

The English Classroom

A Peer Reviewed Bi-annual Journal



Regional Institute of English, South India

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Volume 24

Number 1

June 2022

ISSN 2250-2831

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Co-editor	:	Dr Uzma S. Raheel Faculty, RIESI
Publisher	:	Regional Institute of English, South India Jnanabharati Campus, Bengaluru - 560 056.
Edition	:	June 2022
No. of Copies	:	1200
Printed at	:	DOTS # 48/1, "N" Block, 5th Main, Suguna Hospital Back Gate, Prakash Nagar, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru - 560 010. Phone : 080-4153 0311 / 12 printdots@gmail.com

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About The English Classroom

The English Classroom Journal is a peer reviewed bi-annual journal published in the month of June and December. The main objective of the journal is to publish articles pertaining to English Language Teaching and teacher education. The articles for this edition include the second volume of papers presented at a two-day online International Conference jointly conducted by the Regional Institute of English, South India, Bengaluru and IT for Change, Bengaluru on 25.06.2021 and 26. 06.2021 on the theme, "English Language Teaching during Pandemic Times: Grappling with the New Normal." We hope that the research findings, the strategies, techniques, methodology and assessment processes tried out by educators in India and abroad during the COVID 19 pandemic would keep us more equipped and updated in facing similar situations if any in the future.

The article, **Exploring Virtual Learning Community in the New Normal**, written by **Kuheli Mukherjee** and **Anamika Bassu** is about a virtual learning community that they volunteered to develop to support the member teachers to cope with the challenges of the time.

Dr. A. Neela Madhavi in the article, **A New Mode in the New Normal: A Reflection on Online Teaching and Learning** presents the adaptation, challenges and outcome of new mode of teaching during the pandemic by the researcher herself and a community of teachers across the districts of Telangana.

Shabna P in the article, **English Language Teaching during Pandemic Times: Students' Perspectives** documents the perspective of students on online teachers and e-learning process of English Language Teaching.

In the article, **Impact on Language Teaching Incorporating Values and the Nuances of English Language**, **M Alivelu Manga** attempts to examine the challenges that teachers face while incorporating values / principles of language and the subtle nuances of English language while teaching the language skills.

Mamatha Sadu and **Syed Irshad Ali**, in the article, **Awareness on Current Issues through Significance of Cartoons in Developing Awareness on Covid-19 Pandemic, Moral Values and Gender Equity. - Collaboration in Isolation: Connecting Classrooms through Asynchronous Technology** mention the initiative taken by them to make students of 3 different schools collaborate to improve their language skills.

In the article, **‘Do at Home Activity Package’ for Retaining Language Skills Acquired by 4th and 5th Grade Students of Kerala** by **Nisha Panthavoor** shares the initiative of preparing 30 online home based activities by the state of Kerala to retain the language skills of 5th and 4th grade students.

Prameela Tharavath in the article, **Techniques to Enhance Listening Skills in ESL Classrooms** records some remarkable improvement she found in the Listening skill of the students. The researcher used several ICT tools to improve the Listening skill of the learners.

The article, CPD in **New Normal – Finding Positivity in Negativity** by **Vinija N.S.** explores the benefits that teachers of Kerala received from the Kite Victers Channel classes and the other online training programmes that they attended during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Asha Katikaneni in her article, **“My Status” Feature of the Whatsapp Messenger as a rescue platform to convey Important Occasions to Students during the Pandemic** shares her study on the use of smart phone and 'My Status' feature of WhatsApp Messenger with classes 4,5 and to celebrate important occasions virtually.

G.G.S. Nageswara Rao states in his article, **The Relevance of Theme-Based Pictures in Developing Questioning Ability of Teacher Trainees** that trainee teachers who are in 1st year DEI.ED in DIET, Bheemunipatnam, Vishakapatnam struggle to frame meaningful questions. Hence by providing 10 pictures in Google meet, the researcher helped the students to frame meaningful questions.

Gaurav S. Misal, in the article **Integrating Digital Technology in an EFL Classroom - With Special Reference to 'Canva for Education' App** presents an action research conducted with First Year Additional English students by using free 'Canva for Education' to boost self-learning interest and teamwork in the students.

The article, **The Need for Specific Pre-service and In-service Training for Continuous Professional Development of ESP Teachers** by **Komal Shahedadpuri** focuses on the survey conducted by the researcher using a questionnaire to find the needs of ESP teachers.

Exploring Virtual Learning Community in the New Normal

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Abstract

The closure of schools due to Covid pandemic posed teachers, specially those at school level, with the challenge of transforming teaching from offline to online. However, support from the main stream providers of in-service teacher education of ESL teachers in West Bengal was scarce in this regard. The authors volunteered to develop a virtual learning community for supporting member teachers develop professionally to cope with their challenges. The paper explores the trajectory of this virtual learning community in the New Normal and focuses on the learning of two founder teachers benefitting from the dialogic reflection taking place within the community.

Keywords

Teacher learning, professional development, learning community, community of practice, collaboration, reflection.

Introduction

The 21st century has been marked for “rapid change” (Scott, 2010:20) in educational contexts necessitating a demand for change in teaching practices also. Professional development is pointed out as a key strategy “to bring positive change in practicing teachers' competence” (Borg, 2018:1). However, the year 2020 witnessed an unforeseen situation in educational contexts that expedited this change process with a sudden leap. The closure of all educational institutes during the Covid pandemic in India created a situation where teachers at all levels of education system had to shift their teaching from offline to online. The main stream providers of professional development for in-service teachers at school levels were often found ill-

prepared to cater to the needs of thousands of teachers at the grassroots. The authors of this paper will discuss their experience of developing a virtual learning community and its impact in such a situation.

Context

Genesis of 'Professional Outreach for English Teachers(POET)

In-service teacher training in West Bengal in New Normal

In the state of West Bengal in-service teacher education at the school level is mainly provided by the 'Expert Committee on Syllabus and Curriculum' working under the Department of School Education, Govt. of WB. Occasionally SCERT, WB also provides project specific in-service training to school teachers. Teacher training in cascade mode is the state's main provision for professional development of in-service teachers. The members of the Expert Committee provide training at the state level and teachers trained by them train teachers at the subsequent levels. Prior to 2020 the training sessions were conducted offline. So with the challenge posed by the Pandemic the in-service trainings came to a stop for a while. However, trainings were resumed after some months and subject teachers were invited to attend online training. I was invited to attend one such three hour online training for ESL teachers. However, the experience was frustrating as questions related to online teaching posed by attendees remained unanswered. The trainer appeared not adequately equipped either technologically or pedagogically to address those questions. The session was conducted in lecture method with no scope for teachers to discuss their current challenges or their attempt to cope with those.

Lack of Awareness about Professional Development

In 2019, while doing a research on the professional development of in-service ESL teacher trainers of Assam and West Bengal, under ELTRMS of British Council, I found that majority of the participating in-service teacher trainers from West Bengal lacked awareness about professional development opportunities and they often equated it with the in-service trainings received by them. Another finding of the research was that most of these in-service trainers who were actually practicing teachers from different government schools did not have clear concept about English Language Teaching. So when the research came to an end in April 2020 I started planning how to support the professional development of these teachers.

Teacher Motivation for Learning

With the closure of schools in May'20 I started getting regular calls from colleagues asking for support to teach online. I had to mentor willing colleagues to help them learn use of both synchronous and asynchronous modes of online teaching to cater to learners with varying access to internet. I felt that an online community for learning through collaboration and sharing might be useful to provide professional support to these teachers motivated to gain mastery over the new mode of teaching and also to enjoy autonomy (Pink, 2009) to a certain extent due to lack of any ready prescriptive model in local context.

Journey of POET

With the help of a number of motivated teachers that included my co-author we formed a WhatsApp group with fifteen members in the month of August 2020. Our members include teachers of ESL from different contexts of West Bengal as we wanted to focus on supporting teachers from contexts where they find it very challenging to continue teaching during the Pandemic. Majority of our members teach the age group of 12yrs-16 years with the exception of one who teaches students at graduate and post graduate levels. As the members, collaborated to name the community as POET or they developed a sense of ownership from the very outset. Initially we would meet twice a month virtually using Google Meet platform and I would be the moderator in these group discussions. Gradually other members were entrusted with the responsibility to facilitate specific sessions. Later, collaborating with Language Teacher Associations like AINET we also started organizing webinars with experts from the field as speakers. The webinars were made accessible not only to POET members but also to a larger community of ESL teachers across the state and beyond. The present paper does not intend to evaluate the impact of POET in general but would limit to its impact on the authors' professional learning from their involvement in the virtual community. The paper will use the term 'teacher learning' and 'teacher's professional development' interchangeably

Research context

Learning communities are 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998) developed with the specific aim of providing its members a collaborative learning experience in order to improve their practice as well as students' learning outcomes (Whitehouse, McCloskey & Ketelhut, 2010). In a 'virtual community of practice' (Cook-Craig & Sabah, 2009), practitioners go online to share ideas, network and discuss matters of

common individual interest. The characteristics of such a learning community may be summarized in the following words:

A shared goal and focus on a concrete outcome; collective focus on student learning; reflective dialogue; collaboration and participation; structured and guided activities having a relation to practice; trust; leadership; stakeholder's support; and individual's prior knowledge and motivation. (Andrews and Richmond, 2019:409)

Teacher learning as viewed from socio cultural perspective refers to Schön (1983) who defines professional knowledge as not mere theoretical knowledge applied to practice but knowledge-in-practice which can be created by professionals themselves in the context of their practice. Schön further emphasizes the importance of “reflection” through continuous dialogue in a specific group of professionals to construct and reconstruct professional knowledge (Kelly, 2006). The process of construction and reconstruction of professional knowledge also results in building new identities that takes place through the negotiation of the meanings of any professional's experiences as a member of a social community (Wenger, 1998). The collaboration and dialogic reflection of the community help its members identify resonances as well as contradictions with their own experiences (Kelly, 2006) and thereby create a new construct of their own practices.

Since 'teacher learning communities' provide teachers the opportunity to work collaboratively to address challenges of their own choice directly related to their classroom practice, researchers consider 'teacher learning communities' to be more effective for teacher learning than the traditional modes of teacher professional development (White house et al, 2010). Such learning communities comprising experienced as well as less experienced teacher members attempt to co-construct a Vygotskian (1978) ZPD whereby members develop a new construct about their professional practice (Golombek and Johnson, 2020) and professional identity. All the members of such a community may not be equally active but the participation is important as source of learning for teachers who might, for some time, just observe the more active members (Wenger, McDermot and Snyder, 2002). Cochran-Smith (2015) points out that when such learning communities have a focus on equity it allows teachers to question their own practices concerned with learners marginalized in class or considered deficient in learning outcome.

Macia and Garcia (2016) refer to three interrelated components of the educational experience of a community viz. “cognitive presence”, “teaching

presence” and “social presence”. Cognitive presence plays a key role in “acquisition of new knowledge, skill learning and analytical thinking”, teaching presence accounts for collaboration and critical thinking whereas social presence facilitates trustful collaboration. Hence it is important to foster all these elements in a learning community to be effective for its members (p. 300). The sharing of knowledge, reflection on shared teaching practice, immediate response from peers and asynchronous nature of online communities have been identified as factors conducive for enhancing professional development of teachers. Questions posed by other teachers generate reflection on regular practices of self leading to new understanding of one's own practice (Wesley, 2013; Davis, 2015).

Wenger et al (2002) emphasize the role of moderator in a community to foster member participation. In the beginning the role of a moderator may be taken by one person and gradually distributed among other members as they grow confident observing and listening to the moderator facilitating the group discussions and other activities of the community. The moderator should also keep in mind that developing a sense of self efficacy amongst the members is important and hence they need be empowered with the required digital competencies so that the community members feel motivated to share and help their colleagues (Tseng and Kuo, 2014).

Pointing out the lack of extensive research on informal online communities of teachers Macia and Garcia (2016) posit that most of the studies on online communities of teachers were based on communities developed in university environment for the purpose of the specific study. However, the practical impact of online communities on teachers' professional development still remains controversial. They point out the need for further studies on the role of moderator and distributed leadership within the community for a clear understanding of the impact of online communities of teachers on their professional learning.

Experiences of Learning from the Virtual Learning Community

Learning of the Moderator

As the moderator of the community I started our first discussion by describing my experience of a successful class and asked members to do the same. This was followed by a reflective session on what made the described classes successful. The next meeting focused on a class which I did not consider successful and I asked members to reflect on this class of mine. Next I did the needs analysis of the teacher members to decide topics of group discussion and topics for webinars. The

experience of moderating regular group discussions and organizing webinars and workshops fostered knowledge and skill that empowered me not only as a teacher but also as teacher educator and teacher researcher.

Learning as a teacher

The sharing of teaching practices by peer members and the related questions posed by them helped me reflect on my own practice (Wesley, 2013; Schon, 1983) as a classroom teacher who is trying to transform into an online teacher. A number of community members raised the issue of passive learners in their online classes. Despite their sincere effort they were not getting desired learner responses. Discussion revealed that teachers were merely replicating their offline pedagogy without making the necessary adjustments to engage learners online. Reflection revealed that my own way of asking students' answer verbally to check their comprehension (the same as in offline class) might be allowing some learners remain passive in my class. Consequently I started asking my learners to write their answers in the chat box first and then gave feedback on the basis of their individual answers. I immediately noticed the growing interest of learners in response to this changed practice.

Learning as a teacher educator

As the moderator of group discussions in the online meetings or on WhatsApp group one of my objectives is to encourage all the members to participate. I observed that some of the members, though regularly attending community meetings, speaking freely about their classroom experiences and their challenges over phone personally, kept silent during the discussions which were conducted in English. They remained passive listeners during group discussions on Google Meet. So I started using Bengali, our mother tongue, while facilitating the group discussions. I would start the discussion in Bengali and switch code intermittently. The more confident members followed suit and the less confident ones started taking part in the group discussions. Prior to this experience, as a teacher educator of ESL I had always insisted on use of English in training sessions. However, the community experience made me aware that like our learners teacher trainees might need time and nurturing to become confident users of English. Allowing trainees to use mother tongue to describe their challenges and their ideas could be empowering for both trainees and the trainer. The trainer would have better understanding of the challenges faced by trainees and thereby suggest appropriate redresses (Golombek & Johnson, 2020).

Learning as a teacher researcher

Facilitating discussions in a virtual community with members from different contexts (areas and levels) made me aware of issues related to teaching of English in my own state that I had not paid attention to before. Some members informed about challenges related with teaching English to learners whose mother tongue is a tribal language. The main stream teacher education programmes do not offer much help to these ESL teachers who do not share their learners' mother tongue. Another issue that caught my attention was the use of youtube by member teachers from schools where learners come from very poor economic background. These learners cannot access real time online classes. They watch the videos created by their teachers in asynchronous mode. Observing such videos and then analyzing in the online community generated ideas about exploring uses of teacher made videos for English language Learners in Indian context (Macia & Garcia, 2016).

Learning as a member and co-facilitator

Rationale for joining POET

A few words about why I joined this virtual learning community might make the account of my learning from the experience more tangible. Coming from a background of English Literature my experience of learning about “English Language” was restricted to the study of Philology. Joining an Engineering college as an assistant professor, made me aware that what I learnt as a student of English Literature did not equip me with the pedagogy to teach young adult learners of English in professional courses.

Majority of my learners coming from the vernacular medium schools from the rural and semi- urban areas of West Bengal have studied English as a second language for twelve years. However, most of them appear deficient in expected English language proficiency. My lack of knowledge about English Language Teaching (ELT) and students' poor proficiency in English created a challenging situation for me. I completed CELTA, PGCTE and PGDTE successfully. However, coming back to my classroom, I felt I still needed to explore how to apply my knowledge in practice for my students' benefit.

Learning about teaching

The virtual platform of POET offered me a new opportunity for learning. I felt

that a thorough understanding of the practices of ESL teachers from different school contexts in West Bengal might help me gain new insight about my own learners and how to address their difficulties in learning English at the tertiary level. While collaborating with teacher members of POET I became aware that a number of these teachers did not have clear concept about ELT pedagogy.

I felt that my learners might have been taught English as a “content subject” rather than a language for use. So I decided to provide “scaffolding” in terms of basic vocabulary and structure to my learners to enable them to use the language. Challenging though it is, I have started taking remedial classes for students who need this support. The change is slow, but it is there. Had I not been a part of this virtual learning community I would not have clear idea about what kind of support these students needed (Wenger et al, 2002).

Learning about technology use

Though I teach in a context of technical education I am not well conversant in use of technology. Organizing online meetings and webinars for the community necessitated my initiative to learn more about uses of technology related with designing of programme flyers, creating registration links and developing feedback forms, live streaming of programme and such issues. The learning is going to help me organize online events for my own institution in future. Attending POET’s sessions and webinars on use of online tools also increased my confidence in the use of technology for teaching which would benefit my own learners (Tseng & Kuo, 2014).

Learning about reflection

I often perceived a mismatch between research literature and the actual classrooms. POET helped me learn how reflection can bridge this gap and help us improve. The group discussions of our community motivate us to take an enquiry stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015) on our own practice. Facilitating the discussion posts also led me to reflect on my own classroom practice. While collaborating and sharing ideas with the other members I feel inspired when I get to know about their own individual ways of dealing with and overcoming the classroom issues. Reflection found that even though some of these strategies had no theoretical support they were effective in the given context. Engaging in such reflections (Schön, 1983) has helped me develop my own constructs about effective classroom pedagogy.

Learning about professional development

My involvement with POET helped me realize what 'continuous professional development' really means. Collaborating with the moderator in developing the virtual community, facilitating group meetings, doing the needs analysis or organizing webinars, it had all been learning experiences for me as a professional. It is not only developing me as a classroom teacher but also transforming me into a reflective professional. My association with the community also keeps me updated about conferences, scholarships, research articles and opportunities for writing and presenting papers. Reflecting on all these experiences I consider POET to be a learning community (Wenger, 1991) in the true sense of the term.

Conclusion

The authors' account, showing a gradual development of a shared identity and a new construct of professional practice through continuous reflection, might be considered as evidence to claim that virtual learning communities should be made an integral part of main-stream teacher education specially for in-service teachers in West Bengal and similar contexts. A longer study on the impact of POET might also address the gap in research on the impact of informal learning communities. Such informal communities would also be in line with the spirit of NEP 2020 emphasizing teachers' self-initiative for professional development.

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A New Mode in the New Normal: A Reflection on Online Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

A paradigm shift in teaching and learning methodologies has resulted in the unprecedented times of the pandemic. The need to transit from traditional classrooms to an online mode of teaching has forced teachers to dive into virtual classrooms and up skill themselves thereby accelerating digitization. The resilience and determination of teachers has helped them to learn and use both synchronous and asynchronous ICT tools and link it in their video-conferencing platforms. Teachers have geared students up to adapt to virtual classrooms, and have introduced student- engagement online tools and platforms, hybrid learning, blended learning and flipped learning. There has been a shift in the modes and methods of teaching, assigning activities and assessing. Quite rewardingly, the new normal has subtly equipped the teacher and the taught with 21st century skill sets to a certain degree. As the past academic year ends, and the present academic year continues with online teaching, it is imperative to reflect.

John Dewey (1933) states, “We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience.” The paper presents reflections of the presenter and a community of teachers across the districts of Telangana, regarding their evolution and adaptations, their challenges, outcomes, in the new normal and the possible impact the new skill sets and the new mode of teaching could have on the future of education.

Keywords

Virtual Classrooms, classroom practices, digitization, students' engagement tools, 21st century skill sets)

Introduction

The health emergency caused by the Corona virus and the ensuing pandemic

closed most schools over the academic year, 2020-21. This led to schools and colleges adopting online and blended learning approaches which may well continue during 2021-22 as well. The past academic year has thus been a very experimental year in terms of exploring platforms, apps and tools for teaching the students synchronously and asynchronously. Teachers had to gear themselves up to learn various digital tools and apps to help children learn and continue with their education, right at their homes. The unforeseen shift to online teaching left teachers looking for avenues and sources to equip themselves by learning the new modes of teaching online and meet the needs of the stakeholders. It is observed that teachers registered voluntarily at various avenues that offered courses connected to online teaching, which for many teachers had been a maiden attempt. They registered for webinars, faculty development programs, courses provided by the Government, Corporate Firms as part of CSR, the International Educational Organizations, Private Organizations, and many others, both that were open and paid. Teachers' Associations and Teacher Communities shared and promoted teaching and assessment strategies among the groups. Teachers familiar with online ICT tools served as mentors to their peers. The pandemic has to an extent digitized the teacher and the taught. The journey by both has been a new experience, unlike the traditional classrooms.

At this point of time when the past academic year has concluded and the second academic year still continues with online teaching and learning, it is worth reflecting on our classroom practices, over the past fifteen months, keeping note of the scant resources available to students and teachers. The paper is a collection of reflections of forty teachers including the presenter engaged with High School students (Class VIII – X), on the e-platforms, apps and tools explored and learnt by teachers, irrespective of age, gender and their experience with ICT tools and technology, to provide online education to their students in various capacities and share what worked out practically. It also reflects on their attempt to reach out to students and those deprived of online teaching and alternative sources of learning. The paper concludes by stating how the skill sets gained by the teachers could be a step forward to achieving digital literacy and the impact it could have on the mode of teaching and the future of school education and what is worth carrying forward.

Teacher's Reflections

Teacher's Reflections have assumed greater significance since the 1980s, though there has been emphasis much earlier. John Dewey (1916) opined the

educational process as a "continual reorganization, reconstruction and transformation of experience" and reflecting and learning on the experience can help shape the educational process and in our present context it can help the reflections of teachers. It is essentially the teachers who are at the grass root level and are directly associated with students, and it is in this context that their reflection on experience matters. As a consequence, "reflective practice", "reflective thinking", "teacher as decision maker", has gained relevance and meaning (Calderhead and Gates, 1993; Bengtsson, 1995; Waks, 1999). Reflection is perceived by Williams (1998) as "a theory of meta cognition which directs skilled behaviour during professional activity or assists in the deliberative processes which occur during problem solving". The pandemic posed a problem preventing students from coming to schools. Education is a basic need and students had to be catered with. Online teaching and learning provided some support to address the problem. Teachers volunteered and deliberately attempted to solve the problem and upskilled themselves. Online teaching was the step forward to digitalization and technology-enabled education, which has been in the agenda of our Education System for a decade and the process has speeded up as necessitated by the emergency. Richards, (1998), claims that reflection can help teachers move from a level where they are guided by impulse, intuition, or routine, to a level where their actions are guided by critical thinking. He sums up driving the point home that in reflection, people recall, consider and evaluate their experience usually in relation to improve their practice and to deepen their understanding of that experience. Minott, (2009) defines reflection as careful consideration or thought; it is a process of disciplined intellectual criticism combining research; knowledge of context, and balanced judgement (critical thinking) about previous, present, and future actions, events or decisions. A critical reflection on the present online teaching or digitalized teaching, its effectiveness and means of implementation, what worked and what needs to be addressed can help to reconstruct the existing Education system and its plans to implement technology into education and also prepare the education system to tackle the future as and when a need or an emergency arises.

