



यशवंतराव
चव्हाण
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मुक्त विद्यापीठ

EDU

ENGLISH FOR
PRIMARY TEACHERS

Book Two

Self Development in Context of English

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❑ **First Publication** : June 2015

❑ **Publication No. :**

❑ **Typesetting** : AKOSIS, Nashik

❑ **Printer** :

❑ **Published by** : Dr. Prakash Atkare, Registrar, Y. C. M. Open University, Nashik - 422 222

Introduction

Improvement or growth is an important aspect of any individual, organization, society or nation. A plant that absorbs food and water through the ground and takes in the energy through the sunrays, blossoms into a full-fledged tree with fruit and flowers and makes the surrounding pleasant. A plant that refuses to grow, dies its own death. You all know, the water that does not flow or stops to flow, gets stagnated and in the course of time begins to smell unpleasant and makes the surrounding unliveable.

Growth is possible only if we keep on changing ourselves in changing situations constant change is the law of nature. Anything that is rigid, static, anything that does not change, cannot hope to survive.

This is more so with teachers. Therefore as teachers, you have to keep on changing. Every year you come into contact with a new generation, with their new dreams, desires as well as new problems. The month of June of every year, opens new horizons and the new year begins bringing in new challenges, new excitement and new joys.

Objectives of Book

After you go through this Book you will come to know :

1. The meaning of the concept 'self-improvement'
2. The need to self-improve
3. How continuous Research and Development (R & D) is essential for self-enrichment
4. In what way academic alertness and time management increase your confidence and efficiency in your work
5. The need to try yourself out at every opportunity that comes your way in order to keep you growing up

You have got to change, you have to improve and you have to grow up. You just cannot help it. The new class, new syllabus, new learners! Even if the school or college is the same, the classroom is the same, colleagues and authorities are the same, the learners are not because they have come to an upper grade. Their hunger for knowledge has now increased because that is going to shape their future. Therefore, their expectations have increased. They do not expect you to be the same teacher. They want you to be more knowledgeable, more efficient more encouraging, more stimulating than before. If you are not so, you are not for them. If you are well-equipped to guide them properly, to make them go in the right direction, if you help them walk their way they will be proud of you.

They will love to admire you, they will listen to you, they will value your advice only if there is something new in you because they are the angels of new life, new time, new world.

In the new changing order you cannot afford to lag behind. You have to change.

You have to self-improve!

Director
School of Education

Unit 1 : What is Self-improvement

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 - 1.2.2 Need of Self-improvement
 - 1.2.3 Ways of Self-improvement
- 1.3 Summary
- 1.4 Questions for Practice
- 1.5 Answers to Questions for Self-Study

1.0 Objectives

After you go through this Unit you will understand -

- ★ The meaning of the term 'self-improvement'
- ★ The need for self-improvement
- ★ The qualities a teacher of English should possess and improve upon them to make their teaching effective
- ★ Various ways of self-improvement

1.1 Introduction

Continuous self-improvement is a hallmark of a good teacher. This is more so with a teacher of English. English is an ever growing language and you have to keep learning how it is used. It is also used on a large scale in all walks of life on account of globalization. You can't help but learn new language forms and how they are used in the given context.

For example : Which of the following sentences do you think is acceptable?

1. He's good at **Maths**.
2. He's good at **Math**.

Well, the Oxford Dictionary tells you that **mathematics** has two abbreviations **Maths** and **Math**. Both are acceptable. **Maths** is British while **Math** is American.

Look at the following sentences :

1. She's a **Maths** teacher. (Not **Math's teacher**)
2. She teaches **Mathematics**. (Not **Mathematic**)
3. For my diploma I chose English, **Maths** and Science. (**M** in **Maths** is capital)
4. If his Maths **is** right, the answer will be 78.
5. If his Maths **are** right, the answer will be 78. (Both 4 & 5 are used)
6. **Do the Maths** before you decide to buy a new house. (= workout everything related to it in terms of facts and figures)

Many of you are yet to know that the pronunciation of **tortoise** is _____ and not _____ and the word **canal** is not _____ it is _____.

The point is you have to keep on learning. For teachers learning is never ending. They have to be like a student throughout their life. Remember, a good teacher is always a good student. You have got to know how English is used in various contexts and keep on improving yourself constantly.

Questions for self-study-1

1. Why is there a need for a teacher to change?
2. What does 'to improve' mean?
3. Can improvement happen on its own or automatically?
4. When can you hope to change the world?

1.2 Subject-analysis

1.2.1 Qualities of a good teacher of English

Every teacher, no matter what subject they teach is supposed to be a good human being. It is also taken for granted that a teacher is a great lover of knowledge. They keep on reading, interacting with others and are engaged in collecting knowledge little by little like a honey bee that goes to the source of nectar, collects it as much as possible gets back and deposits it in a bee-hive. Any insect that is a honey bee is engaged all the time in adding to their invaluable collection of honey. In the same way, a good teacher is constantly engaged in searching for knowledge and keeps on adding to their treasure of experience about teaching. This activity gives them confidence and makes them more effective teachers than what they were before. Apart from these qualities in general, teachers need to possess a lot

many other capabilities. I will discuss them one by one.

These are the qualities teachers have to improve upon.

1. Competence

Competence means the ability to do something well. A good teacher of English has to have competence in their subject, that is, English. Competence in English means the ability to make use of English for our practical purposes and of course for the purpose of teaching.

Competence in English has two aspects : Linguistic competence and communicative competence.

Linguistic competence implies grammatical competence which means the ability to form grammatically acceptable sentences.

Very often English teachers are found quite good at grammatical competence, that is, they have the ability to form sentences which are grammatically accurate. The teachers who follow the 'structural method' believe that they should highlight various sentence structures while teaching English and expose students to know how the elements in an English sentence are put together.

For example :

	Noun
Sub + Verb + Complement	Adjective
	Adverbial

This means the first element is **S**, followed by **V** and the **C** which can be **N** or **Adj** or **Adv**.

For example :

S + V + C

She is **a teacher**.

She is **angry**.

She is **in her class**.

And this is how a student can make an indefinite number of sentences with the help of one of the basic clause structures of the English language.

As a result students may come out with sentences which you will laugh at first but which are grammatically absolutely correct. For example:

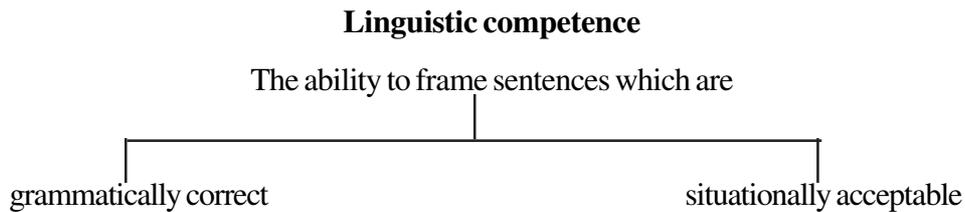
She is a chapatti.

The table is angry.

The cow is in her office.

What you have to understand is only the ability to frame grammatically correct sentences is not enough. You should have the ability to produce sentences which are not only grammatically correct but also situationally acceptable. This is known

as the ‘situational acceptability.’ This can be shown as follows:



As a teacher of English you should also have the ability to communicate effectively. It is quite obvious that in the absence of linguistic competence, communication cannot take place.

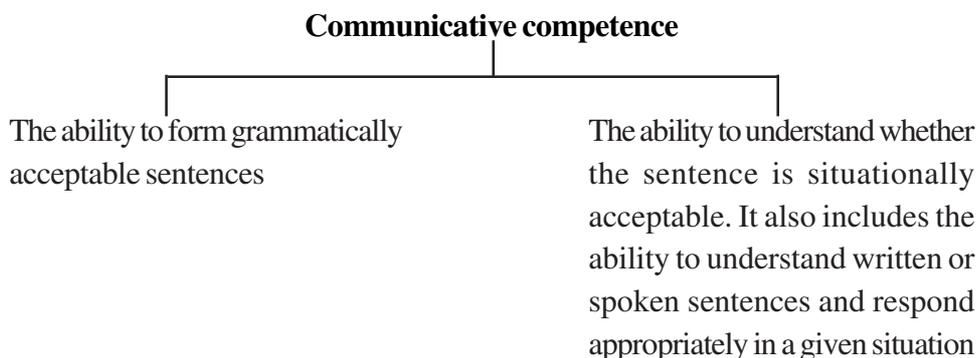
Communicative competence refers to the ability to produce grammatically acceptable utterances which can be used in appropriate situations. It is the ability to use language appropriately and respond to different types of occasions such as requests, apologies, invitations, thanks etc. Communicative competence also includes knowledge of how to begin or end conversations, how to move from one topic to another, how to recognize the social setting, relationship between the participants of the conversation and the type of language that is required to be used in a given situation. A person with the communicative competence must also be able to interpret written or spoken sentences within the overall context in which they are used.

Activity – 1

Think of your competence in English and how it affects your classroom performance.

Make a list of your strong points and not-so-strong points.

Communicative competence can be put diagrammatically as follows



A teacher needs to have both, the linguistic competence as well as communicative competence.

However, this is not all!

As a teacher of English you also need to perform well in a classroom.

By now, it must have been quite clear to you that if a teacher does not possess linguistic as well as communicative competencies, they cannot be good a teacher of English. Simply because someone is a fluent speaker of English does not mean they can be a successful teacher in a classroom.

It means, apart from the competence in English, you must know what it is to teach English. A person who wishes to go for teaching English must know how to go about it. This course is to help you improve your competence in English as well performance in a classroom. If you keep on improving both, you can certainly hope to be an effective teacher of English.

Questions for self-study-2

Mark the following sentences as right or wrong.

1. Grammatical competence means the ability to form grammatically correct sentences.
2. You cannot be effective communicator in the absence of linguistic competence.
3. Communicative competence means the ability to produce grammatically acceptable utterances which are also situationally appropriate.
4. A fluent speaker of English is always a good teacher of English.

2. The ability to get along with others

In many schools the teachers of English enjoy a special status which creates a feeling that they are a class by themselves and they do not belong to this planet.

A teacher of English may be brilliant. They may be more competent than many others. However, if this kind of teacher cannot work with others, what is the use? If a teacher is outstanding but cannot accommodate themselves in a group of teachers, if they have differences, disagreements, arguments, quarrels every now and then, they are likely to invite problems not only for themselves but also for all teachers and the school as well.

The point is, only to be competent is not enough. Our competence should not be a source of problems. We all have to develop the skill to get along with others even if we have differences. As teachers, at our workplace, our relationship is formal. We do compare ourselves with other colleagues, there may be a tacit competition, but we are not enemies of one another. We have to work together. There can always be healthy competition.

This is the age of group work. It is the team spirit that matters a lot. In a team, every member is equally important. All are equal. They come together to work together. They come together because they have common interests. All teachers put together form a team. We have to work hand in hand. We have to achieve a common goal. We have to perform a number of academic as well as extracurricular activities. We have to co-operate with each other. We have to help each other and

make the activities a success. Success of a team is creditable to every member of the team.

Remember, this is not an age of hero worship. This is the age of coming together and working together, forgetting differences.

In order to get along with others you need to do the following:

- a. **Know your colleagues :** We work in the same organization for years but we hardly try to understand each other. You should know the qualities of your fellow teachers. How much English they have, what their problems in English communication are and in what way you can help them.
- b. **Be co-operative :** Co-operation develops a sense of security. It gives you confidence. You have a feeling that there is someone to help you particularly in difficult times. When they get stuck with English, they look upon you as someone who can always help them.
- c. **Develop a sense of appreciation :** We are said to be miserly in appreciating others. If someone has achieved something, congratulate the person. Tell others about their achievements. Even if they speak wrong English, let them. Appreciate their attempts to speak in English.
- d. **Share with others :** Feel free with your colleagues. Share your experiences with them whenever possible. Talk about the problems you face while teaching English. Tell others about the innovative activities which you carried out successfully in your class, how you make an English class enjoyable and not a burden.
- e. **Stop back biting or insinuations :** Do not indulge into unpleasant and unkind talk about someone who is not present. Do not talk about anyone behind their back. Instead, talk about:
 - Something new you have read
 - Some new expression, phrase, usage you have come across
 - Something you want to teach
 - The programme in English you watched on TV

This kind of interaction will be beneficial for your improvement.

A cheap talk, irresponsible remarks, sweeping comments, idle gossip, pollute the education environment. Do not enjoy spreading false stories about others. This is a sheer waste of time.

3. A sense of belonging

You should always remember that as a teacher you represent your school, your institution and your students. The educational organization in which you work can prosper if you prosper and whatever you are, your organization has a role in it. You and your school are inter-related and interdependent. You should be proud

that you belong to your organization. You are a part of it.

You are a member of your school and the institution to which your school belongs. A school or any organization is made of members like you. Peons, clerks, office people, teachers, students, authorities – all together make an organization.

Unless you have a feeling that you belong to your school, the school is yours and you are the school, you will not work with devotion. Working without devotion, doing things without faith is no work. You always take care of something that belongs to you. Your interests and the interests of the school have to be the same. Then you grow together.

4. Have a heart of a tree

A tree is a home for birds. Birds feel safe and comfortable with a tree. They build their nests in it. A tree provides shade. When you sit down in the shade of a tree you feel fresh. The pure air coming from a tree is life giving. It is cooling and comforting in the summer.

Like birds, children should feel safe and comfortable in the company of a teacher. Children build the nests of their dreams with the guidance of their teacher. They listen to their teacher, they have respect for them. A teacher has a great role in their life.

In fact a teacher should be motherly. Unless you love your students you cannot teach them, neither can they learn anything from you.

Activity – 2

Take a pause. Examine yourself. Make a list of the qualities you have as a teacher of English. What are the qualities you need to improve upon?

These are the qualities every teacher should possess. Every teacher is expected to have these qualities. However, a teacher who teaches English is expected to have certain qualities in addition to the ones discussed above. We expect the English teacher as follows:

- a. A teacher of English **speaks English** as far as possible in the class and outside the class as long as they are on the school campus. This is inspiring to students. Gradually, they also feel like speaking in English.
- b. A teacher of English **speaks as simple English** as possible with clarity and audibility. They do not use bombastic words or long winded sentences to impress upon students that they are masters of English.
- c. A teacher of English **speaks slow**, that is, with a reasonable speed. They believe that **‘speaking fast is not a mark of a good speaker’**. They speak English in the class and otherwise, which every student can understand. They do not show off that they speak ‘high English’ and speaking fast is speaking good English.

- d. A teacher of English is **highly encouraging**. They very often say,
- “Look, God has given the ability to learn language to everyone. Anyone can learn English. It’s not difficult. **You can always learn it.** Even if you come from a village, even if you are financially poor, even if you’re a slow learner, even if your parents don’t know English, you can always learn English.”
 - “What you have written is quite all right. But **don’t you think you could have done better?**”
 - “You haven’t done well this time. Doesn’t matter. You are a good student. **You can always do better.**”
 - “You cannot say, ‘Her hair are beautiful.’ The word ‘hair’ in this context is always used in the singular. But ‘I found a hair in my soup’ is correct. In this context it is used in the singular. Do you get it? Now refer to a dictionary and learn more about ‘hair’. **I’m sure you will do it**”.
 - “Your answer is quite good. You’re an excellent student of English. But how is it that you’ve gone wrong in spelling the word ‘beggar.’ It’s not **–er**, it’s **–ar**! I didn’t expect this from a student like you. You could have got 10 out of 10 for this answer. Anyway. **Don’t worry. It happens. Let’s not be over confident.** If you wish to achieve mastery over English, you have to be very careful. Ok. Good luck!”
 - “Oh my God! There’re mistakes and mistakes in your essay. You’ll have to rewrite the essay. **Don’t get disappointed.** I’m confident, **you’ll do much better next time.**”
 - “You’ve done pretty well. But **there is a lot of scope for improvement. You’ll have to work hard.**”
- e. A teacher of English never creates fear about English in the minds of the students. They never say:
- “English is a very difficult language. You’re from the rural area. **You can never hope to learn it.**”
 - “You come from an illiterate background. No one knows English in your family. **How can you learn English?**”
 - “English is not your cup of tea! **Anyone cannot learn English.** It’s meant for a particular class of people only.”
 - “I know you can never pass in English. **Learning English is your responsibility.** What can I do? You’re so dull. **You’re a mug. I don’t think you can ever get English.**
- f. A good teacher of English **never looks down upon others**, thinking that others do not know English and they are the only master of English. On the contrary, they always help others if they have any problem with

English.

