organization has to conceptualize its initiatives in alignment with these new realities of the day. It is heartening to see that Department of Communication Skills, Marwadi Education Foundation, has evolved and implemented initiatives that find expression through innovative modes of engagement. Whether it is an educative Facebook page of the Department or a blog, the faculty members have found newer avenues of interaction via digital platforms. On the other hand, it is profoundly significant to note that the teachers of the department have not only incessantly worked hard and performed their duties but they have also spared their valuable time to contemplate over the key issues of the domain through 'Samvad', a faculty forum. I am deeply grateful for the kind of support that the forum received as the experts from various universities in India and abroad engaged in the discourse at 'Samvad'.

What this little narrative spread over 6 months conveys is that conventional modes of operation may not yield the desired result in the second decade of the 21st century. It is not necessary but, in fact, inevitable to innovate in order to transform the space called education. As against every other walk of life getting transformed by innovations, it is unfortunate that education has largely remained untouched by innovations. Department of Communication Skills has conceptualized and implemented innovation-driven initiatives and the pleasantly surprising results are vividly and minutely documented on the pages of this newsletter. Newsletter is also one such initiative that preserves the life of the journey of this innovative department and will continue to enrich our sense of who we are and what we stand for- innovation in education.

At this juncture, I wish to submit my sincere gratitude to Mr. Ketan Marwadi, Hon. Chairman MEF, Dr. Y. P. Kosta, Hon. Director, MEF, Dr. R. B. Jadeja, Hon. Dean, MEF and other senior officials of MEF for their unbounded support and cooperation that has ensured that these initiatives come to life and prosper. On behalf of the Department, I wish to place on record my eternal indebtedness to them.

I wish to congratulate the Editors of the newsletter for rendering the journey of the Department so richly insightful and so memorable.

Dr. Sunil Sagar
Head, Department of Communication Skills - MEF

Technology in Education: A Journey So Far

Today, technology has become an intrinsic part of our lives. It has entered into all areas of teaching and learning. Technology had entered into the field of English Language Teaching in the year 1950 by American linguists especially when the Audio-lingual method came into existence. At that time, tape recorders and audiovisual equipments used to play a central role in an audio-lingual course. A language laboratory was also introduced later on, and started being considered essential. A taped lesson would first used to present a dialogue for listening practice, allowing the student to repeat the sentences in the dialogue, line by line, and used to provide follow up fluency drills on grammar and/or pronunciation. Now, from radio, films and television, we have entered into the computer and the internet age. Computers and their varied and ever changing applications are becoming part of the educational scene today. Computer and internet have brought an astonishing change in the lives of most of the people across the world. Communication, messages, audios, visuals, photographs can be exchanged instantaneously from one part of the world to any other.

The students are spread over large distances and not confined to a classroom with a teacher teaching as earlier. This technology (computers and broadband internet) allows people spread over large distances to be connected and networked. This also allows the access to both text and visual materials. Animation is also used widely in the educational scene along with its immense use in the world of advertisement. Technology is being implemented today in various forms and through various tools such as - emails, blogs, wikis, e-portfolios, animation, video links, specialized software, etc. We can create through these tools a learning situation spread over distance and locations that are picturesquely termed as a virtual classroom.

> *"We have moved from the industrial age to the networked age. We have moved from the agricultural and industrial revolutions to the information revolutions".*

Yogesh Ramani
Department of Communication Skills - MEF

Achieving Development Goals: Innovation in Education

Innovation is defined as "the process of making changes to something established by introducing something new." Over the years there have been many changes in the way education is designed and delivered in parts of the world. If we look at the past scenario, we get to know that mostly there were teacher centered classrooms.

"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"
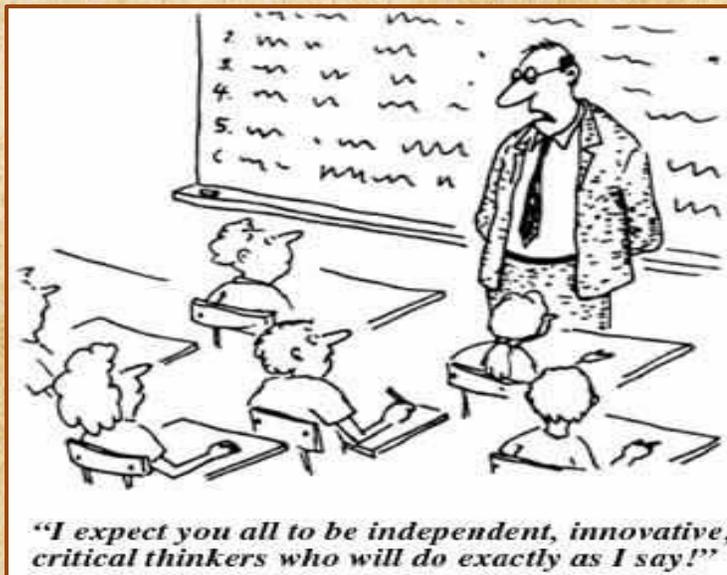
Though, India has made great advancements in improving the education system but still much remains to be done. If you see the current scenario, then you will find that there is an overflow of advanced technology all over the world, but our education system is not benefiting due to the lack of information, and knowledge of teachers, students and administrations. The students have their own restrictions, teachers have their own. Administrations admit the fact that education system is really in a pitiable shape. Today, technology plays an important role behind almost every change and also in innovations in educational design and delivery. There are immense possibilities for greater changes with the use of present-day technological advancements.

Technologies that are now available in most Commonwealth countries increase the potential to support learners and educators, and can help remove the barriers of time and space. Appropriate use of technologies can provide additional possibilities for learner support, interactivity, and access to education. For example, at the weekend, if somebody must travel to visit a relative in a rural area, so she/he is unable to attend a scheduled group discussion session. The institution broadcasts its group discussion by radio, so she/he tunes in, and uses her/his cell-phone to send her/his comments via text messages that her/his group leader shares with the group.

'Learner-Centered' Education

It is through technology, that distances can be bridged and education can be brought to the students' doorstep and with the emergence of smart phones, eBook readers, internet and low-cost computers individuals and communities in places under-served by traditional educational institutes have been provided educational assistance. A student from the Sothern India can learn what is happening in the classroom of Delhi University. A student from a remote village in any part of India can get quality material to study from any part of India and the world. Technology enables educational design and delivery to be adapted to the needs and environment of students enrolled in Open and Distance Learning (ODL). Thus, technology can also help programs shift to a 'learner-centered' approach in education. There are various changes in technology, not just in ICT, but in radio and TV as well. "Although technology should not drive our teaching, technology does drive change."