Teachers Reflections can happen before, during or after an action. Based on the moment or time when reflection happens, Schön (1983) has come out with the notion of: Reflection-in-action and Reflection-on-action. Court (1988) distinguishes that reflection-in-action is when practitioners are "in the thick of things", and they consciously pause to reflect on the problem or the practices at that instant. Reflection-on-action is when practitioners reflect after the action is done. Reflection-on-action

can be done by practitioners after a class, a unit, a term or even after an academic year and the reflections on experiences, be it a success, a challenge, or a failure, a learning, an adaptation, matters. The mode of Reflections can be private at an individual level or a group, collectively reflecting on the classroom practices, in our context being a mix of online and in person classes. The present paper has sought to gather the reflections of forty teachers on the new mode of teaching in the new normal.

Based on Online teaching and learning a study was carried out.

The Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of the paper is to pool the reflections of a community of teachers across the districts of Telangana and gather their reflections by revisiting the days right from March 2020, when lockdown and isolation was enforced and the way teachers braced themselves up to overcome the challenge and both adopt and adapt to online teaching. The teachers reflect on the various modes of teaching, sharing content/material, assigning homework and activities, and modes of quizzes and assessment as well. The paper would seek reflections on education integrated with ICT tools and technology. These reflections are hoped would help shape our future pedagogy and classrooms. (The value of the reflections has already been briefed.)

Methodology

Questionnaire was administered to a group of forty teachers facilitating English Language Teaching to High School students. The Questionnaire was a mix of both open-ended and closed questions. The questionnaire was shared via Google Forms (<https://forms.gle/amR2Xj1sRX4xtktKA>). The questionnaire was an elaborate one and demanded the teachers to reflect and share their journey of online teaching and learning and on the virtual classroom practices. The first section includes the personal details regarding their name, place of work, years of experience, contact details and it is agreed to keep this information confidential. The other section is meant to reflect on the challenges, successes, failures and contemplate on the virtual classroom practices and what could be the way forward.

The participants were forty teachers including the author, who handled English Language in an ESL context and handled the High School (Class VIII – X). The teachers are placed at Government schools, Zilla Parishad Schools, Model Schools, Tribal Welfare Schools, Minority Schools, Government-Aided Schools and Private

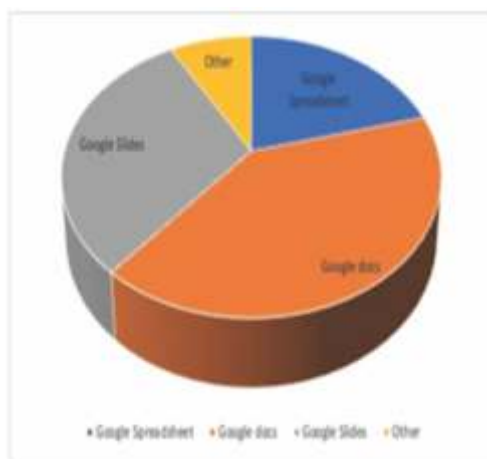
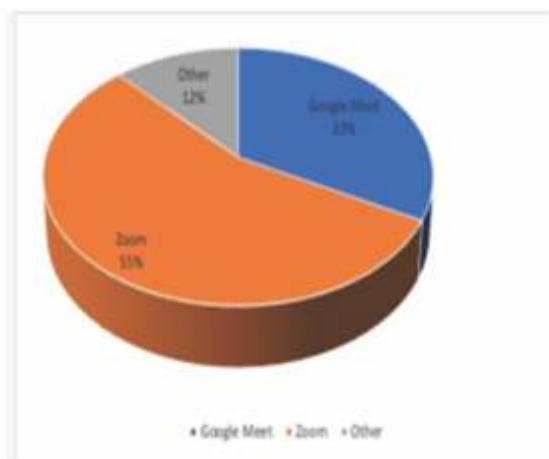
schools. Their teaching experience ranged from three years to thirty-one years. Such diverse group of teachers were requested to reflect to see how online teaching and learning worked irrespective of their age, experience, gender, area in which they work (rural, semi-rural and urban) and the reach they had to e-gadget and net sources.

Reflections of ten teachers (who were not comfortable sharing reflections through Google Forms) through a semi-structured interview was also gathered.

Reflections on the New Mode of Teaching

The responses and reflections of forty teachers for the given questionnaire are summarised and furnished below. The usage of various Apps/Tools used by teachers for the synchronous and asynchronous online teaching and learning has been represented in percentages and for each purpose that the App/Tool served, some teachers have used more than one, while some have used none. Check boxes in Google Forms have been used to gather the information below.

55% of teachers used Zoom Meet and 33% Google Meet for synchronous transaction of Online lessons. The remaining 12% of the teacher opted for Big Blue Button (BBB), Web Ex, WhatsApp to transact classes or have asked students to view TSAT and Doordarshan Channels and backed the students through Mobile Calls and WhatsApp calls (Pi 1). A few teachers visited the homes of students to monitor and pool up resources in the neighbourhood.



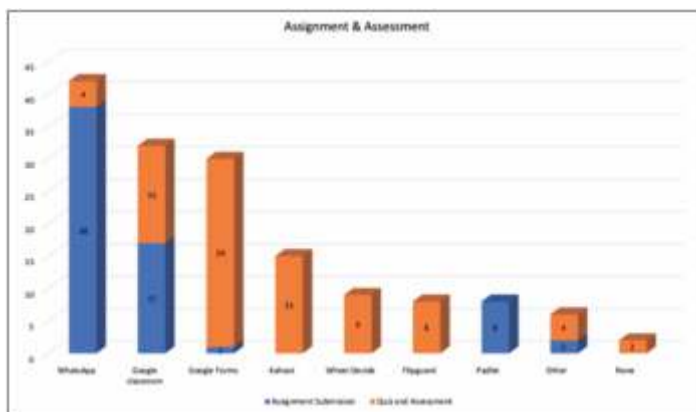
The applications/tools used for Online collaboration with co-teachers and students were Google Docs (72.5%), Google Slides (55%), Spread Sheets (37.5%) and 15% used either WhatsApp or none (Pi. 2). Looking at the percentages, it is evident that teachers used more than one to collaborate as per the need and convenience.

The applications/tools used by teachers for students to access materials and submit assignments/homework were majorly through WhatsApp (95%) and Google Classroom (42.5%). A few teachers tried Padlet (20%) and Google Forms (2.5%). It is understood that teachers have used more than one share content and gets assignments done by students.

Teaching is one aspect and testing is another. Quizzes and Assessment through apps and e-tools proved to more engaging and fun to the students. It has helped increase student participate on due to interesting apps and tools introduced by teachers. The percent of teachers using Google Forms (72.5%), Google Classroom (37.5%), Kahoot (37.5%), Wheel Decide (22.5%), Flip grid (20%), WhatsApp (20%). While multiple tools were used by some enthusiastic teachers. 1% of teachers used none.

The tools/apps used by teachers and students for brainstorming/organizing of idea, text, concepts through graphic organizers and mind maps were Coggle majorly and miMind.

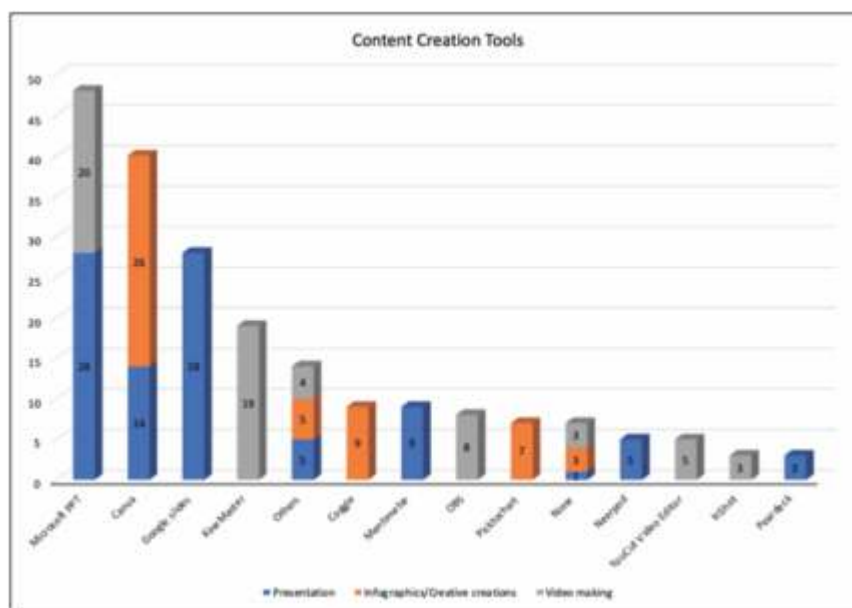
For Unit tests/ Formative Assessments/ Summative Assessments, teachers have found Google Forms to be very useful for assessing students' performance. (Though it is not known whether the student has genuinely scored the marks). It was also found useful for gathering student info and other details. The Bar Graph given under helps to understand better.



The mode of Presentations has been through Microsoft Power Point (70%), Google Slides (70%), Canva (35%), Mentimeter (22.5%), Nearpod (12.5%), Pear Deck (7.5%), and 3% of teachers have not tried any.

Infographic tools used were Canva (65%), Coggle (22.5%), Piktochart (17.5%), and 7.5% of teachers have used none.

Video-lessons proved very useful for remote learning and teachers spent hours making them using Kinemaster (47.5%), Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) Studio (20%), YouCut Video Editor (12.5%), In Shot Video Editor (7.5%). In fact, the teachers found the Apps/Tools useful as students were enthusiastic in submitting assignments and activities through videos. It is worth noting that a teacher reflected saying Tic Tok videos have been replaced by videos connected [to lessons](#).



It is evident that teachers have used Video conferencing Services as Zoom Meet and Google Meet and others to connect virtually and employed Apps and Tools that could also promote asynchronous learning giving the students to learn at their own pace. Many student-engagement platforms to motivate and increase student participation and interaction like Kahoot, Edmodo, Nearpod, Pear Deck have been introduced to students. Brainstorming tools and Apps like Coggle, mi Mind have been used to help student structure their ideas for Vocabulary, Grammar, Comprehension,

discourses and other language elements and aspects. It is obvious that teachers have handled the crisis on a war footing and have learnt to make use of the online and ICT tools.

Learning Zones

A reflective teacher is a lifelong learner. Teachers registered for both open and paid courses. The teachers acknowledged the contribution of NCERT, SCERT, SWAYAM Portal, RIE SI, CIET, SIET, DIET in helping teachers to upskill themselves. RELO India, OPEN GOCs and MOOCs, CANVAS NETWORK, Am-English Live Series, British Council, Future Learn, Cambridge Programs, CENTA, also was mentioned for the timely guidance given to teachers through Facebook and Learning Managing Systems.

English Language Associations like ELTAI, ELTA Telangana and Corporates like TISS, IT for Change, various Universities and Colleges that came out with webinars, faculty development programs greatly enhanced the skill sets among the teachers and the teachers reflected that there has been a steep learning curve during the pandemic.

Impact of Learning the Skillsets

The knowledge and the newfound learning of teachers were to be transferred to students. It was reflected that this was a challenge as the parents in their context had little technical knowledge about downloading Zoom or connecting to Google Classroom. Repeated calls and instructions were given to both parents and students. Sometime a support from a person in the neighbourhood was called for to assist the



students to connect to online classes. Teachers reflected that taking all precautions, they visited the homes of students to help them get acquainted to Apps and tools to connect, access material and assignments and to turn in their assignments (e.g. <https://padlet.com/drneelamlfvm/mutgaiirtw1d5iox>).

Access to mobile and erratic connectivity issue made teachers to post material, assignment through WhatsApp and teachers got very liberal about the students' submission of assignment at a relatively slower pace. Sometimes handouts were distributed to those who lacked devices. The teachers reflected that this was a 24/7 job as students approached for help and guidance at any hour as a single mobile at home had to be used by the siblings and the family members. Keeping note of this aspect, the teachers reflected that the hours of instruction and guidance extended beyond the regular working hours of the school.

The reflections provided by the teachers revealed that through Zoom Meet or Google Meet the teachers could easily share websites and YouTube videos to children as resources to support the content of their lesson. Ted Ed Students were introduced to a vast fund of resources available in the net and many language games and apps helped in developing the LSRW skills among students and learning proved to be student-engaging and fun. Above all, they were exposed through internet to a global community. The resources used by teachers were shared. (Shared after "References" section). The teachers agreed that those having access had also benefitted from the digital access and slowly got accustomed to virtual classes and virtual interaction with teachers and friends for group activities also materialized. Children's Day, Republic Day (<https://youtu.be/oqtAPr-UoZI>) were also celebrated virtually and shared in Facebook and the calendar of events have been celebrated. Few teachers have shared that they have their own Facebook book sites, YouTube channels, blogs for disseminating their knowledge and lessons. The teachers opined that if learning is made fun and has relevance to their needs and interests and matches their multiple intelligence, students would be drawn to online learning as well. And the digitalization that is forced upon them in the current context can prove to be beneficial to the teacher and the taught as technology-enabled education and classrooms can work wonders under a skilled teacher who facilitates the learning as suited to the students.

Way Forward

An attempt has been made this paper to pool the reflections of teachers who

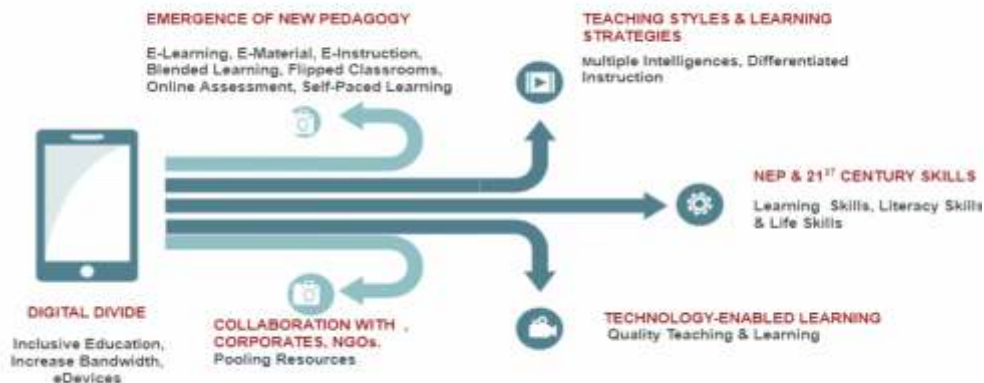
self-observed and self-evaluated about their practices. Ghaye (2007) opines, “Maybe reflective practices offer us a way of trying to make sense of the uncertainty in our workplaces and the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos...” The teachers in the present chaos and crisis have braved themselves and used the ICT platforms and tools, which many confess had been experimental and the trans formational. The evolvment has just initiated and it is hoped by teachers to enhance on the skill sets gained as recommended by the NEP 2020. For this to take shape, teachers suggested trainings and workshops is in the immediate future be arranged for teachers so they may use ICT tools discretely and judiciously. Awareness to administrators and teachers on Free and Open source software need to be given. Teachers as a potential human resource have come out with lessons on TSAT and DD and accomplished QR Coded textbooks and lesson, and the latest being interactive worksheets. Up skilling teachers to in turn hone students is a step in the right direction. Above all, technology can assist and help continue with education in case of emergencies.

The NEP's recommendation on the use of technology was looked forward to welcomed by the teachers in Education Planning, Teaching, Learning and in assessment. They envisage a digitalized educational society and gearing students to online mode at the High School would ease their way to taking up online courses and examinations in their Higher Education.

When normalcy prevails and when in person teaching and learning in traditional classrooms becomes the norm, it is reflected that the current emergence of new pedagogy should be continued along with the traditional mode of teaching and a blended learning, flipped learning can prove to be added benefits. The benefits would assume relevance and significance if it reaches all the student community and the dream of inclusive and equitable education becomes a reality. Even among those enrolled in schools, the digital divide and erratic connectivity has resulted low attendance of students to online classes.

Digitally equipping schools, teachers and students was strongly voiced out by teachers and expressed that the long hours spent in learning for the past fifteen months could be productive only with language labs and technology-enabled teaching and learning. Quality in educations can be brought through technology. For good infrastructure and maintenance Governing Bodies and Corporates as part of CSR and NGOs could come forward and invest as the future of India is shaped in the classrooms and in the hands of proficient, skilled and committed teachers

Reflections: The Current; The Future



Limitations

The paper is limited to the reflections of forty teachers across the districts of Telangana including the presenters and is based on personal experiences and observations which could be both subjective or objective. Nevertheless, the reflections and voices of teacher matter as they are at the heart of education facilitating pupils. As agents of change, teachers are a force to reckon with and policy makers could benefit from their reflections.

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https://education.stateuniversity.com /pages/1914/Dewey-John-1859-1952.html#ixzz71SmOpYEv](https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1914/Dewey-John-1859-1952.html#ixzz71SmOpYEv)

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NEP: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

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Waks, L.J. (1999). Reflective practice in the design studio and teacher education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 31/3: 303-316 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337992327_How_does_Reflection_Help_Teachers_to_Become_Effective_Teachershttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/233054009_Making_sense_of_reflection_A_comparison_of_beginning_and_experienced_teachers'_perceptions_of_reflection_for_practice

Appendix

Resources shared by teachers used in online teaching to enhance language skills

<https://www.google.co.kr/imghp>

<https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/>

<https://www.teach-this.com/images/resources/what-makes-this-sound.pdf>

<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/word-games/>

<https://www.teach-this.com/esl-games>

<https://www.educandy.com/>

<https://www.vocabulary.com/>

<https://www.classcard.net/Login?redirect=/Main>

<https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/>

<https://www.wordclouds.com/>

<https://www.wordhippo.com/>

<https://www.foboko.com/>

<https://www.literacyplanet.com/>

<https://freckle.com/en-us/>

<https://www.superteacherworksheets.com/generator-word-search.html>

<https://www.getepic.com/>

<http://lingro.com/>

Stories

<https://literacycloud.org/>

<https://reader.letsreadasia.org/>

<https://storylineonline.net/>

English Language Teaching During Pandemic Times: Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

As a consequence of the COVID -19 pandemic the education systems around the world like other socio - economic systems are disrupted. On the other hand, the pandemic has pushed the world to stimulate and accelerate innovation in the teaching learning process. Though the educational institutions are closed, it is necessary to maintain the learning activities effectively with all the possible methods. E-learning is comparatively difficult in English Language Teaching. Absence of face to face interaction is a challenge for the teacher and the learner to develop the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The aim of this paper is to identify student's perspective in English language teaching during the time of pandemic. This paper uses two major research strategies: (1) a quantitative analysis of data on online learning (2) two case studies. Data have been collected from interviews, newspapers and published reports. While analyzing students' perspective on online teaching and e-learning, the researcher has found many benefits and down sides as well. To teach grammar and structure using E-learning platforms, teacher should know strategies to keep the students' interest in the topic. This research also attempts to analyze whether the students have adapted to E-learning, considering the obstacles in the process of learning, focusing on their acquisition of language skill, availability and use of technical devices and assessment issues.

Keywords

E-learning platforms, language skills, English language teaching, virtual classrooms, assessment, innovation

Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic has opened a new era of learning in the global

education system. Schools and universities are forced to stop face to face classes. The closure of educational institutions has accelerated digital learning strategies. As the health crisis unfolded, massive efforts were made by many countries in a short time. In this regard, lock down and social distancing measures were taken by many governments to suppress the transmission of the virus. Educators and learners across the globe were unprepared to adapt to the virtual learning methodologies. Educators and learners are trying their best to mitigate the devastating learning crisis during the pandemic. E-learning is an innovative approach and an alternative for ensuring the learning continuity.

E-learning offers student centeredness and involves synchronous and asynchronous methods. It also facilitates the distribution of content to a large number of learners at the same time using technologies. Educational institutions can save on infra structural and overhead expenditure. In spite of some challenges brought by the educators and learners, E-learning might enhance learning continuity during the COVID-19 crisis. The last one year was extremely stressful from the perspective of students and parents. Repeated postponement and cancellation of exams added to the fear of getting infected by the virus. Prolonged exposure to the mobile screens or computer screens leads to anxiety, depression and other health issues. Parents are expected to work from home and teach their children. Female teachers had to continue teaching while coping with increased workloads and family responsibilities.

English language teaching using E-learning platforms is a challenge for the educators and the learners, especially to teach the four skills, i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading and writing. Many students living in villages of India are bereft of internet connectivity and essential technologies for E-learning. There is a pressing need to innovate and implement new strategies for education and assessment. The limited exposure of teachers to online teaching is also a challenge. Despite all the challenges posed to teachers and students, the institutions, including schools, colleges and universities in India have started digital classes on various subjects comprising English language.

As the key objectives the study aims to be acquainted with the perceptions of the students learning English through online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic and to obtain suggestions to enhance the quality of online teaching for UG students in India. In other words this study examines the way English language learning was affected during COVID-19 crisis and investigates student's view on the use of E-learning platforms. The researcher is also interested in identifying the obstacles that

students encountered while learning English language in virtual classrooms.

Research Methodology

The present study found it suitable to use a collective case study approach to know how the students feel about learning English language online. The methodology of the study is the a mixed one having the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to obtain a better understanding of the research problem and complicated issues than any single method(Creswell &Plano Clark 2007)cited in(Molina –Zorin,2016)

The sample for this study includes 342 undergraduate students studying English as core course or as a subject of the syllabus, who are currently learning through online plat forms like Zoom, Google meet and Google classroom. Data was collected online. The questionnaire was sent as link on the WhatsApp groups of two colleges affiliated to the university of Calicut, through the Google forms application. The 342 participants in the study received information at the beginning of the questionnaire about the survey. in order to investigate students' perceptions regarding the ability of colleges to provide English language teaching through E-learning platforms in the context of COVID-19 crisis.

The researcher has used the exploratory method of data analysis that consists of the task of extracting important variables. The questionnaire aimed to explore data in terms of exploring new learning formats, internet connectivity, availability of devices, acquisition of language skills, digitalization of classes, obstacles being faced, advantages being enjoyed using virtual platforms, teacher-student interaction, learning atmosphere at home and maximizing the use of open materials to the fruitful implementation of E-learning. Accordingly, this research has utilized the exploratory data analysis method to demonstrate as well as distinguish numerical and percentage wise figures of the total population sample.

Findings and Discussion

52.6% students feel good about overall English language learning via virtual classrooms. Around 7.6 % out of them feel it excellent while 34.5% of students feel it average and 5.26% feel it so poor.

As to the troubles they face about internet network, 47% students say that they have a high speed internet connection at home. Whereas 47.66 % students are facing

network issues.

Majority of the participants (95.3%) have access to mobile/laptops for digital learning. Around 4.7% students are unable to pursue their education due to the lack of devices.

67.54% students opine that their teachers are helpful for learning English online.

53.8% of students have the habit of making a list of unfamiliar words in English and studying them at home. Whereas 46.2% are not all practicing it.

67.54% of the participants respond that their teachers are helpful for learning English in virtual classrooms.

