CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The study proved that enhancing learners’ lateral thinking abilities would enhance the language proficiency and the learning ability. This study proposed that task based learning enhanced lateral thinking strategies. Examinations of these issues led to giving training for implementing lateral thinking skills. The learners were trained in lateral thinking skills from the initial stage of the course. It helped them to adopt the strategies needed to respond to the tasks. As all the tasks called for effective use of cognition, learners adopted different strategies and expressed their ideas in the required language. It helped learners to achieve two goals simultaneously: lateral thinking attitude and English language proficiency.

5.1 What is needed to change the attitude of second language learners?

Lateral thinking attitude helped in changing the patterns of the minds of learners. It broke the tentative pattern of disrupted experience, concepts and perception. It explored new perceptions and concepts. Learners showed willingness to look at things from various points of views. They changed the old perception and kept changing the perceptions according to the situations and topics given to them. Instead of developing readymade pattern, Learners, the lateral thinkers restructured the pattern by putting things differently. Rearrangement of pattern frequently occurred to find different pattern. Rigid patterns were refused, the new attempts of putting various concepts and ideas together occurred. Though all the tasks similar with regard to some ideas and concepts, learners stopped judging specific
pattern as inevitable. They acknowledged the new pattern as one of the useful pattern and regarded it as one of the ways of looking at things. It limited the self maximizing memory system. Lateral Thinking liberated the old pattern of information. Fluidity of Lateral thinking was explored to fit the mind with the situation. It enabled the learners to develop practical tools to handle the insight.

Failure of application of ideas occurred due to the innate nature of thought process. The aim of lateral thinking attitude was attaining success by using acquired knowledge maximally; initiate new ideas wherever it is required and restructure patterns of mind to reach the goal. It increased the involvement of the learner in learning, helped in the concept formation and language learning automatically. Hence it was assured that lateral thinking attitude led the learners at tertiary level to enhance concept formation and L₂ proficiency naturally. Therefore, if the learners were trained to think innovatively in L₂ by involving themselves in the process of learning then the quality of output would be positive.

5.2 How lateral thinking attitude was implemented

It was found that it would not be possible to teach thinking skills in terms of theories. Enabling procedure of education provided young people the opportunity to realize their potential in the form of understanding and ability. The provided innovative language modules enhanced the lateral thinking skills of the learners. Tasks related to the real world and the demand for meaningful language engaged students in the systematic process of completing the tasks without noticing much of anything about the language they use. Through task based learning approach lateral thinking attitude was implanted in the minds of learners.
Task based learning focused on the content and thought process of the learners in which structural aspect of teaching was not given importance. It helped them to acquire practical knowledge of second language communication skills. Gradual development in the complexity of the task transformed the learners into lateral thinker. Different types of tasks were given to the learners. Each task demanded a particular feature of lateral thinking skills and combination of other skills. The tasks helped learners to develop lateral thinking skills. The tasks were constructed based on the rationale, code complexity, cognitive complexity, communicative pressures demanded by the tasks. Learners were given chance to give feedback in written form. It helped in understanding the cognitive maturity in the process of learning. It was found that out of 66 students 48 of them were from regional medium background where medium of instruction was in regional language at school and 18 were from English medium background. It was found that the learners with regional medium background lacked sufficient L2 academic skills. Motivation level was increased through the complexities of the tasks. Tasks enhanced their ability to work individually and cope up with the group members in the process of the learning task. In addition, learners’ responses reflected independent concepts and original thoughts rather than the reproduction of the thoughts of others. In the process of working on tasks, the learners were able to use lateral thinking strategies naturally. Hence, the development of strategic approach attributed the specific thinking skills.

The data were collected in the form of responses to the tasks. To avoid subjectivity in the results data were collected with the help of questionnaires and personal observation. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 16) was used to evaluate the responses. Cronbach’ Alpha for pre questionnaire and post questionnaire were 0.881 and 0.844
respectively. It assured that responses and data were reliable and original. Variables were computed in two pairs as one as Pre-questionnaire data and Post questionnaire data. Mean difference and standard deviation value of the variables were -1.643 and 3.854. The p value was less than 0.05. Therefore it was assured that the methodology followed in the study successfully imparted lateral thinking skills and second language proficiency skills to the learner. Gradual improvements of learners were found according to the gradation of the tasks. Task 17 and 24 were paired to find the improvement of the learners that gave positive results regarding the improvement of the learners. The mean and standard deviation of the first group task 17 and task 24 were -.530 and 1.303 respectively. Paired value p was 0.002. The mean difference and standard deviation value of the second group of tasks 25 and 31 were -1.591 and 1.022 respectively. Paired value p was less than 0.05. Hence the results were assured as significant and successful. The mean and standard deviation of the first group tasks ‘ability to keep conversation going’ were -1.864 and 1.006 respectively. Paired value p was 0.000. The mean and standard deviation of the second group ‘content of contribution-ideas, information, and feeling expressed’ were -1.818 and 1.122 respectively. Paired value p was 0.000. The mean and standard deviation of the second group ‘Intelligibility in organizing ideas’ was -1.924 and 1.071 respectively. Paired value p was 0.000. Paired value p was 0.000. The mean difference and standard deviation of the second group ‘Intelligibility in grammar, vocabulary, and sentence formation were -1.924 and 1.100 respectively. Paired value p value is lesser than 0.05. Hence the results were assured as significant and successful.

Profile of the learners at the beginning of the study, value of Independent thinking was 2.11, creativity was 1.94 and the mean value of language proficiency of learners was
1.85. According to the results based on the profile prepared by the subject teacher most of the learners were at below average and low level learners and a very few were at above average level. This was an important reference point in assessing the change observed in the study and in making the conclusions in the study. The post – task profile of individual learners’ value of Independent thinking was 3.94, creativity was 3.95 and the mean value of language proficiency of learners was 3.92. It provided an evidence of the development in the lateral thinking skills and in L2 of the learners.