Challenges, Opportunities, and Barriers

Given the challenges of insufficient numbers of trained teachers and teachers leaving the profession can technology enable more people to access education? Will the next generation of low-cost computers make it feasible for more students in developing countries to have access to this technology? It is not the technology, but the potential it provides for access, efficiency, and enhanced learning opportunities that makes it so vital. Computers enable learners to a better access to education through ODL. Learners can use Internet to communicate with other students or instructors across a city or around the world. Teachers and students can access information through virtual libraries and the World Wide Web and use software to master technical as well as academic skills.

The opportunities are immense, but there are also technological limitations in many parts of developing countries. Barriers to technological innovations for supporting education include inadequate telecommunications, lack of trained staff,

and the cost and the availability of simple telephones, cell phones, computers, and electricity.

Here are some questions to consider in applying innovation to enable access to education:

- What processes are needed to provide electricity and broadband access for all educational institutions? (e.g. schools, colleges, universities);
- What alternatives do institutions have if they are unlikely to be connected to a reliable electricity service?
- What alternatives are there for introducing computers or increasing their numbers in schools and institutions of higher learning?
- If computers are to be installed in institutions, what processes are under way to ensure full training and support for teachers and learners to effectively integrate these into the teaching, learning and management processes?

Innovation in Education for Development

The challenge of closing the gap between the haves and have-nots may rest with the willingness of the education community to view education from a new perspective and to innovate. This may include making use of affordable and accessible technologies to expand access to education. It may also require other innovative process or service strategies that do not rely on technology. It may require a shift in focus, to target educational and training programs to align more closely with what people identify as their most urgent needs.

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Nikita Gadani
Department of Communication Skills – MEF

Reflective Learning through Storytelling: An Innovation

"Stories are marvelous, magical things, they are also, paradoxically mundane and commonplace – because they are everywhere. We cannot avoid telling them and making them. You yourself are a story; a story of how you have been and hope to be, of how you are and how you might be."   - Anonymous

When we use storytelling as a learning tool, students' past experiences, attitudes towards storytelling and intensity of feelings engendered by particular stories, together with how these stories are processed, influence how and what is learned. While storytelling is reliant on both tellers and listeners, it is fundamental to appreciate that every story is presented from the teller's perspective. Motives, ideas, words or events depict their point of view and are substantiated through tone of voice, points of emphasis and gestures. Tellers also determine what level of affective involvement they will reveal. Stories that appeal to some students may have little relevance to others given that our sense-making processes are culturally generated. While some stories evoke powerful cathartic responses, others may cause little, if any, emotional connection. The stories students tend to find appealing and want to tell, or listen to, are often those that connect in some way with their own experiences. These connections may be thematic, social, cultural or perhaps related to current interests. For example, a student teacher might tell a story about a classroom interaction that intrigued or concerned her. Now let us have a brief outline of the stages of our Reflective Learning through Storytelling Model:

Story Finding

The stories we find, and have an urgent need to tell, are frequently high in emotional content. Something about a situation excites, upsets or intrigues us. We may be overwhelmed by emotions and not always aware of why we are thinking about a particular situation in one of our storytelling sessions.

Story Telling

In the second stage, tellers and listeners focus on organising and ordering content. Stories are told and listened to for the purpose of understanding the story itself. Students attempt to make sense both of context and of human experience (Josselson, 1995). There may be some linking of ideas; however, this tends to be at a surface level.

Story Expanding

This stage is characterised by making meaning of the events being shared. Throughout the storytelling process forgotten aspects are frequently recalled,

which sometimes necessitates a degree of backtracking. Questions are asked, important aspects are expanded on and feelings are clarified.

Story Processing

Deep learning is associated with reflective activity, a key aspect of this stage where the focus shifts to working with meaning and, in particular, developing through reflective dialogue, multiple perspectives of events. Tellers and listeners engage in review processes that raise awareness of how personal knowledge influences actions taken in professional practice contexts.

Story Reconstructing

In this final stage, tellers and listeners demonstrate an ability to interrogate stories critically from as many perspectives as possible. They also critically evaluate the potential of resolutions and solutions (Kemmis, 1985; Taylor, 1998). Implications to self and practice are considered as each resolution or solution is evaluated.

However, these gains do not always occur. Some stories are told and retold without any obvious sense of advancement or resolution. Questions are left unanswered or conflicts and concerns unresolved. As a result, learning opportunities are missed. Therefore, it is useful to explore further, how storytelling can lead to the richest gains.

TED TED shared a link.
May 4

Want to tell better stories? 6 brilliant storytellers talk about their craft:

PLAYLIST: How to tell a story
www.ted.com

Why do we love our favorite stories? Masters of storytelling explore new answers to age-old questions of the craft.

Sneha Patel
Department of Communication Skills - MEF

Socrates and Crito on ELT in Technical Education

Socrates: Why are you sad my dear English teacher?

Crito: (Frustrated) Something is not right the way English is taught and learnt in Technical Education, Socrates!

Socrates: Ah! A concerned teacher! I may suggest something, if you elaborate your problems.

Crito: You know all of it, Socrates! However, let me put my problems in front of you. We, teachers like me, are to teach English to the students of Technical Education who are not interested in learning it. Secondly, it is a mass education so we can't produce quality work. Syllabus! You know, English Language is learnt and taught under the pretext of Communication Skills...

Socrates: Well, well...being skeptical is good, but don't be judgmental Crito! There are always ways...

Crito: But I don't see any...

Socrates: Teacher's pessimism will put an end to everything you can see around!

Crito: What should be done in this kind of scenario?

Socrates: (With a smile) I can show at the most the *can be* part!

Crito: Please, show and oblige.

Socrates: Here I give you a readymade theory; it is not my original thought. You need to customize it and you will see all the stakeholders of English Education in Technical Education will be happy.

Crito: (Eagerly) Is it possible? Tell me, guide me, dear Socrates.

Socrates: Implement the framework of ESP i.e. English for Specific Purposes. As the English that an engineer needs is different than what a doctor or a lawyer needs.

Crito: That's correct.

Socrates: In ESP language is viewed as a means rather than as an aim. The language teacher must be accountable, take full responsibility of what he does. The teacher is regarded as facilitator of learning rather than the teacher as source of information. All the students should not be taught the same syllabus of language.

Crito: How is it possible?

Socrates: Through (emphatically) *Needs Analysis*.

Crito: What is that?

Socrates: As a teacher you know that there are different levels of students in each

classroom.

Crito: Yes, some of my classes are excellent in their interaction and overall interest in the subject, they always want more than syllabus. But some classes, they even don't follow what I speak in English!!!

Socrates: And you treat both these classes in the same manner! Isn't there difference between a lotus and a rose?

Crito: You mean to say needs of these two classes of the same year and courses are different?