67.54% students have a peaceful and comfortable atmosphere to learn at home. 14.91% students are dissatisfied and 15.2% of them are very satisfied. 2.34 % students are very dissatisfied.

62.87% students have the habit of memorizing example sentences in order to remember grammar points. 37.13 % of students replied negatively to it.

52.92% of students practice English watching YouTube videos. 23.39% of students use a textbook. 21.64 of students take English lesson and 2.05% of students are practicing English through club house discussions.

About interaction with peers and teachers 47.37% students responded rarely have a discussion with their teachers in English. 31.87 students say often and 7.6% students say every time and 13.16 % students never.

41.23% students are dissatisfied with their experience of learning from home as compared to learning from college. 31.58% students are satisfied. 25.44% students are very dissatisfied. 1.75% students are very satisfied.

55.85% students say that they are stressful to learn online during COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas 22.51% of students are not stressful. 15.79% of students are very stressful and 5.85 % students are relaxed.

81% of students translate a text mentally while reading it. 19.01 replied negatively.

54.09% of students are interested to attend English webinars, group discussions and personal classes.

36.26% of students pay attention to grammar when they write while 42.98 % rarely do it. 13.16 % of them do it every time. 7.6 % of students never pay attention to grammar when they write.

35.09% student often think what they are going to say before speaking it. 30.70% of students rarely think about it 26.9% do it every time while 7.31 % never do it.

Of the 342 students participating in the study, approximately 53% mention advantages of virtual learning during this pandemic, such as: classes can be attended from remote area, classes can be recorded, no transport hassle, students are able to attend class and continue learning even during this unparalleled COVID-19 crisis, they get live class link before the class. In terms of the benefits of online classes, about 34% of the respondents do not think online classes have any mentionable advantage.

Digital learning helps students by enabling them to think more broadly about the subject and it ensures that they don't get bored quickly during learning. But this strategy cannot work well if students do not have a high motivation to learn. For example, the teacher shares the video of a song in the WhatsApp group. Listening to the song repeatedly, writing words or lyrics that have been heard, matching the lyrics and finally learning to sing the song helps the students increase their vocabulary. The first step is listening to the song repeatedly. The teacher utilizes this strategy with the aim that students can enrich their vocabulary or lyrics of the song. Besides, this activity also measures the extent to which students learn to listen. The teacher gives instructions for students to choose a favorite song that may be used as an assignment, and then the students listen to it carefully once, twice, even up to three times until everything feels clear.

From the analysis that has been done, researcher can conclude that some strategies in teaching some skills in English are considered to be very helpful for teachers in teaching assisted with e-learning in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, making students not get bored easily and strategies that are used can also facilitate students in achieving their learning objectives.

Conclusion

Ensuring learning continuity during the time of Pandemic became a priority for governments across the globe. The COVID-19 crisis has stimulated innovation within the education sector. As WHO predicts the world might have to survive with the virus for years. A vast amount of research on related topics provides evidence that the interest in distance education which has become an international trend, is steadily increasing (Drone & Anderson 2016). Educators and learners across the Globe have no option other than grappling with this “new normal” virtual learning. Likewise, the learners and teachers of English language are in the same boat. Therefore, the findings of this research and the further ones are worth considering in terms of making online English language teaching more effective.

The findings of this study offer several recommendations for teachers, students and researchers. Many teachers lack the basic ICT skills. A teacher lecturing on Zoom in traditional method is not beneficial to the students. Teachers also have to adapt new method of teaching to enhance the learners' motivation to virtual learning. In the conditions of face-to-face learning, it is more difficult for a student to cheat or take a hint from classmates, while during a distance lesson, the teacher cannot fully control the process of writing tests (Watson & Sottile, 2010). Training programs for teachers need to be developed to help them adapt to the changes. Eventually, it will enable the students understand the content more and enjoy learning even through online platforms. This research can improve the quality and creativity of teachers in teaching English E-learning classes. Technical issues are the most difficult issues for the teachers and learners. Poor network, signal loss, lack of adequate digital devices remain the main problems regarding online learning. Educational institutions could create programs to meet these type of issues and thus facilitate education to all.

Domestic violence and child abuse are on the rise as the perpetrators are many a time at home or in the neighborhood which is a mental distraction and threat to the learners (Ravichandran & Shah 2020). The situation is particularly worrying for those who are more vulnerable on account of their fragile condition. Students have to rearrange their daily lives to adjust to a situation of confinement. Students have to be motivated for online classes.

In face to face classes teachers still managed to find methods to improve communication skills, critical thinking skills and presentation skills of the learners. While in online classes students lack ability to debate and express their opinion. It is known that most students admit that the lack of communication with the teacher is the

main difficulty in the distance study of English. Moreover, distance learning of English turned out to be more complicated than the traditional one (Zhang & Cui 2010). It is necessary to assign a number of practical tasks in order to improve their interaction and communication. The writer hopes that for future researchers who are interested in conducting similar research, it will contribute to understand students' perspectives in teaching English language in E-learning classes. Besides, hopefully, this research will provide inspiration and guidance for further researchers. Therefore, the results will be more profitable and be applied in a larger area.

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Teacher Innovations and Challenges: Impact on Language Teaching Incorporating Values and the Nuances of English Language

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“Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important.”

BILL GATES

Abstract

This paper attempts to examine the challenges dealing with the language skills incorporating values / principles of language / the subtle nuances of English language. The language teachers' challenge is to enable the learners to manipulate and practice specific features of language where values can also be incorporated, activating psychological and psycholinguistic process of learning.

Subtle nuances of English language help to show our unique personality and lets us choose who we want to be in English. In a classroom situation, nuances are a great way to create a very personal experience. Using different vocabulary and changing teachers' English and mannerisms in many ways can help the teacher connect with students. Here it is about the words the teacher says, the way she/he uses them, the tone and way in which it is delivered. Among other benefits, positive relationships develop due to the amount of student-teacher informal interaction, especially in the first few years of education. During pandemic, pedagogical adaptations have proven to be pivotal as the traditional lecturing in-person models do not translate to a remote learning environment. At this juncture, teachers need to be more creative and imaginative and should periodically upgrade themselves to suit to the 'new normal'. In 2020 the rapid move from classroom to online teaching has set many queries related to national education policies and theoretical grounds and premises. The pandemic has played a key role in how teachers divide their time between teaching and engaging with the students. It has highlighted the need for

'allocation of time' for student teacher interaction.

Language Teachers' Role is to Be More Resilient.

To reset 2020 with upgraded knowledge, skills and values and to overcome the herculean task of remote teaching learning, the teaching community should teach the sub-skills and widely adapt and advocate values/principles without losing the succulents of subtle nuances.

Background and Study

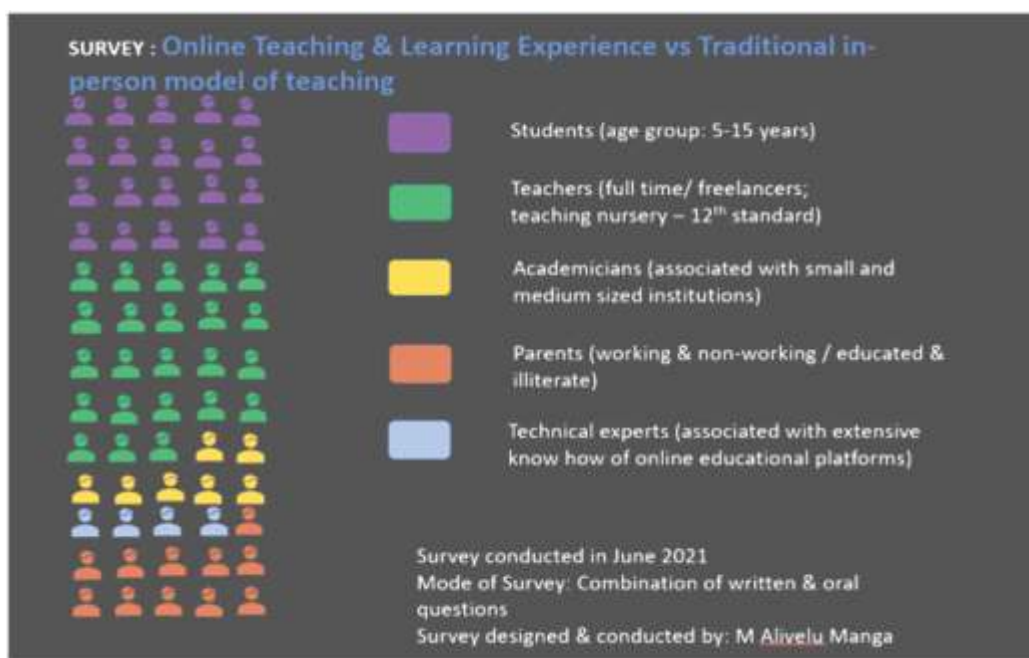
Globally researchers have been deliberating on two distinctive modes of educational learning system trying to show and prove which one is more effective and better - the traditional one or the online system. Besides this there are different arguments discussing that online is a beneficial learning system used to assess the overall teaching and learning components, while the others argue the traditional is more effective in this regard.

There is little research done with respect to understanding the language teachers' role in imparting values with language skills with online mode of teaching.

English teachers by the very nature of their course content, teach nuances. The languages that we learn and speak impact the way we think, the way we see the world and the way we live our lives. When students learn a second language, they learn more than just words. They learn about different cultures, about different ways of thinking and about how to accept and respect differences.

To understand the widening gap better, in June 2021, I designed and conducted an exclusive survey focusing on the 'Online Teaching and Learning Experience vs. Traditional In-person Model of Teaching'. The survey was rolled to a heterogeneous group of 100 people consisting of students, teachers, parents, academicians and technical experts.

The aim of the study is to evaluate whether there is a significant difference in performance between students learning online / in class in the context of 'Language teaching incorporating values':



Agamut of questions in the **survey questionnaire** covered important areas.

- Advantages of traditional Vs. online teaching and learning
- Level of student- teacher interaction and bonding
- Effect of English teacher's teaching style in classroom Vs. online
- Technical factors and ease of teacher-student adjustments
- Flexibility, Efficiency
- Perceptions of students and teachers
- Academic impact, etc.

Open-ended questions were also given to record opinions, ideas and feelings of the survey respondents.

Outcome of the Survey and Emerging Themes

The findings of survey showed that majority (70% of the survey respondents) of

students, parents, teachers and academicians agreed with **traditional way of language learning** with standpoint of holistic development, social and cultural influences. They also compared both the language learning opportunities with time and global perspective. Similarly, some portion of students (40% of the student group survey respondents) found the traditional learning most comprehensive and specific as compared to online learning.

Verbatim Report of Some of the Survey Respondents (focus here on teachers' perspectives to understand the scope to make improvements in the teaching pattern):

1. **Respondent – English Teacher:** “For the past 30 years my attitude when it comes to English Language teaching (ESL) for secondary classes is to take every student's weakness as a challenge, since every student has his/her own talent in terms of language learning as individuals. But online teaching made it a 'One Way Traffic'”
2. **Respondent – English Teacher:** “My way is to train my students on how to study, how to maintain focus, how to ask right questions but online teaching doesn't give much opportunity to the above mentioned. Students learn best through spoken language and not through written language. There is hardly any scope for these 'how' and 'why' online. I miss their questioning.
3. **Respondent – Parent who is also a language teacher:** “Online classes created a sense of isolation in my children, though the positive aspect is that they became more independent and active learners.
4. **Respondent – English Teacher:** “I'm associated with a Government school for girls. I prefer to switch to the mother tongue at times, to help the girls understand the English concept better. Over a period of time, the girls develop a bond with the teacher and open up to share any personal challenges and find solace and trust in the conversation with their teacher. These informal, sensitive interactions significantly reduced with no physical schools. If this continues, there would be a lot of stress in girls increasing school dropouts”
5. **Respondent – English Teacher:** “Online class preparation requires more time than classes at school, requires good time-management skills (no scope to extend the class time, if required. I see the students get distracted easily (than before). It is difficult to coordinate and plan a language-based activity with their

teachers. Exchanging notes and observations on student behaviour, performance between teachers has diminished with online school”

Key Emerging theme: Identification of Strengths became a herculean task (sub-skills of LSRW)

6. **Respondent – English Teacher:** “As a language teacher I love book reading and I want my students to read-read and read and develop in them a positive attitude and approach. I know that visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners at different level in different classes have different types of needs. So, I often change my testing patterns. For some students I prefer oral tests / Quiz / Multiple choice questions, while for some others role plays. For more than 50% both essay type and objective type of questions but while teaching on line I have many constraints. I am not able to focus on assessment. The worksheets that are meant for the online tests and assignments cannot cover all the sub-skills of the language. Hence evaluation becomes quite difficult”
7. **Respondent – Student:** “I used to get low scores in my school exercises before the pandemic. It is easy now to get scores since the assignments (done by someone unknown) are available online and can be easily copied”
8. **Respondent – Parent who is also a teacher:** “ADHD is starting to show in most of the kids even if they were normal earlier. The students are impatient, informal, highly distracted, seek short-cuts than working hard to memorise”
9. **Respondent – Academician:** “Advantage is that online classes reduced competition & off-task behaviour. Academic, physical and social competition between peers is reduced, as is the anxiety and preoccupation of having to compete and compare oneself to their peers. This is a big drift from the past”
10. **Respondent – Parent:** “Visual learning through TV/Internet is reducing communication between kids and the influence of language with different accents across the globe has very high influence on written and spoken English. My child is inclined to use American accent when speaking English. He gets confused in the class with some words & spellings. His teacher cannot easily figure this in the limited duration in online-class”

Key Emerging theme: Assessment and Evaluation online doesn't cover all sub-skills of the language

11. **Respondent – English Teacher:** “For me it is quite complicated to teach with technology because of social and contextual factors, while dealing with the sub skills and values / principles of languages. I struggle to keep a tab on each student and land up spending more time to ask them to switch off video than on the subject. The quality of learning & teaching is severely impacted”
12. **Respondent – Student:** “My brother is in VIII standard and I'm in III. Since we have only one smart phone, I skip my language classes since they are less important and give the phone to him for his classes”

Key Emerging theme: Technological Barriers and inconsistency in delivering training and access to technology.

As per the other teachers, their cognition levels involved their beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors and concepts of teaching, learning subject matter, material, among other properties.

Role of Language Teacher in Traditional Model of Teaching

School being the foundation of a student's life, **assemblies** are cultural rituals and help them gather a lot of energy to do well for the rest of the day at school. They are conducted with a complete and active participation of the students and the teachers. This develops a feeling of affiliation and being united.

Language teachers play a very important role every day from the minute the assembly schedule starts. For example, in Central Schools, (KVs) language teachers are assigned 'Morning Assembly' proceedings. While the school head girl/boy gives commands, confidence and leadership qualities are imbibed in the students. The imperative sentences taught by the language teacher in the class leads to those values. In the same manner by taking **pledge**, the entire school from I to XII standard learns the values of responsibility to become good citizens. While singing the national songs, patriotic feeling is inculcated. While making the students read the **'NEWS'** during morning assembly, ESL teachers' presence is indispensable. Pause, stress, intonation, pronunciation, etc. are taken care of. **Thought for the day**, inculcates thinking skills. **Wishing and greeting** friends and teachers inculcates respect to others. Practice of **dialogues or speech** extensively and during the **language-laboratory** proceedings ESL teachers inculcate values without any extra efforts. The teachers aim to say as little as possible for the students to be in control of what he/she needs to say, in English.

By embedding the **school values into teaching and learning opportunities**, bringing different sections of the school to work together and ensuring the values are made explicit through displays, a values-based culture can be created. Language teacher plays a central role here since the teaching here is far more than just the language. The focus is also on teaching children about diversity, tolerance, celebrating the differences, inclusion, tolerance, multilingualism, multiculturalism, etc. The impact is long term on each student.

A language teacher juggles effectively between being an observer, a mentor, a motivator, an analyst, an organiser, a negotiator and a consultant.

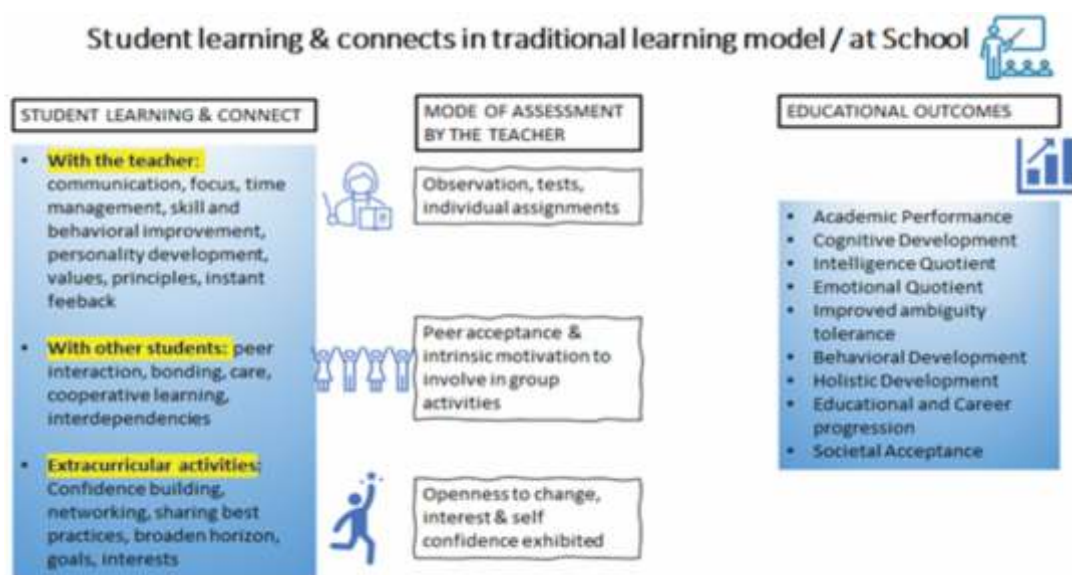
- **Builds** students self-confidence by having them make lists of their strengths of what they know or have accomplished so far in the course.
- **Stimulates** creativity in organising games, role plays, visual exercises
- **Inspires** when they win or achieve. Acts as challenger to make them compete with others.
- Acts as an **optimist** by showing positive vibes.
- As a **motivator** tries to showcase the values of students through the language skills
- Brutally honest during crucial time acts as an **accountability partner**.
- **Recognises** the diversity and complexity in the classroom (financial status, gender, culture, language abilities and interests)
- **Uses positive reinforcement** which teaches students respect for others, as well as respect for themselves.
- **Provides visual analogies** and metaphors to help with visual imagery. Get students to visualise using phrases, such as, "Imagine that you are in this situation", "Let's see what you would do."
- **Substitutes** words for colours and pictures
- **Uses blackboard effectively** to write key points/words in front of the

class to emphasise and provide visual cues.

- **Lowers inhibitions** by making them engaged in playing guessing and communication games, role plays and skits, songs, group works; laugh with the students, have them share fears in small groups.
- **Encourages risk taking** by praising students for their sincere efforts to try out language, use fluency exercises where errors are not corrected at that time, give outside of class assignments to speak or write.
- **Promotes co-operative learning.**
- **Encourages** students to use right brain processing
- **Helps inculcate** several language learning principles, while teaching reading, along with sub-skills which make the students adapt, comprehension values like author's attitude, understanding, arguments, techniques, connotations, denotations etc.
- Easily **exposes learners to language** produced for Real life skills/values/principles.**Creates opportunities** for learners' participation.
- **Increases** learners' motivation by using all the **encouraging words** when they try to show case their values and engages all types of learners at all levels of language and different sets of prior knowledge by using graded and authentic teaching material.
- **Promotes ambiguity tolerance**-helps students use their intuition, gets students to set their own goals and gets students make their mistakes work for them.
- **Exposes the students to the values** involved in formal behaviours, greetings, introductions, apologising, thanking, expressing likes and dislikes, polite and helpful behaviour, agreeing / disagreeing.
- **Initiates group discussions** wherein they learn to cooperate and go in for mutual respect. They help to grow decision making capacity.

- **Simple gestures** such as a pat on the back, nodding to build confidence when a slow bloomer is trying to improve his/her oral skills
- **Corrects behaviour and language** formally & informally.

These findings from the survey and also the content gathered by various academicians and organisations show that these values / principles / nuances are not being inculcated during online teaching and feedback is limited.



It is important to note here that this 'traditional' model is interactive and spontaneous. Depending on the student reaction and engagement, the language teacher **adjusts his/her teaching model/strategy** and **complexity of spoken language** (vocabulary/grammar). Here the students are **active learners and are not distracted by extrinsic factors** (technical challenges/home environment.)

“Effective learning in the classroom depends on the teacher's ability to maintain the interest that brought students to the course in the first place” (Erickson, 1978).

Not all students are motivated by the same values, needs and interests. Some students are motivated by the approval of others or by overcoming challenges. **The virtual classroom environment limits the teachers' ability to observe, reinforce, provide instant feedback and make necessary course corrections.**

Proposed Solutions and Conclusion

“We should aggressively work on opening schools” – **AIIMS CHIEF**

“Physical schools are useful because they help individuals to grow, there is interaction among students and other activities in school which help a lot in terms of development of children's character. We should try and work on strategies that schools can be opened” - Dr. **GULERIA**.

Classroom is the **Real Tangible Touchable** place to teach and learn. Teaching in the class room (traditional model) is still a training tool need for the future. When we speak about virtues / values, principles, sub skills or nuances, they are real. Virtual classroom cannot replace the traditional classroom in terms of all these since we need to work in a 'new normal' situation.

Online learning can be as good as or even better than in-person classroom learning. Research has shown that students in online learning have performed better than those receiving face-to-face instruction, however it **has to be done right and would need to improve exponentially**.

Some proposals that could help build a hybrid model (in the event of 'getting back to school full time' is not possible):

- Customize the curriculum as per the age group
- Redefine the teacher: student ratio per class (reduce to the extent possible)
- In-service training must include online teaching techniques, adequate technical training
- Strategic change in teaching model to incorporate inquiry-oriented teaching, social-emotional learning activities to help develop skills like self-advocacy and working in groups
- Simulated classroom experiences (e.g. drama)
- Encourage using grammar, vocabulary, intonation, pause, stress, in context
- Make authentic reading resources available

- Teach note-taking skills (instead of banking only on recordings)
- Awareness campaigns for parents, students and teachers

To overcome the current challenge, the key is not to get locked into one style of teaching, but to customize the teacher's style, skill, curriculum, mode and method to suit the need of the hour. This requires high involvement and dedicated focus of educational institutions, parent and teacher community to develop a high impact strategic model of ESL teaching with values. The future model needs to be agile, robust and sustainable.

“When we talk about 21st century pedagogy, we have to consider many things—the objectives of education, the curriculum, how assessment strategies work, the kind of technology infrastructure involved, and how leadership and policy facilitate attaining education goals.” - **Chris Dede, Harvard University**

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**Awareness On Current Issues Through Significance of Cartoons in
Developing Awareness on Covid-19 Pandemic, Moral Values and Gender Equity.
- Collaboration in Isolation**

Connecting Classrooms through Asynchronous Technology

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Abstract

The aim of this activity of connecting classrooms was to collaborate students with other school students in the teaching learning process, at the same time to integrate technology in classrooms, particularly in government schools to make them 21st century students.