- g. A good teacher of English **does not find faults with someone** who speaks or writes English. An English teacher encourages others to converse in English and while doing so **deliberately presents excellent models of English** which others can feel like imitating.
- h. A good teacher of English **never pretends that they know everything about English**. If there is a problematic usage or doubtful pronunciation, they say, 'Oh. I'm not sure. I'll have to consult a dictionary. I'll let you know about it tomorrow. Ok?'
- i. A good teacher of English keeps aside some money every month **to buy at least one book** in English – a novel, travelogue, story book, recipe book, etc or some kind of reference book which they would enjoy reading. This also adds to their personal library.
- j. A good teacher of English **persuades the authorities concerned to buy** books for their school, books for students for extra reading, good standard dictionaries, magazines, reference books and newspapers in English.
- k. A good teacher of English is well versed in the language skills –they listen to English carefully and understand what is being spoken. Their pronunciation and intonation is fairly presentable. They can help others in writing applications, letters, notices, invitations, etc in flawless English. A good teacher of English is a voracious reader. They are all the time busy in reading English.

This kind of positive approach to everything and everybody keeps adding to your personality and you get enriched. Self-improvement is nothing but to keep on enriching oneself.

Questions for self-study - 3

1. What does 'the ability to get along with others' mean?
2. 'A teacher should have a heart of a tree.' What does it imply?
3. What can a teacher do to drive away the fear of English which usually students have?
4. Why should you avoid talking cheap about our colleagues behind their back?

1.2.2 Need to self-improve

Having read about improvement and self-improvement, a question may arise in your mind: Why to self-improve at all? Why to take the trouble of constantly learning new things, improving our English and making our teaching of English effective?

A large number of teachers get into a comfort zone and in the course of time become self-complacent, and finally become lethargic. They may not be interested in new syllabuses, new textbooks, effective teaching methods and teacher training.

Whether they get to their class late, whether they are prepared for the class, whether their students get any English during their class, whether they fail or pass, whether they go on leave every now and then, their monthly payment is intact. Even if a teacher does not really prepare for the class, does not teach well, does not perform their duty as a teacher, they do not have to lose anything. The losers, ultimately, are students!

You know, this may not be so everywhere and it may not be true of every teacher but the situation described above is one of the main reasons why many teachers are reluctant to put in efforts for their self-improvement. I am sure, you would hate to belong to that lazy lot because you believe in your self-improvement.

You need to self-improve because one of the important parameters by which a teacher has been assessed these days at the national and international level is 'the continuous self-improvement.' There are many other reasons why teachers need to resort to self-improvement.

1. English is widely used in all walks of life for our internal communication within the country and for communication with the world outside. This is more so in the context of privatization and globalization. Our young people need to use English far more than ever before. They need to be good communicators in order to get into the job market and face the cut-throat competition.

In order to make our students good communicators and to prepare them to take on new challenges of today's life, you as a teacher of English must improve. Otherwise, our students will never pardon us.

2. Teaching is now looked upon as an industry and students are the stakeholders. According to the Consumers' Protection Act students are our consumers and teachers and schools are service providers. Students pay fees for their education and it is their lawful right to get education worth their money. Otherwise, they may sue a teacher or school in a court of law. That our students are tolerant and do not go to the court of law asking for justice is something we all should appreciate. Before anything of this kind happens, we should make every effort to self-improve.
3. There is a lot of competition in the field of education after globalization. We have opened our doors to foreign universities and educational organizations. A number of private international schools are coming up all over. Many conventional schools, therefore, have been facing problems of students' admissions. In order for facing this competition several managements, school authorities and the Government are busy in giving a face-lift to their schools. In this competitive environment

teachers have to self-improve.

4. A greatness of a school is not measured by its posh buildings or their five-star look but by the quality of its teachers and the kind of students it has. In order to maintain this reputation and the public image of the school you are or would be working in, there is no way out but to self-improve.

Activity 3

Think of your school you were attending as a student.

Note down its strengths and weaknesses from the academic point of view.

5. In these days of knowledge explosion the kind of students schools get are far brighter than that of the past. The student of today is more informed, more curious, more ambitious, more aware of what they need as compared to students of conventional setup and look for quality education. Young learners are exposed to a lot of first hand English round the clock. They browse through the Internet and interact with the mobile all the time. They are also alert about what is happening around. How can they tolerate a lousy teacher of English who has problems of fluency and clarity in English? How can we expect them to listen to their teacher with unacceptable English?

If you wish your student should respect you, there is no other way for you but to self-improve.

6. These days there is a growing awareness among parents about quality education and they are prepared to do anything to give the best education to their children. They refuse to compromise with incompetent teachers and do not want to go with the school that has low-quality teachers.

In order to fulfill the aspirations of students as well as parents, teachers have to self-improve.

7. Any profession needs special training or skills. It has to maintain high standards. A farmer needs to know soil, seeds, seasons and market conditions. Farming is a highly skilled job with a variety of tasks that a farmer has to carry out. They have to know about the improved seeds, care to be taken of crops, new pesticides, new fertilizers and new methods of increasing production. A doctor needs to know about various diseases. They have got to know the functioning of the body. They cannot ignore the psychology of the patient. They have to know about the latest technology in their field of specialization. A lawyer has to know the legal system, be extremely careful in using language during the trial. They have to take note of the new amendment in law and study newly formulated Acts.

We are teachers by profession and we are paid handsomely these days. Teaching is prestigious and the society still honors good teachers. Since we have accepted teaching as a profession, we cannot afford to be non-professional.

There is a great need to induct professionalism in our teaching. Teachers of English have to resort to innovative methods of teaching which can give students confidence in using English, develop their reading habit and make them participate in a conversation with ease, interact with others smartly, make enquiries fearlessly and impress others with excellent English.

Don't you think to achieve all this a teacher has to be highly professional, for which they have to self-improve?

8. In the globalized context, English teachers have lots of opportunities. If you plan to go abroad as an expert teacher of English, or wish to join a renowned international school in the area around, if you desire to have a fat salary and you dream to live quality life – self-improvement is the only answer. There is a great dearth of English teachers not only in India but all over the world. If you are a competent teacher of English accompanied by the qualities we have talked about before – such as a sense of belonging, the ability to get along with others, etc you have a bright future.

Questions for self-study - 4

1. Which is the parameter according to which a teacher these days is assessed at the national and international level?
2. How can the greatness of a school be measured?
3. Do you think in the competitive age students and parents will be happy with the low-quality school?
4. What is the role of a school teacher and students according to the Consumers' Protection Act?

1.2.3 Ways of self- improvement

If you have a desire to self-improve, you can always do it. You can change yourself, if you really want to. Right from this moment, the change can begin to happen provided you have made a decision. Do not expect someone to change you and make a better teacher of English. You are the architect of your life. You can always bring about a change in yourself if you try to do the following things.

1. Attend seminars, workshops

Make it a point to attend seminars, workshops and crash courses to update yourself. Do not attend such courses just to get a certificate. Actively participate in

them. Ask the resource person your doubts, queries or problems you face while teaching English, using English. Do not be a silent listener. Be responsive. Speak up, discuss, argue, make your point, demonstrate and you will realize that doing a training programme is a learning experience. What you acquire there is much more than what you would read in books.

2. Organize seminars, workshops

Do not wait for the government to organize the training courses. If possible, you can always organize an academic get-together of teachers from your school or the institution your school belongs to. In consultation with the authorities concerned, take initiative to hold a workshop at your place or in a village or town where you work. You can certainly exchange your teaching experiences and this give and take can go a long way to your enrichment.

3. Interact with others

This is the best way to keep your English polished, to improve your interactive skills and make you learn new things. Do not think that knowledge is only in books. Some users of English are really reservoirs of knowledge. They may not be teachers, they may not be teaching English but they are excellent users of English. Someone may be working in a company, someone may be a businessman or a professional, many of such people have good English with them. They may not be BA or MA with English, still you can learn a lot of English from them. You are very likely to come across parents who are good at English. Establish a relationship with such people, maintain it, be in touch with them and that will help you improve your English.

4. Cultivate a dictionary habit and develop reference skills

If you go for self-improvement, buy your own standard dictionary. Modern dictionaries are usage oriented. They guide you which word, which phrase, which sentence is to be used in which context.

Good dictionaries are mines of gold. The more you dig up, the more you get. Some of the standard dictionaries available in the market are given below:

- a. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
- b. Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary
- c. Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners
- d. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
- e. Oxford Picture Dictionary
- f. Cambridge Pronouncing Dictionary
- g. Student's Thesaurus by Mare McCutcheon, Viva Books
- h. Oxford BBC Guide to English Pronunciation
- i. Longman Essential Activator

All these are English to English dictionaries.

For English-English-Marathi, you have the following dictionaries:

- a. Oxford Dictionary of English by Ramesh Dhondge
- b. Students' Modern Dictionary, Keshav Bhikaji Dhavale Prakashan, Mumbai, 1993
- c. New Approach Dictionary of Living English, V S Sohoni, Nitin Prakashan, Pune – 1996
- d. 'My First Marathi Dictionary' brought out by Maharashtra State Bureau of textbook Production and Curriculum Research, Pune

The English-English dictionaries (monolingual dictionaries) mentioned above come with the CD Rom which you can feed to your computer or laptop or mobile and use it anytime, anywhere you like.

Buy the latest edition.

Learn to look up a dictionary.

Many teachers buy a dictionary but do not know how to refer to it. Looking up a dictionary is a skill and you have to acquire it. Otherwise, it is like you buy the latest mobile and do not know how to operate it.

Make up your mind that you will not go to bed unless you consult a dictionary at least once in a day.

Also learn to refer to thesaurus, encyclopedias and useful reference books which will add to your knowledge.

Activity – 4

Do you have a standard dictionary of your own?

Do you know how to use it?

How often do you look it up?

5. Be computer savvy

There are a large number of websites related to English and English Language Teaching (ELT). There are also a variety of softwares available for learning English. You can download instruction materials and keep them in separate folders for your ready reference. A mobile is another useful device to help you improve your English.

6. Watch English movies

A TV channel like HBO shows English films. The advantage is, as you see the action on the screen and listen to dialogues, you also see their script which you can read to understand what is being spoken. Discovery, National Geographic, Animal Planet, HBO, NDTV bring out many interesting programmes which you can enjoy and simultaneously improve your communication and listening skills.

For this you have to spare time, look out for useful programmes and watch them uninterruptedly.

You can also hire or buy CD's of best of the movies in English and play them whenever you can.

Activity – 5

Watch an English movie. Try to write down 10-15 lines about it.

7. Develop the reading habit

There is a separate book on Reading Skills in this course. Here I would only say that, as far as possible buy your own English newspaper. If not daily, you can buy the Sunday editions and keep reading throughout the week.

You should also read magazines 'Chandoba' and 'Champak' available in English. You can read a magazine like 'Brain Tonic' published from Nashik. Subscribe to 'The Journal of English Language Teaching' (look up www.eltai.in for details). Become a member of ELT@I (English Language Teaching Association of India) and attend national and international seminars organized by the ELT@I. You can become a member of the British Council Library and enjoy lots of benefits such as borrowing books, audio-video materials and so on.

8. Do action research

This is to look at your teaching activity as an experiment. You have planned your classroom presentation. You have thought of the content you are going to deal with, objectives of your interaction with the class, the way you are going to deploy the teaching items and so on.

After the class is over, you go over whatever you did in the class, and assess yourself on the basis of the following points.

- Whether the objectives you had decided upon were fulfilled.
- What was it that you had planned but did not work, what could be the reasons for its failure?
- What was it that succeeded beyond your expectations?
- If you have to teach the same thing to a similar class, what modifications would you make?

This kind of exercise would give you new insights into the art and science of teaching.

If you look at your teaching objectively, you will come to know your shortcomings and your strengths.

If you could get your classroom presentation video shot and then watch it and analyze it, you are bound to improve your pronunciation, intonation, body language and your English. This will make your journey towards excellence enjoyable and highly rewarding.

9. Take up a small research project

This is voluntary though you may make an attempt to seek financial help from your school or organization or the Government authority.

Take up an issue and study it from the research orientation. This activity could be for a short period of time, say, about six months to one year.

Let us imagine you want to study 'the problems of teaching English to Marathi medium students'. You will need to do the following things:

- a. Do some basic reading related to the issue. For example: 'the use of the learners' L1 in teaching English'. Get help of a college library, do browsing on the Internet and identify useful reading material.
- b. Interact formally or informally with the students, parents and authorities on the issue. Interact with experts, if possible.
- c. Get the questionnaire filled up, if necessary.
- d. On the basis of your observation, experience, reading, interaction with people who know about the issue under study and your data analysis, arrive at your findings.
- e. Type the project, make a copy of it which you can show others. This kind of research oriented activity can be helpful to enrich you as follows:
 - a. You will develop research attitude of looking at any problem in a scientific way without partiality, biases or pre conceived view.
 - b. Your reading and interaction with others keep your English polished and in the process you will learn a lot.
 - c. The research report will always remain with you and it will make your bio-data strong.
 - d. Your research, though on a small scale, may bring you opportunities you may not have expected.
 - e. It will keep you fruitfully engaged and your intellectual energy will be channelized properly.
 - f. This may stimulate other colleagues to go for research.
 - g. This may inspire you to go for higher research leading to M. Phil. or Ph.D. degrees.

Some of the sample topics for short-term research could be as follows:

- a. Effective communication: a study of 10 effective speakers of English
- b. Teaching English: A study of English teachers based on their teaching experiences
- c. Parents' attitude to English: A study of how parents look at English
- d. English for specific purposes: A study in the use of English for sports

- e. English in movies: A study of 10 conversations from ‘The Titanic’
- f. Commerce and English: A study in the use of English in banks
- g. English for anchoring: A study of two English TV programmes from the anchoring point of view

Questions for self-study - 5

1. What does self-improvement for a teacher of English would mean?
2. What is the advantage of attending of seminars, workshops etc?
3. Why should a teacher of English be computer savvy?
4. Name four ways to get exposure to English?

1.3 Summary

There is a need for every teacher of English to self-improve. Constant self-improvement is one of the parameters by which a teacher is assessed. Self-improvement means to keep learning English all the time and acquire proficiency in English.

A teacher of English needs to cultivate certain qualities. One of them is communicative competence. They should know the grammatical correctness of utterances as well as their situational appropriateness. You should also be able to understand utterances in a given situation and respond to them in keeping with the norms of conversing in English. A teacher of English has to survive in the competitive context in the globalized environment.

Apart from competence, a teacher is expected to possess qualities like the ability to get along with others, know them well, share with them, co-operate with them, avoid backbiting and maintain – the feeling that ‘I represent my school’ and ‘I’m an inseparable part of it.’ There is a great need particularly for teachers of English to be encouraging and should have a mother’s heart.

Various ways of improving English are: to develop a reading habit, to learn to look up a dictionary and to consult it regularly, to watch English programmes on TV or listen to them on radio. Attending or organizing seminars, workshops help a lot. Interacting with your colleagues gives you a good deal of confidence. Browsing through the internet is always enriching. Carrying out small research projects and action research can give you the first-hand experience of using English for the academic purpose. It would be highly beneficial if you become a member of The British Council Library and subscribe for ‘The Journal of English Language Teaching.’

It would be a good idea to video shoot your presentation in a classroom and

see it again and analyze it. This would be of immense use. Attending your colleagues' classes would give you new insights.

Be in touch with what happens in ELT all over the world which will keep you updated.

1.4 Questions for practice

1. What do you mean by the term 'communicative competence'?
2. In order to get along with others what are the things you should take care of?
3. What are the characteristic features of a good teacher of English?
4. In what way does 'a sense of belonging' help the organization (i.e. school) as well as its members (i.e. teachers)?
5. Write five sentences a teacher of English can use which can be encouraging for students to learn English?
6. Write the factors that make it necessary for a teacher to self-improve?
7. What are the various ways for self-improvement?

1.5 Answers to questions for self-study

Answers to self-study - 1

1. Every academic year in a school brings new changes in the syllabus, teaching materials, learners – all are new. The teacher has to change according to the changing education context.
2. It means to make something or someone better.
3. No, we have to make improvement happen.
4. You can see the change in the world, only if you change yourself first.

Answers to self-study – 2

1. Right
2. Right
3. Right
4. Wrong

Answers to self-study – 3

1. It means to work together as a team, ignoring differences.
2. It implies that students feel comfortable with the teacher so that learning becomes an enjoyable activity.

3. A teacher can tell students that English is not difficult to learn, anyone can learn, you'll also learn it and I'm there to help you.
4. It is a waste of time and it pollutes the academic environment.

Answers to self-study – 4

1. 'The continuous self-improvement'.
2. It is measured by the kind of students and the quality of teachers the school has, not only by its building and furniture.
3. No, not at all.
4. A school is an industry, students are consumers and teachers are service providers.