Socrates: Precisely! You are a good learner Crito.
Therefore, for the needs analysis, when a teacher goes to the class for the first time, let him/her interact with the students, involve them in some language related activities. This should continue without any interruption for a week or so. No syllabus should come in picture. The aim of the week's interaction is to know overall level of the class; on the basis of which a diagnostic test will be prepared by the teacher under the guidance of an ELT expert.

Syllabus for that particular class will be designed by the teacher and expert/s according to the result of the diagnostic test.

Crito: Correct me if I am wrong, you are saying each class will have different syllabus. But what about uniformity of learning objectives?

Socrates: (Aside)Who says only Socrates asks good questions!

Well, that is a valid argument Crito. See, there are various frameworks available today, Common European Framework of languages (CEF), for instance.

(Aloud) Dear Critos, log on to:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp

Crito: I didn't get you.

Socrates: See there can be a common set of guidelines of Technical Education in Gujarat or that of AICTE for that matter. These two bodies should not decide syllabus and methodology. If they want to boost students' competency in English, ask them to make *English Skills* a daily lecture rather than thrice a week. Let them only decide and dictate the bare minimum learning outcomes of English of a student who completes his/her BE/ME degree.

For example, students should be able to explain in English procedures of how petrol engine works.

Let the teacher, expert and other educators decide the syllabus, course contents and methodology to attain this level of student. Each class, college and university will have different syllabus. Planting only white roses in the garden will not be a good idea, let all kinds of flower flourish in the garden. Homogeneity is unnatural Crito.

Crito: It sounds great! However, is it possible practically?

Socrates: In Finland, it is in practise for decades now. Each school is free to design it curricula based on the national guidelines. Finland is considered to have best education system in the world by Harvard. (The Findland Phenomenon: Youtube)

Crito: But what about equal and democratic dissemination of knowledge?

Socrates: Well, the common guidelines would justify the democracy. In methodology there should be heterogeneity. You cannot treat an elephant, a fish and a sparrow in the same manner.

Crito: And assessment?

Socrates: Assessment will be based on common/national guidelines. You can have a common assessment system as you have right now.
If learner will be provided with what they actually need rather than what you want to teach, learner will take interest. For example, you want to teach them language through literature and what they need is language through technical register. Inappropriate delivery to the actual demand.

Crito: For this kind of pedagogy, what would be the qualification of a teacher?

Socrates: The ESP teacher will need to develop certain areas of expertise and to familiarize himself with some other subjects. He/She will try to help students to define their objectives, to diagnose their problems and to write their own prescription. The teacher must be creative and trained at the same time. It is the ESP teacher who decides what to teach, produces and evaluates materials, teaches and tests. As a teacher you have to be innovative and competent enough to test and design relevant course contents. (with a pause) Mediocre teachers will spoil the vision!

Crito: It seems rosy picture but is it possible in mass education? One of my biggest problems!

Socrates: Mass education is a challenge but ESP works better in same. Let me give you a brief roadmap, dear Crito:

At the entry level i.e. when students enrol for their first semester B.E. or Diploma, conduct a diagnostic test. Group them into 6 levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) as per their proficiency. I am of the opinion that those who cannot

pass A1 level (which is the most basic level i.e. primary school level), stop those learners there only. IITs and IIMs can produce excellent result because they choose the best students; when you have the best ones you need not worry about their fundamental concepts but just polish their skills here and there and that's it.

Sorry for little diversion. As soon as you get the result, ask teachers to design course as per the level of the group. In each unit of the syllabus, technology has to be an inseparable part. Let teachings of English go beyond the classroom. It will reduce the teacher-student ration from 60:1 to 1:1. Use moodle, Youtube, Google hangout, facebook-tweeter etc.

Crito: In short, an ESP teacher will be:
- Teacher,
- Course designer and materials provider,
- Facilitator and participant,
- Researcher and Evaluator.

Socrates: You got me right!
Crito: A final doubt.
Socrates: Go ahead!
Crito: For such a nice concept, we will need 'autonomy' at various levels. How can we get it?

Socrates: Go and convince the administrators. As a language teacher, you can. They have all the ways, all of them! If administrators are convinced, implementing ESP framework is not a herculean task.

Crito: (Aloud) Are you listening Demos and Athenians?
Socrates: Wise men interact, discuss and debate about the new concepts before implementing. I would advise the same to you dear Crito!

Crito: Ok. Let's discuss it then…

Vishal Bhadani
Department of Communication Skills - MEF

Faculty Forum as an Innovation in Education

Introduction:

This article is an attempt to throw the light on education in 21st century, its challenges and how to bring innovations in education especially with the efforts by faculties. In this globalization and technical world, education is the most necessary aspect but the question emerges "WHAT IS EDUCATION IN 21st CENTURY?" Only to teach on black board and to pass the exam cannot be contemplated as education. The term *"21st-Century Education"* is generally used to refer to certain core competencies such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving that help students to thrive in today's world. In a broader sense, however, the idea of what education in the 21st century should look like is open to interpretation and controversy. To change something, one needs to undergo many challenges. There are many challenges which are faced by many universities and institutes for today's education.

Educational Challenges:

The students of this era cannot sustain to sit in the classroom for hours for their education. They are more concerned about their enjoyment than study so to meet their expectations, study should be having the flavor of enjoyment i.e. edutainment. To satisfy their requirements, Modern Methodology for teaching should be applied rather than Traditional One. The biggest challenge especially for teaching English Language is traditional method in which teachers and students are found only concerned about syllabus. Almost all the time education is seen dominated by the teacher in the classroom rather than the student. A teacher's main role is to "Make learning happen"; this modern concept still has not been accepted thoroughly by the academia. This concept includes involving students in what is going on by enabling them to work at their own speed, by not giving long explanations, by encouraging them to participate, to interact, to let them do things, etc. At times, teachers are not aware of so many new academic aspects which put them on barrel while facing the young and innovative students of this era. Hence, in today's technical era, there must be expert lectures in two areas for all the faculty members to make themselves updated: first, regarding new technologies and second, regarding the requirements of students' (academic needs). These concepts should be practiced on daily basis to make the classroom teaching successfully. There are other challenges such as student-teacher ratio, family background, weak schooling, and various levels of students in the classroom.

Various Platforms for Faculties for Their Development:

As mentioned earlier, it is necessity for the faculties to get themselves updated for applying various creative methodologies for education. For the development of faculties The University Grants Commissions (UGC) has established 66 Academic Staff Colleges (ASCS) in different universities and institutes in the country which

conduct and designed Orientation Programmes and Refresher Courses for newly appointed young lecturers to inculcate self-confidence, morality and intelligence in them. For allotment of Orientation Programme, Short-term Courses and Refresher Courses for the year, 2014, a meeting of the Expert Committee was held on 26/3/2014 to scrutinize the proposals received from UGC-Academic Staff Colleges.