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. Many countries have (rightly) decided to close schools, colleges and universities. In Telangana also there is the same situation and for Government school children there is no scope of online learning. But we as teachers, are trying to make continuity in our lifelong learning process, adapting Synchronous Teaching learning process and trying to utilise this Lockdown period for future Synchronous and Asynchronous classroom practices after Lockdown.

During this project firstly we connected with our students through Synchronous and Asynchronous mode, secondly collaborated with other school students by connecting our classrooms to improve language skills LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing), Communicative skills in collaboration through usage of technology with the help of contemporary issue of Pandemic Situation. We have connected with three different structured schools i.e. ZPHS Girls Narsampet, TSMS Pegadapally and TSMS Nellikudur. We planned for 8 weeks of Action plan and designed activities like introducing each other on an online collaborative wall Padlet. By using Cartoons, Internet, newspaper articles we worked on our project "Awareness on Current Issues Through Significance of Cartoons in Developing Awareness on Covid-19 Pandemic, Moral values and Gender Equity." Students were

encouraged to collect information through various sources, to analyse the data and to present their report through posters and Power Points in Zoom dissemination.

At the end of the project we came to know that if students are properly guided, they would engage themselves in proper learning and use of technology. Along with that they can improve their language skills, observation skills, problem solving skills, communication and collaborative skills. Children can learn a lot of things through current issues and integrate those things with language and technology.

Keywords

COVID-19 Pandemic, Lockdown, Home Quarantine, Synchronous, Zoom, Padlet, Kahoot, Webinars, Connecting Classrooms, Collaborating, Blended learning, Technology Integration

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. Many countries have (rightly) decided to close schools, colleges and universities. The crisis crystallises the dilemma policy makers are facing between closing schools (reducing contact and saving lives) and keeping them open (allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy). The severe short-term disruption is felt by many families around the world: home schooling is not only a massive shock to parents' productivity, but also to children's social life and learning. Teaching is moving online, on an untested and unprecedented scale. Student assessments are also moving online, with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty for everyone. Many assessments have simply been cancelled. Importantly, these interruptions will not just be a short-term issue, but can also have long-term consequences for the affected cohorts and are likely to increase inequality.

The global lockdown of education institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students' learning; disruptions in internal assessments; and the cancellation of public assessments for qualifications or their replacement by an inferior alternative. While institutes and enterprising teachers are trying to promote e-learning among their students, those belonging to underprivileged sections or living in far-flung areas are finding it difficult to keep up.

Most of India is at home these days amid a nationwide lockdown. And many are spending a lot of time online, largely in search of entertainment or education. But, just

like the real world, the virtual one too has class privileges.

So, while many universities and colleges are conducting online learning sessions, students from disadvantaged families or living in remote areas may not have access to Telegram, iCloud or, indeed, the internet even in the best of times.

In Telangana also there is the same situation and for Government school children there is no scope for online learning. But we as teachers, are trying to make continuity in our lifelong learning process, adapting Synchronous Teaching learning process and trying to utilise this Lockdown period for future Synchronous and Asynchronous classroom practices after Lockdown.

Technology has taken a vital role in connecting the world especially during this Pandemic. Learning and sharing also happens everywhere and classrooms are leaving their four walls and adopting Blended and Flipped modes. Technology helps us to continue for upcoming situations like Pandemics and Natural disasters without any intervention globally. Our project focussed on learning with technology in collaboration. We also concentrated on learning happening everywhere, not only in the closed classrooms but also from distant places.

About our project: In our project we connected our classroom with the classrooms of different districts and different types of schools. During our project we collaborated with the teachers of TSMS Pegadapally and Nellikudur and prepared a timeline to work together for about 8 weeks and we used an online collaboration tool Padlet for our project.

The main focus of our work had the following objective: 'Creating awareness about the pandemic, moral values, and gender equity using cartoons.'

Objectives of this project:

- Improving Language skills and presentation skills.
- Become a critical thinker and independent learner.
- Learning Collaboratively

Collaborating teachers and their background:

Teacher 1 is an English language teacher working in Telangana state government school. She has been teaching English since 2009. She works at ZPHS

Girls Narsampet in Warangal Rural district. She is a continuous learner and tech savvy, good at using technology but works in a low tech environment. Her students do not have proper internet facility at home and school and no proper computer lab even at school. But during this pandemic students are able to use mobiles and TVs a bit for their online classes. So she used this opportunity for the learning of her students. Average strength of her classes in schools is 40. Most of her students are from rural India. The medium of instruction in her school is English and Telugu. She had taken her class 10 students for this project. They are of 14 to 16 age group.

Teacher 2 works as PGT English at TSMS Pegadapally, Jagtial District, in the same state of Telangana. He involved his class 9 students in the project. Their syllabus is also the same and the students are also from rural backgrounds. But the school system is different from our regular schools and students have more exposure to language than other Government schools.

Teacher 3 works as TGT English at TSMS Nellikudur, Mahabubabad District, in the same state of Telangana. She involved her class 8 students in the project. Their syllabus is also the same and students are also from rural backgrounds. But the school system is different from our regular schools and students have more exposure to language than other Government schools.

All three teachers are from the same state, following the same syllabus and working in similar rural backgrounds, but from different grades, learning strategies and perspectives.

Subject: Imparting language skills and 21st century skills through Collaborative learning during Pandemic.

Planning meetings: We planned our project by organizing synchronous meetings through online conference tools like Zoom and Google Meet. In our online meetings we discussed our plan of action and prepared a timeline for 8 weeks. Since we are from the same neighbourhood, this helped us to conduct meetings as per our convenience.

Technological Tools Used

The diagram illustrates a variety of technological tools used in education, arranged in a circular pattern around a central 'Kahoot!' icon. The tools include:

- Kahoot!
- Padlet
- Google Slides
- Google Meet
- Google Drive
- Google Classroom
- Proxima
- Others (represented by icons for a video camera, a person, a document, and a building)

Zoom: Zoom is an online conference tool to organize synchronous meetings in real time. We used this tool to plan our collaborative project. To work with zoom we need to install app or access from the computer. We need to create an online meeting by selecting date and time and create an online meeting link. This link can be shared with our friends and colleagues to connect with them in real time. We can share our desktop during our conference so this feature helped schedule our plan well.

Mentoring: This project is an initiation of United States- India Educational

Foundational (USIEF) project in collaboration with Swechcha foundation. They mentored our project by organizing online meetings frequently and setting deadlines to complete our tasks on time. Here the mentor from School Assistant English, ZPHS Jangapally, Karimnagar district has taken the charge of this project and mentored as well as monitored the total project.

Project Notes:

General Overview

Students posted introductions on the Padlet and responded to other students with similar interests. Students continued to post and respond to fellow students for the better understanding of each other and to proceed with their main Theme.

Dates	Week	Description	Notes
September 28 - October 4, 2020	1	Self-Introduction of students on the padlet	Students will post a formal introduction with a picture of themselves (no last names) and respond to a student with similar interests.
October 5 - 11, 2020	2	Responding to connecting schools students	Students will post a formal introduction with a picture of themselves and respond to a student with similar interests.
October 12-18, 2020	3	First segment of observing cartoons to motivate and prepare the children towards the project	Students of Teacher 1 will pick a cartoon show related to our stories and post a short summary of the story with an image of the cartoon show. Students of Teacher 2 will respond with a cartoon show which is not related to other stories. Students for Teacher 3 will respond with the moral of those Cartoons.

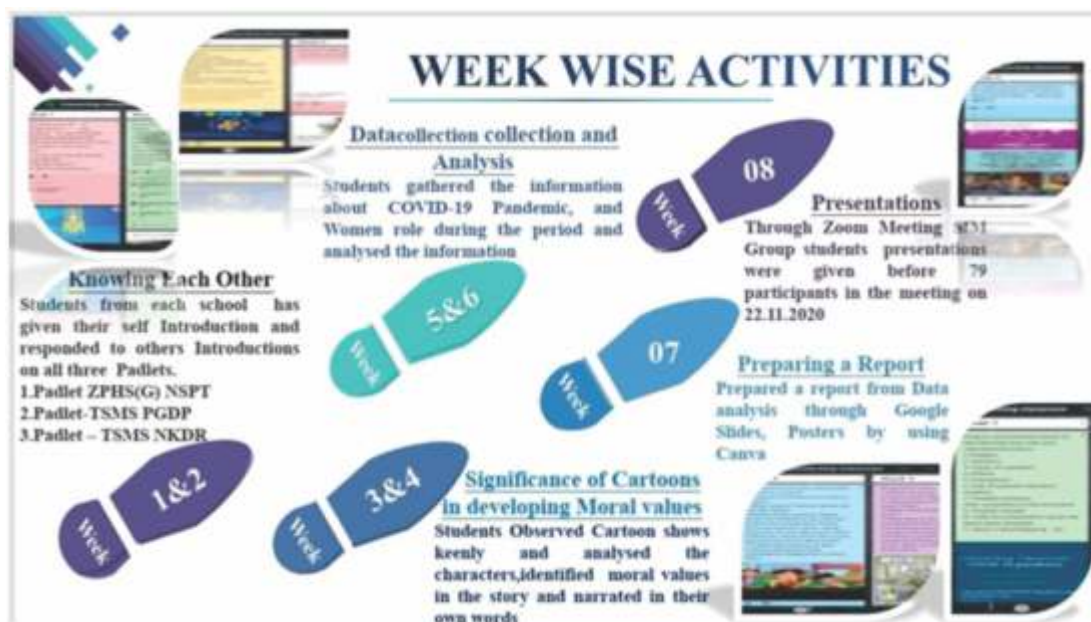
Dates	Week	Description	Notes
October 19-25, 2020	4	Analysing the cartoons, finding Moral values in the cartoon shows and presenting in their own way.	Students of Teacher 1 will pick an Indian cartoon and post a short summary of the story with an image of the show. Students of Teacher 2 will respond with a show with another country's story. Students of Teacher 3 will analyse both types of cartoons
October 26 - November 1, 2020	5	Main segment of our project awareness on current issues - present situation Covid-19 Problem solving COVID-19 Pandemic Identifying and analysing a problem	Students will research about COVID-19 Pandemic issue and prepare a report for presentation. Reading material: Articles on COVID-19. 1. https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov . 2. https://www.mygov.in/COVID-19 3. https://in.one.un.org/women-are-at-the-frontlines-of-the-battle-against-covid-19/
November 2- 8, 2020	6	1. Collecting data 2. Finding solutions Preparation of reports to solve the problem of COVID-19 Pandemic	Students will read and research the topic and prepare a presentation based on the following clues: 1. Problem 2. Statistics 3. Cause of a problem

Dates	Week	Description	Notes
			4. Effects 5. Precautions 6. Role of parents/ teachers/ students 7. Possible solutions
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Dates	Week	Description	Notes
			4. Effects 5. Precautions 6. Role of parents/ teachers/ students 7. Possible solutions
November 9-15, 2020	7	Preparing the report from the analysis	Students will present their reports and post their videos online to receive comments and Feedback
November 16-22, 2020	8	Presentations of Student's Reports	Students will present their reports and post their videos online to receive comments and Feedback

Teacher reflections:

We name our group as "**SIM**" (Sangeetha, Irshad Ali and Mamatha)



1st and 2nd week:

During first two weeks of our project, students introduced themselves by using the following clues:

1. In my school last year we did activities like.....
2. My best friend is.....
3. I like my friend because.....

They wrote about their school, activities they did in the school and about their best friends and their qualities and read the introductions posted by their friends and commented on it by finding the similarities and differences between their schools, activities and friends. How did they spend last year and how are they spending now?

We three teachers have taken care of the students in getting awareness of technology, using Padlet, Zoom and Google Meet etc.

These weeks have provided an opportunity to students to know each other and acquaint themselves with technology.

3rd Week and 4th Week:

During these weeks the students started writing summaries of their favourite Cartoon shows. While writing this, they have included preliminaries, summary, pictures etc....

1. Preliminaries: They wrote preliminaries like names of the comic characters, their way of action, their background etc. They used the internet to collect information.

2. Summary: After watching various Cartoon shows they have written a summary of differences and similarities between Different types of Cartoon shows and their morals in English. This activity provided an opportunity for the students to use the language in real context.

3. Pictures: They have collected the pictures of the Cartoons from newspapers to use them in their presentation. Some students even tried to draw the characters in the film if they didn't get the pictures. Children loved to do this activity of drawing and usage of colours which enhanced their presentation skills and creativity.

4. Reflected on the following questions: The last part of their presentation included the answers to the following reflective questions.

- Which character of the show do you like the most? Why?
- Whose performance do you like the most? Why?
- Write some dialogues you like the most. Why did you like them the most?
- Moral of the cartoon story?.... etc

Students participated actively and did their work well in advance.

This task made the students use the language in context. Most of them watched Cartoons regularly during Pandemic. The topic we have chosen is within their experiential orbit and provided an opportunity to read and use the language without much difficulty.

5th week and 6th week:

Students were encouraged to learn the skill of problem solving and analysing . We have taken up an issue of COVID-19 Pandemic which recently happened all over the world. Most of the students stayed at home during the lockdown for months together while their family members were away from daily activities. We asked the students to work in groups to learn collaboratively.

During 5th week they researched the topic by finding reports related to COVID-19 Pandemic by using the internet and collected different reports and their findings. Using this information they worked in groups and brain stormed the topic and organized the information on different slides like our PowerPoint on papers. They added their own ideas to solve the problem of viruses and global warming etc....

This task made them think about current situations around them and to make use of language and technology in day-to-day life in problem solving, critical and creative thinking.

7th week and 8th week:

During the 7th and 8th week we arranged Virtual meetings and shared our findings with each other. We exchanged our reports and received the suggestions and appreciation from each other.

At the end of our project we invited guests to watch the students' final presentations and to provide feedback to them. Due to the continuation of Covid-19 pandemic they watched our presentations and gave constructive feedback by writing comments in the Virtual meeting.



Conclusion

To conclude, the project has made a drastic change in our perception of language teaching learning strategies... for example initially we felt that offline mode is the only way to teach and when lockdown was announced, we were worried about student's learning but adapted and shifted to the new situations and teaching learning processes. Our students got memorable lifelong experience by interacting with students of other Districts and using technology for learning and communication. At the beginning of our project we thought that our students may not handle technology and collaborate with other students but it is not true, they did it well, worked hard and proved themselves.

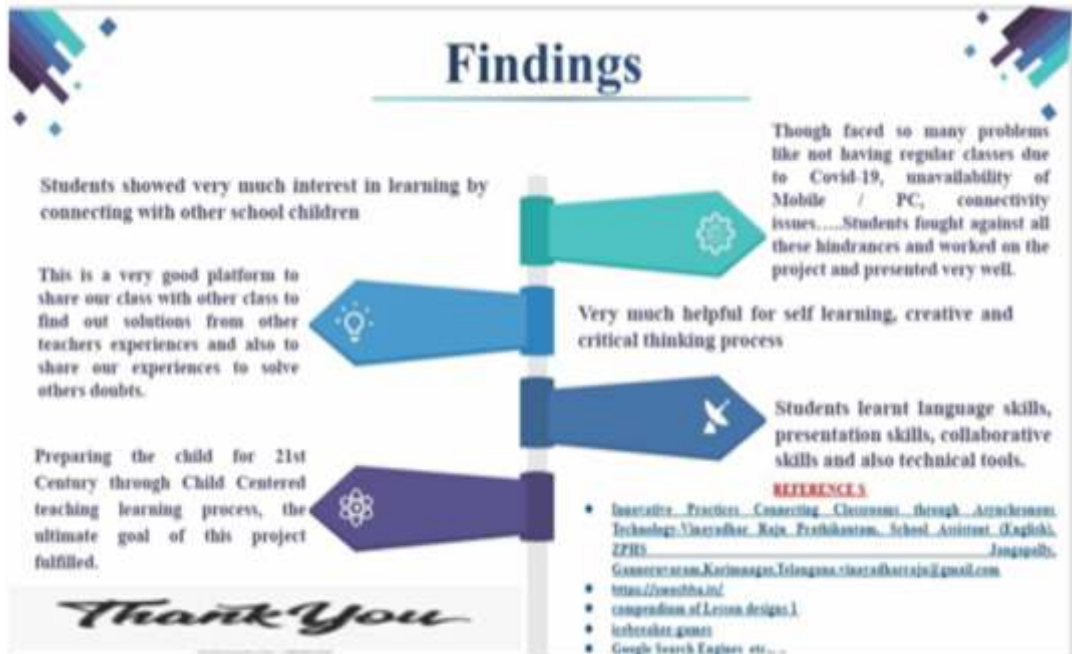
Apart from language skills we also learnt so many life skills like collaboration, time management, planning, and negotiation skills. We also started using new technologies like Padlet, Voki, Thing link, Google Classroom, Google docs, Google Slides and conference tools like zoom and Google Meet.

Finally, Learning can happen in Isolation. In Isolation also we can collaborate through technology. Proper use of technology can be integrated in language learning. Definitely learning happens when students are engaged in real life situations by

creating an urge to do something. To make 21st century students, teachers have to become 21st century teachers. Technology has changed the role of teacher from teaching to mentoring, facilitating, collaborating, event organizing, content developing and E-moderating.

“Great Teachers focus not on Compliance, but on connections and relationships”-

PJ Caposey in Education Week Teacher



Evidence :

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4. TSMS Nellikudur , Padlet <https://padlet.com/gsv09061983/dxgf0u81qww51mm6>

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7. Poster designed by students <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WnV0xZeAVoUQ9OQ9pqXOJi1srwp0WfpT/view?usp=drivesdk>
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'Do at Home Activity Package' for Retaining Language Skills Acquired by 4th and 5th Grade Students of Kerala

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Abstract

Across different categories of people, children have been highly affected during the lock down. They lost their good happy school days and are mentally stressed. They have begun to lose whatever they acquired in the second language classes. Hence, we need to ensure the language potential needed for the 4th grade students since they are moving to an elementary level. 5th grade students being the beginners also have to be given special consideration. The planning and the implementation of some activities will help keeping these children totally engaged. Activity packages related to digital devices help the children to ensure development of language skills. After the first imbalance created by the Covid - 19 Pandemic, from the 1st of May 2020 various types of activities were planned for the 4th grade and 5th grade students. 30 online home-based activities were prepared for the students of Kerala in order to retain the language skills acquired by them from the respective levels. Teachers were worried about not being able to support the students in online mode. The activities considered the existing pandemic situations focusing on holistic language development. It included word building activities, simple context-based conversations, short poems, drawing pictures, making masks, making puppets etc. It also included video recording of their home premises and describing the same to the teacher. The activities went on smoothly and the sharp responses of the children were sent to the telegram group by the teachers.

Keywords

Do at home, activity package, retaining language skills, 4th and 5th grade

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Covid-19 as a health pandemic. Schools at all levels across the world have temporarily shuttered their doors. Many have rapidly adopted distance learning practices in an effort to overcome the spread of the virus. The sudden global shift to online classes has been seismic - an unanticipated drastic change in learning. By shifting from learning solely offline to online, technology has broken down barriers to education and created new learning opportunities for thousands of children. Teachers and academic groups have started many programmes to make sure that learning never stops. As a result, education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. Some believe that the unplanned and rapid move to online learning with no training, insufficient bandwidth and little preparation – will result in poor user experience and may not be conducive to sustained growth. Others believe that a new hybrid model of education will emerge, with significant benefits. As a teacher educator, I was also trying to develop some activities for the elementary students which can be done from their home itself.

Along with the adults, children were also affected by the Corona pandemic. All were shut in their houses. Children enjoyed some of the educational videos and then slowly skipped to video games and other entertainment programmes. Children had completely lost the English language inputs from the classroom. The investigator was eager to know the language level of the 4th Grade students since they are in the last class of the primary level. In the same way the activities were given to 5th grade class students also, as they are the first batch of the elementary class. Teachers and parents were thinking deeply about the English language support to be given to the children.

The investigator prepared a vision paper for the happy learning of English language as ' Do @ home activities. Series of discussions were held to fix the situation. The teacher group was trying to unlock the language teaching in the lockdown period. It was actually the need of the hour. That is why the teachers joined the group and conducted the activities on their own. The study is entitled as, Develop a 'Do at home ' activity package for retaining language skills acquired by 4th and 5th grade students of Kerala.

Objectives

1. Ensuring English Language learning continuity of 4th and 5th grade students
2. Recognising how creative and comfortable learning environment can support the online language learning activity package
3. Identifying various strategies for making online activities creative and comfortable.
4. Inculcate natural interest and involvement in learning English language.

Methodology

Implementing an Online English Language Activity Package and analysing the qualitative reflections.

Sample: 120 students are considered as the sample from different schools. 60 students from 4th grade and 60 students from 5th grade are included.

Tools: Various tools were employed to study the impact and effectiveness of the programme. Specific tools for each objective were fixed.

1. Questionnaire for focus group discussion
2. Brain storming of content and methodology of learning materials
3. Activity package
4. Interim feedback
5. Programme Evaluation tool

Implementation of the activity package: Activity package was implemented to the students from 1/5/2020 to 30/5/20. One activity was given on alternative days both for the 4th Grade as well as 5th grade. One day was spared for each activity so that children could engage in the activity in their own pace.

Qualitative analysis of Activity package, process of implementation and learning evidences: The effectiveness of activity package implemented was analysed deeply. The pedagogic aspects of the activities, the acceptance of teachers, need for extended support was analysed for ensuring quality.

Action plan of the programme

Questionnaire for focus group discussion: In order to gather the English language learning status of children in 4th and 5th grade, a questionnaire was prepared and discussed in a focus group of ten teachers. The questionnaire included the areas, language learning gaps, selection of comfortable learning environment, online strategies, need of home-based activities and the effective role of parents. The collected data from the field was analysed.

Brain storming of content and methodology of learning materials: Online meeting with a group of expert teachers including DIET faculty members, BRC trainers, cluster coordinators, District Resource Group members was organised. The content and context for the activities, Various strategies for implementation were discussed. The mode of receiving and giving of learning materials were also fixed. The available online resources such as Telegram, YouTube, and Facebook were added for implementing the activity package.

Activity package: Based on the discussion from the focus group, the activities were discussed to develop English language skills of the children. The activities were prepared to give exposure to listening, speaking, reading and writing. All activities were selected from their life situations. The input was categorised to video, audio, reading text and interaction. The activities were given to children of 4th and 5th grade students through teachers on alternate days. 15 activities for each grade were fixed.

Interim feedback: A google form was prepared for receiving feedback of the activities after 10 days (after 5 activities). Discussion was done with the responses. Creative suggestions were added by the teachers. Space was given for the field teachers to design their own strategy for making the activity more child friendly.

Programme Evaluation tool: The programme was evaluated with a questionnaire for assessing the improvement in the children. Sample activity evidence was also used for the evaluation from different students.

The prepared activity package was implemented on the first of May, 2020. The activities were fixed by giving weightage to each language skill. 15 activities were prepared and presented to the group on alternate days.