Answers to self-study – 5

1. It would mean to improve their English in order to make the teaching of English effective.
2. You can judge yourself and find out where you stand as compared to many others. Through the interaction with others you get a lot of exposure to English.
3. A lot of websites on ELT can help identify useful teaching materials. You can interact with the best of teachers in English.
4.
 - a. to read English newspaper, magazines, etc.
 - b. to watch English movies
 - c. to be computer savvy
 - d. to cultivate a dictionary habit

Unit 2 : Research Orientation

CONTENT

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Subject Analysis
 - 2.2.1 Observation of English Teaching
 - 2.2.2 Self Evaluation
 - 2.2.3 Action Research
- 2.3 Summary
- 2.4 Questions for Practice
- 2.5 Answers to Questions for Self-Study

2.0 Objectives

After you go through this Unit you will understand -

- ★ The meaning of the concept 'research orientation'
- ★ What observation means and what it is to observe the classroom performance of a teacher of English
- ★ The importance of the classroom observation for teachers' professional development
- ★ The importance of Research and Development (R&D) resulting from observation

2.1 Introduction

Research orientation means a research attitude. The word 'attitude' implies the way you look at something which shows the way you think or feel about something. For example: if someone is hostile toward English, that is, if they have unfriendly or aggressive feelings about the English language or the teacher of English, they would not be comfortable with learning English. As a result, the learning outcome would be far less than that of the individual who has a friendly attitude.

In this context, you are supposed to shape the students' attitude to English and yourself. It is common knowledge that students do quite well in the subject whose teacher they like most and the other way round. Even the performance of good students begin to deteriorate the moment they begin to develop dislike for the teacher of English. The positive attitude of students toward English and the teacher of English works as a source of motivation, and the higher is the motivation, the more is learning. Therefore, apart from teaching English, a teacher of English should also make students positive towards the study of English. This can be done as follows:

- a. Remove the fear of English from the minds of your students.
"Learning English is not at all difficult, you can learn it easily."
- b. Keep telling them from time to time that English has achieved importance in the
New World.
"In the age of globalization and internationalization, you'll need English every now and then in all walks of life."
- c. Motivate them to learn English.
"If you're an effective communicator, you'll get lots of opportunities and your future will be bright."
- d. Assure them that you will always help them in acquiring English.
"I'm sure you'll enjoy every class and I'm always there to help you. Feel free to ask your queries, difficulties or problems you face while learning English."

These are just a few examples of shaping the attitude of your students.

This can be done more effectively if your own attitude to English, your students and the teaching and learning of English is scientific. What is a scientific attitude? Well, it is to look at everything around us in an objective way, without prejudices. To observe things minutely, reflect on them impartially and learn to put them in a systematic way. Research is nothing but systematization of our observation to get more information so that it helps to increase our understanding about them.

Research in the teaching of English leads to development: development in syllabus, development in teaching materials and above all, self-improvement of teachers.

Questions for self-study-1

1. What does 'the positive attitude to learning English' mean?
2. What is the advantage of the students' positive attitude to English?
3. What is 'research'?
4. What is the advantage of research for a teacher?

2.2 Subject analysis

2.2.1 Observation of teaching English

Observation is an act of watching something carefully. In the context of teaching to observe is to watch minutely what the teacher does during the class and the purpose is to learn more about it.

This kind of observation is with a purpose. The purposeful examination of the teaching-learning events in a systematic way can help data collection which can be analyzed for the purpose of research.

In the language teaching context the classroom observation is usually undertaken for the following reasons:

- a. As a regular part of pre-service teacher training programmes, the would-be teachers are observed in action during the classroom teaching by teachers, trainers or teacher-educators. This is mainly to provide guidance to such teachers by trainers as to how to go about teaching. During your training, teacher educators observe your lessons and give you advice on the development of your teaching skills. I'm sure many of you are familiar with the process. This kind of classroom observation is mainly for the supervisory purpose.
- b. Another occasion is when the newly appointed teachers observe demonstration lessons by the practicing teachers. This is for the professional development of the observing teachers.
- c. The third instance is principals or head masters, supervisors, heads of departments, course coordinators observe practising teachers for the following reasons :
 1. To judge how effective the teaching techniques are and whether they are up to the expectations of the authorities concerned.
 2. To judge whether teacher's focus is on the items from the syllabus or whether the teacher goes away from the syllabus.
 3. To find out whether the teacher indulges into irrelevant teaching and meaningless diversions just to kill time.
 4. In short, to measure the quality of teaching from all points of view: relevance, enjoyable presentation, learning outcome, class control, etc.
- d. Another reason for classroom observation is to collect data for the purpose of research.

In all these situations given above, teachers are observed by outsiders.

These days teachers have become quality conscious. There is a lot of competition between schools and educational institutions and among teachers themselves. Therefore, very often, we see teachers themselves undertaking the activity of classroom observation. They invite their colleagues to observe their

classroom presentation. After the presentation, informal interaction takes place. Strengths and weaknesses of the presentation are sorted out. This helps teachers for their professional development. This type of peer observation helps them to go for action research. The classroom observation of this kind is voluntary and is undertaken by teachers on their own for their own improvement. Since the observing teachers and the teacher giving the demonstration belong to the same group or school, they do not feel awkward or embarrassed. There is no tension for both – the teacher observing and the teacher that is being observed.

This is not a formal or official or administrative task. However, much depends how expert or experienced the observer teacher is.

Any classroom observation that contributes to teachers' professional development is worth undertaking.

Classroom observation can be

- a. restricted or
- b. open ended

In the restricted observation, the observer is given a list of parameters against which the classroom teaching is to be assessed. This is a systematic assessment. However, it puts limitations on the observation as well as assessment. This is because the observer has to focus on the given parameters only. For example: if one of the parameters is 'pronunciation', the observer will focus only on the pronunciation of individual words and the other aspects of spoken language such as fluency, rhythm, audibility, speed, intonation, meaningful pauses, etc. will be lost sight of.

The open-ended observation is by no means random observation. The observer will always assume certain parameters but they will not restrict or limit the observation because the observer would be flexible about what is to be observed.

What you have to bear in mind is observation to be made of a lesson has to be carried out seriously and with a specific purpose. It is not a task done in a casual way. This is because the process of careful observation is enriching to both, the observer teacher as well as the demonstrating teacher.

Activity – 1

1. Observe a class of your colleague and note down their problems with reference to-
 - a. Pronunciation
 - b. Kind of questions they ask students and the question formation (grammatical accuracy)
 - c. Sentences used and the usage problems
 - d. Audibility, simplicity and clarity
2. Shoot your own class and observe it with reference to the above points.

The teacher that is being observed can learn the following:

1. They learn to teach in a natural way even if they know they are being observed. This sends positive signals to students as well. They realize that they should enjoy learning without bothering about the presence of somebody else in the class other than their teacher.
2. It adds to their confidence because they get used to observation by the observer. They gradually overcome tension, pressure and occasional confusion resulting in faltering and hesitations.
3. The interaction with the observer may offer them new insights in the teaching and learning of English.
4. While teaching the same items next time, the guidance given now would be useful and will give the teachers the opportunity to try themselves out. This would certainly enhance the quality of teaching.

The observing person who may be the principal, supervisor, teacher, educator or colleague can learn a lot.

1. They learn to prepare the observation instrument, that is, the basis on which the classroom observation is to be carried out.
2. They understand, through their first-hand experience, the process of observation and how to make it systematic and reliable, free from subjectivity and partiality.
3. It helps improve their skills of observation and also strategies about how to guide the teacher so that the teacher concerned takes the advice in a positive way.
4. They realize that they have to improve their own teaching because ultimately the observer is a teacher and they should be able to demonstrate model teaching and not resort to only fault-finding with the teacher.

It is also important to note that both the participants in the process of classroom observation develop the scientific attitude. They begin to look at students, teachers and activities in the class as the source of data. The collection of data is an important aspect of research.

Teachers begin to look at the data from a scientific point of view. The data no more remains a collection of facts or pieces of information, it begins to imply a number of things about teaching and learning and adds to their knowledge more understanding about it. It also makes the participants reflective and they realize what can succeed in a class and why. They understand what is to be avoided and what is to be highlighted.

In this way observation turns to be a means of enquiry. To make an enquiry is to try to find out about something. For example: You observe a lesson by your fellow teacher of English in order to find out about how the teaching of English can be effective. During your observation you see a sentence put on the board by your colleague.

My school is just five years' old but I've ten year's experience.

After you read it, your curiosity arouses. You get doubtful about **five year' old**. Is it **five year's old** or **five years' old**?

This observation leads to finding out more information and the authentic information about the language item which seems to be problematic from the point of view of usage.

Had you accepted the items written on the board by your colleague there would not have been any exploration into it. But your keen observation makes you think about it. You want to confirm it with the dictionary. What you are doing is nothing but research which will lead to your development.

So you refer to the Oxford dictionary. To observe, to doubt, to have a desire to confirm, to look up a dictionary is the first step towards the process of research.

To your surprise, the dictionary neither shows it **five year's old** or **five years' old** but **five years old**.

When you look up **ten year's experience**, to your surprise, it shows **ten years' experience**. How strange?

You have done R&D about the item. You have verified it, and come to know for sure that the sentence has to be,

My school is just **five years old** but I've **ten years' experience**.

You come to know when you talk about somebody's age or the age of something, you say **five** (or whatever) **years old**, without apostrophe. But when you have to say about a period of time of someone's experience, you write **ten** (or whatever) **years' experience**.

Your observation led you to make enquiry about the said language item and you came out with something that you were not aware of. This added to your stock of knowledge about the English language.

Later you let this known to your colleague. This will tell them that

- The item they wrote on the board was wrong
- They should be extremely careful about such items
- Since they presented a wrong item, that is going to be harmful to students as well as the reputation of the teacher

The practicing teacher will learn a lot about it and students would be benefitted by this information. In this way, observation becomes a means of investigation. It makes us do research, which adds to our competence in English.

Questions for self-study – 2

1. What is ‘to observe’?
2. In what way does the classroom observation help the teachers?
3. What is ‘to observe in a scientific way’?
4. Which is the first step towards research?

2.2.2 Self-evaluation

They say, self-examination is the best examination. As a teacher, you evaluate your students, you judge your colleagues, you observe school working and the programmes that take place in your school. In our life in general we keep on observing various people and events happening around, we think about them, try to analyze even the complex issues in our personal life and try to assess them in whatever way we can.

Most of you observe, assess and evaluate or judge every other person or happening. But have you ever examined or even observed yourself? Have you seen yourself in the mirror of your mind?

To examine something means to take a careful look at it or to take a close look at it to find out if there is anything wrong, to see whether everything is all right or there is any problem. You ask a question, ‘Why is it so?’ So you examine something to understand it or to help someone else understand it.

To examine means to study something thoroughly. We say, ‘He has been advised to do the medical examination.’ or ‘The patient is under examination.’ A doctor examines a patient means they take a close look at them especially to see what the problem with the patient is and why the problem is there.

This study leads the doctor to analyze the causes of the patient’s illness. And finally, prescribe appropriate medicines in order to recover the patient from illness, get well and live happily. What the doctor does is nothing but research and development. While examining the patient, the doctor asks a number of questions. The purpose is to gather information which helps the doctor to understand the nature of the patient’s problems and then seek a solution by way of prescribing medicines.

This is the purpose and process of research.

The same can be applied to an individual. You must learn to examine yourself from time to time, identify your problems and find out solutions to them. This is especially so in the context of teaching.

On many occasions I find teachers saying, ‘Sir, I teach a lot but these students are not able to learn any English.’

In a situation like this you are the best judge of it. You are the best person to know what is happening and why. How can you expect an outsider to know the

situation and suggest solutions? Even if an outsider is an expert in English Language Teaching (ELT), they may not be able to comprehend your situation completely and therefore, the solutions suggested may not work.

Learn to judge the situation in which you find yourself, study it closely and you will come out with a solution which can set the things right.

You cannot expect somebody else to solve your problems. Remedies are not going to fall from the heaven.

You can always consult expert teachers and teacher educators but it is not desirable to look upon them as saviors.

The result is we do not know ourselves. We do not know our own problems so there is no question of seeking solutions to them. Instead of looking into ourselves, we look at others to provide solutions to our problems. This is unrealistic. The intensity which you have about your problem, no outsider can have the same degree of intensity.

Self-help is the best help. God also helps those who help themselves. How can you help yourself? How can you face difficulties in life? How can you find a way out of a complicated situation?

Well, the answer is self-examination! You can begin assessing as a teacher of English by asking various questions to yourself. Let us think of the questions which can help you realize where you stand.

1. The first question you can ask yourself is: ‘What have I done after my graduation or post-graduation to bring about any improvement in me? Has there been any improvement in me for the last so many years?’

Here, we are talking about improvement in your English, in your communication in English and improvement in your teaching of English.

We have already seen before that improvement does not take place automatically. You have to make it happen. You have to make an attempt. You have to try for it. Now the question is-

‘Have you made an attempt to improve my English as a teacher of English? What did I do during the Diwali and summer vacations?’

Ask yourself the following questions about what you did during vacations:

- a. Have I undergone any professional training?
- b. Have I attended any workshop or seminar?
- c. Have I undergone any crash course?
- d. If I have done any of these, have I whole-heartedly participated in it or I attended it just for getting a certificate?
- e. Have I organized any activity of this kind at my school or college?
- f. Have I developed a professional relationship with someone who has been contributing to ELT?

Very often I put a question to teachers in a seminar or some kind of training in ELT:

“Have you read anything in English apart from your text or what you have to teach, for the last five years? Two years? One year? One month?”

Usually, the response of teachers is not very encouraging. **If you do not have contact with English, how can you hope to improve your English and the teaching of English?**

If you do not do anything for your own improvement, who else?

2. **‘Do I teach English through the learners’ mother tongue, that is, Marathi?’ is another important question.**

Wherever I go in the rural area, teachers tell me,

“Sir, we have to teach English through Marathi only because these rural students do not understand anything in English. In order to make them understand what we teach, we have no other option but to use Marathi to teach English.”

Fine. If you use 20% Marathi, it is OK. You can always be bilingual whenever you feel the need. But what I see in practice is the other way round! The English class is converted into Marathi while we expect our students to learn English.

My experience tells me that the problem is not with students really. The problem lies with teachers. They find it difficult to speak English continuously and teach English through English.

Maybe, when you passed out XII or did your graduation or post graduation, your English was quite all right and to interact in English was not much of a problem for you. After you took up teaching and a few years passed by, you have lost your confidence in using English.

If you examine yourself, the loss you have to suffer for teaching English through Marathi, you will realize that:

- a. You have lost whatever fluency in English you had before.
- b. You have become shaky about using English.
- c. Your vocabulary has remained extremely restricted. You are not able to recognize even simple words or expressions. There is hardly any new addition to your stock of vocabulary.
- d. You tend to use Marathi in teaching English more day by day, and also justify it.
- e. You develop an inferiority complex.
- f. Students are the worst sufferers. They are not likely to learn any English. Maybe, in future when they look back upon their life they may blame their teachers of English.

3. Another question could be: “Do I have any academic discipline? Do I spare time to study English?”

This is a vital question. Unless you study English, use English, you cannot get proficiency in it. Apart from what you have to teach, you have to read, watch and listen to English, reflect on it, study it, look up a dictionary, make notes, write down useful expressions, sentences, then only you will feel confident in English. For this, you have to make time and this is to be done regularly.

Several good teachers have self-discipline. They keep with them newspaper clippings, pictures with captions, advertisements with excellent English. They draw notes and go through the file from time to time. They also make an attempt to make use of the items they have newly come across.

There can be several other questions you can ask yourself to know about yourself as a teacher of English.

Activity - 2

1. Ask a question to yourself: ‘What have I done for my self-improvement for the last five years?’
Write down your answer to this question.
2. Write down your response to the following question:
‘How do you see yourself as a teacher of English five years from now?’

You must have realized by now that self-evaluation is an important aspect of your growth as a teacher. You can keep on developing only if you take care of your growth. Self-evaluation keeps you alert and active and makes you play the game of teaching English effectively and successfully.

In the next pages we will see how self-reflection leads to action research which you have to carry out for your own professional development.

But before that, do not forget to take an objective look at yourself and try to understand how much competent in English you are and how much you have to travel to catch the glimpses of excellence.

Questions for self-study – 3

1. Who is the best judge of your situation?
2. What is self-examination?
3. In what way teaching English through Marathi is damaging to a teacher?
4. What is ‘academic discipline’?

2.2.3 Action research

Action research has already been referred to in 1.2.3, 'Ways of self-improvement'. Let us know more about research. There are three types of research.

