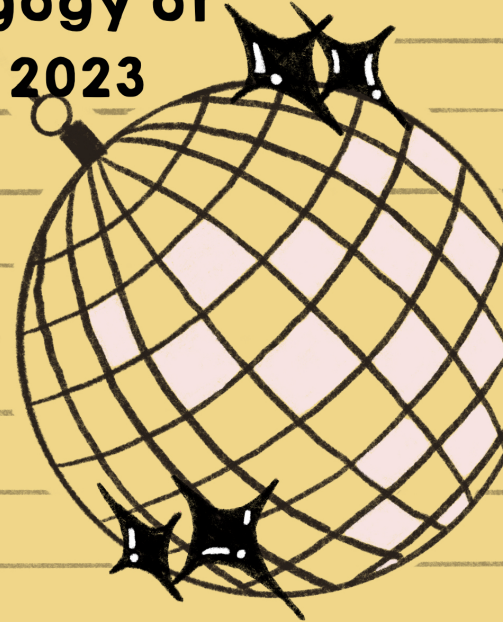


# PROCEEDINGS OF THE ENGLISH TEACHING CONFERENCE

Communing Towards a Pedagogy of  
Hope and Transformation 2023



St. Joseph's University

# **Proceedings of the English Teaching Conference**

**Communing Towards a Pedagogy of  
Hope and Transformation 2023**

**Organized by  
The Department of English  
St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru**

**8-10 JUNE 2023**

Proceedings of the English Teaching Conference: Communing  
Towards a Pedagogy of Hope and Transformation 2023

Editors: Arul Mani and Drishti Rakhra

Published by St. Joseph's University

Publisher's address: 36, Lalbagh Road, Bengaluru - 560027

ISBN: 978-81-963319-1-7

Printer's details: Deccan Printers  
No C-431,  
Behind Peenya Police Station,  
Peenya 1<sup>st</sup> Stage  
Bengaluru - 560058

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# Foreword

The forgotten person in the room amidst confident assertions about language learning is often the student from marginalized communities, already rendered disarticulate by the problems of access, and yet capable of making a micro-deposit of hope in the English classroom. What are the conversations and interventions that work, and how can we begin to build on such experiences? What else might we uncover if we remember these students carefully enough? Is it possible through an articulation of these concerns to imagine a post-ELT world built around the idea of justice in the curriculum?

This Conference on Teaching English seeks to understand the big debates listed above by asking small questions about everyday practice, about the teacher and their inspirations, and the student and their experiences. We hope thus to draw researchers, academicians, policy-makers, leaders of industry, teachers and students into conversation with each other through plenaries, paper presentations, posters, panels and workshops. The conference will be held in hybrid mode: offline on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June, and online on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

A conference of this kind is also a moment of solidarity and rejuvenation for teachers and for students and researchers who aspire to enter the field. Listening to other experiences can be the minor endorphin boost that can charge a coming academic year even in the bleakest of circumstances. We look forward to meeting you, to listening to your stories, and to continuing the conversations thus begun.

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# Teaching ‘Out of the Box’ a Reality

## An Auto-Ethnographic Study

### FLORISA WELAR

#### An Overview of Autoethnography

Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*) (Adams et al., 1). This approach opposes the canonical ways of doing research as it focuses more on personal experiences. An Autoethnographer uses the theory of autobiography and ethnography to write Autoethnography. The researcher in autoethnography particularly chooses to write about the past experiences as an ‘eye-witness tool’ for autobiography with a mixture of “thick description” (Geertz, 3) of a culture. In autoethnographic writing the researcher proposes the reader to enter its subjective world. This approach focuses on a particular aspect of reality that helps to broaden, explore and on the other hand, opens up a wider lens on the world. The researcher recognizes the numerous ways of one’s learning experience, personal difficulties, and success which can influence the mass audience. Through autoethnography, the researcher not only tries to make personal experiences relevant and cultural experiences engaging, but by producing comprehensible texts, the researcher may be able to reach broader and more diverse public audiences which traditional research typically ignores.