Activity package for 5th grade students

No	Name of Activity	Language skills focussed	Nature of activity/ Discourses	Learning evidences
1	My family	Listening Writing	Taking a snap of the family members and writing a description	A family photo with a description of family members
2	Corona Virus	Listening Writing Speaking	Making the model of Corona virus with low-cost material and preparing a dialogue box.	Model of Coronavirus ; Shows the hatred towards Corona by writing dialogue in the dialogue box.
3	Little poem	Listening Reading Writing	Complete the poem	Children add more lines to the given poem related to the context
4	Let's sing a song	Listening Writing Reading	Children listen to the song -Write down the lines -Read the lines along with the song -Sing the song for the teachers and parents	Enjoy the song and sing the song with relevant actions
5	Nature walk	Writing Reading	Listens to the interaction - Conducting nature walk and collecting as many things as they can.	They are able to read the collected things and prepare a note on nature walk
6	Lock down game	Listening Writing	Video listening and listing out the games and trying to describe the games.	Describing a game played during lock down days
7	Ammu's Puppy	Listening Writing	Video listening and comprehending the story	Write down the conversation between Ammu and her father

8	A picture story	Picture Reading Writing	Video listening and observing the picture reading	Story writing by expanding the events
9	The school garden	Listening Writing	Listens to the video with instruction	Children draw the picture of their school garden and write few sentences about their garden
10	The News	Listening Reading Writing	Follow the instruction in the video leading to a written work	Prepares news of their home and read the live news
11	The tree of Goodness	Writing Speaking	Children will be listing out the persons they know They will be trying to find out good qualities in them Collecting information they prepare Tree of goodness.	Interacting with family members and preparing a Tree of goodness.
12	Fishing with my grandpa	Listening Writing	Children enjoy listening to the video and write down how they enjoy time with their grandpa	Description of happy moments with grandpa.
13	Mouse and the pencil	Picture Reading	Children enjoy the pictures Connects the events Write a small story for the picture	Picture reading and preparing a small story based on the pictures.
14	Talking Toys	Listening Reading	Listening to the instructions Observe the video Preparing a description of the toys	Children listen to the picture video and describe each toy
15	Naughty little princess	Listening Reading	Listening to the instruction Watch the video again and again Preparing dialogues for the scenes	Children observe the video keenly and prepare dialogues for the three scenes.

Activity package for 4th grade students

No	Activity Name	Skills focussed	Nature of activity	Learning evidence
1	Siji's Covid Days	Reading Writing	Narrative presentation Pictures given in the video	Listens and comprehends the story and writes down a description about the covid school days.
2	The lock down scenes	Reading Writing	Observe the Lock down scenes. Sequencing of the pictures. Preparing a description	Description of lock down scenes.
3	Mee too	Writing Reading	Video with visuals	Speech by appreciating the health workers
4	Lock down Video	Listening Writing	Comprehend video of UNICEF and follow instructions and write down the lock down activities.	Describing one's own lock down activities
5	Shall we make a dish?	Reading Writing	Listens to the narration They will be able to collect new words for expressing their ideas by interacting with their mother	Write up on how Sambar is prepared.
6	A friend	Listening Reading Writing	Video interaction For conversation. Children prepare conversation for the context	Conversation between Melvin and Siji
7	A dream school	Listening Writing Reading	Video with interaction leading to imagining a dream school	Listens to the video and follows instructions - Prepares the description about dream school.

8	A memorable day	Listening Writing	Video and interaction leading to write down the diary	Listens to the video and prepares a diary
9	A Phone call	Listening Writing	Video Interaction helping to prepare conversation	Writes the conversation between Melwin and her Dad
10	The little Cooks	Speaking Writing	Video with interaction leading to write the recipe of the favorite dish. Prepare the list of things needed in Kitchen by interacting with their mother	Writes a recipe of a dish and makes presentation of the recipe
11	The first rain	Listening Writing	Listening to the video children will be writing the next part of the narrative	Narrative completion
12	A fever	Listening Reading Writing	Video-Interaction for ensuring comprehension the audio and write down the conversation	Preparing conversation between Siji's parents with Asha worker
13	A poem	Listening Reading Writing	Children listen to the interaction in the video. Children write down the lines. Find out a rhythm for the poem and sing it well	Writes down the lines Reads the poem and sings it rhythmically
14	An email	Listening Writing	Children listen to the input given in the video and write down an email letter	Listening to the input for context and preparing an email to Melwin
15	Back to home	Listening Writing	Children listen to the narrative and prepare a story	Children listen to the narrative and complete the story

This is how the activities were given to the children of 4th and 5th grade. The activities were mainly based on a video prepared by the investigator. It contained interaction related to some situations. The children were involved in the activities since they were able to do the activities with the help of their teacher at home. All the videos had a small listening input. With the help of ICT each audio was transformed to videos with suitable pictures which helped the children for better comprehension.

A telegram group for teachers was formed and around 155 teachers joined in it. Among the teachers 30 teachers were willing to lead and support the students continuously for the implementation of the activity package. This teacher group was used for receiving feedback from the parents, teachers as well as students. The number students was limited to 120. In the total sample, 60 students from 4th grade and 60 students from 5th grade. Each teacher gave the learning evidence of four students. Two for 4th grade and two for 5th grade. The prepared activities were sent to the telegram group and the teachers forwarded the same to the class group. The responses for each activity was received from the field which was given on alternate days both for the 4th and 5th grade students.

Programme Evaluation

The programme was evaluated in two phases. An interim evaluation after five activities (10 days) and an overall evaluation after the completion of the package. The first Programme was to collect the responses of the students and to know the functioning of the activity package in the online platform. It was done by using feedback forms. The overall programme was evaluated by giving a Google form to the students through their teachers and by collecting the responses directly. Children were excited with the activities. They drew pictures, wrote discourses, they themselves took videos and audios and sent them to the class group. The selected teachers kept a digital portfolio of all the responses as learning evidence. These digital portfolios were handed over to the investigator for programme evaluation. These digital evidences were used for specific analysis to know the qualitative impact of the activity package.

Findings

After the overall evaluation of the programme the investigator realized the need and effectiveness of such 'Do at home' activity package. The findings of the programme show a qualitative progress of the students in English language learning.

1. Through the activity package the language learning continuity was ensured in

4th and 5th grade students.

2. The online strategies ensuring a creative and comfortable language environment enhanced language acquisition of children. The 'Do at home' activities in online mode enhanced language learning of children to a great extent. They felt free and enjoyed learning English at home.
3. Activity oriented and experiential mode of online interaction engaged the children creatively. Various online strategies (nature walk, telephonic conversation, singing small poems rhythmically, puppetry, dialoguing, photo shoot) helped the children for language acquisition
4. Blending technology into activities enhanced language acquisition of the children. The children were curious to take their video, audio and they used language needed for each situation naturally. Since children could easily handle all digital forms they learnt the language according to their will.
5. Children were interested in doing systematic, innovative online activities. They expressed their ideas differently in online mode. The timely feedback encouraged children to be involved in the activity package. Instant feedback from the teacher helped children for self-assessment.

Discussions and Challenges

The school was closed due to the Corona Pandemic all of a sudden. The students were not evaluated as we couldn't implement any evaluation tool. Teachers only had a vague idea about the language achievement level of the students. Here the investigator considers the 4th grade and 5th grade students for the programme in order to give creative support for the children. Being the last level of the primary class, the 4th grade students should be given additional support for developing language skills. Similarly this year's 5th grade students are expected to have an optimum language skill for entering to the elementary level schooling. The implemented activity package ensured a platform for developing the needed language skills in 4th and 5th grade students.

Lock down period created a number of digital explosion. Children, teachers and parents forwarded whichever they liked. But children took the digital form of worksheets or activities as their own. More than that, whatever they gained was in their mother tongue. The exposure to the second language reduced enormously and children began to drift from the second language learning. Teachers were sincerely in need of some activities to continue their second language usage.

The activity package includes 15 activities for 4th grade and 15 activities for 5th grade students. All the instructions were given as a small video. Each day the activity would be uploaded to the Telegram group and teachers would forward the same to the class group. The activities were designed to be done from their home premises. So, the children felt comfortable. While listening to the video they would get the visual image of the narration and it helped them to know more about the language usage. Most of the children interacted with their parents, friends and teachers in English. They recorded their performances and sent them to the group. Teachers could see the interest and enthusiasm of children for completing the works. One important factor is, children were taking more responsible roles in their language learning because they received instant feedback from the teacher. Unknowingly but in a natural way language learning occurred.

All the teachers commented that they had never tried these types of activities. According to their opinion, they learned the technique of conducting online activities for the children, how to interact and how to present narrative through online mode. Teachers became capable of preparing such activities as follow up programme.

The investigator had done qualitative analysis of the programme by implementing an interim evaluation tool and a final evaluation tool. The interim evaluation data pointed to the need of more interaction in the activities and asked to arrange according to the gradation. The activities were rearranged according to the suggestions including more simple interactions.

The students' learning evidence written-audio-video were the real evidence of the language learning. The activities were concentrating on spiralling of the language skills and according to the google form data it is clear that they are comprehending listening texts very easily. This gave them confidence and they became ready to accept new online learning method put forward by govt of Kerala through Victor's channel. This programme could keep a continuum in language learning

If we are analysing one activity for example, A song was given to them and they were asked to write down the lines of the song. Then they were asked to sing it rhythmically. Then the real song was recorded and given to the children. They even tried to present the song with action. 38 (31.7%) children even helped their little brothers or sisters to sing the song. It was really surprising and thrilling for the whole team.

Among the 120 students, 102 (85%) reached A grade level and the others B grade level in the 4th grade; whereas in the 5th grade, 70% got A grade while 30% got

B grade. Among the learning evidence in the performing discourses (skit, acting, speech, song) they reached 98%. The written products are still to be improved (70%) It is 100 % clear that all the children came to the next level of the skills through the activity package.

Qualitative analysis of the activities.

Table-1
Achievement level of 4th grade students

Skills	Included in the activity package	Total number of students who achieved the skills	% of achievement
Listening	11	54	90%
Reading	7	51	85%
Writing	13	42	70%
Speaking skill was ensured in all activities through the interaction between the teachers and students. For two activities (Making of Corona Virus and Tree of Goodness) students directly spoke to the teachers, took videos and sent to the investigator.			

Total number of students: 60

Table-2

Qualitative analysis based on discourses 4th Grade

Discourses	Context	Qualitative achievement	% of achievement
Conversation (2)	1.Between Ammu and her Dad	The recurrence of the discourse 'Conversation' helped children to include all the indicators (discourse markers, beginning, context based) in their conversation	39 (65%)
	2.Dialogue between the princesses		46 (76.7%)
Picture description (2)	1.Drawing the picture of School garden and describe	Picture description was done by 98% of the children effectively. The learning evidence from the children showed that it is up to the level of 4th Grade which includes a variety of sentences used in sequential order.	49 (81.7%)
	2.Picturing the tree of goodness and preparing a small description		58 (96.7%)
Description (6)	1.My family	The spiralling of different modes of description helped the children to prepare a description suitable to any context. They added a variety of sentences with a sequential order related to the context.	41 (68.3)%
	2.How to make a Coronavirus		45 (75%)
	3.Lock down games		50 (83.3%)
	4. Happy moments with grandpa		53 (88.3%)
	5.describing nature walk		55 (91.7 %)
	6.Describing the toys		58 (96.7 %)
Simple stories (2)	1. A picture story	Children faced difficulty in preparing simple stories	32 (53.3)%
	2.Mouse and the pencil		34 (56.7%)
News (1)	News at home	Children felt difficulty to prepare News	31 (51.7%)
Add more lines (2)	1.Little poem	Children loved to prepare poems on their own. The children enjoyed songs and tried to sing the poem effectively.	47 (78.3%)
	2.Let's sing a song		57 (95 %)

Though the children appeared in different grades all the children became comfortable and happy in using English language

Table-3

Achievement level of 5th Grade students

Skills	Included in the activity package	Total number of students who achieved the skills	% of achievement
Listening	10	57	95%
Reading	8	45	75%
Writing	15	42	70%
Speaking skill was ensured in all activities through the interaction between the teachers and students. For one activity children took video of interacting with their parents while preparing a dish (recipe of the dish and presentation). Students directly spoke to the teachers, videos were sent to the investigator periodically.			

Total number of students: 60

Table-4

Qualitative analysis based on discourses 5th Grade

Discourses	Context	Qualitative achievement	% of achievement
1. Narrative Writing (2)	1.Listening to the video and continuing the story	Narrative writing was not an easy activity for the children. However, they learned how to write very simple stories.	41 (68.3 %)
	2.Children listens the story and complete the story.		46 (76.7 %)
2. Description (6)	1.Siji's Covid days	Children prepared the description by including all the parameters needed for a description. They described it using a variety of sentences suitable for the context.	45 (75%)
	2.The lockdown scenes		40 (66.7%)
	3.Describing lockdown games	From context to context they showed a remarkable improvement	47 (78.3%)
	4.Preparing a dish by giving a description		50 (83.3%)
	5.Description of dream school	They were keeping rhythm for the poem. The lines added by the students were context related. But they have to learn how	52 (86.7%)
	6.Little Cooks-Write recipe		55 (91.7%)
3.Letter (1)	1.Melvi's father writes an email to Melvin	All of them conveyed the message suitable to the situation. The sentences used were properly sequenced. They were familiarized with different appropriate expressions.	43 (71.7%)
4.Poem (1)	1.Read the poem and sing rhythmically and add more lines to the poem	poem.	48 (80%)
5.Conversation (3)	1. Conversation between Melvin and Siji	Children prepared the conversation very easily but with the same pattern of sentences in the beginning. Later, children expressed ideas and feelings relevant to the context. Used well -formed expressions.	43 (71.7%)
	2.Coversation between Melwin and her Dad		49 (81.7%)
	3. Conversation between Siji's parents and Asha worker		52(86.7%)
6.Diary (1)	1.Preparing diary of a memorable day	Diary was a difficult discourse for the students. They were not able to use expression and personal reflections needed for a diary. But they were using well -formed sentences	40 (66.7%)
7. Speech (1)	1. Mee too. Speech by appreciating health workers	The Students knew the format of speech but were not able to substantiate ideas. The style of presen tation had to be improved. Couldn't add relevant questions with examples.	38 (63.3%)

The qualitative grading of 5th grade also gave a positive change. Description was given to the children in different contexts and it seemed that the children felt very easy to describe in any context. They were ready to perform with whatever script they have written without any hesitation. Children felt difficulty in slightly higher discourses such as speech, diary and story writing .

Limitations

Some limitations were also noted while implementing the programme.

1. The students who have minimum ICT devices were selected as part of the sample.
2. In the activity package all the skills couldn't be given equal weightage.
3. Speaking skill was given as interaction by the teachers which became subjective. The style and quality of interaction done by the teacher might have affected in evolving other discourses.
4. Conversation, Picture description, simple stories writing, news making, poems were considered as discourses in 4th grade activities. Speech, Diary, Conversation, Poem, letter, story writing and description were used for 5th grade activities. All the discourses familiarized in previous classes were not considered.

Conclusion

The main focus of the activities was that the children were enjoying a natural input through the video. They became adjusted to listen and comprehend the texts and excel in doing the activities mentioned. The parents also expressed their happiness on engaging children in these types of activities. They helped children in collecting the required materials. Provided moves, tabs and computers for the follow up activities.

These activities can be used as holiday packages or supplementary packages for English language acquisition. The teachers would be getting an opportunity to handle different activities which in turn would help them for professional development. With minute planning and expert discussions this 'Do @ home activities' could be implemented to the whole state or the district.

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Techniques to Enhance Listening Skills in ESL Classrooms

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Abstract

Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) are the four basic skills of language learning. Listening is the first and foremost skill and the poor acquisition of it, directly and indirectly affects the communicative aspect of a learner. Listening to a foreign language is a difficult task as it is largely limited to formal and English classrooms. Recent studies prove that when we communicate, we spend around 40-50% of our time listening, 25-30% speaking, 11-16% reading and only 9% writing. That means we spend half of the time listening. It is an active process though it is considered to be a passive skill. So, the question is whether we devote the required attention to listening exercises in our ESL classrooms or not. It is high time we took an active initiative to improve the listening skills (LS) of ESL learners.

As an initiative to improve the LS, a group of 45 ESL learners were selected from high school classes and guided listening tasks were given to them. Various listening materials like live news, text based short films, speeches of eminent speakers like Malala Yousafzai and video presentation of poems were shown to them through ICT. They were motivated to listen to pre-listening tasks. Their listening capacity was analyzed and recorded by asking simple questions and quizzes. The best listener of the team was rewarded with appreciation. It has also boosted up their confidence as a result, a healthy competition among the learners for better performance. Some of the very simple listening tasks attracted even the slow learners and they became active in the learning process.

The paper is an attempt to discuss some of the classroom ICT techniques that made remarkable changes in the LS of ESL learners.

Keywords

English as Second Language (ESL), Information Technology (ICT), Listening Skills (LS), Digital Learning, Different Stages of Listening

Introduction

Why is listening important in the digital mode of learning?

Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) are the four basic skills of language learning. Listening is the first and foremost skill and the poor acquisition of it, directly and indirectly affects the communicative aspect of a learner. We learn our native language through listening from our environment. But Listening to a foreign language is a difficult task as it is largely limited to formal and English classrooms. Research shows that when we communicate, we spend around 40-50% of our time listening, 25-30% speaking, 11-16% reading and only 9% writing. That means we spend half of the time listening. It is an active process though it is considered to be a passive skill. The other three skills are closely related to this prime skill. So the question is relevant whether we devote that much attention to listening exercises in our ESL classrooms? The evaluation system gives more emphasis to productive and active skills like speaking and writing, we concentrate more on it. So, it is high time we took an active initiative to improve the listening skills of ESL online learners. In this highly competitive world however academically they excel, if they are not able to express themselves effectively in the target language they have to face challenges to survive. To equip our learners to communicate confidently we must provide them ample listening practices. Learning in the new normal situation demands focus on listening skills.

Issue

More than 30% of ESL learners fail to recognize even familiar words as they fail to listen properly or are not trained to store what they have listened to. They are not confident to speak, read or to write on their own. Listening has no direct role in our evaluation scheme. Poor vocabulary, inability to group letters together to form words and segments, revealed the truth that the learners get minimal exposure in the target language and they could not even store it in their short-term memory. It is a surprise to learn that our short time memory is shorter for a second language. We remember well what we hear more. So it is a dire necessity to empower listening skills in ESL classrooms through various innovative digital techniques.

Objectives

- * understand and make simple requests related to their daily lives
- * understand a very short voice message

- * take notes on a short, informal presentation on a familiar topic
- * give a short, formal presentation
- * ability to understand the main points of a TV news broadcast or a television programme and retell them with reasonable accuracy
- * start, maintain, and end a conversation in a variety of contexts
- * participate and interact in academic activities
- * to be competent to express themselves confidently

Challenges in Listening

1. Speaker and the Situation

Listening is quite subjective in its scope. The personality of the speaker, voice modulations, presentation skills and individual differences affect a listener to a great extent. The situation also plays a significant role as we all know poor listening takes place in a distracted environment. The new normal period changed the familiar environment to a foreign one and it affected the psychological and social aspects of a learner. There is a tendency for learners to remain passive.

2. Poor Vocabulary of the Learner

Learners often find difficulties in identifying even common expressions. Their poor vocabulary makes the language difficult to grasp. They face problems in relating and sequencing ideas or events. The situation if unattended will lead to multiple learning problems.

3. Lack of Knowledge about the Topic

Familiar topics or areas of personal interests make learning engaging. Language is not a barrier if we are transacting some interesting topics. For example, when we transact sports related tasks, the learners will be eager to share their ideas. They are aware of the content, and are familiar with the rules and mannerisms well enough to respond actively. Lack of knowledge about the topic disturbs their listening.

4. Assessment Focuses Active Skills

Learning efficiency is assessed focusing on active skills. Listening issues will remain hidden and most of the time the child is grouped under slow learners if he is a slow listener.

5. Lack of Exposure in the Target Language

Listening opportunities are minimal in second language learning. Unless the learners are guided to listen more they won't take efforts to listen. When teaching learning switched on to online mode all of a sudden slow learners faced many challenges. At first, they are not interested about listening to a new platform where they feel everything is strange. They depend on their own teachers whose voice is friendly and acceptable to them. They need more care to accommodate themselves to the new changes. Active learners find it tough to listen in passive mode to the online video classes. They are quite spontaneous with their views and thoughts. They feel dejected, lacking opportunities to express and impress the teachers and peer groups.

The initiative taken by Kerala Government to start the academic year on digital mode on time attracted international fame. The classes are recorded using new technology and telecasted through Vickers Channel. At the outbreak of the pandemic when schools remained closed it was a blessing to switch on the learning platforms remaining safe at home. Introduction of Interbell worksheets under the leadership of DIET is another turning point in continuous assessment of learners, district wise. The intervention of teachers to make the learners friendly to these two platforms ensures learning is unlocked during lockdown.

To address these issues mentioned above and systematic execution of Vickers Classes and Interbell Worksheets, I designed a project 'Enjoy English' for the learners. The project was inaugurated on the Reading Day Celebration of the School in June 2020. The possibilities of the wide digital world are explored to them as the project was inaugurated online by Senior Scholars in the field of ELT and they shared their message to the learners. Learners got a chance to share the platform with dignified personalities.

The YouTube link of Reading Day Celebration and inauguration of Enjoy English Project.

[Inauguration of Enjoy English Project](#)

Listening Process (Pre-listening and Post Listening Tasks)

The tasks are divided into different stages to fulfil the needs and requirements of the individual learner. Selected presentations of the learners are compiled to a single video at regular intervals and uploaded in the YouTube channel. It has become a milestone because it has instilled great confidence and earned recognition among parents and peer groups.

Stage 1 Screening

Official Victors video classes are shared to the learners with pre listening tasks. Prepared audio and video modules on selected passages of the English Reader, Newspaper reports and discourses. These audio- visual materials are shared to them through WhatsApp class groups and Google classroom assignments. They are given proper guidance to listen as many times as required to grasp the content. The technique of Flipped Learning is employed here. The self-esteem of the learners is guarded by not highlighting the errors with comments and insinuations. This helps the learners to express themselves freely and engage themselves more actively in the listening processes. This eventually results in bettering their competence.

At regular intervals their listening is assessed through simple Google form quizzes and in Google meet interactive classes. At the initial stage questions are designed to instil confidence among the learners since they are quite new to the digital platform. They are thrilled when they are able to score the maximum. They are channeled to learning tracks quite automatically. Their scores and performance are recorded in the teacher's diary. There are significant changes in their performance and involvement.

[Sample of a Module for class X](#)

Stage 2 Listen & Recall

The learners are assigned numerous tasks related to various discourses in the text. Listen and report the live news or daily news. They are given audio of the sample conversations or thoughts of the speaker in a story and instructed to listen. They are asked to prepare an audio or video on similar topics and to share in class groups. Their presentations are returned to them with proper feedback and areas of correction required. They have to send their modified version within the specified time. These modified presentations are stored in Google Drive.