National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research, Bhopal (NITTER) develops competent human resources by designing and imparting need based training programmes, research studies, learning resources and need based curriculum for strengthening and developing faculties and staff as well as the institutions.

Many Private Institutes and Universities also make faculties do various activities for their development such as, Academic Affaires, Academic calendar, CASL - Committee for the assessment of the student learning, Faculty Awards, Faculty Development Library, Faculty Focus, Inside Higher Education, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The IDEA Center, The Teaching Professor, to name a few.

Faculty Forum as an Innovation in Education:

The teachers are contemplated to be the persons whom specific rights and privileges are granted by the academic society to diagnose and provide the remedies to educational apprehension and justify their authority. For successful teaching and for real education, a teacher has to play many roles such as inculcating cognitive and self-regulation skills, promoting deeper learning, setting high expectations, planning offline activities carefully, understanding the new technology that is used by the students of this generation, making learning relevant and engaging, monitoring educational data in use, providing positive feedback to students and celebrating success, etc. For these kinds of blended learning, teachers need discourse for sharing the ideas with one another. *Faculty Forum* provides the proper platform to intellectuals for reciprocating their ideas and to learn various academic aspects in limited time. **Alvin Toffler** opined, *"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn and relearn."*

Initiative of Samvad – a Faculty Forum at MEF:

It is redundant to gab that this institute works on the doctrines of instigating the faculties for higher education. For current research trends for the new technologies and for required presentation skills with strength, the Department of Communication Skills, has given a whirl by putting a step forward to provide a platform to the teachers to share their ideas regarding a particular topic. There are also other initiatives such as the Departmental Blog, Departmental Facebook Page, Departmental Library and E-News Letter. Faculty Forum is one such initiative by

the Department of Communication Skills which includes the objectives such as catering the opportunity for the staff to discuss on key issues of language teaching-learning, comprehending the aspects of national and international perspectives of a particular pedagogical issue, sharing the experience of faculties of their classrooms teaching, deliberating the use technology in classrooms, and to propose actions plan for the institute in respective areas. After the discussion the staff members are encouraged to take initiative to develop language skills for students' transition from their academics to professions.

Format of Samvad:

The format of Samvad, a Faculty Forum has been as following:

- Hurdles/Opportunities
- Opening Remarks
- Panel Discussion
- Open-House Discussion
- Closing Remarks

Department of Communication Skills at MEF has accomplished 5 sessions of Faculty Forum till date in which in-house faculties of the department as well as the scholars of other national and international universities/institutions have contributed by participating actively as panelists in the discussion by joining on Google Hang-out. Up to now the following topics have been discussed:

- "How to teach a language in 21st century?"
- "Importance of Writing Skills for engineering students"
- "Presentation Skills for engineering students."
- "Pedagogy of English Language Teaching –Challenges and Opportunities"
- "Using of Language Lab for teaching Communication Skills."

Many veteran scholars from various colleges and universities spared their valuable time as panelists of the forum. These scholars include Dr. Dharmendra Sheth, Executive Member and Former President, ELTAI; Dr. Sunil Shah, Assistant Professor, H. M. Patel Institute of English Training and Research; Dr. Dilip Barad, Professor and Head, Department of English, Bhavnagar University; Dr. Surendra Gohil, Assistant Professor, Navsari Agricultural University, Navsari; Dr. Vivienne Baumfield, Professor of Pedagogy, Glasgow University, Scotland; Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee, Associate Professor, Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, Saurashtra University, Rajkot; Ms. Liana Hyde, Senior Training Consultant, West India to name a few.

Outcome of all the Sessions of Faculty Forum:

SAMVAD – a Faculty Forum made all the faculties of the Department of Communication Skills to find the new and creative ideas. The ideas shared by the panelists laid many new questions and challenges, raised by the faculties regarding teaching and learning English Language and communication skills, using technology i.e. using of ICT in education, especially how to make teaching a language innovative and delightful. As it is apparent that the classroom teaching is the routine for the faculties but to speak and share their own ideas with the other faculties and external experts was challenging task. The task required a lot of preparation and authentic data to discuss. Thus, the forum encouraged the faculties to raise their own voice for a particular topic which helped them improve their classroom teaching.

"This is a recorded message from Prof Vivienne Baumfield, Professor of Pedagogy, Glasgow University, Scotland. She sent this video as she was a panelist for the session of faculty forum held on February 05, 2014. The theme of the session was 'Pedagogy of English Language Teaching'."

View video

Conclusion:

Initiatives such as Samvad – a Faculty Forum can bring various innovations in education by the great efforts of the faculties and make them think out of the box. The Forum provides the platform to the faculties for sharing ideas on a particular topic through which they come to know the ins and outs of the respective domain which is very fruitful for the enrichment of knowledge.

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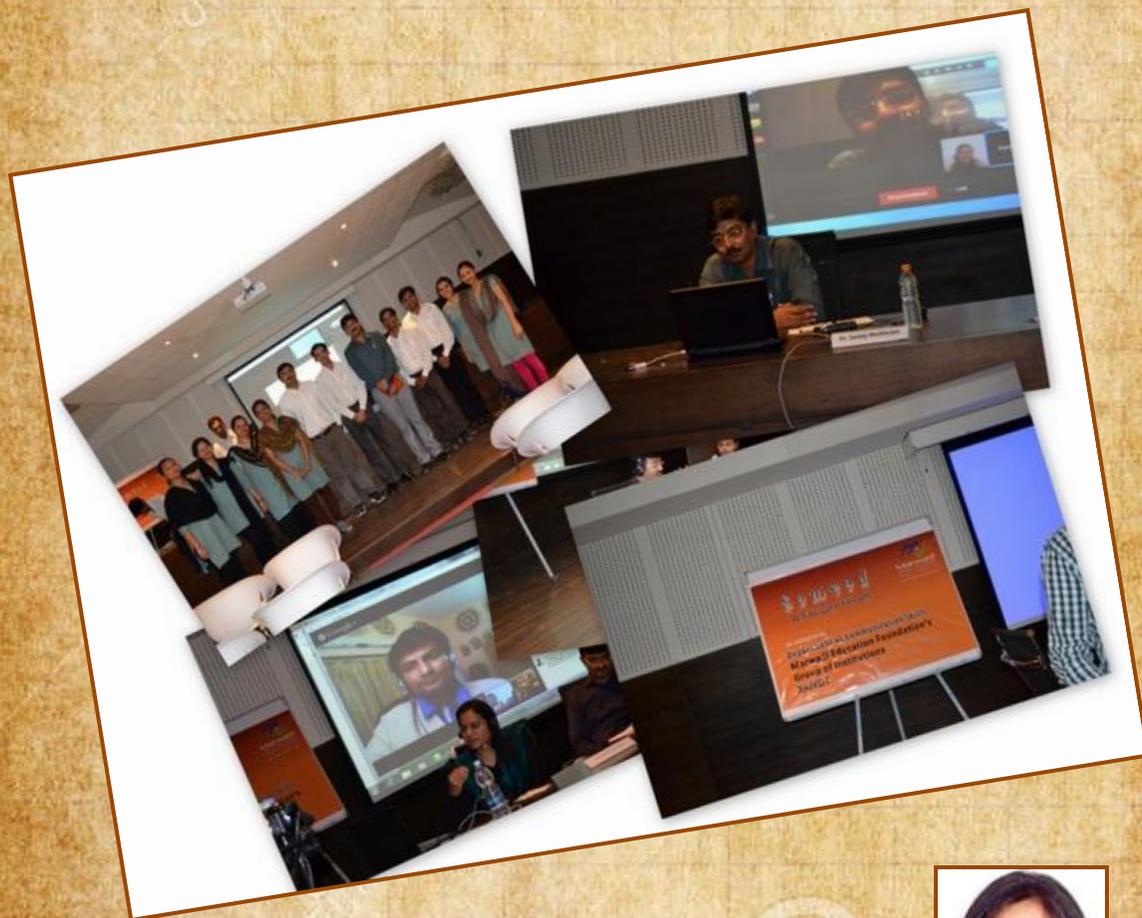
Arti Kotak
Department of Communication Skills - MEF