#### English as a Lingua Franca

The term English as a Lingua Franca “is a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first language” (Seidlhofer, 339). The voyage of English as a language in India started with the establishment of the East India Company. There was an urgent need for a common language for official communication and English served as an “umbrella label” that welded all the English speaking people together. As English became a shared language among the Indians, there was an underlying urgency for the Britishers to bring English Language as a discipline. It is crucial to understand the fundamentals of English as a lingua franca in the academic environment of India. It was Lord Macaulay who played a major role in the introduction of English as a discipline of study in schools and universities. His major objective was to produce some Indians who would be able to serve the British interests. This can be witnessed in his ‘Minute on Indian Education’, when he stated “Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (Murthy, 14). This served as his linguistic recipe during the British Raj. It also gave rise to “linguistic Imperialism” (Philipson, 4) which laid the foundation to present “Linguistic Globalization”.

#### Introduction

Creativity and Innovation in Teaching is a medium that contributes to the success of Language Teaching. A teacher must be creative and imaginative in order to enable pupils to appreciate the experience of language and to explore the knowledge of Language Learning. In this paper, the researcher uses autoethnographic research to examine her own theoretical and practical expertise in teaching English to Pre-University students. English is currently taught in a very traditional manner. A creative and innovative teacher should use creative teaching techniques rather than a "one size fits all" approach as students differ in their calibre and capability. The actual problem in real world education is the conventional practice teaching which is teacher-centred. In the classroom, it is

typically the teachers who are busier than the students. The class is always quiet and they attentively follow the teachers' explanations. The study claims that a shift is needed in the classroom to move away from a teacher-centred approach to a person-centred approach (Garrett,34). This approach emphasises a greater balance between teachers and students, with knowledge and community building as the primary goal. Teachers must consider English as a target language while adhering to the guiding principles of correctness, authenticity, and competence for, it is only when someone becomes fluent in the language, can bring in changes or modifications.

### **Data Collection**

The overall aim of this study is to explore and understand the role of an English Teacher in engaging the students and to teach Language in new ways. As a result, the present study was designed as self-study research, based on my experience throughout my teaching practicum programme (Fatinah et al., 2). Throughout the teaching process, the researcher kept a research journal that was re-read on a regular basis and notes were taken, all of which served as the research data in this study. It is also based on the evaluation by Peer Review during my Teaching Practicum Programme, changes were made in response to ideas and comments received. Autoethnography was written over 18 days of teaching experience (19 sessions per week). Notes were taken down on daily basis which included reflection and personal opinions. Challenges and Strategies were discussed with the colleagues of the institution and feedback was examined and taken into account. The researcher prepared simple, structured questionnaire and distributed it to the students from the previous and current batches. Students who are currently in their second year of Pre-University course were interviewed for 15 minutes regarding their expectation from an English class. The purpose of the study was also to document what the students expect from an English class. While reading an Autoethnography the readers will gain first-hand knowledge from it, which will aid in learning something new as they can 'learn, discover and co-relate' with autoethnographer's experience.

### **Teacher's Personal Discourse**

The paper describes the experience of a teacher who teaches three separate streams and discusses the students' shifting attitudes in learning English. While entering the Humanities class the teacher notices that the students are attentive and they take initiative to participate in the conversation. The students understand the importance of Language as it will help in their future goals like Journalism, Content Writing, Law and Mass Communication.

The same set of attitudes is not seen in the students of Commerce stream as they focus more on the core subjects like Accountancy, Business Studies and Mathematics. The similar attitude follows in the students of Science stream as they consider Biology, Physics and Chemistry to be important and English Language as just a "scoring" subject.

While dealing with "uninvolved/nonparticipating" students, the teacher has to keep in mind that students come in different packages and interests. The attention span of students also play a crucial role in their class involvement. Thus, at present it is important to bring a change in English Language Teaching.

### **Methods for Teaching Language Creatively**

#### ***Engaging Set Induction***

The success of the teaching and learning process could be determined at the beginning of the class, which is why Set induction is so important. An engaging set-induction could encourage students to focus on the topic, help them connect their prior knowledge with the new topic as it will arouse their interest. The teacher can begin the class by linking prior knowledge or by displaying images, mind maps, or by surprising the class with unexpected information or facts. For ex: in an English class the teacher can share some etymological English words of Indian origin like pyjamas, jungle, veranda, shampoo etc. While teaching 'Tenses' the teacher can also integrate history and talk about 'time' and its invention. Set Induction is crucial for a teacher as it deals with getting students' "undivided

attention" at the beginning of a class, piques their interest, and creates a conceptual framework for the content that follows.

