

**A STUDY OF THE HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN ENGLISH, CONDUCTED BY  
THE SRI LANKA INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

**S.L.R.YAwasinghe**

*English language teaching unit, faculty of agriculture, rajarata university of sri lanka,  
PULiyankulama.*

The Higher National Diploma in English is one of the programmes conducted by the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE), under the Ministry of Higher Education. This course is carried out in all the Advanced Technological Institutions in the island. The HND English new curriculum is a diploma program of two years' duration. The two year program will be offered in a course unit system in four semesters. Each semester will have 15 weeks of course work. There are three specialization areas namely, English Language Teaching, Journalism and English for Business Communication. Hence, several new modules have been introduced to the proposed new curriculum of the HND English diploma program offered by SLIATE. To obtain the full potential of the newly developed modules as well as the revised modules, it is essential that staff development programs are implemented so that the academic staff would have the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to teach and implement the modules in the new curriculum.

The outcomes of the programme are quite attractive. The Higher National Diploma in English provides an opportunity for school leavers, with GCE A' Level qualifications, to develop their proficiency in English Language, English Literature and Communication Skills. The learners will be directed to follow an area of specialization during the second year in order to strengthen their chances of finding suitable employment. The course also aims at developing their personality, interpersonal skills and general transferable skills such as adaptability, decision making ability and organizational ability which are regarded as important requirements to meet employer expectations. There will be no in-plant training in specialization areas. Instead a practical component has been included for each course. Once teaching appointments are given for students who have completed the diploma in English an in-service training is provided. The course has a great demand in the field of teaching and many of its successful candidates have secured employment in the government and private sector. The programme in Anuradhapura is conducted under very difficult circumstances with very limited resources. They only have a part time programme as opposed to a full time programmes due to the non-availability of full - time teaching staff. Despite these difficulties, the programme has been upgraded to a three year programme with the addition of a few professional courses.

This paper analyzed the problems and challenges encountered by the students who follow this programme in the Anuradhapura Advanced Technological Institution and suggest ways in which it could be improved. The new curriculum for the Higher National Diploma in English came into effect in 2012 and this is the result of a comprehensive curriculum revision set in motion by the SLIATE in 2010. The old and the new curricula for the HNDE cover the major aspects of learning English language and literature. The new curriculum in particular, has spread out the work load of the students and the staff in a more balanced

Subject	Pass rate in 03 semesters		
	Year 1 semester1	Year 1 semester 2	Year 2 semester 1
Listening	96.87	85.71	100
Practical and Professional Writing	81.81	64.29	86.96
Effective Communication skills	100	100	100
Vocabulary Development	90.9	60.71	64
Advanced Reading skills	81.81	57.14	89.47
Literature	67.74	28.57	52.63
Language structure	87.5	64.29	61.54
Practical Phonology	65.63	50	45.83
Computer Assisted Language Learning		100	100

manner. The new curriculum for the HNDE has not been pre-tested adequately and there are many course units with one credit value. Student opinion has not been sought adequately in preparation of the new curriculum for HNDE.

The analysis was based on a sample of ten students and three lecturers of the Diploma in English programme in the Advanced Technological Institute in Anuradhapura. Primary data was collected through tests, discussions and interviews and feedback questionnaires from the focused groups. Their writing ability was tested by making them produce a small paragraph of 75 words. Through a discussion with the students their weaknesses were identified. A structured interview was carried out with the teachers and students in order to collect data. A feedback questionnaire was given to the students to identify their background and to get their views on the subjects and the teaching. Secondary data was obtained from the available sources and literature and a conclusion was drawn from the data analysis. Data was analyzed holistically and statistically so that an absolute conclusion could be drawn from the collected data.

A analysis of data revealed that language skills of students should be further improved so that they could conquer the challenges encountered by them in society. To achieve this target the Advanced Technological Institution in Anuradhapura should provide the equipment necessary to facilitate learning. Students should be made to listen to standard Sri Lankan English for them to be able to recognize the difference between standard and non standard Sri Lankan English.