(i) Basic research or fundamental research

The aim of this type of research is to test a theory. For example: 'How does the theory of behaviourism work in the process of language learning?' or 'How does collaborative learning take place?'

Basic research does not have any immediate application.

(ii) Applied research

The purpose of applied research is to apply theoretical concepts to the actual problem situations. This is also to improve the situation, product or process. For example: the deployment of instructional material in the classroom.

(iii) Action research

It is a process in which a practising teacher attempts to study their problem in a scientific way in order to self-improve as well as to verify their decisions about some aspect of teaching and learning.

Usually, the researcher and the practitioner is the same person.

Action research is normally undertaken by a teacher voluntarily. It is not imposed on the teacher by anyone. It is the decision of the teacher.

Objectives of action research for a teacher of English

- a. To improve teachers' abilities to identify problems in a real educational setting
- b. To study solutions in a scientific way
- c. To seek solutions to the problem under study
- d. To improve the situation the teacher has to work in
- e. To improve the pedagogical practices and thereby improve the quality of teaching and learning of English

We have already seen that action research is an enrichment programme for a teacher. Let us repeat how beneficial action research is for a teacher.

1. It keeps the teacher meaningfully engaged.
2. They carry out their daily work with the new insights they acquire from their research activities.
3. They develop, in the process, research attitude.
4. Action research gives them confidence that a teacher can identify as well as solve their problems on their own.

5. Research makes the researcher active, enthusiastic and their imagination begins to fly high. Teaching-learning becomes experimental to them.

Another important characteristic feature of action research is its area of research. Usually, the topic selected for research is local. It is not of a general nature and its findings may not be universal. The specific issue that is under investigation is for the purposes of finding solution.

Action research is undertaken, thus, for practical reasons. That is why it is applied in nature.

Action research is a sort of 'self-reflective enquiry' undertaken to improve the situation or practices in the field of education. Its focus is on immediate application not theoretical discussion for testing an existing theory or establishing any new theory.

Questions for self-study – 4

1. What are the types of research?
2. What is action research?
3. Why is action research said to be 'applied in nature'?
4. What help do students need in writing a composition – content points or language items?

Let us have an example of action research and how to go about it.

You have been teaching VIII class of Marathi medium students. One of the items from the syllabus is essay writing. This also matters in the examination. You have done so far two essays: 1) 'A fair in my village/town' and 2) 'A visit to a well-known place.'

You are a competent teacher and you have to do the essay writing for the above topics in a very systematic way. For example: you write the following points for the first topic.

'A fair in my village'

Important points

- ✓ a famous fair in Nashik - the Kalika fair
- ✓ importance of the holy month of Navaratri
- ✓ crowds of people for nine days
- ✓ prayers in the temple
- ✓ enjoyment in the fair

You have also given them some of the vocabulary items like coconut, sanctum, sweets shops, merry-go-round and so on.

You tell the students to write the essay with the help of the above points. You have done some oral work. You go round the class to find out whether they are doing the activity.

You do the second essay 'A visit to a well-known place.'

You find that except a handful of students nobody has been able to write the essay in presentable English.

This makes you a little uneasy. You very sincerely feel that you have tried your best but students have not been able to develop the given points in simple English. You share it with your colleague and she says, "Students are like that only. You do whatever you can but they cannot write an essay even on a simple topic. What to do? We can't help it. They are terribly weak at essay writing."

You think that your colleague has a point. You also wonder, 'I've given them important points, wrote them on the board, explained to them each point. How is it that they cannot do it? They're good at grammar. They get good marks in other questions. It is only essay writing that creates problems'.

The researcher in you does not allow you to be calm. You have realized the problem. 'Students are not able to write an essay even if they are explained the important points on the basis of which they are expected to write a few lines.'

This realization makes you go into more details of the issue.

You make the students write the same essay again and you collect the scripts. This becomes your data. You go through the scripts minutely. You come to know that students have got stuck in the very first paragraph. Here are some samples:

- a. 'Nashik is a city of temples. One of the famous temple is the Kalika temple. A fair is organized every year around the temple.....'
- b. 'Nashik contains many many temples. One temple is a Kalika temple. The fair is arranged regularly in the Navaratri'
- c. 'We went first to the Kalika temple. Threw flowers to goddess, broke coconuts and prayed. Then we went to the fair.'
- d. 'At the end we tired and walked towards home.'
- e. 'We liked laughing mirrors and went up in the flying wheel.'

You then underline the expressions which seemed to be problematic to students. You then note appropriate expressions for the unacceptable ones. Here is a sample how you did it.

- a. 'Nashik is a city of temples. **One of the famous temple** is the Kalika temple. **A fair is organized** every year **around the temple.**'

Your replacement

One of the famous **temples**

A fair **is held**

at the temple

- b. ‘**Nashik contains many many temples. One temple** is a Kalika temple. The fair **is arranged regularly** in the Navaratri.’

Your replacement

Nashik has a large number of temples.

The fair **is held every year.**

- c. ‘We first went to the Kalika temple. **Threw flowers** to goddess, broke coconuts and prayed. **Then we went to the fair.**’

- d. Your replacement

offered flowers

Then we **went around.**

- e. **At the end we tired and walked toward home.**

Your replacement with optional expressions

after some time/after a couple of hours

we got tired/we became tired

returned home/ got back home

- f. ‘We **liked** laughing mirrors and **went up in the flying wheel.**’

enjoyed

Your replacement

sat on the flying wheel

rode on the flying wheel

You begin to understand gradually that students have a lot many things to say, they also know some words but they do not know how to say things or how to use words.

You also understand that rather than the ‘important points’ you put on the board, your students need linguistic help.

You decide to confirm your hunch. You make the following exercise sheet to take your experiment further.

You write the English equivalences for the Marathi sentences. Do not translate. Think of how it is said in English.

1. Nashik la khup mandire aheth
2. Tya paiki ek mandir mahnje kalika mandir
3. Dar varshi nashik la kalike chi yatra bharte
4. Amhi devala fule vahili
5. Nantar amhi yatret firayala gelo

After you give this test you confirm your guess that students have problems with ‘using language for saying things.’ They have a lot to say, they also know what to say but do not know how to say it in English. And to top it all, their mother tongue pull is always at work while using English. Considering all this, you introduce the language items to students skillfully – against the background of the essay writing on the fair.

Nashik has **many** temples.

Students, rewrite the sentence replacing **many**.

There are some responses like

‘There are **many, many** temples in Nashik.

There are **a lot of** temples in Nashik.

You feel the need to introduce the following variations:

many

a lot of

lots of

a lot many

a great number of

a large number of

quite a few

several

numerous

You also tell them how they say things in English. For example,

You **offer flowers** to God. You **don’t ‘throw them to God’**

You **go around something**. So don’t say, **we went to the fair**. You can just say, **we went around**.

You **get tired** or **become tired**. You don’t say **I tired**. You can just say, **I was tired**.

It’s **one of the temples**. It means, there are many temples and **one** of those **temples** is the Kalika temple. For example,

One of my friends helped me a lot.

When you introduce such items with examples you find that the faces of students are lit and they feel happy to get something new.

You then do the oral work and consolidate the related language items to write a composition on the Kalika fair.

Then you display the language items they have practised and tell them to write the composition.

You also display a model essay for students.

You compare both the performances and you see a lot of improvement.

After this experiment you arrive at a conclusion:

Students face a lot of problems if they are told to write a composition directly on the basis of reference points and students do not come out with acceptable sentences.

Before students are told to write a composition the following steps can help:

1. Introduce students to language items related to the essay they are supposed to write.
2. Do adequate oral work for the language items introduced so that students get familiar with them and the items stay with them. This gives them confidence to use them.
3. It helps a lot to tell students how things are said in English rather than translating from their mother tongue to the target language.

In other words, if students are provided with good models of English in the context they have to work on, it helps improve their English and they grow confident.

This is one of the effective ways of language learning.

The experiment you have conducted consists of-

1. Identification of the problem based on your own personal classroom observation
2. Reflecting on it to examine the issue and understand its various aspects
3. Carrying out verification of the problem through scientific techniques
4. Formulating a hypothesis or a hunch
5. Trying out with students the things you have taken for granted
6. Arriving at generalizations

What you do is **action research**.

Activity – 3

Think of a problem related to the teaching-learning of English and carry out research on the basis of the point given above.

It would be better if you could put all this in a systematic way. The steps for writing the project report are as follows:

Topic of action research: ‘Writing an essay or a composition’

Introduction (to the research undertaken)

It consists of the following :

- a. Introduction (in general, a short one)
- b. Statement of the problem
- c. Objectives of the research
- d. Data, scope and limitations
- e. Research method (The way you are going to carry out your research)
- f. Justification for the research (What is its value)
- g. Pedagogical implications (application of the research in the classroom situation for improving the process of teaching and learning of English)
- h. Chapterization

Chapter 1: **Introduction** as given above

Chapter 2: **Theoretical framework** (This is to provide a theoretical foundation to your research)

Chapter 3: **Literature review** (This is to know what experts have said on the issue under investigation. This shows whether you have done the basic reading and whether you know the latest things happening in the field of your study. You also relate to it what you wish to do.)

Chapter 4 & 5: **Analysis of the data**

Chapter 6: **Research findings**

If you type your research experiment and put the print out in a bound form, you can proudly keep it with you, show it to others, have their responses and interact with them and get yourself enriched

2.3 Summary

Research orientation means research attitude. A teacher is expected to develop a scientific attitude to their profession which includes not only teaching and learning of English but also students involved in the process of learning, parents who are indirectly a part of it, and the teachers as well.

The term ‘scientific attitude’ refers to an objective and impartial outlook at everything related to educational environment. The foundation of the research attitude is careful observation of the given situation to get

more information about it which can help to increase our understanding about it.

A teacher of English cannot afford to look at the activity of teaching in a casual way. Observation of classroom interactions, whether of their colleagues or their own is an on-going process. It has to take place continuously. This constant observation of what you do as a teacher of English gives you new insights and adds to your self-improvement.

Minute observation, that is, examining the teaching-learning process with a specific purpose leads to enquiry or further investigation into what you observe. This encourages a systematic study of something that is under observation. Observing the process of teaching and learning English in a systematic way is of paramount importance to a teacher of English. This observation can also help you to collect data which can form a part of research you may wish to carry out.

As a teacher, you are an inseparable part of the whole process of teaching and learning of English in particular and the educational scenario in general. In fact you are the person who makes things happen in a classroom. Therefore, you should also develop the ability to observe yourself objectively. You have to self-examine. You should be aware of your strengths and weaknesses, your competence, the training you need and how you can keep on improving yourself. Self-evaluation is essential for every teacher. It keeps the teacher alert all the time. Self-examination keeps you in tune with the time.

Research is of three types: Basic or fundamental research is carried out for a practical purpose of improving the situation, while action research is usually taken up by a teacher to solve a local problem related to their teaching in order to seek an immediate solution. Action research is basically applied in nature.

Whatever research you plan to carry out must have pedagogical value. It means any research in ELT cannot be for its own sake. In a country like India, where learning English is always a problem, research has got to contribute to the improvement in the quality of classroom teaching.

2.4 Questions for practice

1. Make a list of the sentences a teacher of English can say to their students to make their attitude positive toward learning English. (Take a look at the sentences in the introduction of this Unit)
2. In what way observation turns to be a means of enquiry?
3. Make a list of questions you should ask yourself as a teacher of English for the purpose of self-examination.

4. Explain the concept 'action research' with reference to the following points:
 - Meaning
 - Purpose
 - Steps for carrying it out
 - Applied value
5. What are the important points that are explained in the Introduction to the research undertaken?
6. What would be the tentative chapterization of a project report of your research?
7. What is meant by 'pedagogical implications'? Why is there a need to have it as a part of a research project?

2.5 Answers to questions of self-study

Answers to questions of self-study - 1

1. It means a learner is happy to learn English.
2. It leads to motivation. Motivation means a strong desire to do something.
3. It means putting your knowledge in a systematic way.
4. It adds to their self-improvement.

Answers to questions of self-study - 2

1. 'To observe' is to watch something carefully.
2. It contributes to their professional development. It also helps data collection for research.
3. It means to observe in an objective way, free from biases, prejudices, personal views or partiality.
4. Observation.

Answers to questions of self-study - 3

1. Yourself.
2. To take stock of what you have been thinking, doing and to assess it objectively.
3. They lose their fluency and confidence in using English. There is no increase in their vocabulary and they develop inferiority complex.
4. It means to spare time to read, study English, look up a dictionary, make notes, record new words, phrases, sentences and keep on thinking about how English is used.

Answers to questions of self-study - 4

1.
 - a. Basic or fundamental research
 - b. Applied research
 - c. Action research
2. It is normally undertaken by a teacher voluntarily. The purpose is to study a problem faced by the teacher and to find solutions to it.
3. Because the focus is on the immediate application to improve the situation or practices in the teaching and learning of English NOT the theoretical discussion.
4. Language items.

Unit 3 : Academic Planning

CONTENT

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Subject Analysis
 - 3.2.1 Planning for the academic year
 - 3.2.2 Planning for meeting / interacting with people
 - 3.2.3 Planning for reading
- 3.3 Summary
- 3.4 Questions for Practice
- 3.5 Answers to Questions for Self-Study

3.0 Objectives

After you go through this Unit you will understand -

- ★ The meaning of the term ‘academic planning’.
- ★ How to do time management for effective teaching-learning operation.
- ★ How to organize or reorganize yourself.
- ★ How to plan for interacting with people to retain your fluency in English, maintain efficiency in teaching, remain updated and get new insights
- ★ How to plan for reading

3.1 Introduction

To plan means to think about and decide what you want to do and how you are going to do something in the future. **It is to decide upon what is to be done, when, how and for what purpose.**

The following aspects have to be taken into account for this act of deciding what you wish to do in the future and in what way.

1. **Identify the activities** you are likely to, or supposed to, or have to carry out, or jobs to perform, or the roles to play tomorrow, this week, this month or for this year, or for the next few years.

For example, if you wish to improve your educational qualifications it may be comparatively a long-term planning. If you want to improve your language skills, the sky is the limit. If you plan to read a book or an article and finish it in a limited period of time, the activity may be short-term.

2. You have to **think of the time at your disposal**, that is, how much time the task would need and whether you will be able to spare it. When and how much.

If you plan to visit a book shop or a library you have to see how much time it would take to reach there, how much time you have to spend there and when is it possible for you to make a slot for this.

3. Consider **the favourable or unfavourable factors** related to the task you have to carry out. For example, if you want to see someone and interact with them about some issues about the teaching and learning of English:

- a. you will have to call that person and find out when they are available,
- b. how much time the person can spare for you,
- c. you will have to take their appointment,
- d. you will also have to decide the venue of meeting – his home or yours, at school or a hotel where you can sit and talk about things over a cup of tea and so on.

You will also have to think of **how to reach the place** – whether you will go by your bike or there is a bus or the distance is walkable and you can walk down.

How much time would it take to reach and get back?

You have to decide **what you are going to talk to the person**. Maybe, you have to write it down on a piece of paper. This is because you are not visiting the person to carry out a stray talk or kill time or chat with the person in a casual way and, therefore, you have to take into account all these things.

Accordingly, you have to think of sparing time. Maybe, you have to rearrange your schedule. Remember, you have to make a note in your diary of the day and time when you are going to see the person.

Activity – 1

Imagine that you want to see someone and share problems in the teaching of English. How will you plan the visit and prepare for the interaction? What are the factors you will take into account for an activity of this kind?

You know, especially these days, you cannot drop in on someone all of a sudden. You cannot take it for granted that the person will be freely available for you and it is your right to disturb the person anytime according to your sweet wish and your convenience.

You must have realized that planning for an academic activity is a responsible task. Now on we will discuss how to go about the planning for the academic year.

Have you ever thought about why planning is necessary? Why should we plan at all.

For every teacher and particularly a teacher of English planning is necessary because :

- a. Planning is an essential aspect of your academic discipline. If you wish to achieve your target, you must plan for it.
- b. Planning tells you what is what and when you have to do things.
- c. Planning helps you to make preparations for what you aim to do and get ready for it.
- d. Planning gives you confidence. The very feeling that you are not disorderly, that you are well organized makes you have an edge over the others.

Questions for self-study 1

1. What does 'to plan' mean?
2. What are the types of planning?
3. Is it right to assume that a person you want to meet up would be readily available at your service?
4. What is the advantage of planning?

3.2 Subject analysis

3.2.1 Planning for the academic year

You have seen what planning means and how to go about it. You also know the importance of planning and how it is an essential part of the academic discipline which is necessary if you aim at achieving your academic goal. Let us now think how you can plan for the academic year.