### ***Conversations***

To break the silence in a classroom and to help the students develop their speaking skills it is important to engage students in a conversation. It is not required for the content to always be textbook-based; rather, it should be something that enables the students to perceive the meaning on their own. The teacher can start the class by asking the students some general topics wherein the students can express themselves freely. The purpose of Language is not just to help them speak and write but to communicate and develop their conversational vocabulary. Conversation forms a very important part in the teaching process as it focuses on "how to think" and "not what to think"(Fisher, 17).

### ***Creative Assignments***

The orthodox method of giving the topic and asking the students to research on their own becomes tedious. This approach works better in different pedagogy like Commerce or Science. Creative assignments help students' thought process and widens the horizons of epistemological understanding of subject matters. When it comes to English the students should be given a language homework that requires them to modify something that already exists, for ex: give a background or extra knowledge about the topic and ask them to either change the climax or modify the content. This will develop an involvement in learning on their own as creativity is difficult to foster when it is imposed on students (Anburaj et al., 64).

### ***Newspaper as an Educational Resource.***

Newspapers can be used as a living textbook. It is an educational tool which is often underused. The teacher can use the newspaper to enhance students' basic language skills that are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The newspaper broadens the curriculum by providing an infinite supply of data to be used as background for educational activities. Students can learn a wide range of subjects as it covers a wider spectrum of topics such as alphabets, grammar structures, vocabulary, and several disciplines. Newspapers can be used as an aid to teach students voice modulation irrespective of the stream they belong to, for ex: when they need to be loud, stress on powerful words and the importance of pace and pause.

### ***Stream Crossover***

Stream Crossover deals with the concept of inclusiveness. Using this method, the teacher tries to integrate Language with other subjects based on the student's stream (Riaz,19). For ex: While engaging Commerce classes, the teacher uses the 'Case Study' approach to introduce "Dialogue Writing". The teacher gives a real-life situation of a marketplace and the students have to introduce themselves to strangers using the basic rules of communication like greeting, leave-taking etc.

### ***Use of Technology in Classroom Learning***

Technology has become an integral part in contemporary language classrooms because of its beneficial characteristics that cannot be found in face-to-face environments. It can be difficult for a student to stay awake and interested in a class the entire time, but keeping them awake and interested is much more challenging. The teacher has to go the extra mile and make use of technology, for example: While teaching "Romeo and Juliet" to II Pre -University students, a recorded rendering of the play screened would assist the students to comprehend the play better. Students have always had a difficult time understanding poetry because it deals with language, syntax, rhyme, imagery, diction, etc. The students can lose interest if the teacher recites in the conventional manner. Poetry can be introduced in several ways through technology. For instance, the teacher can help the students visualise better by a video presentation and a voiceover of the poem. Poetry cannot be read solely with the eye, thus the combined effect of the visual and hearing aids would help students learn more effectively (Umar and Iyere, 480).

## Students' Expectation

It is necessary to examine the students' expectations from an English class. Students were asked what they expected from an English class. The data supplied by the students revealed that students require an engaging session. The students' ability to converse well is aided through regular discussion of podcasts, novels, music, and other topics. Teachers were advised to use audio-visual aids while instructing. Students today need a transition from the era of writing to the era of visuals, since it encourages reading and engagement.

## Conclusion

The teaching pendulum is swinging from one approach to another without any motion at the moment because English teachers are concentrating more on the shortcomings of traditional techniques to teach English. English teachers have to understand that there is no 'right' way to teach English but widely accepted methods and precepts. The purpose of language is to not to simply listen, speak and write but help the students communicate. English Language Learning can occur only in an environment where students are engaged and ready to learn. This is only possible if the teacher takes the initiative to keep the class engaged and encourage learning. Thus, the paper suggests the need for continuous language teaching. English teachers are neither 'born' nor 'made', but their past experiences as students have a major influence on how they perceive teaching. Thus, in order to accomplish the teaching goal, the paper outlines several modifications that could be made to close the learning gap.

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# The Moomins: Journeying across Languages

**ASTHA SHARMA**

The Moomins are a family of soft, white hippopotamic creatures that first appear in the comics of Tove Jansson, a Finnish-Swedish writer and illustrator. Her 1945 book “The Moomins and The Great Flood” came out during the Second World War “when (she) was feeling depressed and scared of the bombing and wanted to get away from my gloomy thoughts to something else entirely. . . . I crept into an unbelievable world where everything was natural and benign—and possible” (Heti, 80). It was not until The Moomin Boom in the 1990s that Jansson’s escapist work entirely swept up children’s imagination worldwide. This was a result of the premier of “Tales of Moomin Valley”, an animated series produced by Dennis Livson and Lars Jansson.