Stage 3 Listen and Record

At this stage the learners are categorised properly depending on their proficiency in learning. They are assigned suitable tasks where they can utilize their creativity and with the support of their family members they can submit different audio and video presentations. After modifications these audio and video are compiled to a single project to upload in the Enjoy English YouTube channel. Their parents and siblings take an active role in recording audio and video. These presentations stimulated not only listening but all four skills. Some of them emerged as stars in their

presentation skills. They record, listen, assess and re-record to submit their best entries.

Stage-4 Listen & Enact: Listen & Repeat

At this stage the learners are exposed to live news reports, conversations, using ICT and they are asked to enact the following tasks based on their listening.

1. Mimicry
2. Role Play
3. Mime
4. Tongue Twisters
5. Vocabulary
6. Proverbs

Final Stage – Listen & Recall

As an extended listening activity learners are trained to listen to speeches of eminent personalities and language quiz based on their listening. The best listener of the class is selected and appreciated. Speech of Malala is given to them as a module of listening. They listen with much attention and note down important points of the speech. They are asked to submit a quiz in Google Form after listening to the speech. Announcements, poems, news reports and authentic materials are introduced to them as mere listening tasks and they are asked to complete worksheets with missing words, complete the story, poems and many other interesting and creative tasks. The learners are enthusiastic in these activities and the instant scores and appreciations make them feel victorious. The compiled video is uploaded titled Interbell Learners Review.

Observations of National and International days are also organized on this platform. It serves as a chance of prosperity in adversity. Several children came forward with their creative talents in the language and won admiration and appreciation by all.

READING DAY @ GHSS CHITTUR

Vanamahotsava 2020 by Shanish N XF

Findings of the Project

- * The learners are able to concentrate on guided listening tasks
- * Learning becomes an enjoyable activity.
- * Boosts up their levels of confidence
- * They started communicating in English
- * As a scaffolding task every presentation served as a self-assessment tool for them. There arises a healthy competition among learners for better performance.
- * The slow learners became active in the classroom, as some of the simple tasks motivated their learning.
- * Learning skills got harnessed on the right track
- * Since listening required silence they maintained self-discipline and recorded the presentations in a noise free environment.
- * As a practising teacher I have also started exploring the scope of ICT tools and techniques and learned video and audio editing soft wares like Kdenlive, Audacity and various Google Apps.
- * Involvement of family ensured a proper engagement of learners with the devices to a certain extent. Often family became the first audience.

Transformation – A True Story

There are instances of notable progress in the performance of learners in general. Their interest in learning enabled them to concentrate more on studies. It is proved that recognition and appreciation can transform learners. One of the passive learners in class never took any initiative to present his responses in English classroom, but these listening tasks instilled hope in him and there was a tremendous change in his classroom behaviour. He became active when his name appeared in the top ten listeners and took initiative in the follow up activities. Significant changes occurred in his mannerisms and there was hope generated in his attitudes.

Suggested Activities

We can provide many innovative tasks using ICT to empower the listening skills such as Listen & identify the speaker from speeches, Conversations, Newspaper,

Listen & make assumptions from recorded programmes, Announcements, Professional interviews, News telecast, and online listening test can be given as a challenging listening module to enhance their listening skills to the optimum level.

Online listening tests <https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/listening>

Limitations

- * Lack of digital devices
- * Network problems in rural areas
- * Low-tech parents fail to monitor their children's online activities
- * Some of the learners find easy excuses to stay offline

Conclusion

The scope of language learning can be broadened to meet the present requirements of the day and make our learners highly competitive in their career opportunities. Enhancing listening skills proved tremendous changes in their creativity. It reflected in their better performance and contributed a great share in their overall development. This New Normal has definitely transformed every individual to an innovator.

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CPD in New Normal – Finding Positivity in Negativity

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Abstract

The Covid 19 pandemic redefined the nature of teaching, learning, teacher training and teachers' professional development. With limitations on face-to-face teacher training and the new demands of blended learning requiring up-skilling of teachers, policy makers were confronted with challenges on how to empower and enhance professional skills among the teacher community. The rapid transition from offline to online mode of teaching and learning has made teachers more inquisitive and technology lovers. Teachers themselves have made efforts to enhance their professional skills to teach online and such interventions have contributed much to their professional development.

The teachers of Kerala received plenty of opportunities to develop professionally during the pandemic period. The Kite Victers channel classes and the online teacher training programmes organized by various agencies offered a formal platform to them to reflect on their own practices and to sharpen their pedagogic skills. In addition, many self-motivated teachers explored many other informal resources to enhance their professional competence. This paper explores how the ESL teachers of Thirur district in Kerala made use of and benefitted from the opportunities for CPD during this unprecedented situation posed by Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords

CPD, new normal, ESL teachers, English language teaching, ICT skills

Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic has brought a major pedagogical shift in education across the world. The kind of skills that teachers require has exploded during these days. Teachers themselves have made efforts to enhance their professional skills to teach online and such interventions have contributed much to their professional development. This paper investigates how the primary level English language teachers in Kerala prepared themselves to respond to COVID19 by attending various

professional development courses. The investigator collected data from seventy-six primary level ESL teachers using a questionnaire. A focus group discussion and informal interactions were also consequently conducted among the teachers who are teaching English at the primary level in Thrissur district, Kerala. The results revealed a high level of engagement among these teachers in various professional development programmes during the New Normal. This helped to generate recommendations to improve second language teaching in primary level classes, providing more opportunities to the teachers to engage in professional development programmes primarily through the use of an online environment.

Background of the Study

It was a big challenge for the teachers to adapt to the new situation by familiarizing themselves to the emerging technology-driven pedagogy. They were compelled to teach online mode with a curriculum which is suitable and made for offline, face-to-face mode. They were confused and in panic, delimited by so many how's and what's! In Kerala, the government and the department of education took a remarkable decision by doing an interim arrangement for regular digital classes named First Bell, and are telecast through the Government owned KITE Victers channel under Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE). The teachers were instructed to give the students follow up activities based on these classes. Undeniably, it was a great support for the teachers to prepare themselves to cope with the new normal, but challenging too. Many teachers who had been tourists of the virtual environment were compelled to migrate, reinventing themselves to navigate within this new culture. Many teachers were intrinsically motivated and got themselves involved in several formal and informal modes of professional development activities.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are :

- to find out whether the primary level ESL teachers of Thrissur district in Kerala have been involved in any professional development programmes in the pandemic situation.
- to examine the perceptions of the primary school ESL teachers towards CPD programmes and various modes of professional development activities which they adopted during the new normal.
- to put forward certain recommendations for enhancing professional skills

among primary level ESL teachers, exploring the current virtual milieu.

Continuing Professional Development during Covid-19 pandemic

Teacher professional development is an ongoing process. It is a dynamic area of constant change. Fraser et al. (2007) suggested that “teacher's professional learning can be seen as the processes that result in specific changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or action of teachers” (p. 157). According to Reid's quadrants (Fraser et al., 2007), teacher's professional learning opportunities comprise two dimensions: formal-informal and planned-incidental. Formal opportunities are those explicitly established by an agent other than the teacher, whereas informal opportunities are sought and established by the teacher. On the other axis, planned opportunities may be formal or informal, whereas incidental opportunities are spontaneous and unpredictable.

Professional development in ordinary situation is occasionally institutionalized where a particular unit is responsible to organize professional development events and in some other cases, it is more self-initiated by the teachers themselves. In the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic period, there were no institutional arrangements for teacher professional development and teachers were on their own to find out the opportunities to learn to teach alternatively. Teachers had to make a shift from face-to-face teaching to virtual and online teaching. This critical situation brought a new wave in teaching, learning and professional development. It offered teachers various informal and incidental opportunities to develop professionally. Tracing and contacting students, establishing connection through the electronic modes, setting up classes in the virtual world, engaging students on tasks and activities, facilitating learning through virtual modes were some of the immediate steps all teachers had to learn within no time (Allen, Rowan & Singh, 2020). However, they used different coping strategies in order to stay aware of the situation and find ways of helping their students (Mac Intyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2020). As the pandemic surge continued rising and school closure prolonged, they began to search for opportunities to learn not only how to teach online but also the tools and resources for virtual pedagogy. Additionally, teachers were asking their friends, mentors, seniors and experts the ways to respond to COVID-19. So, in this context, professional development was more collaborative (Darling- Hammond and Hyler 2020) and self-regulated (Peel, 2020).

Methods of Data Collection & Analysis of Data

The researcher collected data through a questionnaire for teachers, Focus

Group Discussion (FGD) and informal interactions with the practicing teachers. The questionnaire was emailed to 100 teachers who are teaching English in the primary classes of Thrissur district in Kerala. Out of them, only 76 teachers returned the completed questionnaire. The responses in the question airewere used to understand the perception and participation of teachers on CPD programmes during the pandemic period. Later a Focus Group Discussion with 10 teachers who engaged in CPD programmes was conducted to analyse the effectiveness of the programmes they attended and also for understanding their further requirements. The major findings gathered from the data are given below.

Sensing the need for Professional Development

The teachers participated in the FGD, discussed the causes which motivated them to get engaged in different CPD programmes. In case of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no institutionalized teacher professional development programmes and teachers were on their own to find out the opportunities to learn to teach alternatively. Along with the unprecedented situations created by Covid-19 pandemic, the teachers of Kerala were motivated by the following matters as well.

- The KITE VICTERS First bell classes of Kerala introduced excellent models of English language teaching to the teachers which motivated the teachers. These classes also made the teachers more reflective and they were motivated to introspect and assess their own performance.
- As the classroom moved into the interiors of each house, the teachers became more conscious of their pedagogic skill. They became aware of the presence of parents and other family members of the students in the online classes. It led them to make changes and improvements in teacher talk and classroom process.
- The teachers wished to make their classes more interesting to attract students' attention. They searched, adopted and adapted novel online techniques and strategies to cater to the needs of their students.
- The teachers felt the need of improving their skills and involved in self-initiated CPD activities.

Engagement in CPD Programmes

The results of the data collected through the questionnaire show that 98.7% of teachers faced the need for improving their skills to teach English in the

present pandemic situation. As per the responses received from the teachers, they attended the following kinds of professional development programmes.

- Online teacher training programmes organized by government agencies (SCERT, DIET, DCE, KITE, RIE etc.)
- Online teacher development programmes organized by non-government agencies (ELTAI, ELTIF etc.)
- Online Certificate programmes (Coursera, ...)
- Professional development programmes organized by teacher communities.

The data (Figure 1) shows that out of seventy six teachers, sixty six teachers (86.8%) participated in the online in-service teacher training programmes organized by government agencies. Ten teachers (13.2%) took part in teacher development programmes organized by non- government agencies and seven teachers (9.2%) enrolled in online certification courses offered by different universities. Fifty (65.8%) teachers attended the professional development programmes conducted by online teacher communities. The initiations taken by the teacher communities to conduct professional development programmes during the pandemic situation and the participation of teachers in it shows how teachers necessitated and experienced the need for improving their professional skills.

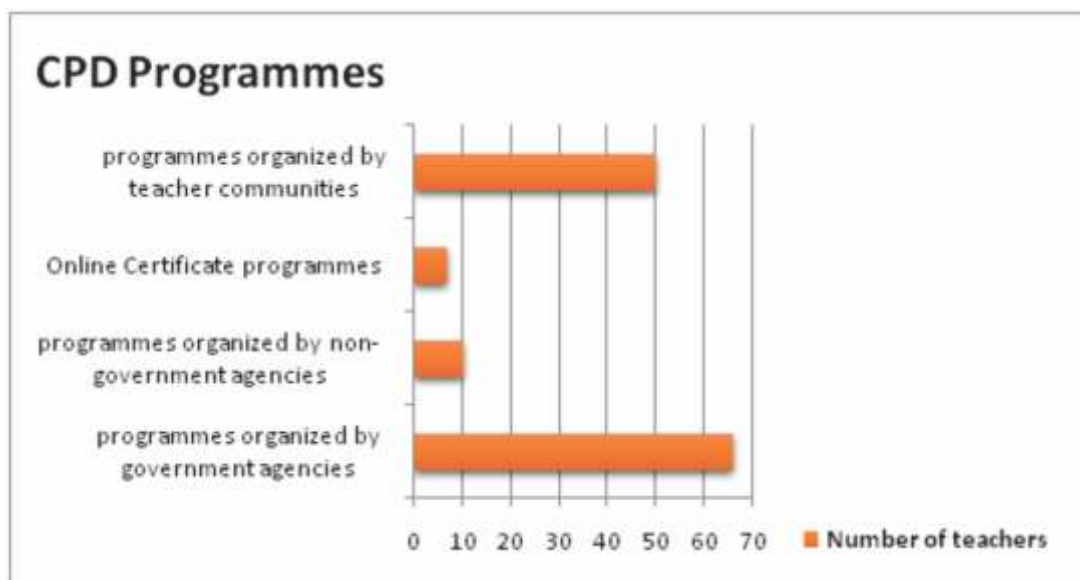


Figure (1): Participation of professional development activities during the pandemic period

Figure (2): shows the professional skills that the respondents acquired by attending the professional development activities mentioned earlier. The content areas addressed in various programmes were, ICT, communication, grammatical and pedagogic skills.

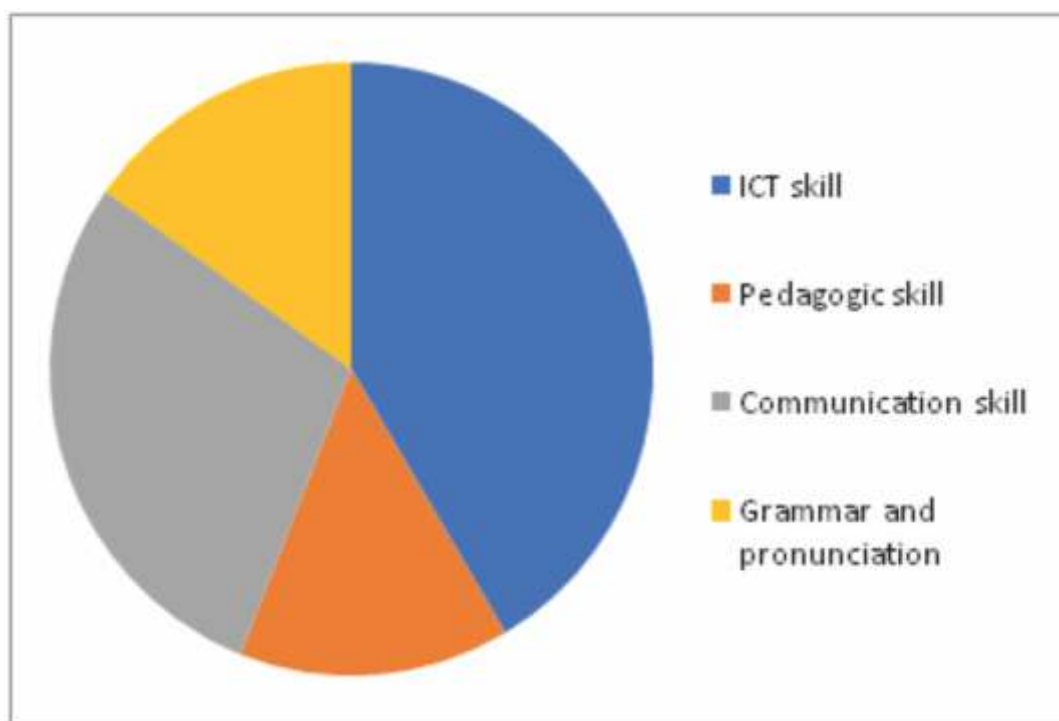


Figure (2) professional skills achieved

One of the major challenges that the English teachers faced during the pandemic was the lack of adequate technological skills to deliver the courses online. Majority of the teachers under the study had no prior online teaching and learning experience. Only 26.3% of teachers were able to incorporate ICT in English language teaching before the pre-covid period.

Some of the responses from the teachers after engaging the professional development programmes are given below:

“Now I am gaining experience in handling online teaching platform Google

meet, google form, utilization of youtube videos, preparing & editing videos to encourage students and to showcase their academic and non-academic skills ..”(SmithaUnni, GLPSAmmadam)

“I could use new methods in teaching by providing audio and video classes, could make the students more active. Follow up works in connection with the home works are assigned to the students”. (Jayalekshmi. K., UPS Thanikkudam)

‘I have attended many online classes. Got opportunities to watch the classes of expert teachers. Increased confidence to use ICT and communication skill as it became a necessity.”(RamyaRaveendran. K, GLPS Puthenchira North)

“Teachers' groups and students' groups are more active now..Now we are getting more supporting materials...videos...etc. we also get opportunity to discuss with teachers who are teaching other BRCs...schools.,etc..actually get a high-level support..”(Sabitha, IMUPS Azhikode)

“Through google meet, the parents are also alert. So I think I must be more alert about taking classes. So I start searching more and more activities”.(Maya S, Sankara u. P school, Alangad).

“Got a little more time to prepare activities such as videos, worksheets etc. Got new ideas from teachers' groups which helped to improve my skills in my profession , even though the workload was much higher than before”.(Rekha P.K, HLPS Malesamangalam)

Findings and Conclusion

- The formal online training programmes conducted by Sarva Sikha Kerala, SCERT, DIET and District Centre for English introduced different topics of ELT that include, digital learning materials, activities for teaching vocabulary and grammar, online resources for teaching different language skills etc. The participants could interact with the experts from the different parts of the country which was not common during the normal training sessions. The enhancement in communication and grammatical skills made them more confident and thereby they could perform well in their class.
- The teachers pointed out that the participation in these professional development events made them digitally confident to run the class online

and increased their awareness of the integration of online resources in English language teaching.

- The teachers were motivated to create online teacher communities through the platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram and through which they shared their effective teaching strategies, products of their students, information about useful websites and training programmes, books and reading materials. They also conducted 'in-house orientations' for familiarizing digital platforms and online applications and through which they were familiarized with web-sites like Pratham – story weaver, M-Guru English, android applications for video editing, presentations and for creating animated videos. Some teacher communities prepared a tool kit for e- resources and worksheets to support online teaching.
- Many teachers joined and completed short-term certification courses from reputed universities with the support of 'Coursera'. They also started participating in the webinars and online lectures on ELT conducted by various colleges and non-government agencies such as ELTAI and ELTIF.

The study has indicated that teachers were very active during the pandemic period to find ways of helping their students in the best possible way they could. Many of them had heard about the technology integration in education but the pandemic context gave them the real opportunity to experience ICT integration in the teaching and learning of English. The professional development journey during the pandemic served dual purpose for them. It was mandatory for them to be digitally literate and competent in using the online education tools. At the same time, they also had to learn how English language contents could be delivered online so that they can support their students to develop linguistic and communicative skills in the English language. The findings of the study reveals that the second language teaching in primary level will be improved by providing more opportunities to the teachers to engage in professional development programmes primarily through the use of an online environment. Active and willful participation in CPD activities means reaching up to greater range of possibilities for persistent growth and expansion.

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“My Status”

Feature of the Whatsapp Messenger as a Rescue Platform to Convey Important Occasions to Students During the Pandemic

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Abstract

Every day on the calendar is an occasion to celebrate. Teachers generally begin the class by recalling the significance of the day. Till February, 2020 this particular activity was through chalk and board. During this activity the class was full of sounds and gestures. The excitement among the student was a visual feast. Later, due to pandemic, there was a shift in this platform for this activity.

This paper is my personal journey of different academic years from offline to online. The participants are the students of the classes 4,5 and 9. The useful tool of the shift is the smart phone and the app is the widely popular WhatsApp Messenger. The particular feature used for the same activity of celebrating the important occasions as a message for the day is the “My Status”. The images and the content posted on the different occasions of the National and International Days celebrated engrossed my students. Initially they couldn't interpret the content as it contained alpha-numericals and symbols but they got it clarified through WhatsApp Chat. This activity came as a de-stress too for the children. They started posting the same image of mine as their status after taking the screen shots.

This shift triggered the young minds to explore more avenues enabling them to participate more creatively in the activity and come up with the new ideas.

Keywords

Important occasions, offline-online, Mobile learning, WhatsApp messenger, “My Status,” interpretational skills.

Introduction

Eight years ago I was transferred to this school, near the Saroornagar Lake in the city of Hyderabad. The school has a strength of 420 pupils with

Classes 1 to 5 and the Staff of 14 Teachers. The children are from the near by catchment area, Singareni colony being a densely populated slum. The Inhabitants are the families migrated mainly from Nalgonda, Suryapet and erstwhile Mahabobnagar districts. The majority being from this colony and belong to Scheduled Tribes (Lambada). The school has to train the children in the basic social learnings - cleanliness, manner of speaking, rules of behaviour etc.

I teach all the subjects to all the classes. But, for the past three years, I have been teaching only the English language and EVS (Environmental Studies) to all the classes.

In Feb 2021 I was deputed to a high school in the same Mandal, Saidabad-2 to teach Classes 6 to 10.

The Pandemic Covid-19 made the use of social media mandatory for the distance learning. The useful tool of the shift is a smart phone and the App is WhatsApp. WhatsApp is the popular, readily accessible and widely used App. It is cost effective too. The Parents being aware of certain features of the App is an added advantage. So we quickly formed Classroom Groups initially for 4th and 5th Classes only. Later all other classes were shifted to this platform slowly.

Method

The particular feature of the App I used for the activity of Celebrating the Important Occasions as a message for the day is the Status feature of WhatsApp Messenger.

This method is being implemented with the classes 4, 5 & 9.

- * “The Status” feature of the WhatsApp is used to improve reading skills and decipher the alpha-numerical and emoji included in writing.

Everyday is different. Everyday in the calendar has an occasion to celebrate. In the schools all over, we celebrate the important occasions of the day either national or international, with utmost zeal. The students were aware of the common days celebrated in school like the Teacher's Day; Children's Day; Girl Child Day; Hand Wash Day; De-Worming Day; Science Day; Maths Day etc.

The images posted on My WhatsApp Status and the content therein engrossed my students and sometimes their parents too. Initially they couldn't interpret as the quote/ comment contained alpha numerals and symbols. The

students clarified it through chats and calls. They showed interest to do this themselves. They started selecting the images. Through this search they could learn more about the special days in a month of the year.

With this they learnt certain vocabulary, phrases, hyphenated words, usage of punctuation marks, alpha-numerical style of captions (1ness); (2gether); (4get); (cheer4India) use & meaning of different emojis.

Initially typing itself was a problem. The challenge was overcome successfully. The Parent-Teacher timings were adjusted to the time of availability of the device at home – i.e., only late evenings after parents return from work.

Table

Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Pupils with smart phone			Active on Whatsapp		
4th	19	22	41	12	09	21	08	03	11
5 th	17	21	39	09	05	14	05	04	09
9 th	19	35	54	10	10	20	03	05	08
	55	78	134	31	24	55	16	12	28

Result

Once the child tastes the joy of such exploration and learning then the sky is the limit. The students have shown a fascination towards this feature, “My Status” and engaged themselves wholeheartedly. They were teaching one another and thus peer learning happened. They taught the use of emojis to their parents too which was shared personally in the chat, Class group chats and sometimes on the call. It brought out the hidden talents, Rubies in the clay.