Usually, educational institutions, whether schools or colleges, come to a standstill at the end of April or in the first week of May – normally between 1st and 5th May. They usually reopen about 15th June.

Let us think of the total time for teaching you are likely to get during the first half of the academic year.

- ❖ The school reopens : 15th June
- ❖ Closes for Diwali vacation : 31st October (tentatively)

It normally takes a week after 15th June for the school to get settled. Let us assume that **teaching begins in the last week of June. So you get one week of June for the academic purpose.**

Till the end of October, you get about four months: July, August, September and October.

Of these, at least one week is required for tests and exams. So you get 3 months and 2 weeks.

Let us add a week of June to this and the total period you get for the first half of the year is four months – that is 16 weeks, i.e. $16 \times 7 = 112$ days. Let us deduct from this 16 Sundays and about 8 holidays or days spent on school functions, celebration of some days etc.

So the total days you are likely to get are $112 - 24 = 88$ days. Of this, you are entitled to casual leave for 8 days, and 8 days are spent on revision which means: $88 - 16 = 72$ days.

Let us assume that you have a class in English every day. The period is for 35 minutes of which effective teaching is for about 30 minutes.

Thus, the total teaching time you get is;

$$72 \text{ days} \times 30 \text{ minutes} = 2160 \text{ minutes} / 60 = 36 \text{ clock hours}$$

You all have the school time-table, school planning, class notes and so on. But the reality is you get about 36 clock hours to teach items from the syllabus and the text.

For any teacher of English the teaching time is extremely limited while the amount of teaching is never ending.

How much would be the learning outcome for all this is a matter of research.

Activity – 2

Think of the time you are likely to get for the second half of the academic year. Calculate it as it has been done here for you for the first half.

Syllabus designers and textbook writers assume a particular span of time for completing the portion and also **a particular kind of learner at the entry point**. This means they assume that in order to do the syllabus and the text a learner needs to have a certain amount of English with them.

This is an important issue. However, the ground reality is:

The time span assumed by the makers of the syllabus and the textbook never matches with the real time available for a teacher.

Similarly, the amount of English a learner is supposed to have at the entry point of a class always varies from school to school and many learners do not have the required linguistic ability to take on the new course. In addition to this there can also be a number of slow learners.

Under these circumstances, the teacher of English has to manage their teaching pace. On the one hand they have to complete the portion and on the other they have to take care of the slow learners and learners with poor English. At the top of it all, they have to show the learning outcomes in terms of exam results and how much proficiency learners have actually acquired.

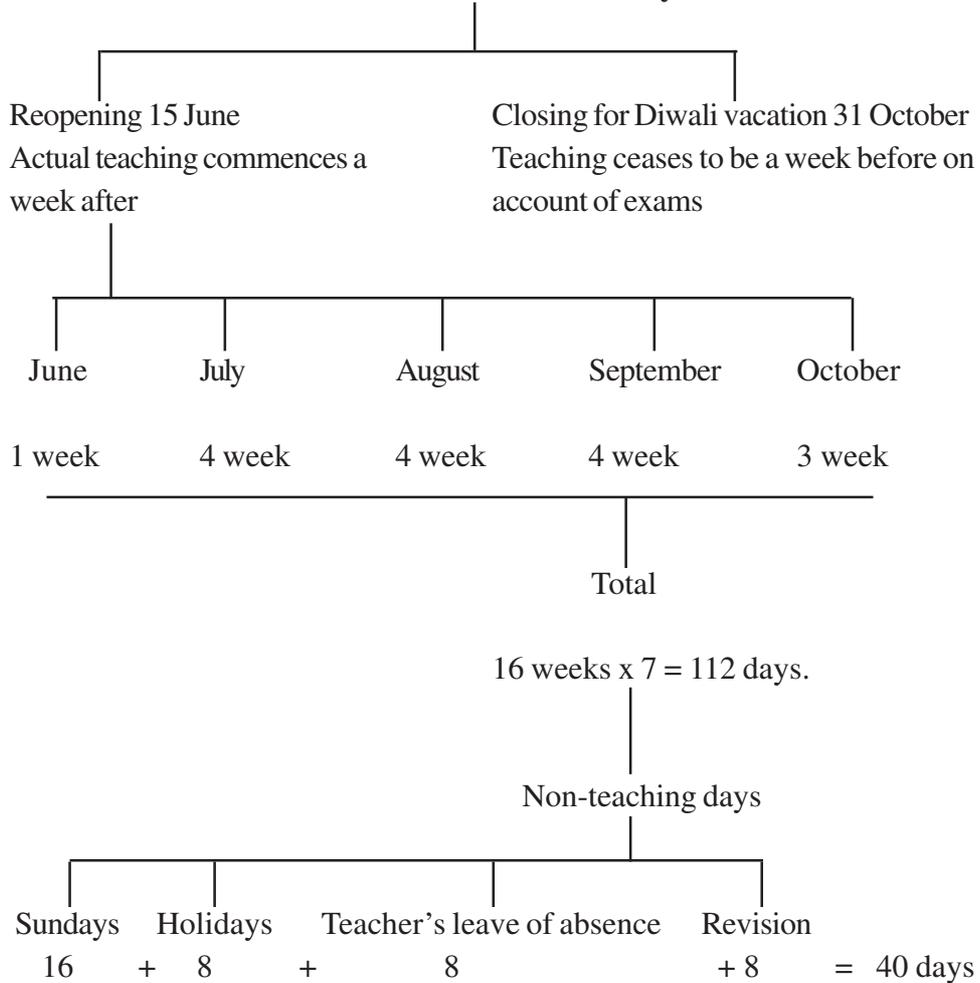
Considering all the paradoxes, a teacher of English has to do the planning for the academic year.

Questions for self-study – 2

1. Why is it necessary to calculate time you are likely to get for classroom teaching?
2. Which time cannot be calculated for teaching?
3. What is the approximate period of time a teacher is likely to get for actual classroom teaching for the first or the second half of the academic year?
4. What is the problem about time in the academic planning?

The amount of teaching time a teacher is likely to get can be shown as follows :

The first half of the academic year



$$112 - 40 = 72 \text{ days}$$

A period is of 35 mts but effective teaching happens for about 30 mts

$$72 \text{ days} \times 30 = 2160 \text{ mts} \div 60 = 36 \text{ clock hours: the actual teaching time}$$

Remember, you have to plan your teaching schedule for these 32 clock hours.

(This assumes that there is a period of English every day.)

It is important to note that the assumed time and the entrant's ability in English never match.

In this situation, a teacher of English has to do a spacewalk successfully.

Also remember, this planning is going to be there only for teaching. Planning for extra-curricular activities and your self-improvement is going to be different.

3.2.2 Planning for interacting with people, visiting libraries, bookstalls etc.

Knowledge is not only in books. There are people who are like encyclopedias. They are reservoirs of knowledge which is based on their experience. You should learn to know about such people, establish contacts with them, maintain the relationship, interact with them and get benefitted by them. There are essential prerequisites for any interaction. What you can learn through just one interaction with a person who really knows English, you may not be able to learn from ten books.

The best person to interact can be your colleague in your school or a friend from some other school. If a person has proficiency in English better than you, you are going to be benefitted. If it is the other way round, anyway, you don't have to lose anything. The other person is going to be benefitted.

Whether the interaction with the person is formal or informal, **you must plan for it.**

The best way would be to form an English club wherever you and your colleagues can come together once a week or twice a month or whatever. The other occasions for interactions are seminars, workshops or training courses.

You can also interact with the person you want to over the phone. Mobiles are common now and you can always make use of it for your enrichment. In this context, the opening of your conversation has to be something as follows:

A : Hello. Am I speaking to Mr Sharma?

B : Speaking.

A : Good evening, Sir. Is it the right time to talk to you?

There can be variations on the last sentence.

May I talk to you for a few minutes?

Is it possible to talk to you for a short time?

I want to talk to you about a problem I've come across in English. Could I tell you about it now or should I call you sometime later?

This kind of opening is important because you cannot take it for granted that the person is free for you and they will be at your service immediately after you call them. Secondly, it is unmannerly to call someone any time and begin to talk without bothering about whether the person is busy or has time to talk to you or whether they are in a frame of mind to talk to you.

To approach a person in a pleasant way is a part of your planning and it tells the other person about your culture. Remember, you are a teacher of English and you cannot afford to be unorganized.

Activity – 3

- ◆ Write a conversation of about 10 utterances between you and the person you plan to interact with.
- ◆ Write about your planning to visit a library or a bookshop.

You can also interact with a person through the SMS but it cannot go on for a long time. Chatting with a person on the Facebook or through Skype would be another way. Interacting with a person through the e-mail would be convenient and what you interact can be saved for your future reference.

I have already talked to you about the advantages of meeting up with a person with a prior appointment. Let us repeat the advantages for a person you are visiting and you as well, with a prior intimation or appointment. You need not be very formal every time but you should let the person know when you are visiting them and maybe, how long. The advantages are as follows:

1. A phone call prior to your visit to someone creates an impression that you are a mannerly person. It sends positive signals that you know the importance of time. The person feels honoured because calling someone like this is like respecting the person.
2. The person at the other end gets time to think, find out whether they have time. The other person can also get options or alternatives.
3. The person you call gets the opportunity to welcome you. Wouldn't you hate anyone catching you unawares when you may be busy with something or you may not be in a state of mind to welcome the person?
4. The person knows for sure that you are coming at a particular time. They also get the opportunity to reschedule their work.
5. The person gets time to think about what they are going to talk to you, or what help, guidance you need so that you get ready with it.

The best places to visit a teacher of English is a library and bookshop. These days they have been substituted by the internet. Even to work with the internet whether on your computer, laptop or new generation mobile – you have to do the planning and spare an adequate amount of time. Remember to download and save important information or get their print outs.

Interacting with the internet is more rewarding than anything else. Everything under the sun about English would be easily available on the internet. You can look for any book or a piece of information or a teacher of English in remote corner of the world.

All these interactions will be of immense use only if they are carried out with appropriate planning.

Questions for self-study 3

1. Why is it important to interact with people?
2. What are the essential prerequisites for any interaction?
3. What are the occasions and mediums to interact with people?
4. What care should be taken in approaching a person for an interaction?

3.2.3 Planning for reading

A good teacher of English has to be a good reader. They have to spare time for reading.

Reading is interacting with the printed text.

Do not think that anything in print is a word of the Bible. However, look for something that is going to be useful to you. Planned reading helps in:

- a. Improving your competence in English and
- b. Improving pedagogical competence, i.e. your competence as a teacher

I have already said before that you have to buy the necessary reference books, your own English newspaper and make it a point to read, at least turn its pages and run your eyes over the headlines.

You need to think about the following points in order to do planning for reading :

What do I need to read during this year?

This question directs your reading. The reading without a purpose is not of much use. Random reading will lead you nowhere. Reading has to be focused and well-directed. For this, you have to decide upon what is to be read. Your future reading can be :

- Something that is **related to the subject in which you wish to develop your expertise**. For example: it could be economics, biology or English. It could be reading for improving your vocabulary and communication skills in English.

- **Something in which you are interested**. It may not be related to the subject you teach or the subject you graduated or post-graduated in, but the one you are curious about and you would like to know more about it. Maybe ‘seven wonders of the world,’ ‘global warming,’ ‘yoga and physical fitness,’ etc.

2. Where would it be available?

It is an excellent idea to think about what to read. You should also know where the books you want to read would be available. For this, you have to be on the lookout for what you plan to read. You can get information about it from the following sources:

- a. The internet
- b. Advertisements of new publications
- c. Book reviews in newspapers, magazines, etc.
- d. A list of best books of the year or 'who is reading what in the newspaper, interviews, etc.'
- e. 'New arrivals' in the library
- f. Information from the librarian
- g. From the interaction with friends, book lovers or members of the book club, etc.
- h. Visits to bookshops

Once you decide what to read and the source that would make you the material available you have to go hunting for it.

If you have done away with gossiping and meaningless talk you are able to save a lot of time. Invest that time in hunting for books you wish to read.

After you get a book, you cannot start to read immediately. Examine the book in the following way.

- a. Look at title and the author and make it sure whether it is the same book you were looking for. For example: 'Musafiri,' by a well-known IT specialist Acchut Gadgil is a recently published book. Confirm whether the book you come across is the same.
- b. See the date of publication to find out how recent the book is.
- c. Read the blurb, i.e. brief description about the book usually given at the end.
- d. Take a quick look at the 'Introduction' or 'Foreword'
- e. Go through the content page.

All this gives you a fair idea about which parts of the book or the whole book you need to read. It will also give you an idea about how far it is useful for what you have planned.

It depends on where you come across the book. The possibilities of this are as follows :

- a. You find the book in the library and you cannot take it out, i.e. you cannot borrow it. In that case you have to plan to sit in the library for reading it.
- b. If you can borrow it, that would be good. You can take it home and go through it as long as it can remain with you.
- c. The third possibility is you come across a book on the internet and you can download it or place an order for it.

- d. If you come across the book at a bookshop, you can buy it and the book will be yours forever.
- e. You may also borrow the book, if possible, from your friend for a particular period of time.

Only to buy, borrow or possess a book is not enough. You have now to time-plan your reading.

As far as possible, choose the time when you do not have any disturbances or distraction so that you can enjoy quality company of the book. Many people get engrossed in reading before going to bed since that is the best time for some people. If possible, you can also switch off your mobile during reading.

Let me remind you again, only thinking or talking about reading is of no use. **You have to do actual reading, give a thought to what you read** and look at reading as a highly beneficial activity for self-improvement. The more you do it, the more confidence you get and you become academically more organized than others.

Questions for self-study – 4

1. What is planning for reading?
2. How is planned teaching helpful for a teacher of English?
3. Which is a reference book you must have as a teacher of English?
4. What is necessary to be a good teacher?

I am going to give you a list of books which you can plan to read throughout the year. If you are able to read some of them, they will bring about a change in you.

Books on ELT

1. Krishnaswamy, N. and Lalitha Krishnaswamy 2003. **Teaching English: Approaches, Methods and Techniques**, Delhi: Macmillan
2. Tickoo, M.L. 2003. **Teaching Learning English: a Source Book for Teachers and Teacher – Trainers**, Mumbai Orient Longman.
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4. Eliot George: **Silas Marner**

3.3 Summary

Planning means to decide upon what to do when, how and for what reasons.

The academic planning refers to planning the teaching activities within the time available during the academic year. For this purpose you need to find out how much real time you are likely to get.

You also have to consider the kind of learners you are going to have. The assumed competence in English at the entry point and the actual abilities in using English the learners possess is likely to affect your planning. Whether your planning is going to succeed or not matters not. But you must plan your teaching.

Interacting with people from our field, visiting libraries or bookshops or institutions of excellence cannot be done in a casual way. These activities have to be planned properly, only then will they be beneficial.

Reading is an essential factor that contributes to your enrichment as a teacher of English. You have got to be a good reader and plan for reading. The reading list given **at the end of this Unit** will certainly help you. The list is not final. You can add more books to the list which you would come across and which you find useful for you.

3.4 Questions for practice

1. What are the essential factors that can make planning a reality?
2. Why is planning essential for a teacher?
3. What are the benefits of interacting with people?
4. Why should you get a prior appointment of a person you would like to visit? What are the advantages? Make a list of them.
5. In what way does planning for reading matter in a teacher's life?

3.5 Answers to questions of self-study

Answers to questions of self-study - 1

1. It is to decide upon what you want to do, when, how and for what purpose.
2. Short-term and long-term.
3. No. Not at all.
4. It tells you what is what and gives you confidence.

Answers to questions of self-study - 2

1. You come to know how much real time you get for classroom teaching and accordingly you can plan your teaching.
2. Sundays, holidays, days of functions and celebrations, revision time and the days when a teacher is absent.
3. Around 40 to 50 clock hours.
4. The assumed time and the real time do not match.

Answers to questions of self-study - 3

1. What we learn through interactions with people we may not get from books.
2. To establish a rapport with the person and maintain the academic relationship.
3. **Occasions** : clubs, get-togethers, seminars, workshops or training courses
Mediums : mobile, internet, chat room, Skype, Facebook, e-mail, SMS
4. You should ask for permission before you begin to speak over the phone and take an appointment before visiting the person you wish to interact with.

Answers to questions of self-study - 4

1. It means to spare a specific period of time to do a particular amount of reading.
2. It helps them to improve their competence in English which in turn helps improve the quality of their classroom interaction with students.
3. A standard dictionary.
4. To improve reading skills, to buy your own reading materials such as newspapers, magazines etc. and plan for reading.