In 2001, there was a substantial lack of children’s programmes in Nepali. Recognising this, Finnish journalist Leena Vihtonen and her husband Erkki secured licenses to dub the Moomin series in Nepali. Deependra Gauchan and Binod Giri then overtook the task of dubbing 26 episodes. It premiered under the name “Adventures from Moominvalley.” Giri himself voiced the characters of Moominbaba and Hemulen Ba, while a younger cast was gathered to voice the other characters, mostly children. The casual, conversational tone of the series was maintained and much of the appeal lay in the recurrent preoccupation with the weather and landscape. A large number of comments flooded the few YouTube videos that appear for a “Nepali Moomin” query. These are steeped in a shared feeling of nostalgia. The common reactions include “great childhood memories”, and a feeling of wanting to return to childhood.

Animated by a Japanese studio named Telescreen Japan, plucked from the books of a Finnish-Swedish writer-illustrator, and voiced in the familiarity of the common tongue, *The Moomins*, despite being foreign were naturally accepted. It appeared in Kathmandu Channel and Nepal TV, reaching viewers in urban and rural Nepal, as well as Sikkim. The showtimes were quite erratic, sometimes chunks of footage squeezed between two news segments. It was not uncommon to watch *The Moomins* as breaking news slid across the lower edge of the screen.

During the time, certain Nepali channels were picked up by cable operators in Sikkim, and were inserted into a random mix of channels as an attempt to facilitate the continuity of a shared cultural and linguistic experience. As children’s media was largely dominated by Hindi language shows, as it is even today, *The Moomins* occupied a space of interest. While for the international viewer, the first episode of the series was titled “Spring in Moomin Valley”, the Nepali edition kicked off in the early 2000s with the first episode being Ep. 49 of the original series “The Giant Pumpkin” or “Thulo Farsi.” The reason behind this is unknown.

In this study, I explore my childhood experiences within and beyond the classroom to map my relationship with the English language. Using the autoethnographic mode and borrowing from the idea of multiliteracy I look at the various moments of transition that fuelled my interest in the English language.

The idea of multiliteracies suggests that literacy involves more than a set of conventions to be learned, either through print or technological formats. Rather, literacy enables people to negotiate meaning

(Leland & Kasten, 18-5). With these negotiations often occurring in technological settings and engaging students' values and identities (Jewitt, 32). The New London Group views literacy as continual, supplemental, and enhancing or modifying established literacy teaching and learning rather than replacing traditional practices, thus proposing the concept of multiliteracy (Rowell, Kosnik, & Beck, 19).

Watching *The Moomins* in English only at the age of 23 shone a new light to nostalgia, and some things stood out. The lack of primary English education in rural Nepal made it imperative that the series be dubbed in Nepali to ensure comprehensibility. The simple logic being when something is entirely understood, it is easier to enjoy. In the Nepali dub, careful consideration has been given to personalize characters according to local sensibilities. A prime example of the same is the character of Sanumaya. Introduced in the first book as Little My, she is often mean and snarky towards the other characters but loved nonetheless.

In Nepali, Little My becomes Sanumaya. It is essential to note the semantic jackpot here as Little translates to "Sanu" and My elongates to "Maya" compounding in a name that is immediately recognisable and familiar. Her characterisation differs as she is given a "sharp" or "charko" voice that complements her blunt and often self-centered personality. Her character stands out as the archetype is familiar, her antics apt for her features. This level of familiarization could not have been possible if the Moomins spoke English, the nuances would be completely absent.

For Nepali speakers living in Sikkim, like myself, language maintenance comes with its unique set of challenges. With every new generation, some words disappear from the speaker's vocabulary and are replaced by loanwords from languages such as Hindi, Bhutia and English. The effect might be altogether unnoticeable. In such a scenario, watching a cartoon in one's own mother tongue acquaints one with a vocabulary that is becoming increasingly distant. A gradual rediscovery of my first language took place.

For instance, in the Episode 1 "Thulo Farsi" the very first phrase uttered by the narrator is "Moomin upatyaka". The word "upatyaka" eludes a significant number of young Nepali speakers in Sikkim since it is so rarely used. The Nepali word for 'valley' would not enter my vocabulary if it weren't for the Moomins.