- The students were curious to know more, started searching for more related images.
- In the process of searching for suitable images they learnt the vocabulary, the phrases and the use of abbreviations.
- In writing the comments for the images they selected to be posted

on the Status of WhatsApp, the children learnt the spelling of the vocabulary, new vocabulary (compound words, hyphenated words etc), use of punctuation marks and certain symbols (&, @, #, \$ etc)

- As this activity is stress free and not for grades the children rejoiced the exposure.
- This showed an impact on the learner's part and the new content in the new school – Govt. High School Bagh Musarimo, the new class (9th). It developed an endearing Teacher-Student relationship.
- This activity became a kind of de-stress in this Pandemic Covid-19.
- Through WhatsApp chat, personally and in the Class groups, my students acknowledged the feeling of content while participating in the activity.
- The Class - 9 students participated in the activity, Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021 enthusiastically for the first time on April 7 at 7pm and posted their certificates proudly on this feature, “My Status”. Earlier to this they also posted their participation certificates on this feature.
- Even today some of my students remind me of the different important occasions of the day on personal chat which has left me with immense satisfaction. (My deputation to the high school has ended and I'm back to my original school)

Limitations

- The post on the feature, “My Status” of the WhatsApp disappear after 24 hours. Thus students cannot see and read their writings repeatedly. This limits the self-editing.

I see it as the positive drawback, the new happenings at the new Sun and move on to something else and learn new.

- Though the availability of the device itself is the major challenge, the non-accessibility of the gadget to the available App is more disappointing.
- A few children could access the device and use the feature either in the late evening or night.

- Sometimes browsing led to either unsuitable or unacceptable search.
- The possibility of the wrong post (An instance of a post with an image of the cigarette).
- Age related problems too were feared of.

The last three limitations mentioned above were addressed personally with the support of the parents.

This made me to re-think the further use of this feature and be cautious.

(The App , WhatsApp is for the age group 16 and above.)

Scope

Though the activity majorly involved the selection of an image suitable to the occasion of the day and writing the suitable comment using alpha–numerical words , symbols and emojis, I see the scope for the following.

- can post a related link and type the rubric and give further exposure to the pupils.
- can use pencil option and pose a question to the students and invite them for a discussion.

Conclusion

No doubt that WhatsApp is not meant for Education but it came as a rescue. It was the need of the hour and the only resource at hand during this pandemic times. The usage of “My Status” feature of WhatsApp Messenger for the important occasions gained the momentum in the course of this journey leaving me with a deeper bond with my students.

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The Relevance of Theme-based Pictures in Developing Questioning Ability of Teacher Trainees

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Abstract

It's a fact that questioning is the most popular tool used extensively in English class to target classroom interaction. The trainee teachers should be equipped to frame a variety of questions to carry out meaningful interactions in their English class. Pictures, which depict themes, are useful in developing questioning ability. It is observed that the teacher trainees, who are pursuing their Diploma course after plus 2 with Mother Tongue medium background are struggling in framing meaningful questions. Hence a 20-day plan of action has been designed and implemented choosing 10 pictures with popular themes through online mode. Practice is provided in online mode via Google Meet. Focus is given on the use of appropriate tense & proper word order in question framing. After 20 days of practice, it is observed that there is improvement in the question framing ability of the teacher trainees in framing meaningful, relevant questions.

Keywords

Theme based Picture, interaction, teacher trainees, questioning ability, language skills.

Introduction

Any language programme focuses more on interaction. There is scope for interaction inside the classroom and outside the classroom. The teachers as well as teacher trainees need to tap the opportunities of interaction with the children to improve their as well as children's linguistic performance. Interaction is a social phenomenon which involves dialogues. Questioning helps in generating natural conversational environment. It is an essential skill to be mastered by every language teacher. Due to the Pandemic, practicing teachers as well as student teachers are unable to meet the children in face-to-face mode. Hence the student teachers are not using the questioning techniques to interact with the children. Though they are using

digital platforms and digital material in reaching the children, they couldn't generate meaningful interaction because of not sharpening their questioning abilities. With this backdrop, the present study is focused on highlighting the relevance of theme-based pictures in developing questioning ability of the teacher trainees. Theme-based pictures provide an ideal resource for young learners to learn English. Teachers also rely more on pictures in their English classrooms to make the students engage meaningfully in learning English. Children love pictures. They can interpret them in their own ways. They can create multiple texts from a theme-based picture. They form images in their mind when they are engaged with a picture. Through theme-based pictures language can be presented in an innovative way by developing visual literacy of the children. Choosing right picture is a challenging task for a resourceful teacher. An appropriate picture is useful in developing linguistic as well as multiple intelligence. There is a lot of scope in addressing the cognitive and interactive abilities through pictures.

This study aims at finding out: 1. What the challenges are faced by the teacher trainees in interacting with the students during their teaching practice? 2. What resources they require to interact with their students in English? 3. What could be done to help them in interacting with their students in English?

By using theme pictures children can be encouraged to:

- Identify any theme from the picture.
- Develop plots based on social themes which contain a beginning, middle and an end.
- Identify the characters.
- Plan role plays.
- Generate multiple texts through interaction and collaboration.

Selection of Pictures:

Nature of the pictures selected should be:

- Thought provoking
- Suitable for developing language skill
- Useful for handling multi-grade and multi-level learners
- More communicative

- Scope for self-reflection & for self-assessment.

Themes for selection of pictures:

The following are the themes taken as suggested by NCF 2005.

- Family, Pets & Neighborhood
- Adventure & Imagination
- Sports & Games
- Science & Technology
- Travel
- Art & Culture
- Health & Hygiene
- Festivals
- Rural Life.

Objectives of the Study:

- To find out the errors with respect to the word order in framing questions by the teacher trainees..
- To find out the challenges faced by the teacher trainees in framing meaningful, relevant questions according to the context.
- To ascertain the relevance of theme-based pictures in question framing ability of teacher trainees.

Design of the Study:

Population

The population for the present study comprised of 75 teacher trainees (39 Telugu Medium+36 English Medium) of I year D.El.Ed studying in D.I.E.T., Bheemunipatnam, Visakhapatnam district.

Sample

Out of 75 student teachers 45 students have no problems in designing questions. Hence the sample is confined to 30 student teachers from Telugu Medium

background.

Method

The method followed for this study is Single group Experimental Method.

Time of the study

The present study was conducted through online mode during May 2021.

Daily Procedure followed

Practice is given in the following areas

- Right word order of the question.
- Using appropriate tense
- Framing questions with auxiliary verbs.
- Statements as questions.
- Framing fixed response questions
- Framing free response questions.

Daily Worksheets

- Daily Work sheet with a picture a day.
- On every odd numbered day i.e. 1, 3, 5...ten questions are provided for the given pictures respectively and the teacher trainees are asked to write answers in a word/phrase/sentence.
- On every even numbered day i.e. 2, 4, 6... ten statements are provided for the respective pictures by underlining some portion of the statement and asked the teacher trainees to frame questions to get the underlined portion as answer.
- The teacher trainees are asked to write as many words as possible from the picture like names of characters, places, actions etc. for framing questions also.
- In the beginning the teacher trainees are encouraged to frame text-dependent questions.
- Gradually they are encouraged to prepare text-independent questions.

The following order of questions is used for each theme picture

- What place(s) do you see in the picture?
- How many people/persons are there?
- Who are they?
- What actions do you see in the picture?
- What are the different characters doing?
- How is the place?
- Have you ever seen such places?
- Where, do you think, is the scene taking place?
- Do you help your parents in their work?
- Mention some games that both boys and girls play together.
- Mention some works that you do on Sunday.
- Imagine you are the head of the school; how would you treat the students?
- What decision would you have taken if you were in the place of the boy? =

Tools used in the study

- Pre-test (With 2 theme pictures)
- For the first picture 10 questions are provided for writing answers.
- For the second picture 10 statements are provided. Some portion of the statement is underlined. The respondents are asked to frame question to get the underlined part as answer.

Questionnaire to ascertain the perception of teacher trainees towards the importance of framing appropriate questions in English.

1. Post-test (With 2 theme pictures)

- For the first picture 10 questions are provided for writing answers.
- For the second picture 10 statements are provided. Some portion of the statement is underlined. The respondents are asked to frame question to

get the underlined part as answer.

Details of Pre-test and Post-Test results

Area	Pretest score (% of student teachers attempted correctly)	Post Test score (% of student teachers attempted correctly)
The word order in a question	23	67
The use of correct verb form	40	75
Questioning as statements	33	50
Fixed response questions	50	75
Free response questions	30	50

It is evident that a good progression is observed , due to the practice provided, in using the right word order while framing the questions from the pre test to the post test which is nearly three times improvement. The next area of better improvement is in the area of using correct verb form while framing questions. Most of the student teachers have got the capacity building of framing questions using past, present and future tenses basing on the context. Prior to that they used to use the same tense form to ask a question in present and past tenses. Now they are able to use the right verb form while framing questions. Before the treatment many of the student teachers are not aware of framing questions to elicit free responses or open ended questions. Now they are better in framing open ended questions, however, improvement is required.

Details of questionnaire responses

S.No	Statement	% of YES
1	Adequate word power is essential to frame questions.	75
2	The meaning of the question has no relation with the word order.	25
3	The meaning of the question has no relation with the form of the verb.	20
4	Theme pictures are useful in framing a variety of questions.	75
5	Higher order thinking skills(HOTS), for framing advanced level questions, can be developed through theme based pictures.	90
6	Questions can also be framed in the form of statements.	50

A questionnaire with 6 statements is administered to know the perceptions of the respondents. The statements are prepared keeping the requirements to frame right type of questions. Most of the respondents agree that HOTS are very essential for framing advanced level of questions, which can be developed through pictures those depict themes followed by the power of theme pictures in framing questions as well as the required word power.

Findings

After providing focused practice for 20 days by selecting 20 theme pictures the following are observed.

Student-teachers' ability is improved in framing

- questions with right word order
- questions for the required details
- questions with relevant tense of the verb
- variety of questions including inferential, application type

Implications for further study

- Engaging in this work is exceedingly meaningful as the researcher realized that he could identify a problem within his classroom and make some decisions in order to improve it.
- In this case, the main weakness of his classroom was the lack of proper interaction.
- Moreover, his collaboration with colleagues convinced him that it could be possible to carry out action research together as English department in order to improve their teaching practices.
- It was important for the purpose of this investigation that it was done in collaboration, so as to have a focus group, and apply the pre- test and post- tests to other similar contexts.
- Future research on similar areas of interest might consider larger samples as well as extending the time considered for the implementations.

Limitations of the study

- The present study was conducted with only 39 teacher trainees of D.I.E.T. Bheemunipatnam, Visakhapatnam district only.
- The time limit of this experiment (20 days)
- The small sample size suggests that the results of the study cannot be generalized to other contexts.

Conclusion

Through this study it is known that appropriate picture is useful in developing linguistic as well as multiple intelligence. There is a lot of scope in addressing the cognitive and interactive abilities through pictures.

It is useful to know the challenges faced by the teacher trainees in interacting with the students during their teaching practice, the resources they require to interact with the students in English and what could be done to help them in interacting with their students in English.

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Integrating Digital Technology in an EFL Classroom with Special Reference to 'Canva for Education' App

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Abstract

The pandemic has thrown educators and students alike in a state of total chaos and confusion. These are indeed unprecedented times. With schools and colleges closed all over India, video conferencing apps like Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc. have come to the rescue. Teachers and students can meet up virtually through these online platforms, but it is observed that there is a general lack of interest and motivation amongst many students with respect to the online teaching-learning process. There are a few reasons for this, viz. technical illiteracy on the part of the teachers as well as the students, connectivity issues, lack of devices and technical assistance, etc. However, one of the main reasons for the above-mentioned problem is that teachers are not able to engage their online class as effectively as they would engage an offline class, with regard to group activities, wherein students would meet up with each other and work together on projects, fill up worksheets, make posters, participate in fun-learn games, etc.

This paper presents an action research that was undertaken by the teacher-researcher in his First Year Additional English Class in a semi-urban college in Ahmednagar, MH, with an intention to boost self-learning, interest and teamwork in the students, using the free 'Canva for Education' App. The paper includes an introduction to Project-based learning and 'Canva for Education' App. It highlights how 'Canva for Education' can be integrated with LMSs like Google Classroom, etc. It further includes the actual process of the action research, the challenges faced, and how they were overcome; and concludes with observations made by the researcher, followed by the students' feedback collected through a survey, concerning this novel initiative.

Keywords

Integrating digital technology, Canva for Education app, project-based learning, action research, LMS, self-learning, group activity, creative engagement

Introduction

The year 2020 would go down in history as the year that plunged the world into uncertainty about everything. No field was an exception to it. The field of education too bore a massive hit from the Global COVID-19 pandemic, and teachers and students alike found themselves in a fix. With schools & colleges closed all over India, the only option available in front of educators was to rely on video conferencing apps like Zoom, Google Meet, etc., to deliver lectures to their students. Also, platforms like Google Classroom & WhatsApp Messenger were used extensively to share notes and give assignments. Though this solved the problem to some extent, it was observed that students soon lost interest in online lectures. Blumenfeld once stated that educational researchers increasingly found that when students are bored and unengaged, they are less likely to learn (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). This sounded like a warning sign.

The teacher-researcher, hence, conducted a short survey in his First Year Additional English Class in a semi-urban college in Ahmednagar in order to ascertain the exact cause of loss of interest amongst students with regard to the online teaching-learning process in general. The data was collected through interaction with students and with the help of Google Form, and the following hurdles were highlighted by the students for the lack of interest, namely, poor connectivity, lack of devices & technical assistance, physical ramifications on students' health like strain on eyes, digital illiteracy in teachers as well as students, etc. However, an important observation was made, that teachers couldn't engage the class in a group activity, and hence, there was a dearth of creative engagement for the students. Hence, an action research was planned by the teacher-researcher to involve project-based learning into the classroom that would boost the interest of the students.

What is Project-based Learning (PBL)?

Project-based learning focuses on teaching by engaging students in investigation. Within this framework, students pursue solutions to nontrivial problems by asking and refining questions, debating ideas, making predictions, designing

plans and/or experiments, collecting and analysing data, drawing conclusions, communicating their ideas and findings to others, asking new questions, and creating artifacts (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Students then are grouped into a team and are given a “driving question” which they have to respond to or answer, and then create artifacts, to present the knowledge gained. The artifacts can be in the form of posters, art, drawings, 3D models, videos, photography, technology-based presentations, infographics, social media posts, etc.

The Challenge of Introducing PBL in a Virtual Class

Now, in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it was impossible for students to meet physically with each other, and work as a team on a group project. So, making posters, drawings, artwork, etc., were out of the context. Hence, the teacher-researcher decided to have technology-based presentations as artifacts for the Project-based learning in his classroom.

Asking the students to make PPTs in MS PowerPoint was the option available, but that would mean that only one student would be responsible for designing the slides, and then sharing it with his/her teammates for reviews & corrections. This would, however, defeat the very purpose of the group project which intended to boost collaboration and teamwork among students, right from researching for the content to the preparation and designing of the artifacts (PPTs). This is when 'Canva for Education' came to the rescue.

'Canva for Education'—A Teacher's Companion

Canva for Education is user friendly for a teacher or educator who is switching to remote working or online classes, as well as those who want to strengthen classroom creativity. The main benefit is that all K – 12 educators—and all their students—can access this platform for free, with no limits on offerings or time.

Features of 'Canva for Education'

1. **Integrates with various LMSs:** Canva integrates with all go-to classroom tools, such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Remind, Canvas & Schoology. It has a dedicated classroom space to invite students and teachers to share, review, and manage their work. Teachers can also share engaging visual assignments, like worksheets, colour

sheets, flashcards, etc., with students for them to complete. The students after completing the assignment can return it to the teacher for evaluation.

2. **Real-Time Group Work:** Students can work together no matter where they are by viewing, editing, and sharing feedback with live comments. It's just like playing a multi player online game, like PUBG or Ludo, where all members can see the changes each of them makes on the PPT in real time.
3. **Vast Media Gallery:** It has millions of copyright free images, fonts, graphics, videos, animations, and educational templates, etc., to make learning fun & interesting.
4. **Record Video & Audio:** Students can create their own videos or record themselves speaking over their own assignments and projects, keeping the feedback loop strong and making their voices heard.

The Action Research Process

Mills (2011) stated that Action Research (AR) is a systematic procedure conducted by educators to collect information about, and subsequently improve, the ways their particular educational setting operates, their teaching, and their student learning. Sue David off and Owen van den Berg (1990) suggested four steps for an action research:

1. plan (an improvement to the practice)
2. teach / act (act to implement the plan)
3. observe (monitor or evaluate the action effects)
4. reflect (on the outcomes of the actions)

Plan:

Planning is a broader term. It includes identifying the problem, investigating the problem (why does it happen? when does it happen? what are its consequences?), gathering data to study the problem, thinking about the solution and how to implement it, etc. thinking about what evidence to collect to decide whether the action is

successful or not. How to collect it? How to analyse it?, etc.

In this context, the main problem observed by the teacher-researcher was that students were losing interest in the online lectures. This was evident from the decrease in attendance of the students. Hence, the teacher-researcher collected data through discussion, and also through a questionnaire that he prepared and shared with the students through Google Form. His class has a strength of 70 students. When asked, 'Do you find online learning interesting?', 42.5% students responded with a 'Yes', 5% responded with a 'No', and an overwhelming 52.5% responded with 'Somewhat'. The fact that those who responded 'Somewhat' were greater in number than those who responded with a clear 'Yes', suggested that students did have some apprehensions regarding online learning.

When asked, 'What challenges do you face during online lectures?', most of them said 'network issues, technical difficulties & distractions at home', while others responded mentioning physical ramifications such as 'strain on eyes & headaches'. However, the students highlighted an interesting point. Some students mentioned 'lack of communication & creative engagement' as something that disinterested them. Hence, the teacher-researcher came up with a plan to group students together and ask them to work on a project. This would facilitate peer-learning, collaboration, leadership qualities, develop deep content knowledge, facilitate interpersonal & communication skills among the students, and give them some creative engagement. 'Canva for Education' was decided to be used as a tool to accomplish this project.

Teach/Act:

The class of 70 students was then divided into 12 groups, each group having a student-coordinator, and the idea was that each group would choose a topic of their choice and make a presentation of 35-40 minutes. 12 WhatsApp groups were created by the coordinators to facilitate communication among students. The teacher-researcher regularly held virtual meetings with the coordinators as well as all the teams. Some of them were to orient them about Canva, while others were general meetings, where the teams would share their problems & experiences and help each other overcome it. The teams worked on their project for 25 days, all of them trying their best to make the presentations as creative as possible with the help of Canva and other digital tools available online.

Observe:

After 25 days, a presentation week, entitled 'Unmasking 2021', was organised, where two different teams made their presentation every day for 6 days, which was followed by a Q & A session. The topics chosen by the teams ranged from, 'The Suspense of the Egyptian Mummies', 'Youth Culture', 'Traditional Education v/s Modern Education' to 'Digital India', 'Animal Abuse' & 'Indian Culture', to name a few. The students used a lot of media & digital resources available to make their presentations unique. Also, some teams had quizzes, riddles and games for the audience, that were based on their topic.

Reflect:

Introducing Project-based learning with the help of Canva gave students the necessary engagement they needed during the lockdown. The students learnt to work in a group, polish their communication skills, handle differences and disagreements, and accomplish the given task in the stipulated time, all of this amidst a global pandemic. The students faced a lot of challenges. The student-coordinators initially complained that their team members didn't actively participate in the project because some were shy, while some had technical issues. But taking regular follow up & encouraging them to give their best gave them the necessary confidence.

After the presentation week, the teacher-researcher prepared another questionnaire to take the feedback of the students. 97.3% students found 'Unmasking 2021' a productive and creative activity. 83.3 % students agreed that they could make better presentations because of Canva, since the UI is very user-friendly and engaging. 87.5% believed that Canva is better than MS PowerPoint and 95.3% students believed that activities like group projects should be a part of every teacher's teaching strategy, especially during the virtual mode, to keep the students motivated and engaged.

Conclusion:

The pandemic has brought with itself new hurdles for educators and students, but with the help of digital platforms like 'Canva for Education' and the like, new horizons of teaching & learning, which were unknown till now, can be explored.

Students can collaborate with each other virtually, and thus fully realise their potential through group learning.

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The Need for Specific Pre-service and in-service Training for Continuous Professional Development of ESP Teachers

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Abstract

Professionalism, Practicality and Specialization are three key words of major focus in teaching English for specific purposes. ESP is an approach to work with language in the context that emphasizes on specific linguistic needs of learners. The field of ESP has rapidly developed around the 1970s to become a major part in English language teaching and research. Therefore, the need to understand the requirements of other professions and willingness to adapt to these requirements make teaching English for specific purposes more difficult than teaching English for general purposes. Because there are various roles that ESP teachers expected to play and challenges that ESP teachers have to face in order to meet the specific needs of learners, ESP teachers require specific pre-service and in-service training regarding 'what to teach' and 'how to teach' in order to prepare students for the specific profession or vocation. As most ESP teachers are from rich literature background, they don't have sound knowledge of linguistics and content specific knowledge of various fields, thus they are in need of continuous professional development before joining the service and also during the service.

This paper aims to discuss some important roles of ESP teachers, their challenges and the ways how ESP teachers should be trained so that they can be professionals and well-prepared to meet learners' needs. To know the areas in which ESP teachers want to receive specific training, a researcher has conducted a small survey using a questionnaire as a part of need analysis of ESP teachers.

Key words

English for specific purpose, pre-service and in-service training or CPD, Need analysis, specific register or discourse, Content knowledge

Introduction

Revolution in the linguistics, global market, science and technology has given rise to ESP approach for second language teaching in the late twentieth century. Developed from the shift in the focus of language teaching from structure to actual use of language that resulted in a communicative approach around the 1980s. It stresses on how to develop the learners' ability to use language for various language functions. Main objective of ESP is to prepare language learners to use language in specific contexts and it is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution, or in a professional work situation. Teaching English for Specific Purpose is quite different from general English. ESP usually has a focus on specific skills and future linguistic needs of language learners and requirements of their professions while General English covers all the skills and components of language. As ESP addresses the specific skills and needs of the learners it requires concrete syllabus and methodology. ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves and centered on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities. ESP course is characterized by its content (science, medicine, tourism etc.) that is one of the consequences of the primary matter of being able to specify why the learners need English. The awareness of the target situation and need to communicate in English that distinguishes the ESP learner from the learner of general English. Therefore, EGP is basic language learning to be studied before college while College English should be more advanced, more specialized, and match students' majors of study, particularly in vocational courses where students are trained to perform on-the-job. Thus, ESP is more effective in increasing students' learning motivation because it relates to their fields of study and caters to their needs. (Bracaj, 2014).