Unit 4 : Time Management

CONTENT

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Subject Analysis
 - 4.2.1 Doing away with gossiping
 - 4.2.2 Doing things in time
 - 4.2.3 Organise yourself
- 4.3 Summary
- 4.4 Questions for Practice
- 4.5 Answers to Questions for Self-Study

4.0 Objectives

After you go through this Unit you will understand -

- ★ The importance of time and how to spend it for your enrichment
- ★ To arrange activities in your daily life in a particular order
- ★ How to organize yourself to have maximum outcome of your efforts
- ★ How to not waste time in gossiping and the idle talk and
- ★ To do things in time

4.1 Introduction

Time is a flow, a flux, like a flow of water. It is continuous, constant, non-stop, never ending. It keeps on flowing eternally. **You cannot step into the same water.** You can never get a moment that is gone. **A moment lost, is lost forever.** You can never, never get it back.

Life is short, time is permanent. Life is nothing but a period of time given to us from that flow of time which has no beginning and no end. Seconds, minutes, hours, days, years are just pieces of time we measure time with. We can measure time right from our birth. Time comes to a standstill for a person when their life

comes to an end, so whatever time we are alive, enjoy it, **make the most of it.**

Though we decide to make the most of the time we have, where is the time? There does not seem to be time at all.

‘Why didn’t you do well in the class?’

‘I had no time to prepare.’

‘Why didn’t you read the newspaper today?’

‘Oh! I found no time at all.’

‘We haven’t met since long.’

‘Really? I’ve been extremely busy all these days.’

‘Have you visited the YCMOU library in Nashik?’

‘I should but where is the time?’

‘I’ve to rush, I’m getting late for school.’

‘Do it quickly, I’ve no time.’

‘Hurry up, the train will move soon.’

‘That’s a fantastic book, the problem is, there is no time to read its.’

‘I haven’t seen my parents since long time. I don’t know when I’ll be able to visit them.’

‘Time is the culprit, you know.’

A new garden has come up, there’s a musical programme, the theatre is running the latest movie, Kashmir is heaven on earth – but where’s the time?

We all are short of time, all the time. We’re very busy, always. The reality is **those who are terribly busy can make time for themselves.** They read books, they see the movies they want. They meet the people of their choice. They attend the programmes they love. They can go for a walk. They enjoy a trip in the company of nature. They make time for their loved ones.

This is because they know how to manage time. Time management is an important value. Your success or failure mainly depends on your skill to handle time.

‘Time management’ refers to the way in which you organize how to spend your time. It is to have a complete control over the time and be able to manipulate it to your advantage. It is to not allow the time to slip out of your fingers and make use of it for your enrichment. In order to acquire the ability to utilize time efficiently, you need to organize and reorganize yourself.

We will discuss now on **how to go about it.**

Questions for self-study - 1

- a. You cannot step into _____ again.
- b. A moment lost, _____.
- c. Life is short, time is _____.
- d. Life is nothing but _____.
- e. Time comes to a standstill for a person _____.
- f. Whatever time we get, _____.
- g. We all are _____, all the time.
- h. Those who are terribly busy _____.

4.2 Subject analysis

4.2.1 Doing away with gossiping

To **gossip** means to talk about other people's private lives in a casual way. For example,

'Many teachers **gossip about** each other.'

It means many teachers enjoy talking about other people's private lives.

The word **gossip** is also used as a noun. It means an informal and careless talk about other people's personal life which may not be true. For example :

'In the teachers' room they **are having a good gossip about** their fellow teachers.'

A person who is engaged in spreading stories about others or talking about their private things is called **a gossip** or a **gossipmonger**.

I have explained the meaning of the word 'gossip' in detail to make you understand how damaging it is. Gossiping is damaging to both – the one who gossips and the one who listens to it for the following reasons:

- a. It is a piece of informal conversation which is of no use to any participant in the conversation.
- b. It is bad manners to talk about someone behind their back.
- c. It is unfair, unkind or uncivilized to talk about someone's personal life.
- d. It pollutes the academic climate at our workplace.

What do you think is the purpose of gossiping? It can be as follows:

- a. To kill time
- b. To spoil someone's reputation
- c. To give vent to your jealousy about someone

Gossiping reflects on those who are involved in it. It tells us about the gossipmonger the following:

- a. They can afford to waste time.
- b. They can do it because they do not have anything worthwhile to do in their life.
- c. They are reckless, irresponsible and uncivilized.
- d. Getting addicted to rumor spreading is a sign of abnormality.

Gossiping is a common mental disorder with a large number of people. **To get involved with a cheap talk seems to be our national pastime.**

Activity - 1

Close your eyes and sit quiet for a minute. Think of the day you spent yesterday. Think of the occasions when you carried out an idle talk.

I am sure about half of our time is spent on talking about something that has really no relevance to our life. Usually, the topics of our idle chat are as follows:

- a. Corruption
- b. Traffic
- c. Cricket
- d. Movies or TV serials
- e. Education system
- f. What the government should do
- g. The golden past and deterioration at present
- h. Indiscipline in the young generation

These are the usual topics. However, there is hardly any topic under the sun we do not take interest in talking about.

Many of us pass sweeping comments on anything that happens or may happen around us and all over the world.

We only talk about what others should do. We usually do not talk about what 'I' can do.

The most interesting thing about our barren talk is that **we talk about something over which we have no control.** If you shout at the top of your voice that the present education system is useless it should be changed immediately, can you change it?

I am not underestimating your right to say things or express your anger or dissatisfaction about the present situation. The issue is only by talking about it is not enough.

The reason is obvious. We always wish God to come down and remedy the situation. **The idle talker always expects someone else to solve the problems or change the situation.**

As has been said before, 'I' have to be the change. **The change has to start with me.** I cannot change the whole education system. Neither can it happen overnight but it has to begin somewhere. Someone has to take the first step. That will be mine. **A long journey begins with a few small steps.**

For example, I may not be able to bring about a change in the whole of my school. I may aspire for quality education but I cannot bring about a change in all of my colleagues. I can certainly change what is under my control, where I am in a driving seat. I can bring about a change in my classroom. **A revolution has to take place in my classroom first.** Before that there has to be a change in me.

A person who has fertile imagination, innovative ideas and an urge to change can change the world.

For this you have to stop the leakages of time from the pot of your life. You have to do away with gossiping, chatting unnecessarily, wasting time in a meaningless talk. That time should be utilized for your own development, to change yourself. And the world will change on its own.

If each of us (the honourable exceptions apart) wastes so much of time in gossiping, you can imagine how much time we all would be wasting as a nation.

If gossiping is replaced by a responsible interaction, if our negative energy is converted into the constructive work, if we act positively instead of peeping into personal lives, we will change the world.

Questions for self-study - 2

1. What do you mean by 'to gossip'?
2. Who is a gossip or a gossipmonger?
3. What are the topics we usually talk about as pastime?
4. What should you avoid talking about?

4.2.2 Doing things in time

Speed is a new value. It is an inseparable part of our life today. Speed is the rate at which something happens or something is done. A cycle, a scooter, a car, a train or a machine may be slow at the beginning but it has to pick up speed in the course of time.

Every activity has a limit. If a bus is supposed to reach the destination within five hours, it has to. It could be a little late on account of some unforeseen difficulties – the road may be blocked or something may go wrong with the machine – but otherwise the bus must reach in time. This is because people do not travel just for the sake of travelling. They travel with a purpose. Someone has a doctor's appointment, to see a person at a particular time, has some important work in an office and so on.

Every passenger has a purpose for travelling. Everybody is keen on reaching in time. Buses have their own schedule. After reaching the destination the same driver may have to carry other passengers from another destination. You know how chaotic it becomes when trains or buses do not run in time for some reason.

Our life too is time-bound. Every activity we have to carry out has to have a time-limit. The time factor is attached to everything we do.

A day is made of 24 hours. No one in this world is going to get a fraction of a moment more than 24 hours in a day. Of the total day time we have to sleep for about 7 to 8 hours – because a good sleep for a period of 7 to 8 hours is necessary if we wish to be healthy. Our sleep is time bound in the sense when we sleep, how long and in which way matters a lot. Night is the proper time to rest. That is why they say it is unhealthy to sleep in the afternoon. There is a variation in when people go to bed and what time they see the morning. You spend about an hour and a half in getting ready for the day and about two hours for teas, breakfast, lunch and dinner. For many people travelling to work is inevitable. It can take anything between half an hour to 3-4 hours. For you, the school duty is for about six hours. Phone calls, TV, domestic errands may consume an hour or so.

In this way, in a day, you get about three plus hours on an average and in general which you can make use of for doing things which you want to. It is important that in order to get those three valuable hours, all the other activities – sleep, job, travelling, eating, etc. have to take place properly. If there is a clog in a machine, it may stop working. If everything takes place within the given time and as it is expected to be or as planned then only we get spare time. Of the time on hand an hour or two or three, **you must keep aside at least half an hour solely for yourself.** You may do something you like and may not do absolutely anything – but it is **your** time. During this time you may take stock of things, reflect on what you have done so far or just relax and be at peace with yourself. This half an hour is highly life-giving, renovating and enriching.

It is said that a person's culture is known by what they do during their spare time. Do they waste time or use it for self-improvement? It would be a good idea to develop some hobby – gardening, travelling, listening to music, playing chess, collecting stamps, coins, clippings of newspapers, photography, making photo albums and so on. A hobby is an activity you carry out for your own pleasure or satisfaction in your spare time. It is the time when you are left to yourself and you are free to do what you wish to.

All this is important because though time is valuable, you cannot run all the while according to your watch. 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,' they say.

In the process of time – management or doing things in time, to take a pause, to relax, to look back is necessary. It is rejuvenating. You get fresh with new energy and you are ready to work better than before.

One of the major problems with planning is unpredictability in the given situation. You have to submit the exam form before four in the evening but your bike gets punctured. You have to work with your computer urgently but there is no electricity. You have to reach Mumbai but the train you plan to go by is three hours' late. You want to see someone with a prior appointment but you come to know the person had to be out of town for some emergency.

Planning succeeds if the things taken for granted remain the same. If the related things get fluctuated, planning is very likely to fail. Doing things in time is an excellent idea but its success depends on the prevailing circumstances, particularly in our context.

This does not mean that we should not plan. What we plan to teach does not work in the classroom does not mean we should not plan our teaching. We have seen that planning makes you confident because you have a feeling that things are under your control and you know what is to be done when though the circumstances may not be favourable.

If there is no planning, if things do not happen in time, they will happen in a haphazard way. 'Take life as it comes to you' is true but it does not mean that you can leave everything to your destiny.

You should make every attempt to do things in time. If you plan to read a book, it will not be read if you do not put any time-limit. It may go on for days maybe you will never come to the last page of the book.

Questions for self-study - 3

1. In what way is time related to our activities in life?
2. Why should you keep aside at least a small period of time for yourself?
3. Why is it necessary to take a pause in your work and relax for a while?
4. What is the major problem with planning?

Time-management or doing things in a specific period of time matters a lot particularly in a class. You want to introduce five vocabulary items. It can take any amount of time depending upon to what extent you want to introduce them and in what way. Considering the importance of the teaching item for students you have got to put a time restriction on it.

Remember, every activity to be carried out in the context of teaching – learning has a time dimension. This is so because it is related to students' progress and

your own advancement just as the teaching has a time frame, tests, tutorials, self-study, examinations have a time limit. A student may have a lot of knowledge, but if they are not able to put it in the form of an answer within twenty or thirty minutes, it is of no use. You must respond within the shortest possible time. In an interview if a person is asked a question how much time can they take to respond? Responding late is not responding.

The whole business of teaching and learning is time-bound. Things have got to be done within the stipulated time. The school must reopen at a particular time. You must complete the portion within the given period of time, exams must take place according to the time-table, assessment cannot afford to be delayed, results must be declared on a given date – everything has to happen in time.

Against this context, teachers have to develop their communication skills. They cannot afford to speak without precision. This is the age when everybody expects, ‘Please speak brief,’ ‘Please speak short.’ Because there is no time. Imagine that a school has a staff of 50 members. If every teacher wants to see the principal for just five minutes, how much time would be consumed?

We all have to develop the skill of saying something we wish to in the shortest possible time. When you have to give a radio talk, or do some educational activity on TV, you have to do it within the given time. This is particularly so during the school functions. Some speakers go astray while giving a speech and it becomes terribly difficult to bring them to a track. It becomes boring and tiring to the audience and a lot of waste of time. Whenever you have to give a speech, or you are told to speak on some occasion, do not do it without planning and speak with a time-limit – 10 to 20 minutes should be OK.

If things are not done within time, we lose the grip on life and our day turns to be a ship without a captain. Let us be on our guard.

Activity 2

Make a list of activities you have to do in your school. How much time each of them requires? How much time do you spend? Can you save time while doing these activities? How much?

4.2.3 Organize yourself

‘To organize’ means to arrange something in a particular order

‘To organize yourself’ means to plan your work and activities in an efficient way

Our domain of work is education and our profession is teaching.

If you are a committed teacher and do not indulge in doing something other than teaching, you can lead a well regulated life.

However, many of us are highly disorganized and we make a mess of our life.

Though we are teachers, we have many irons in the same fire or have a finger in every pie, i.e. many of us are involved with various activities other than teaching. For example, several teachers

- a. are engaged in giving tuitions
- b. conducting classes, or
- c. doing some kind of business or side business like buying and selling, etc.

All this is not legally acceptable but we see a number of teachers resorting to this. **Since they would be busy in such things they would not have enough time to study, prepare for the class and do justice to teaching.** Neither would they have any time to take care of themselves. It would be difficult for such teachers to regularize their life.

If you are only a teacher, you are not engaged in some other money-making activities and teaching is your first love, you can certainly lead regular, peaceful and happy life provided you organize it properly.

What is it to organize life? Let us take a look at a day from the life of a successful teacher.

Lisa is a teacher. She teaches English in an international school at a Taluka place. In addition to her regular teaching, she also has to function as a supervisor. She lives in a housing society. Her school is about two kilometers away from her home. She goes to school by scooter. Her school timing is from 10.30 to 5.30. Her family consists of her husband and two children. Her husband is also a teacher but in a different school. He teaches Science. Era, her daughter is in VII class and the son, Swapnil, in class III. Lisa is a popular teacher and has received a couple of awards too.

Her day begins at 5.00 in the morning. She wakes up at 5 dot. She doesn't need anyone to wake her up. But she doesn't get out of bed till 5.15. During these 15 minutes she just lies in bed, thinking of the day she has on hand. A number of things she planned yesterday before going to bed go through her mind quickly. She believes in 'Early to rise and early to bed, makes one healthy, wealthy and wise.' So early morning she's ready for the day. She gets up at 5.15. Prays to God, thanks him for giving her a new day.

After doing morning things she takes a bath. Then she makes a hot cup of coffee for her. Lisa is fond of coffee. She enjoys the steaming coffee sip by sip. She is by herself and there is no disturbance. By six, she switches the radio on and sits in the gallery for a while listening to the morning songs and taking a look at the trees, birds, sky and the houses around. She wakes up children after 6.30 and makes them get to study. Her husband also wakes up around the same time. The maid servant comes at about seven for cleaning utensils and sweeping rooms.

All the members have to leave home at ten. Lisa has to prepare children for school. They have to bathe, dress up, keep their bags ready. Before that Lisa gets busy with a number of things. She has to prepare tiffins for herself, children and husband. Rolling out chapattis and making vegetable dishes takes a lot of time. She had decided on vegetables yesterday itself and also kept them ready for cooking. So she has no tension now. She had also decided upon the menu for their breakfast and kept the things ready. She has to make breakfast for all. By nine thirty the breakfast is ready. Everyone gets to breakfast. She had kept her school bag ready yesterday night. She only has to confirm things – handkerchief, tiffin, keys, school diary, teaching materials, books and so on.

At ten they must be moving. Lisa and children go by scooter. Her husband goes by bike. She is at school from 10.30 to 5.30. By six she gets back home.

In the evening she is busy in making phone calls and receiving them. She may have to visit someone as a social commitment or someone might visit her. In the mean time she turns the pages of The Times of India. Around seven she gets to kitchen. In an hour's time the cooking is done. She watches news and her favourite serial on a TV programme for an hour. By nine they have dinner.

She then prepares lesson notes for the next day. Till 11.00 she devotes time for her self-improvement – reading, making notes, looking up words in a dictionary, copying useful expressions, sentences and so on.

Before going to bed, Lisa has already planned for the next day. About 11.00 she goes to bed only to get up fresh at 5.00.