The Blog as an Innovative Tool in Present Education

From the dawn to dusk, man is using technology for various aspects of his works. The technology is evolving every day. People have to update themselves for surviving in this hi-tech world. In short this world is driven by technology, which cannot be denied. It is the vehicle to get access to this modernized world. Along with its use in the communication, trade and transactions, today technology is widely used in educational sectors. Though technology cannot play the vital role of a teacher as yet, it can be used as a supplementary tool for enhancing teaching methods in classroom. As the conventional chalk and talk method seems to be monotonous and boring to the students, teachers emphasize and rely on the latest technologies for teaching the subjects. Various software and modern technologies are being introduced that are students friendly and lead them to autonomous learning of their subjects easily.

Many modern technologies are available for teachers of English today, such as:

- Communication lab
- Video conferencing
- Video Library
- CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)
- TELL (Technology Enhanced Language Learning)
- Pod casting
- Quick Link Pen
- Quicktionary
- Programmes through educational satellites
- Blogging

Among them blogging is one of the most innovative and inclusive means for housing teaching learning process outside the classroom walls.

How to Use the Blog in Education?

Blogging can be used for instructing the candidates when the teacher is off campus. The teacher can post his article or the instruction to the students, where the students are allowed to post their comments and queries. The teacher can answer the question through his blog. Blogging has been widely in use. Blog is a shared space, with teachers and students being able to write to the main area. It is best used as a collaborative discussion space, an extra-curricular extension of the classroom. Students can be encouraged to reflect in more depth, in writing, on themes touched upon in class. Students are given a greater sense of freedom and involvement.

There are many reasons why you may choose to use blogs with students. One of the best reasons is to provide a real audience for student writing. Usually, the teacher is the only person who reads student writing, and the focus of this reading is usually on form, not content. With weblogs, students can find themselves writing for a real audience that, apart from the teacher, may include their peers, students from other

classes, or even other countries, their parents, and potentially anyone with access to the Internet.

The blog is now used as a tool for communication rather than simply as way of delivering automated drills or exercises. Vast amount of reading on any topic and in many languages are now available on the web, and the chance to participate in discussions with people from all walks of life is motivating for many learners.

Blog in language learning by multiple intelligence and mixed abilities replace with old methods of teaching. In the multi-cultured community, the four basic skills are imparted in the teaching with a variety and novelty. Hence they are enthusiastic in learning the language. Language can be learnt by imitation. So, one should hear more to develop his/her listening skills. Naturally they try to speak in the same styles as we learnt our mother tongue. The usage of Internet has brought tremendous change in the field of teaching and enhancing English learning.

Every day people are getting access to some new technologies, which join hand with English teaching. It is the need of the hour to integrate modern technologies like blog to upgrade the level of English teaching. The modern technologies relax the mind of the students to get into the subject with full involvement rather than a difficult task to do.

The blog of CS Department: (http://www.csmefgi.blogspot.in/)

Communication Skills Department Blog has been launched on 20th October, 2013 with the vision to expose and engage teachers and students with English Language Enrichment through advanced technology. Its prime objects are to assist and facilitate *English Language Teaching and Learning*. In the fast developing 21st century various innovative technologies are being introduced for the teaching-

learning process of English along with others, which can be incorporated in the classroom. The blog shares these technical updates. The knowledge base is doubling and tripling in so short a time. To cope up with this trend, it is the humble attempt by the department of Communication Skills to use blog to cater the needs of English Language Proficiency of the technical students. The students will have to update their knowledge by using modern technologies. Otherwise they will be relegated in the job market.

The beginning of the journey of the Department Blog was like all other beginnings; it took its own time in evolving. But it steadily moved forward and at present, it throbs with so many creative ideas by the learners. Since the aim of the Departmental Blog is to enrich the knowledge of the faculty regarding innovative insights in English Language Teaching with the use of advanced technology, let us hope that the Departmental Blog can serve the purpose by the contributions of its enlightened contributors/learners.

Reference Links....

http://www.csmefgi.blogspot.in/

http://blog-efl.blogspot.com

http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Campbell-Weblogs.html

Deepali Agravat

Department of Communication Skills - MEF

Education on Facebook

Facebook has struck a chord with millions of college students, drawing them into an online world where they spend countless hours browsing profiles, meeting new people, and exploring relationships. Any technology that is able to captivate so many students for so much time not only carries implications for how those students view the world but also offers an opportunity for educators to understand the elements of social networking that students find so compelling and to incorporate those elements into teaching and learning.

Department of Communication Skills at MEFGI uses facebook for educational purposes. Majority of the students are familiar with and use facebook. We use facebook to open yet another form of communication and promote sharing of information from classes within the same topic.

Facebook has quickly become the social network site of choice by college students. In addition to the incredible usage rate among students, there are a number of unique features that make it amenable to educational pursuits. For example, facebook is equipped with bulletin boards, instant messaging, email, and the ability to post videos and pictures. Beyond high usage rates and some technological advantages, social networks, such as facebook, can provide numerous other pedagogical advantages to both teachers and students.