Need analysis for ESP course is the most important and initial stage to design ESP course as it aims to serve particular needs of language learners, they require understanding their needs and context through register analysis, discourse analysis and target situation analysis. It is a kind of technique for collection of information relevant to course design and it helps to modify the teaching process. It is largely defined in terms of target situation analysis that emphasis on specific future situations in which learner is expected to uses the target language. At present, Teachers are much more aware of the importance of needs analysis that allows ESP teachers to select materials which closely match the goals of the learner. (Bracaj, 2014)

Important point in ESP is teacher training which means that teachers should obtain special training and should be more specialized because they are not only teaching English but also special technical terms according to different subjects and disciplines. Universities that offer ESP courses are searching for specialized people to work for them but they have difficulty in finding those persons.

As ESP has various specific tasks different from general English, ESP teachers require adequate knowledge and skills which can be provided in the form of CPD (continuing professional development) including pre-service and in-service training.

ESP teachers expected to play multiple roles from need analyst to evaluator according to the specific discipline. ESP is a multi-dimension approach which required a variety of roles to perform. These roles are assigned to the ESP practitioner as.

- Needs analyst
- Course designer
- Materials developer
- Motivator
- Researcher
- Counselor
- Collaborator
- Resource person
- Negotiator
- Evaluator(Ibrahim, 2019)

But they are not adequately trained or not aware about specific context, discourse, content knowledge and different methods regarding ESP. Due to the lack of specific knowledge or training ESP teachers face many challenges in the classroom such as

- In understanding the nature of target situation

- To meet specific needs of students and balancing those learning needs
- Teach English in workplace contexts
- To identify authentic language material
- Select teaching methods accordingly
- Design specific syllabus
- Inadequate assessment system
- Language incompetency of students
- Massive classes and short duration

So, to overcome these challenges teachers are in need of pre-service and in-service training for their professional development.

Why is Continuing Professional Development essential for ESP Teachers?

ESP teachers' have multiple roles to play when compared to other language teachers and they are facing many problems and issues in choice of content, method of teaching, preparing discipline specific materials and so on. Main reason behind this is that most of the ESP teachers are from literature background but they are expected to teach language at different levels, in various disciplines without adequate understanding of those areas and disciplines like teaching Aviation English. They do not have mastery over specific vocabulary and context used by pilots. They are lacking proper linguistic and content specific knowledge about which training can be given to them for their professional development. They should be aware of the specific register of English used in various disciplines and contexts.

To overcome the problems or face the challenges and perform various roles appropriately they are in need of professional development.

Significance of research

Increasing trends of teaching English for Specific Purposes has changed the roles of teachers and their teaching techniques. There is a need to analyze the importance of designing ESP course

content relevant to the learner's needs. Moreover, there is need of specific training for ESP teachers to play their roles effectively and to know in which areas they need to be trained. Continuing professional development is essential for ESP teachers in order to cater the changing needs of learners. (Alebaid, 2020)

Problem Statement

Generally, training of the teachers is not treated as an important matter specially of ESP teachers with literature background and lacking knowledge of linguistics and specific content. Though, it is expected from them to teach English in various disciplines where they are facing many problems and challenges to fulfill specific needs of the learners through concrete syllabus and materials.

Objectives

- To identify the needs of ESP teachers regarding professional development
- To understand the issues and challenges in teaching ESP
- To evaluate importance of pre-service along with in-service training
- To understand in what ways they are receiving specific training
- To know how many teachers have received special training
- To identify in which areas they want proper training

Rationale of this study

This study has been conducted for ESP teachers from various disciplines like commerce, science, engineering and vocational education to elaborate the importance of special training for ESP teachers. A questionnaire, which was answered by twenty eight participants, was used to collect the data from respondents.

Data collection and procedures

In order to understand ESP teachers' opinions and actual needs regarding special training, need analysis of ESP teachers has been carried out through a survey method where a small questionnaire of twenty questions has been prepared. A questionnaire has been designed to explore the experiences, problems or challenges

that ESP teachers are facing and the importance of special training they need like in what aspects they are receiving training, in which areas they want themselves to be trained and if they are working on their continuing professional development, how they are doing. Questionnaire statements have been presented in the results section. It has been conducted in virtual mode by using Google Form to collect relevant data in the time of corona pandemic.

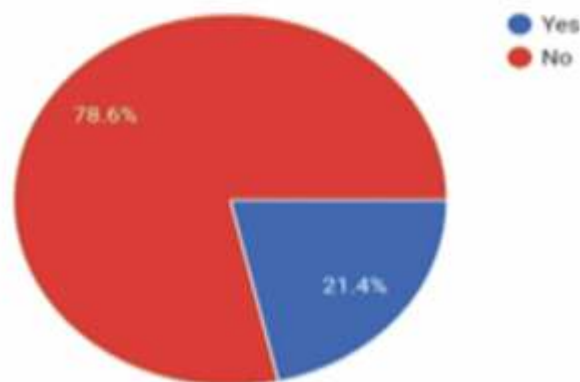
Results

The questionnaire results have been discussed below

1. The need of special training for ESP practitioners

12. Have you received any specific training on ESP ?

28 responses



Out of total respondents, 78.6 % ESP practitioners have not received any kind of special training regarding different components of target language like discourse, contexts, register and teaching according to specific goals or objectives of language learners. Only 21.4 % practitioners of ESP have received special training in the sense of how to develop learners' communication skills.

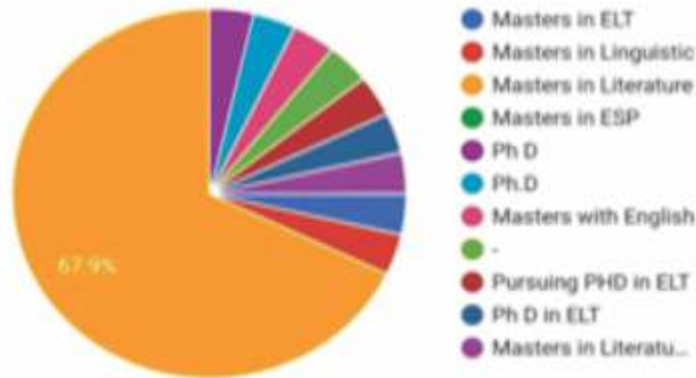
1. Education background of ESP practitioners

This question was asked to know the Education background of ESP teachers that help them in teaching process and to support the argument that most of the ESP practitioners are from literature background which can be the main cause behind

problems or challenges that teachers are facing in teaching second language.

Education Background

28 responses



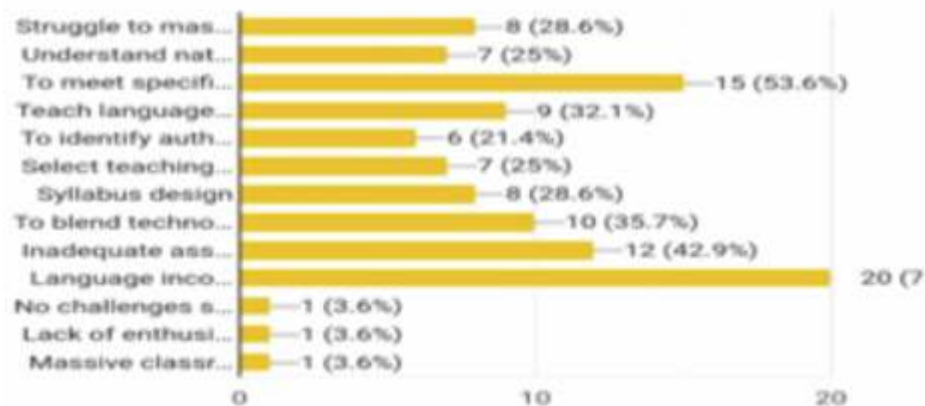
Result indicates that 67.9 % teachers did the Masters in English literature than language though it is expected from them to teach language in various contexts along with literature. While 32.1 % teachers have different education background than literature like Masters in ELT, Masters in Linguistics, and Masters in ESP.

3. Challenges faced by ESP practitioners

This question asked to understand what kind of issues and problems that ESP teachers are facing in the language classroom.

5. What kind of challenges do you face in ESP classroom ?

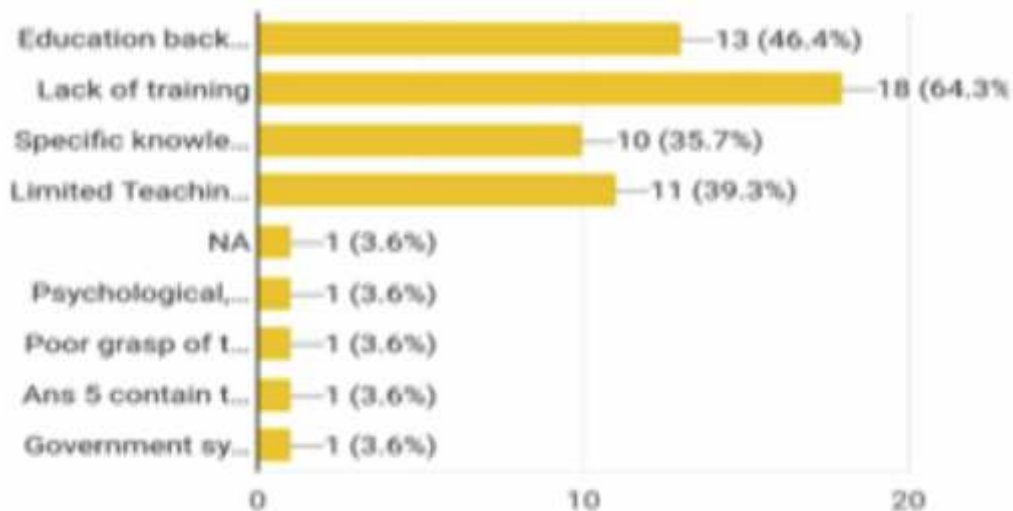
28 responses



The chart reflects some challenges that ESP teachers have experienced, major challenges they have faced are language incompetency of learners, to meet specific linguistic needs, inadequate assessment, and syllabus design and so on. To know the reason behind these all problems and issues in teaching second language in specific context following question asked where 64.3 % teachers are of the opinion that it is because of lack of training and 46.4 % believe that due to education background.

6. What do you think about root cause for these challenges/ problems/ barriers that you face ?

28 responses

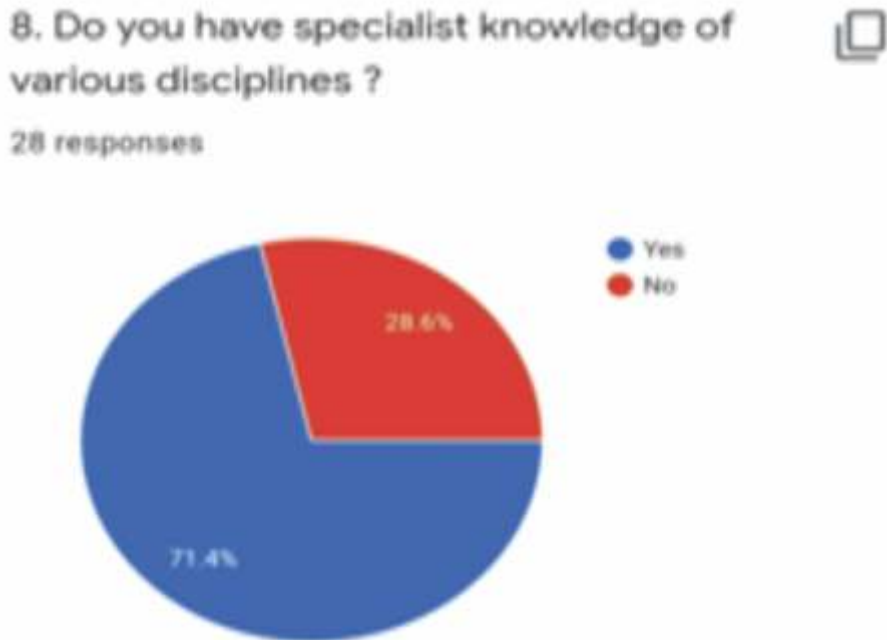


4. In some Language components, ESP teachers do not have mastery

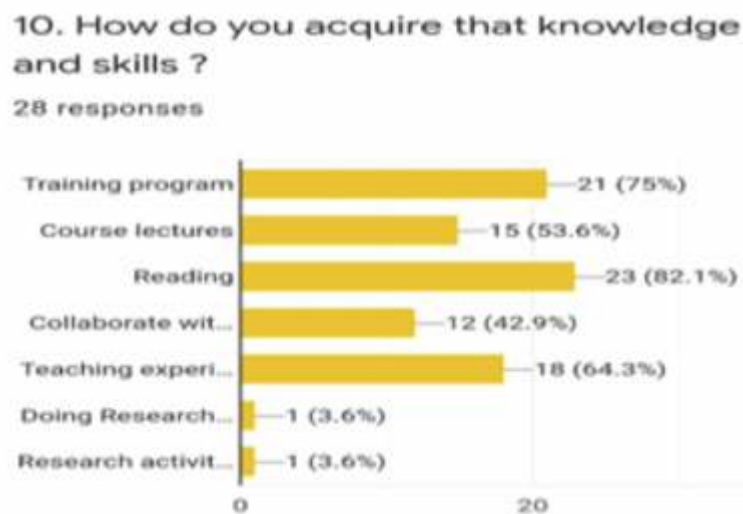
Result indicates some language components where teachers feel they are not acquainted. Majority of respondents (39.3%) not acquainted in specific contexts of various disciplines, 35.7 % are in specific register and 32.1 % are in discipline specific vocabulary.

5. Specialist Knowledge of various disciplines

This question asked to know that ESP teachers have content specific knowledge or not and if they have how they received it.



Result shows that 71.4 % out of total respondents have Specialist Knowledge of the discipline in which they are teaching ESP. The following chart represent that most of teachers received it from self-reading, training program, teaching experience and others from collaboration, lectures and research work.

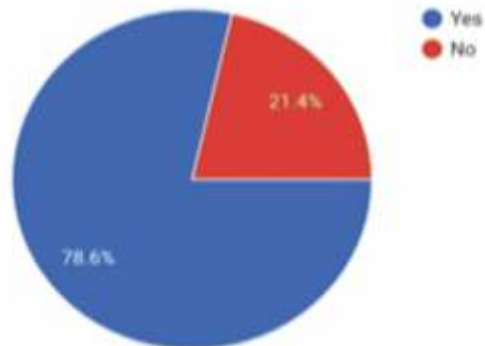


6. Importance of Pre-service training

The question asked to ESP teachers regarding importance of training before joining any services along with in-service training.

15. Do you think that pre-service training is important along with in-service ?

28 responses



Pie chart indicates that 78.6 % ESP practitioners have agreed with the point that pre-service training is equally important with in-service training for CPD while 21.4% respondents have disagreed.

7. Continuing Professional development including pre-service and in-service is important to develop ESP teachers professionally

14. Do you think that this kind of Pre-service and in-service ESP training will enhance your professionalism ?

28 responses

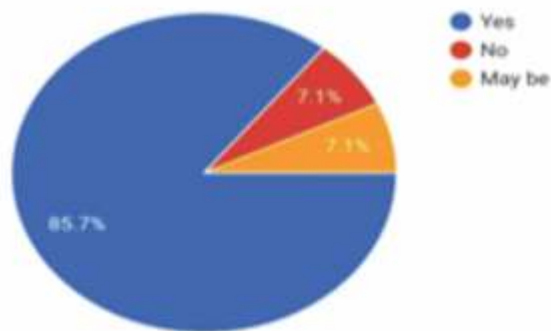
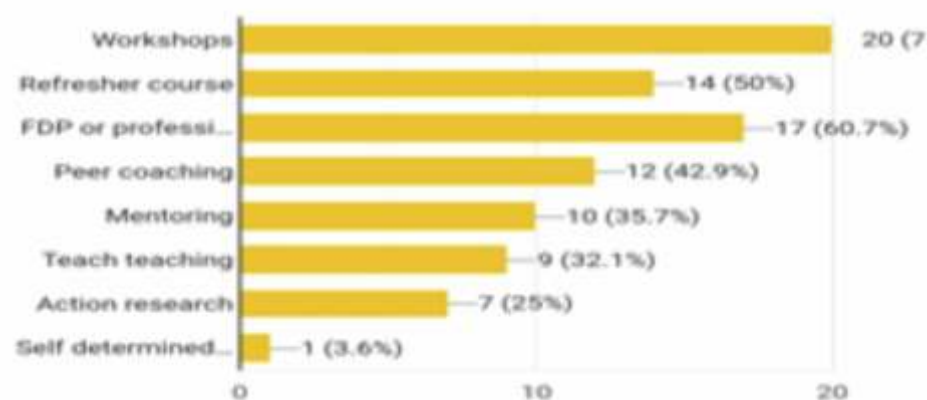


Chart indicates that 85.7 % has responded positively regarding importance of CPD to enhance professionalism of ESP teachers.

8. How they are receiving in-service training?

17. How do you receive in-service training for ESP teaching ?

28 responses



Result indicates that mostly ESP teachers are receiving in-service training in the form of workshops, FDPs, Refresher courses and peer coaching while few teachers are practicing team teaching and Action research.

9. ESP teachers' efforts for self training

18. What do you do for your Continuous professional development ?

28 responses

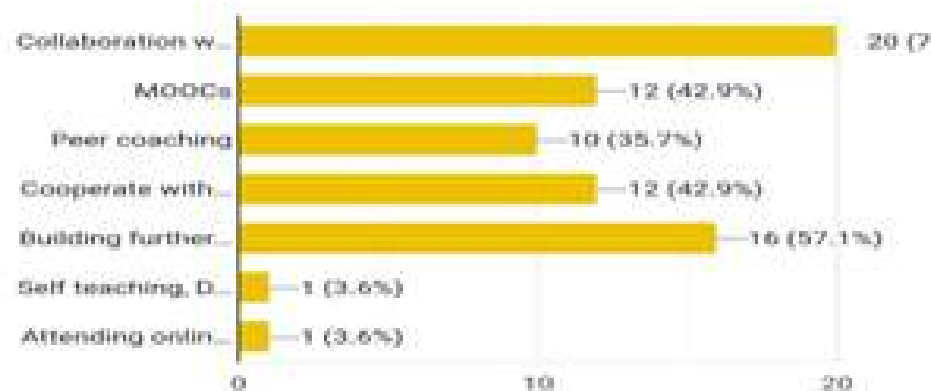
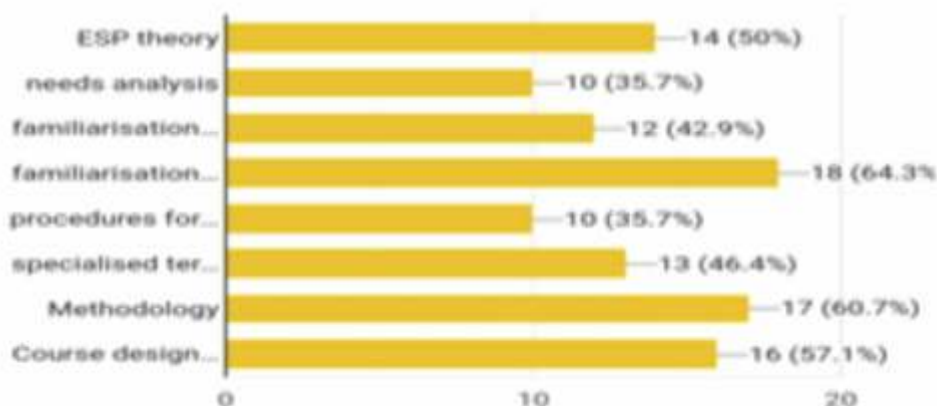


Chart shows that ESP teachers are trying to adapt self learning and self training mode like collaboration with other teachers, building network with community of ESP teachers, from MOOCs, peer coaching and using ICT.

10. In which components of language, ESP teachers need training?

19. Which of the following areas would you like to receive training on ?

28 responses



Result indicates that majority of teachers want to be familiar with disciplinary /professional culture, to know specific methodology, learn to design specific course, understand ESP theory and to understand specialized terminology.

Findings

Overall result of this study indicates that ESP teachers need specific training as 78.6 % teachers did not received training which help them to develop themselves professionally. ESP practitioners should organize and plan course materials but there is a need to improve their skills and knowledge through CPD.

- Teachers are unable to meet specific needs of learners.
- 67.9 % teachers are from literature background and lacking linguistic and content specific knowledge of various disciplines.
- Need specific training for familiarisation with academic genre of specialism, ESP methodology, context specific language and course

design.

- Only 21.4% teachers have received specific training in the context of ESP.
- Main cause behind challenges or issues that ESP teachers are facing is their education background in literature than language.
- Mostly they have done their qualifications in Literature but they are expected to teach language in various contexts and disciplines and because of this they are unable to fulfil needs of learners.
- 78.6 % of respondents considered pre-service training equally important whereas rest believe that pre-service training is not more important.
- Language incompetency of learners, inadequate assessment, and syllabus design and to meet their specific linguistic needs are major challenges that ESP teachers have faced and main reason behind this is lack of proper training.
- ESP teachers are facing problems particularly in specific register, various contexts and vocabulary.
- Majority of teachers have received specific content knowledge through reading, training program and teaching experience.
- As part of in-service training, teachers have participated in workshops, FDPs, Refresher courses and peer coaching.
- ESP teachers are trying to adapt self learning or self training mode like collaboration with other teachers, building network with community of ESP teachers, from MOOCs, peer coaching through ICT integration.
- ESP practitioners want to update themselves in specific terminology, course design, methodology and various professional cultures.

Limitations

- Limited responses of the teachers due to shortage of time. (28 responses)

- Due to COVID 19 pandemic, in-person meeting or interviews were not possible.

Suggestions

- Specific long term or degree courses for ESP teachers as a part of pre-service training should be introduced like B. Ed for school teachers
- Encourage ESP practitioners for self professional development through collaboration, peer teaching, team teaching, with use of ICT etc.
- Train them for specific discourse, register, different contexts, syllabus, methodology, material development and so on.
- Introducing course based on linguistic studies & ELT along with literature at postgraduate level.
- Make ESP teachers aware about importance of need analysis which help them to cater the specific needs of the learners.
- Action research among ESP practitioners should be promoted as they are regularly dealing with language learners.
- There should be Community of ESP practitioners who can share their problems, help each other and collaborate in teaching process.
- As part of CPD, pre-service and in-service training should be given equal importance with focus on specific requirements of ESP teachers. Initially, need analysis of ESP teachers should be conducted.
- As part of in-service training, teachers should continue their professional development through collaboration, peer coaching, community learning apart from workshops & seminars only.

Conclusion

Multiplicity of needs regarding language learning in context of ESP requires specific training for ESP teachers through which they can prepare themselves to teach English in various contexts and disciplines. Training or CDP make ESP teachers ready to face any challenges and can fulfill the requirements of the markets by making

learners employable and creating more job opportunities. Teachers play a major role in teaching English for specific purposes, so they should be trained properly to provide effective learning environment to students. Thus, there is a need to train ESP practitioners to allow them to adopt and discover new ways of teaching English.

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