Well, this is a sample day in a teacher's life. There can always be variations. In a way, it's a routine life but apart from daily chores one can always do what one wants to. There are also holidays, leaves of absence and Sundays, when a teacher can spare time for academic purposes. What do you learn from Lisa's day? You can learn the following:

- a. Her day is planned from early morning till late evening.
- b. She is sure when to start a day and call it a day.
- c. All her activities are arranged one after another in a certain order.
- d. She does not have to waste time, since everything is in place in her house.
- e. She does not remain awake late at night.
- f. It seems that all the members in her family are cooperative.

Questions for self-study - 4

1. What is 'to organize yourself'?
2. What would 'organize yourself' mean to you?
3. What have you learnt from the example of Lisa's day?
4. What happens if things are not in place?

Do you plan your day or let things happen as they would? Do you have a control over your day and do you deliberately make things happen as you want them to?

There are other two aspects of a well-organized life. The first is the harmonious family relationships and orderliness or tidiness in your home.

One can achieve a lot if :

- a. The members of the family understand one another and do not create problems for them.
- b. Everybody is cooperative and ready to help other members.
- c. All do things in a responsible way and do not waste time in petty differences.
- d. Everybody enjoys life at home, carrying out their responsibilities.
- e. There is no tension, no pressure, no stress. All are independent but all are together.

Another important thing that matters a lot in organizing yourself is putting things at their places in your home. Things have to be in place, otherwise they invite lots of problems. Look at the following instances:

- You have received a phone call and you have to write down something important. You look for a pen but you do not get it. You become annoyed and get angry with a family member that happens to be around at that moment.
- You have to lock your house. You look for a lock but it is not at a place where usually it is kept. After a while you get it but without keys. You curse yourself.
- You need the file of your notes you have prepared for teaching. The file was just here with you sometime back but now it seems to be missing. You badly need it. You do not know what to do.
- You come across an article in a newspaper on the falling standards of English. You want to get it cut and keep the clipping with you. You need a pair of scissors, but nowhere is it to be found. You blame your destiny.
- You have received an invitation for a programme. You get ready to go. But you do not know what you did with the invitation card which contains the address of the venue of the programme. Neither do you recollect the address. You seem to be helpless.

Each of these examples show that if things were at place it would have saved a lot of time and a feeling of being annoyed or getting irritated would have been avoided. In many cases, our houses are full of clutter. Unwanted things occupy space and important things have to lie here and there.

Activity 3

Make a list of five happenings from your daily life when you wasted time unnecessarily and when you became upset.

In order to keep oneself fit, only exercise is not enough. One has to eat nutritious food, rest adequately and avoid stressful situations. In the same way if you wish to self-improve you have to organize yourself.

1.3 Summary

Life is a flow of time. Every moment we get, immediately turns into the past. A moment gone, is gone forever. Life has a time-boundary. So we all are always short of time. We must make the most of our time.

As a teacher, you should learn to have control over your time. You have to organize and reorganize yourself. You have to arrange your activities carefully. Classroom preparation, teaching, reading – everything has to be managed with the time factor in mind.

You should avoid non-academic or uneducational activities and focus on teaching as your profession. If everything is in place, if you plan everything, if you know for certain what you want to do, when, in what way and how long, teaching becomes a source of happiness. You become confident of yourself and develop self-respect.

Things have to be arranged neatly in your files, in your cupboard at school, things in your bag that you carry with you to school and things at home. Organizing yourself keeps you mentally, emotionally and physically fit.

Time is valuable to everyone. This is more so with a teacher. As a teacher, you have a vital role in the making of a student's life. Your time is related to the student's prosperity, their future and their overall development. Therefore, gossiping should not have any place in your daily life. Gossiping is a waste of time and it pollutes the atmosphere in your school and among your colleagues. There is no point in talking about something over which you have no control. Probably, changing the world is easy, but to bring about a change in you is far from being easy. If you want to see the change in your school, students, colleagues and the educational scenario, change yourself first. If you want to bring about a revolutionary change, let the revolution happen in your classroom first.

A day consists of 24 hours. You are never going to get more time than 24 hours in a day. You have to carry out all your activities for a day in a planned way. For achieving long-term goals, you need to consider time for the future.

Working all the time is no good. You must take a pause. You must relax. You must have a change in your work. Take an hour or two or a day off your work.

Reflect on what you have been doing, what is yet to be done and how you should go right now. Every activity, doing a passage in class, interaction with students, completing the portion has to be done with time in mind.

If you organize yourself well, do away with gossiping and do things in time, you will enjoy your profession.

1.4 Questions for practice

1. Why are most of us short of time? How are achievers able to spare time for themselves?
2. What does 'time-management' mean? In what way is it important for teachers?
3. Why are some teachers not able to focus on the activity of teaching?
4. How can you do away with gossiping? In what way is gossiping undesirable for a teacher?
5. 'Speed is a new value'. In what way is it applicable to the teaching profession?
6. Explain briefly the importance of relaxation from your work.

1.5 Answers to self-study

Answers to questions of self-study - 1

- a.the same water.
- b.is lost forever.
- c.permanent.
- d.a period of time (given to us by God).
- e.when a person's life comes to an end.
- f.let's make the most of it.
- g.short of time,.....
- h.can make time for themselves.

Answers to questions of self-study - 2

1. To gossip means to talk about other people's private lives in a careless way.
2. A person who takes pleasure in spreading false stories about others or is engaged in talking about their personal life is called a gossip or a gossipmonger.
3. Corruption, politics, cricket, movies and TV serials, what the government should do, how our past life was wonderful and the degeneration now etc.

4. We should avoid to talk about something over which we have no control.

Answers to questions of self-study - 3

1. Life itself is time-bound. There has to be a time-limit for every activity we plan to carry out.
2. During this time you may take stock of things, reflect on what you have done, plan for the future or may not do anything and just relax and be at peace with yourself.
3. It refreshes you and renews your energies, it is rejuvenating.
4. Planning is likely to fail if the situational factors are unpredictable.

Answers to questions of self-study - 4

1. It means to plan your work and activities in an efficient way.
2. For a teacher it would mean they should not indulge into non-academic activities and spare the required time for teaching and preparing for it.
3. Her day is well-planned from early morning to till she goes to bed. We should also plan our day properly.
4. We waste our valuable time and energy.

Unit 5 : Action Plan for Self-improvement

CONTENT

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
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- 5.3 Summary
- 5.4 Questions for Practice
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5.0 Objectives

After you go through this Unit you will understand -

- ★ The implications of the concept 'action-plan'
- ★ The importance of asking yourself, 'Am I improving?'
- ★ To avoid being negative and cynic
- ★ To look at everything including adversities, as opportunities
- ★ That you have to do away with lethargy and become creative
- ★ To plan your teaching short-term as well as long-term
- ★ That to plan sensibly and to act upon it matters in life

5.1 Introduction

A lion is a beautiful animal. It has a large body. It is yellowish-brown in colour. It has a thick mass of long and soft hair around its neck. It is called a mane. It gives the lion a graceful look. It's waist is thin and narrow. In Sanskrit poetry a beautiful woman is said to have a lion's waist (*sinhkati*). Lion's beauty

and elegance is accompanied by power. A lion is an ideal combination of beauty and strength.

A lion is said to be the sovereign king of the jungle.

However, it is not only beauty and strength that makes the lion a king of the jungle.

A lion is said to be the king of the jungle for another reason.

It is said that a lion takes a pause for a while every time it walks about twenty four steps. It looks back to take stock of things. It is said to ask three questions to itself.

1. Where did I start? When?
2. How far have I come? Where am I now?
3. Where do I want to reach?

This is known as **recapitulation**.

A lion recapitulates after every twenty four steps. Though it is the most powerful animal in the jungle and all the other animals are scared of it, after walking some distance, a lion stops and takes stock of things around.

To take stock of things means to stop for a while and think carefully about what is happening with you and around you, the way in which a situation around is developing in order to take a decision what to do next.

As a teacher, you must develop the ability to recapitulate, to take stock of things and ask yourself at the end of every academic year:

1. What kind of a teacher was I at the beginning of the last year? (What qualifications, qualities and competence did I have?)
2. What had I planned for the year for my self-improvement?
3. How far have I come at the end of the year?
4. What more do I need to do?
5. How am I going to do what I need to do?

In other words, the question that you should put to yourself is, 'Am I improving'?

I am going to talk about it in the next part of this Unit.

Activity 1

Go over the year that has gone by.

Give a recap to the things you learnt about ELT, what have been your achievements and in what way you are different now as compared to what you were previously.

5.2 Subject Analysis

1.1.1 Am I improving

A large number of teachers luxuriate in the state of complacency. Complacency is a feeling of satisfaction with whatever you are, whatever you have or whatever situation you are placed in or whatever may happen around you. You love the **status quo** i.e. the situation as it is now. Those who are happy with the status quo, do not want any change. Those who do not want to have any change cannot welcome new ideas. Those who cannot accept change, become lethargic. **Lethargy** means unwillingness to do anything new, anything different, anything unusual.

This is more so with teachers of English. Several teachers do not feel the need to study English and acquire competence in it. They think whatever English they have is more than enough. In the course of time, gradually, they lose the study habit and they become lazy. As a result:

- They do not feel the need to read anything.
- They do not bother to look up a dictionary.
- They do not know how to obtain information from reference materials.
- They are reluctant to interact with people in English.
- They are not interested in visiting libraries or bookshops.
- They avoid watching English programmes on TV or listening to radio.

As the years pass by, they get used to being non-active and lose their contact with English. They also develop a definite mechanism and begin to justify why they have lost contact with English or why they do not need to use English in their school, while teaching English or interacting with their colleagues. The reasons they forward are:

- There are no people around who can speak in English.
- Even if they know English many of them avoid speaking in English.
- If I try to speak in English, others laugh at me.
- There is no congenial atmosphere in which we can use English.
- Students are more than happy, if I teach them English through Marathi. In fact their demand is teaching English through their mother tongue.
- There is hardly anyone to question my teaching.
- What I teach is the final thing and therefore, I teach English in my own way or what suits me and my students.
- My students are from the rural background, I know them well, I prepare them for their examination and they get through with good marks in English.

- Everything is alright with my teaching English, authorities are happy with me, students pass the exam and there is no problem. Everything is OK.

Fine. Everything is OK everywhere. The only problem is:

- Students do not know how to make use of English and teachers remain as they are for years. There is no improvement in the teacher, among students, in the school or the whole situation.
- There is no change, no development, no quality.
- Teachers are unaware of what is happening in the field of teaching and learning of English in the country and elsewhere in the world.
- They are ignorant of new developments, new ways of teaching English, various experiments conducted by practicing teachers or language experts. They remain oblivious of research activities in ELT.

Teachers grow in age, they tend to draw on their years of teaching English.

‘I’ve twenty years’ of teaching experience.’

‘I’ve been teaching English for the last so many years.’

‘I know how to teach English. I’ve put in fifteen years.’

‘Don’t tell me how to teach English, I had 60% marks in my BA English.’

‘I don’t need anyone to teach English, I had stood first in my B.Ed course.’

‘I’ve no problem in teaching English. I had English Method for my B.Ed.’

In this way, teachers love to glorify their past and make their experience a shelter where they think they are safe.

Under the disguise of all this, no teacher of this kind feels the need to ask themselves:

‘Am I improving?’

Activity 1

When you question yourself, ‘Am I improving?’ how do you confirm it. Make a list of the factors with the help of which you check your improvement or changes that have taken place in you as a teacher of English.

In the process of this decadence or degradation or deterioration many teachers are aware of and frankly accept that they have lost whatever command they had over English. Now they do not have even the bear minimum. This is the stage of stagnation.

This feeling of stagnation keeps on eating them. It develops an inferiority complex which leads to frustration. Frustration breeds cynicism. Many teachers turn to be cynic.

A cynic is a person who has a negative attitude to everything in life. A cynic is a pessimist. A pessimist is a person who believes that nothing good is going to happen.

A cynic teacher develops a kind of mental illness which is to find faults with the system and talk highly of the ideal situation. You will find them saying something like the following:

- ‘Had I got a good school, you would have seen the teacher in me.’
- ‘If I get an excellent classroom, all AC, lights, glass board, a podium with a microphone, a comfortable chair, etc. my teaching would be totally different.’
- ‘Students are bad here. If I had got brilliant students, I would have been a brilliant teacher.’
- ‘I can always teach English better if the school provides me the latest audio-visual aids for teaching.’
- ‘The problem is not with me, it is the education system that needs to change.’

The long and short of all this is, ‘If I get an ideal situation, my quality of teaching will improve beyond imagination.’

Cynics are not happy with the system. They expect God to come down and bring about a dramatic change in the present situation, then they will be best people to deliver the goods. So they keep on blaming the system and the situation they find themselves in and wait for the ideal to happen. The problem is the cynics cannot perform. They become dysfunctional, and they try to hide their deformity by putting the blame on the system.

The reality is, there is no ideal system, ideal school or class or ideal teaching.

We all have to accept the situation we happen to be in and try to bring about whatever changes we can.

However, as has been said sometime back, before thinking of changing the educational environment, you have to think of bringing about a change in you. For this, you have to keep on asking yourself:

‘Am I changing?’

In order to bring about a change in you examine yourself first, make a decision to change yourself and seize upon the opportunities that come your way.

Questions for self-study - 1

1. What is 'recapitulation'?
2. What is 'complacency'?
3. What happens when a teacher of English loses contact with English?
4. Who is a 'cynic'?

5.2.2 Seize upon opportunities

The phrase **to seize upon something** means to take advantage of something quickly in an enthusiastic way. **To seize upon an opportunity** means to catch hold of a chance or occasion or situation which you can use to gain advantage for yourself.

Life itself is a great opportunity God has given us. That you are a teacher is another opportunity. If you happen to be a teacher of English, that is a unique opportunity!

You should be proud that you are a teacher. This is because teaching is the most complex operation. It is a mind game. You have to manipulate minds of a number of students in a class simultaneously and outside the class.

In order to play the role of a teacher, you have to acquire language skills, teaching techniques and all the while keep on growing up, changing whenever required, developing, improving and getting enriched.

You already know that the process of getting enriched does not happen on its own. If you have to keep fit and live a happy life, you have to do exercise regularly, eat nutritious food, sleep well and avoid stressful situations. You have to do it deliberately.

In the same way if you want to keep yourself academically fit, you need to do a number of things with a purpose:

- a. You have to be a lover of knowledge. A teacher is ever a seeker of knowledge. Knowledge lies beyond information, and teacher has to search for it all the time.
- b. Since a teacher loves knowledge, they continuously try to acquire it. The knowledge of your subject is not inherent in you. You are not born with it. Neither has it been passed on to you from your forefathers. You have to keep on acquiring and also revising what you have acquired. In other words, you have 'to maintain' your knowledge, otherwise it gets washed out.
- c. Since you have accepted teaching as your profession you have to do whatever is demanded by your profession:
 - Think of how to go about teaching effectively.
 - Possess books which you need to.

- Improve your professional skills.
 - Maintain the academic spirit.
 - Get engaged in some kind of research related to your subject.
 - Be mentally active all the time.
- d. Have a scientific attitude while carrying out your activities in daily life. Thus, to keep yourself academically fit you have to have love for knowledge, institutions imparting knowledge, knowledgeable people, be committed to teaching and keep learning new things and brushing up what you have. For doing all this you have to take initiative, you have to get out of yourself. You cannot sit at home comfortably and expect things to happen.

All of us get lots of opportunities in our life. Opportunities knock at our door. Let them not go. Respond to them positively. Many of us do not look at what comes our way as opportunities. Look at the following examples:

- a) There is a function in Seema's school. A renowned person is coming as the chief guest. The principal wants someone to introduce the guest to the audience. Seema looks at it as an opportunity. She volunteers for it. She collects information about the chief guest, talks to him over the phone, puts the information on a piece of paper, briefly and systematically. She presents it elegantly to the audience. She gains a lot of confidence. Introducing a guest is not an easy task. One has to do it carefully and in a short time.
- b) Neeta in her school loves to do anchoring. Though there are teachers who can do it, Neeta is always enthusiastic about it. She believes that it is an opportunity to do anchoring. She has realized that an anchor has to possess certain qualities. She knows that an anchoring person has to have presentable personality, a small smile on the lips, rhythmic body postures and movements, pleasant dress, soft, fluent language, alertness, confident eye contact, awareness about what to speak, when etc.
- She watches anchoring of programmes on TV that helps her acquire anchoring skills.
- c) Several teachers do not know how to give a vote of thanks at the end of a programme. Rajeev, a science teacher, knows it very well. He is always ready to do the task of thanks giving. He looks at it as an opportunity for his personality development. He knows that thanks giving is an important part of any programme. It is to be done at the end when the audience is usually not in a mood to listen to anyone and want to get up and go. Rajeev knows that he has to do the job in this less favourable situation. But there lies the

skill. He does it brief and with confidence. He succeeds and gains more confidence.