"*Facebook is a network that connects students with other students, indirectly creating a learning community – a vital component of student education (Baker, 1999).*"
Facebook also increases both teacher-student and student-student interaction in the form of web-based communication. Facebook helps instructors connect with their students about assignments, upcoming events, useful links, and samples of work outside of the classroom.

Lastly, if using the site as a course tool, it is suggested that instructors post podcasts, websites, and videos on facebook, and, using Google Documents, link students to study guides, power points presentations, assignments, and tutorials. Instructors can contact students via facebook by sending messages, posting comments on "the wall" or chatting with students during virtual office hours. By increasing student's involvement through communication and community, instructors can tailor their courses towards a variety of learning styles.

It is our conjecture that the benefits of facebook's networking and social communication capabilities can benefit both the instructor and the student by tapping into a greater number of learning styles, providing an alternative to the traditional lecture format, creating an online classroom community, and increasing teacher-student and student-student interaction.

Department of Communication Skills takes advantage of what the students are already doing, using and enjoy. Department of Communication skills, Facebook Status has more than one thousand *"Likes"* so far. We heartily welcome you to share your creative ideas for and on facebook. Let us together enrich our knowledge with active participation and interaction between both teacher-student and student-student. Kindly note the following facebook link:

https://www.facebook.com/cs.mefgi?ref=br_tf

Gazal Pasnani
Department of Communication Skills - MEF

Innovation in Education – A Student's Perspective

"Innovation in education"- itself is an innovative idea! Education is the noblest process on the earth! Education is a process by which one swims through the darkness of illiteracy to the brightness of wisdom and knowledge! Education is a festival of learning! In ancient times, India had the Gurukul system of education in which selected students would stay at the Guru's place and help in all the activities. Under the shed of the Guru, they were exposed to various situations, difficulties, and trainings. They were guided throughout their stay by the Guru but ultimately, they were supposed to solve the problems and take the decisions. The Guru used to teach everything which was must for the student to learn and to master the skills - from Sanskrit to the Holy Scriptures and from Mathematics to Metaphysics. The student used to stay as long as he/she wished or until the Guru felt that he had taught everything he could. All learning used to be closely linked to nature and to life, and not confined to mere memorizing the information.

The modern school system was brought to India, including the English language, originally by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay in the 1830s. The curriculum was confined to "modern" subjects such as science and mathematics, and subjects like metaphysics and philosophy were considered unnecessary. Teaching was confined to classrooms and the link with nature and the close relationship between the teacher and the student was broken as well.

We believe that education is part of our lives; but the truth is- "education is life!" To bring innovation in the whole education system one has to bring innovation in best possible aspect of learning. One aspect is the way of teaching. "A sheep gives us wool" and "Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool? Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full!" Which one sounds more interesting? Making the students write an essay about the rain make no sense until they have enjoyed the rain dancing! Frankly speaking, when I first time lit the bulb on by making my own circuit, I got goose bumps! While mugging up the boring black and white circuit diagram before this experiment, had stolen all the thunder out of me for science.

Second is quality of teaching. One of the most important 'advices' given to the student is to focus on learning and give their best efforts to master the subject. On the other hand, lectures are delivered on how to get a job which gives you more money. Not on improving the quality. I always wonder during such lectures – ok, here is the job and here is the money; but where is the science by the way?

In this era, making money is not a very difficult job. If we have learned with full dedication and we work properly then we'll automatically get money.

One more thing that is a barrier in our growth is the differentiation of subjects. Doctors use X-ray machines which are made by engineers! Engineers must learn how our body works before he makes any machine which is helpful in medical sciences. In fact, there is a number named "Phi" in mathematics, which is considered the world's most beautiful number. That is because, if we divide the number of female bees by the number of male bees then we'll find a number 1.618, and that is the number Phi! If we divide the measurement of our body from head to toe with the measurement of our body from waist to toe then again we will find Phi! And there is one plant which grows its leaves in Fibonacci series of mathematics. So the point is, nature is not differentiating mathematics and biology then who are we to do so? Similarly, if we have new ideas but do not have the ability to express it with words then what is the use of it? Here we need the power of language. A mathematician can be the father of genetics (George Mendel) and the God of physics can be a philosopher (Albert Einstein).

Current education system is far away from its actual motto. In our system, fish is judged by its ability to fly, which is never going to happen. And the craziness for marks! Good marks don't show the potential of the students. A medical student with 99% but if he's afraid of blood, he cannot be a successful doctor at all.

Definitely, innovations are made in education but it should not be just in terms of business. Making huge college buildings with air conditioned class rooms is just the first step; the real gist lies in housing the festival of learning in those class rooms.

So, the conclusion is every beautiful mind should be nurtured with special attention and guidance. Just the way Aamir Khan did in the movie *Tare Zameen Pe*. Improving education is the only option to build a healthier and knowledge-rich future society.

Nairuti Jhala
Student – TA1 – Sem. II - MEF

Innovation in Education – A Student's Observation

According to me, the meaning of word 'education' is to achieve knowledge by a student from his/her instructor or teacher or Guru. Education plays a very vital role in the life of a student in improving his thoughts, ways of thinking, and ways of accepting the challenges in life & life lessons etc.

In ancient time, the teaching was carried out by Gurukuls in which students used to stay inside Gurukul campus and do work what their Guru used to assign. All types of training were imparted from bow/arrow aiming, horse riding to cleaning their cottage even sometimes whole Gurukul. 72 *Kalas* (arts/disciplines) were taught to them which used to include almost all the subjects, theoretical as well as practical. In short, the blend of practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge used to play a vital role in overall development of the students. The teachers were fully confident about what they were teaching to the student. It was of greater relevance for the students and it would help them to become better persons in life. Confident in their teaching, they used to conduct examination in quite different.

At Present, there are no Gurukuls. They are replaced by schools and teachers who give importance to theoretical aspect and they are not confident about "what they are teaching", "is it appropriate, or of relevance to the students or not?" Hence, examinations are conducted at every level which increase burden but generally fail in increasing curiosity and enthusiasm to learn the subject.

Now, what I feel being a micro-particle of the system, a student, that, students are more active and efficient in grasping the knowledge even in their routine life from their parents or guardian or surrounding environment which is real learning and that remains with them till the last breath of their lives. For example, one would find almost every child is very much fond of mobile and computer games while their parents or guardians may not know how to operate the computer or cell phone. The question might arise here that "From where have they learnt all these…?" I have an answer that "their grasping power is much higher than elders. Children can learn much faster than their elders from surrounding environment and it is proved by scientists. My question here is then why education system is same for every child as well as it is the more or less the same way their parents were taught.

The scenario is different i.e. the system is teaching students that 'we should believe in what we are doing…'

A few more questions arise in my mind: "Does examination support the believing in teaching and preparing students for life? Are examinations really needed?"