A summary of the findings of the study are given below,

1. Developing lateral thinking skills in second language learners enhanced second language communication abilities.

2. Developing lateral thinking skill changed the learners’ attitude towards second language communication skills of the learners.

3. Designing and grading of tasks with consistent focus on thinking skills became crucial reason for the success of language proficiency.

4. Learners displayed autonomy in their learning process. They worked independently.

5. The grading of tasks helped learners to move to the next level of cognitive maturity gradually and enabled the learners to work successfully on all the tasks.

6. Lateral thinking strategies in the tasks enabled the learners to be responsible for their own learning.

7. Feedback on the task from the learners enabled teacher to modify the tasks to be suitable one and helped learners to use various ways and use different techniques to reach the goal.

8. Implemented lateral thinking strategies through tasks changed the mindsets of the learners and increased the English language proficiency of the learners.
It could be concluded therefore, that training the learners in lateral thinking strategies enhanced the language proficiency of the learners. Moreover, strategy training increased the motivation and involvement of the learners and subsequently improved the language skills.

5.3 Impact of developing Lateral thinking skills in second language learners:

It was deduced from the analysis of the data that increasing lateral thinking ability in second language learners fostered the communication process of language.

a. The process of second language learning as independent skills was eased by training the students in developing lateral thinking skills. The learners became more proficient in speaking and writing skills towards the end of the training.

b. The learners were made aware of the process of language learning by using various strategies of lateral thinking abilities.

c. Learners’ autonomy was achieved.

d. Concept formation and expansion were achieved through activities.

e. The cognitive stage of the learners went higher as they were trained to perform tasks independently when teacher- researcher took the role of facilitator. Learners utilized the best of their cognitive abilities to work on the tasks individually.

f. Restructuring of the pattern and formation of innovative concepts were achieved without much effort.

g. Linguistic structures of their language were accurate.

5.4 The theoretical implication of the study

A model of tasks stood as indirect inducement of lateral thinking strategies and techniques. It enabled effective implementation of lateral thinking skills and second
language proficiency in the mind of the learners. Open situational tasks provided the green field situation. It initiated the random technique in the mind. Random technique increased the power of design through conflicts. Learners mind challenged the old ideas through escaping techniques and constructed provocations to tackle the demands of the tasks. The possible inventions were given by the learners with the help of provocations and concept fan techniques. Confident solutions were presented by using filament techniques. It resulted in stratals. It led to application of skills and ability without any hesitations. Learners used the target language naturally without being conscious of rules and the form. They concentrated on the concept and the theme to attain the form of completion. These processes make the learners to explore the tasks with appropriate responses. The process of the study was done gradually in steps. Though the learners were not given any instructions to explore lateral thinking strategies, they were successful in implementing the strategies naturally through the tasks. Effective communication skills were expressed in steps throughout the study.
The study indicated a few changes in the model framework proposed in the second chapter. As presented in the previous section, developing lateral thinking skills enhanced language proficiency. A new independent environment was provided that built...
few patterns into the mind and manifested as instinct behavior. It changed their attitude of old patterns and started forming new talent that they have natural talent of L₂ communication skills. They believed that effective communication in English would be possible. It induced the confidence level and reduced the fear of making mistakes and fear of being wrong in L₂ communication ability. They got the new attitude of trying all possible ways to attain effective proficiency and created different ways to develop the communication ability. They replaced the attitude of ‘may be’ with the attitude ‘can be’.

It was proved to be one of the best techniques that could be adopted for teaching and learning process in classroom. The transferable independent skills were developed as part of training lateral thinking strategies. The application of the learnt skills in new contexts was enhanced. The whole process of the framework focused on lateral thinking that led to language development and learner autonomy. Above all, the approaches based on the thinking process provided lasting abilities to communicate. The meticulously designed instruction and tasks met the learners’ interest and cognitive levels that led to progress during the process of acquiring skills. Learners working together solved linguistic problems while co-constructing the language. The opportunities to talk and interact in the second language allowed learners to re-organize knowledge in communicative aspects of language. Learning environment that included opportunities that engaged learners in meaningful activities as conversation enhanced second language communication ability of the students. Group work enabled everyone to participate and it demanded everyone to get some information to contribute to the task. It made learners active and led them to contribute to a great extent in communication. Learners concentrated on performing the tasks though they felt that they were in a new educational situation. The transition from following rote learning
strategy to lateral thinking strategy occurred. Students joining from school to college faced a
different situation that caused socio-psychological barriers, in L₂ thought production and
presentation. These socio-psychological barriers were also removed through the suggested
module. Learners changed their attitude towards second language communication skills.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

The framework constructed for this study would be applicable for all ESL learners
inspite of their cultural backgrounds. Though this study was a case study of a group of learners,
the results could be generalizable to other ESL learners also. This study opened a few of
research questions regarding lateral thinking and its implication in ESL classrooms.

a) Would the same theoretical framework work for imparting other subjects?
b) Evaluation of the effects based on the cultural values of learners.
c) What sort of tasks can be given for other level of learners such as primary and secondary
   level learners to explore lateral thinking skills?

5.7 Conclusion

Lateral thinking skills helped learners to apply knowledge in new contexts.
Adopting lateral thinking strategy as methodology in Indian ESL classroom resulted in
changing the mind sets of the learners and thereby enhanced second language communication
skills. The suggested model of tasks explored lateral thinking strategies. The study found
that tasks related to the interest of learners energize the cognitive process in the learners
and explored lateral thinking strategies. It was proved that lateral thinking strategies
enhanced second language communication skills of the learners.