- d) A person from the education field is to visit the school in Nashik where Mr Joshi works as a teacher. He is told to go to the railway station to receive the guest. He is not at all reluctant to do it. He thinks that this is a good opportunity to interact with the guest.

Many opportunities are offered to you by your school on a number of occasions. All depends on how you take them.

Activity – 2

Make a list of activities you have to carry out which offer you opportunities. Mention the advantage you can gain from each of them.

You should also learn to look at teaching as a self – improvement programme in which you have to try out every day. You have to look at every class as an opportunity to do the best you can. How do you think about and plan your teaching as an opportunity. **You can think of teaching from three points of view.**

(a) Pre-class activity :

This includes -

- Deciding upon the teaching point ('Spoken English' for example)
- Identifying instructional materials available (conversational passages, recorded materials etc)
- Referring to a dictionary
- Going through what you are going to deal with
- Planning the classroom presentation.

This is all homework for you. However, what you do is related mainly **to the content of teaching** which is worth doing.

In this context, however valuable the teaching content may be, all depends on how it is deployed in the class. This makes us think about:

(b) The classroom performance which includes

- how to go about, how to do things
- classroom activities
- black board work
- teaching aids

The whole classroom activity is to make students learn what you want them to. This is the process during which you have to transfer the content into learning. For this, you have to make use of a variety of techniques or maybe some improvisations. Here what you do is important as long as it makes learning happen

and you are the chief actor and motivator.

Don't you think this is exploiting the opportunity from which you, as a teacher learn a lot? If you look at it as an opportunity, it turns to be highly beneficial. The next aspect of the teaching operations is:

(c) Post-classroom teaching activity

This is again related to you. This includes:

- going over everything you did in the class
- to find out what succeeded and what failed
- the learning outcome

In short, taking stock of things.

We have already talked about action research.

Activity – 3

Write down about one of your teaching sessions with reference to the points given under pre class activity, classroom performance and post-teaching review.

Your enrichment as a teacher depends on how you look at teaching and what you make out of it. Teaching is the opportunity that offers you challenges, excitement, learning experiences and mental satisfaction.

Our education department encourages research even for school teachers. Don't miss this opportunity. Take up a topic close to your heart and get engaged in doing research on it.

These days a lot of opportunities are available for going abroad as well as teaching foreign students from home through the internet. Put your CV on the net. Of course your English has to be good and you should be well-versed in your subject. There is a lot of demand for teachers of English, Mathematics and Science. If interested in going abroad, you can try your luck out.

Opportunities are always there and you have to be on the look out for them. It depends on whether you are able to catch hold of them and make the most out of them.

If there are no opportunities, you have to create them. For example, whatever teaching material has been offered by the SSC or HSC Board according to the syllabus, you can also produce your own supplementary material. This gives scope for your creative energy. Very often exhibitions of 'Instructional Materials' or 'Educational Materials' or 'Teaching Materials' are held. You can have it in your school. Producing teaching materials is highly challenging and it gives you the opportunity to put your imagination and expertise in the subject to use.

You can certainly participate in the activities related to the library of your school. In consultation with your principal you can buy new books and expand it.

You can also collect books from parents and the parents would be happy to donate them to your school library. All of them may not be useful for your students or teachers. You have to do the selection. Enriching the school library is something that remains with the school for a long time. It is a rewarding activity for you.

You can request your friend at some other place to invite you for delivering a lecture on the topic of your interest. Let's imagine that you get the opportunity to give talk on 'Food adulteration'. It has the following advantages for you.

- a. You will keep collecting scientific information from authentic sources related to food adulteration.
- b. You will know why and how it takes place.
- c. You will develop expertise in it.
- d. Since the topic is close to people's hearts, they will be happy to listen to you which will give you a feeling of satisfaction of having done something socially relevant.
- e. It will bring you in contact with a variety of people and you will develop your interactive skills. It will also develop your connectivity.

All these activities will be inspiring for your colleagues. This helps maintain the academic environment.

Instead of getting engaged in giving tuitions or writing cheap bazaar guides, or wasting time in gossiping or just whiling away the time in meaningless discussions, it is always better to carry out activities which can make your existence meaningful. For this you have to seize upon opportunities whenever you get them or create opportunities for you.

Questions for self-study – 2

1. What is it 'to seize upon opportunities'?
2. What do you have to do to keep academically fit?
3. Why should you look at teaching as the opportunity?
4. What should you do if you do not get opportunities?

5.2.3 Action plan

An 'action plan' is 'a plan of action'. A plan is an arrangement for something you want to do in the future. 'To make a plan' is to think carefully in advance of something you wish to do in the future. An 'action' is a process of doing something in order to make something happen. You need to act upon what you have decided to do. An 'action plan' indicates how you are going to bring your decisions into reality. Only making plans is not enough. You have to bring them into practice.

So far, we have talked a lot about self-improvement. Now is the time to decide. The decision has to be your own. Do you want to change yourself? Nobody

is going to change you. Not even God. You have to make the decision.

The first thing is to take decision that you want to change yourself.

Let me assure you, you can change yourself right from this very moment.

To begin with, let the change be for a day. Try yourself out. Right now, think of tomorrow and the changes you would like bring about in you.

1. Go to bed today a little early than usual. May be 10.30 or 11.00. Decide not to keep yourself awake unnecessarily. Put a fresh bed sheet on the bed and change the pillow covers.
2. Before going to bed, go over the whole day you spent right from the time you got up till now. Bring to your mind the pleasant happenings first, when you were at your best, the people you meet, your conversation with them, your colleagues at school, the classes you did and your treatment to your family members. Ask the following questions:
 - a. Did I spare time for myself?
 - b. Did I keep aside some time for my family?
 - c. Did I speak something unwanted, unpleasant, unnecessary to someone? What did I say when?
 - d. Did I waste time in gossiping? Could I have saved time?
 - e. Was I committed to do my classroom sessions?
 - f. What did I achieve at the end of the day? What has been the outcome of my activities the whole day?
3. Plan for tomorrow – morning things, going to work, activities in the evening and so on.
4. Thank God for everything, remove negative thoughts from your mind, make the mind blank. Say to yourself that you are going to have a nice sleep. Be comfortable, be relaxed and very soon sleep will take your possession.
5. Decide that you will take exercise at least for ten minutes tomorrow, and spare at least ten minutes for yourself.
6. Decide that you will go to school in time. For this you will prepare yourself well before time. No haste, no hurry, no confusion. You will also go to your class in time.
7. Decide to get up around 6.00 depending on how early you have to go to work. Whatever it is, you will get up early and will not lie in bed for long.
8. After you get up thank God for giving you a beautiful day and say to yourself: ‘The day is going to be good. I’ll enjoy it and make the most of it.

9. Whenever you get time when at school, you will read the newspaper or something useful for you. You will avoid idle talk or empty discussions.
10. You will come home in time without whiling away time on the way.
11. You will write in your diary the money you have spent and maybe some important things which you need to remember.
12. Take a review of the day. I'm sure you will feel happy about the way you have spent the day. This will give you confidence and you will decide to spend the next day even more fruitfully.

At the moment, think of the change for a day. If you can change a day, you can change the whole year or all of the time you are going to get in future.

Activity – 3

You decide to change yourself from tomorrow. Make a list of things you would like to do for the whole day.

Another important aspect of your action plan would be to change your attitude to life i.e. everything we do or happens in our daily life.

Attitudinal change is a tough nut to crack. Attitudes are shaped during our bringing up and they get fossilized. It means they get fixed in our nature and later on it becomes difficult to change them.

However, you know that no person is unchangeable. We do change when the situation demands it. We cannot afford to be rigid, we have to be flexible, we can certainly change our attitude if we get rid of fanciful ideas about ourselves. For example, 'I'm a very important person in the society,' 'The whole life is in front of me. I can do anything I like.' 'I know everything.' 'What I know, nobody knows'. 'I've a lot of experience of life.' 'I'm pretty senior to many'. All this makes us proud, boastful and egoistic. Look at the following instances:

1. We do not know how big is the universe of which we are a part. Our galaxy alone has one billion stars. There are billions of galaxies in the universe. The earth is one of the planets 80% of which is covered by water. It contains seven continents of which Asia is one. A country called India is situated in Asia. Maharashtra is one of states in which there is a small city called Nashik. I belong to a small village.

Who am I in the whole scheme of this universe? Not even a particle!

Why should I be proud? The sun, the moon, the sky, mountains, oceans.....where am I?

Rains, floods, volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, diseases, accidents, poverty-where am I?

2. How much is my life? 70 years, 90 years, 100 years? Half of it is already gone. I'm a passenger who is going to be there at the station for

some time. Who am I? Why should I be proud or egoistic?

3. The structure and functioning of the universe is beyond human knowledge. The strange things that happen everyday may not be within the reach of human understanding, however we may try to grasp them.

How much do I know about the universe and myself? Isn't my knowledge just a grain of sand on the seashore?

Why should I be proud?

4. Life is never - ending though my period of life is short. Man dies but life continues to be. What do I know about human life? How much life have I seen or experienced? Why should I be proud?

5. What I know is not and cannot be final. This is because what the other person can see I may not be able to see. There is no ultimate truth. So what I think, what I say is not the only thing that is true. What I think is true, may be partially true.

Considering all this, there doesn't seem to be any reason to be proud, to assume that I'm someone great, all are fools and I'm the only wise person.

The moment we are able to discard the feeling of pride, we become ready to change our attitude to life.

What kind of attitudes are there? A variety of them. Look at the following list of attitudes:

<i>positive</i>	<i>negative</i>
constructive	destructive
lenient	aggressive
flexible	rigid
liberal	orthodox
sympathetic	indifferent
progressive	conventional
generous	selfish
co-operative	non-co-operative
broad-minded/open-minded	narrow minded/mean minded
optimistic	pessimistic
tolerant	intolerant
democratic	dictatorial
accommodative	provincial/parochial

It goes without saying that we all should have positive or constructive attitude. **A positive attitude means to look at the bright side of anything.** It is to see what is good in a situation, incident or person. A positive attitude makes you

optimistic. You always feel that something good will come out even when you are in an adverse situation. You do not lose confidence even in adversities. You are always hopeful.

Negative attitude is harmful. It affects your mind. It affects your health. It disturbs your peace. It creates discord and disharmony in your life. You lose your balance which leads to disaster.

A person with a positive attitude does not find faults with others or the given situation. They always look at the brighter side of everything.

Train your mind to record and remember pleasant happenings, pleasant interactions and happy moments. Erase from your mind or forget unpleasant experiences. It is good for your health.

Avoid the company of negative people.

Develop and maintain positive attitude all the time.

After you bring about a change in your attitude or if you already possess it, think of changing your future.

How do you visualize yourself five years from now? Well, here is an action plan for the next five years.

I wish to see myself totally different from what I am now within the shortest period of time. For this I have decided upon certain things and act upon them. They could be as follows:

1. I will give at least two lectures in a year on one of the following topics at places other than my school.
 - a. Environmental pollution
 - b. Keeping public places clean
 - c. HIV menace
 - d. How to be healthy?
 - e. Scientific temperament
2. I will plant one tree and take care of it throughout the year.
3. I will make one illiterate person literate every year.
4. I will always be ready to help anyone as much as a can.
5. I will not talk anything unpleasant about my colleagues behind their back.
6. I will sit at the computer at least for half an hour checking the e-mail, identifying important teaching material, meeting people and collecting information about my subject.
7. I will never go to any class without preparation.
8. I will read at least one book a year.

9. I will go on a long trip to visit places that tell us about the cultural heritage of our country.
10. I will learn effective communication skills in English, computer operations (may be through MS CIT) and driving skills.
10. I will make an attempt to learn music or dancing or at least playing on a flute or harmonium, or making sketches or drawing pictures. I can also develop the hobby of photography, mountaineering or trekking.

Don't be very ambitious. Many people make resolutions and forget the next moment. Begin with small things which you can certainly do. For example:

- a. Avoid sitting in front of the TV for a long time. Be selective in watching TV.
- b. Don't speak on the mobile for a long time. This will save time, money and your health.
- c. Keep your things properly and throw out unwanted clutter.
- d. Switch off the light if you don't need it. Use it only when you require it.
- e. Don't throw away things at a public place. Throw them in the dustbin.
- f. Don't use water unnecessarily.
- g. Always speak in a low voice. There is no need to speak very loudly when you talk to someone face to face or over the telephone.
- h. Blow the horn of your vehicle only if it is essential.
- i. Make use of used up paper.
- j. Don't take food on your plate more than what you can eat. Don't leave food on your plate.

Questions for self-study – 3

1. What is the need for an action plan?
2. Why are attitudes difficult to change?
3. When is it possible to bring about an attitudinal change?
4. What do you mean by 'a positive attitude'?

5.3 Summary

A question you should ask yourself at the end of every academic year is, 'Am I improving?' It means to take a pause for a while to take stock of things happening to you as well as around you and to take appropriate decisions about the next course of action. This is known as recapitulation.

However, some of us are lethargic. They are inactive because either they cannot perform or they do not want to perform. They are happy with the status

quo i.e. whatever the present situation. Therefore, they do not wish to change the situation. They become complacent. They think whatever they have or whatever they know is more than enough. They feel they do not need to learn anything new. As a result they stop improving. Non-improvement, non-performance and inaction develop inferiority complex in them. They develop a sense of diffidence. This leads to frustration which ultimately makes them cynical. A cynic is a person who has a negative attitude and is engaged in finding faults with everything. They try to create a false impression that they are excellent teachers but they cannot give their best because the situation in which they are placed is far from the ideal.

The reality is there is no perfectly ideal situation. You have to work in the given situation and do whatever you can to change it.

You should learn to look at everything that comes your way as an opportunity which you should use to your advantage. To do this, you have to be academically fit. You have to have love for knowledge, institutions of academic excellence and knowledgeable people. You have to be a committed teacher and keep acquiring new skills and knowledge and brushing up what you have. If you expect something to happen in a positive way, it will not happen automatically. You have to get out of yourself and take the initiative to make things happen. As a teacher you have to make learning happen. Teaching itself is a great opportunity that can contribute to your self-improvement. Teaching is exciting, challenging and it as an experience that can give you mental satisfaction.

You can always bring about a change in your present situation and look for a better future. You can decide to change right from today, in fact, right from this moment. However, only making decisions is not important. You should try to bring your decision, dreams, plans into practice. Therefore, you have to make an action plan. For this, the first thing you have to do is to bring about an attitudinal change which is very difficult. Attitudes are shaped during our formative stage and become an insparable part of our personality. At a later stage of our life it becomes very difficult to change our attitudes. Many of us have fanciful ideas about us. 'I'm great', 'I've a lot of social prestige'. 'I'm a great person'. 'I know everything'. This makes you egoistic. If you do away with your pride, you get ready to change yourself.

If you adopt a positive attitude you can do a lot. Don't be very ambitions about the change you wish to bring about in you and the surrounding. Begin to do things which you easily can.

5.4 Questions for practice

1. What questions you must ask yourself as a teacher at the end of every academic year?
2. What is lethargy? Why can teachers of English afford to be lethargic?

3. What reasons do teachers of English forward for not speaking English in their school, class or with their colleagues?
4. How does a teacher, in the course of time, turns to be cynic? Describe the process briefly.
5. What are the characteristic features of a teacher who is a cynic?
6. Why is it wrong to be proud, boastful or egoistic?
7. What are the advantages of the positive attitude?
8. In what way is the negative attitude harmful?

5.5 Answers to questions for self-study

Answers to self-study - 1

1. It is to take a pause for a while to take stock of what is happening to you and things around you to take an appropriate decision what to do next.
2. It is a feeling that you are happy with whatever you are, whatever you have and whatever the situation is.
3. They stop improving, lose the ability to perform in English, remain ignorant of new things happening in ELT. All this leads them to frustration and a mental illness of finding faults with the system.
4. A cynic has a negative attitude to everything around.

Answers to self-study – 2

1. It is to get hold of opportunities and use them to your advantage.
2. You have to have love for knowledge, institutions imparting knowledge and knowledgeable people, be committed to teaching, keep learning new things and brushing up what you have.
3. Because it offers you challenges, excitement, learning experiences and mental satisfaction.
4. Create them.

Answers to self-study – 3

1. An action plan indicates how you are going to bring your decisions into reality. Only making plans is not enough. You have to bring the plans into practice.
2. Attitudes get shaped during our bringing up. They get fixed in our nature. Later in life it becomes difficult to change them.
3. When we are able to do away with the feeling of pride.
4. It means to look at the bright side of everything. To be hopeful and optimistic.