I think it is probably NOT. In my opinion teachers or the very education system does not believe in itself or there is a big gape somewhere down the line.

It is a saying that "an experienced person has more knowledge about the subject then the learned person has". To gain knowledge, hands on experience is required which is missing in current education system, in my opinion. The subjects are taught in the same, traditional way, to all the students equally. According to me, the changes required in the current education system are as below.

- Change in teaching method (e.g. Use of ICT, practical tasks should be given more importance)
- Design of syllabus should not change at every year but in 5-10 year's interval of time so that research can be done properly.
- The management should not change their decision while batch doesn't complete the course.
- Examination should be conducted in a way where students are tested in every way, i.e. conceptual clarity, practical aspects, execution of the concepts, linking of concepts with other subjects and other domains of knowledge.
- Examination should be conducted at the end of year not at the end of the semester. The reason is that the students should get enough time to learn the subjects and prepare for the subjects as well as they should get enough vacation time and Holidays.
- Emphasis in education should be 70% on practical and on 30% theoretical.

The list above is of my general observations regarding changes required in Education System. If innovations take place in this direction, in fact, it has already started, the effect of them will be tremendous on whole teaching-learning process. Finally this will lead to a brighter future of our country.

Baiju Vachhani
Student – TA1 – Sem. II - MEF

Departmental Activities:

- Vishal Bhadani, Assistant Professor of Department of Communication Skills presented paper in a two day UGC sponsored National Seminar on *'The Postcolonial Discourse and Politics of Chinua Achebe'* entitled as *Resistance to Representation: An Achebean Idea of Decolonization*, on 17-18, January, 2014, organized by Department of English, Faculty of Arts, M S University of Baroda.

- Arti Kotak and Nikita Gadani, Assistant Professors of Department of Communication Skills attended a *One-day National Symposium on 'Technology In ELT – Challenges and Remedies'* at Charotar University of Science and Technology on 23rd November, 2013.

- Deepak Mashru, Assistant Professor of Department of Communication Skills presented paper on *Flavour of Ethos in Management: A great fusion to avoid confusion* in an International Conference: "Management of Globalised Business Emerging Perspectives" jointly organized by Gujarat Technological University and Faculty of Management, Marwadi Education Foundation's Group of Institutions, Rajkot on 23rd February, 2014.
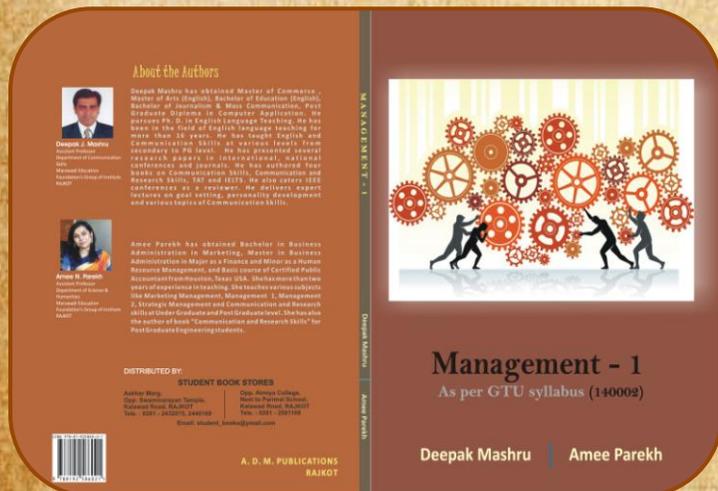
Deepak Mashru, Assistant Professor of Department of Communication Skills has co-authored two books with Amee Parekh viz. Management – 1 and Principles of Management.
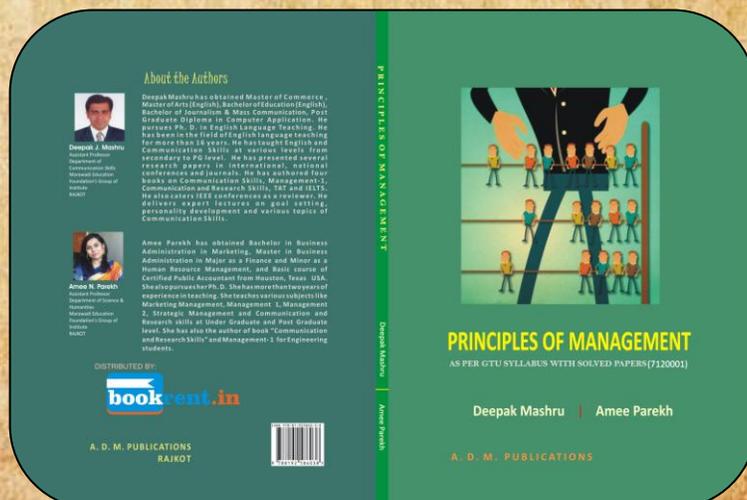
- Pooja Mehta, Gazal Pasnani and Pooja Shukla, Assistant Professors of Department of Communication Skills participated in a National Workshop on *'The Spirit of Democratic Citizenship (Radical General Semantics)'* on 13 -16 November, 2013 jointly organized by Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences and Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, Saurashtra University, Rajkot.


Pooja Mehta, Gazal Pasnani and Pooja Shukla with Gad Horowitz, a Canadian professor of Political Science at University of Toronto, Canada and Shannon Bell, a Professor and Graduate Programme Director in the York University Political Science Department, Toronto.

- Vishal Bhadani, Assistant Professor of Department of Communication Skills was invited to deliver a talk on *Problems of Critiquing Communalism in India* in the Second Roundtable under UGC SAP-DRS (Phase – II) on *'Representation of Social Change in the Novels and Plays published between 1970 and 2013'* organized by the Department of English, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidhyanagar, on 21 – 22 February, 2014.

- Deepak Mashru, Assistant Professor of Department of Communication Skills was invited to deliver a talk on Research Methodology to Ph.D. scholars at C. U. Shah University, Surendranagar on 16th February, 2014.

- An article, "*Role of 'IELTS' As A Language Proficiency Test For Canadian Immigration*", by Deepak Mashru, Assistant Professor of Department of Communication was selected and published by Department of Education, Saurashtra University in "EDUKARTA: An International Journal of Educational Research" with ISSN No. : 2348-8255.

- Department of Communication Skills organized an *Introductory Course for Presentation Skills*, especially for the hostel students of 4th and 6th Semester.

The course was scheduled for one week from 11th Jan. to 20th Jan. 2014. On each day of this course, various aspects of presentation skills were elaborated.

- The Department of Communication Skills took the initiative of offering foreign languages to MEF students by commencing a basic level course of Spanish language. The facilitator appointed for the course was Mr. Yogesh Sandhvi, Ahmadabad. The course was decided to be of 40 sessions (Each session of 1.5 hours). Total 17 students registered the course which started on 17th October, 2013 and on 27th March, 2014 ended with a final test qualifying six students for the certificate.

- After the successful commencement of Spanish Language Course, the Department of Communication Skills offered the basic level course in French Language to MEFGI students. The facilitator appointed is Ms. Ester Castro, a French Language trainer from SNK School. The course is decided to be of 40 sessions (Each session of 1.5 hours). Total 18 students registered for the course which started on 31th January, 2014.

- Department of Communication Skills has launched a departmental library. It has a good number of books, e-books and a wide range of Educational Software. The library also houses a repository of documentaries and video lectures. The library is managed by Sneha Patel and Nikita Gadani, Assistant Professors of the department.

- Mr. Deepak Mashru is a reviewer of Journal, 2014 IEEE Colloquium on Humanities, Science & Engineering Research -*Engineering Management and Sustainable Development*
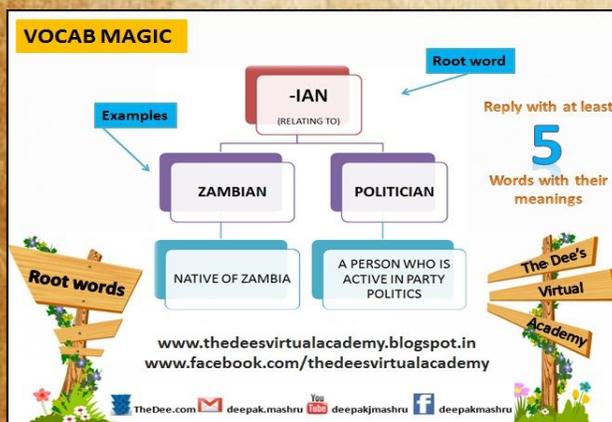
Vocab Magic: Teaching Vocabulary through What's App and Android Application

Mobile Learning:

Communication Skills through videos

*Initiatives by Deepak Mashru*

Students' Creativity:
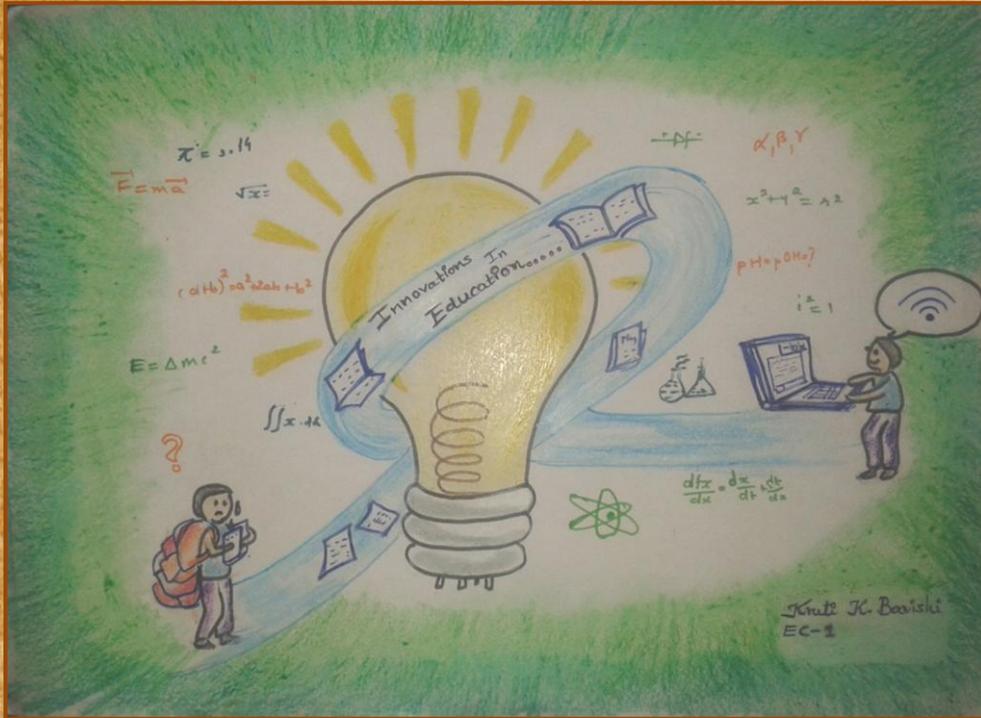
Innovation in Education

By Student
Kruti Bavishi
EC1 Sem. II

"Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower."
– Steve Jobs

By Student
Meet Ghodasara
TA1 Sem. II
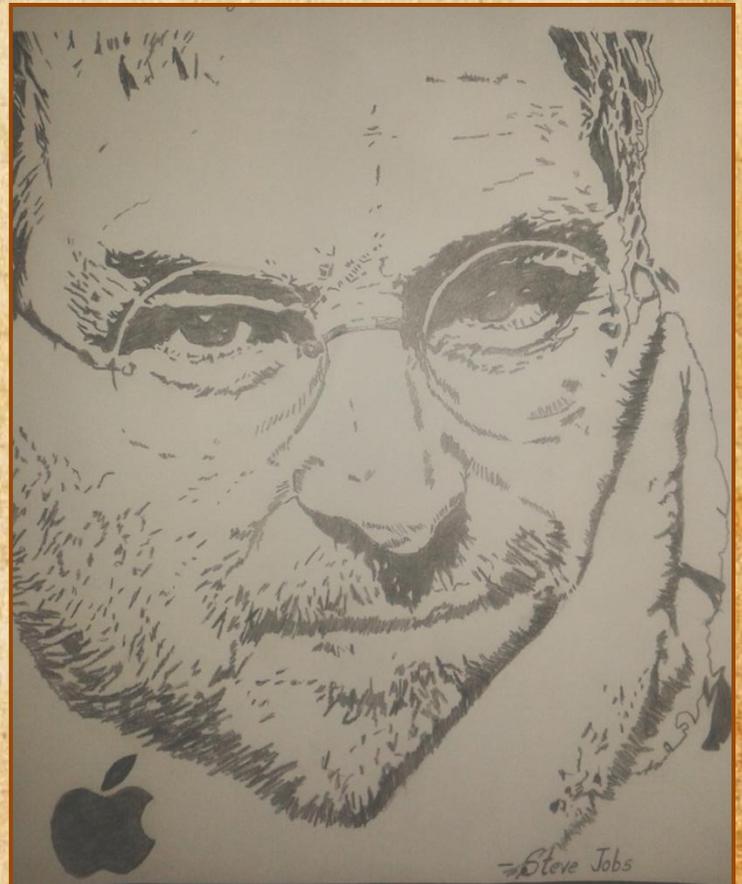
"Never before in history has innovation offered promise of so much to so many in so short a time"

- **Bill Gates**