By the age of five, my presence in various linguistic universes was apparent. While in school we were only encouraged to speak in English, and could be penalized for speaking in Nepali, the English language remained within the institution. I did not speak to my friends or family in English, it was associated with academics only. During 2005-2010, English remained a minimum contact language for me. Our cable television experience was curated by Nayuma and was devoid of any English channels. In my first school, there was no library so, therefore storybooks were awarded to best performing students. While the basic shape and syntax of the language was familiar, I could read the written text and replicate the answers in an examination without much trouble, the language failed to extend into my private imagination.

Things changed when I got my first phone shortly after the trip. It was a Vodafone device that came from buying the Vodafone sim card. This was the first place where I started documenting my thoughts and ideas at the age of 10. The English keyboard led me to write in English because transliterating Nepali often resulted in ambiguous meanings. While I did not have many friends to chat with, I typed messages and saved them as drafts, to negotiate the absence of a notes app.

It was on this device that I wrote a piece of fiction that I much later came to recognise as fanfiction. During that time, my ten year old self was invested in a Hindi TV soap *Pyaar Ki Yeh Ek Kahaani*, that followed the story of a vampire in a Dehradun college and his love affairs. In my message drafts, I inserted myself and a neighborhood boy into the soap's universe and concocted a story that was

highly unlikely. My mother chanced upon my creation a few days later and gave me an earful, expressing her disappointment that I was engaging in such “grown up fantasies.”



**Figure 1: My first phone, the Vodafone Phone**

But the urge to express was only growing and the process was made even more efficient with the arrival of a new phone in 2012, The Nokia X-2 01 with a qwerty keyboard.



**Figure 2: My second phone, Nokia X-2 01**

This device allowed me to access the internet, and with that I arrived on Facebook. Facebook was the only social media I was using. A large percentage of this content was occupied by memes and what was trending during the time as “teenager posts.” The expression of one’s private experiences and feelings was so uninhibited and succinct, that it led me to begin writing for an audience.

This time, the drafts folder was replaced by the Notes feature on Facebook. This allowed the sharing of long written content, stuff that would not fit into a mere status update. At the time, I was not aware of blogging as a phenomenon, but now it is clear that I was using the notes feature to write personal blog posts. This regular writing exercise for an audience was also paying off in my social life as I made friends who were also interested in reading and writing.

During a winter trip to Bengaluru in 2014, I chanced upon my first novel. It was *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho which I devoured on the three-day train journey back home. After I finished my first novel I started reaching out to my new Facebook friends, looking for more books to read.

Luckily, a new window opened in the academic space as well simultaneously. An hour a week was dedicated to reading in the library. The assigned teacher would distribute random volumes of *The Hardy Boys*, *Naughty Amelia Jane* and rarely, *Nancy Drew*. I devoured them, as I relished the



opportunity to escape into an author's imagination with my classmates in silence, every child reading a different book.

In the following years, I was consumed by the works of Dan Brown, Paulo Coelho and a few Agatha Christie books. A person I got acquainted with on Facebook suggested that I should read Dan Brown, saying that the *Inferno* was one of the best books he had read. Through him, I got my hands on all of Dan Brown's books and read them religiously. My school did not have most of these books, so in addition to Facebook friends with reading habits, I started making trips to the District Library and spent some hours reading there.

My interest and comfort with the English language deepened when I was in the 9th grade. I went to an ICSE school that was under the Darjeeling Diocese of Roman Catholic School. English was now divided into English 1 - Language, and English 2 - Literature. Having dedicated periods to study literature, away from the monotonous rhythm of grammar excited me.

However, the most interesting discussions about the language only happened in my first year of college. The first semester paper "What in the World-A Sampling of World Literature" explored literature from around the globe, and it expanded my worldview as we traversed stories from the Igbo tribe of Nigeria and read Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi*. Three years of engaging in written material, films and graphic novels in the Optional English classroom enabled me to reflect on my childhood experiences and interactions with the world.

Having access to a simple device that allowed me to document my thoughts, concocting obnoxious fanfiction whilst being completely unaware of the genre, finding an online space to write for an audience, conversing with other readers online and finally discovering novels; all of these instances opened an imaginative space wider than otherwise possible and this is perhaps multiliteracy in action.

As I watched *The Moomins* after graduating from the EJP program, I was excited to see what would happen if I watched it in English as a child. I could appreciate the work that went into the Nepali dubbing, the care that had been taken to translate nuances and to make it relevant to a Nepali speaking audience. I can only speculate on what would have happened if *The Moomins* were not dubbed, and had been broadcasted in English itself. Would it still stand out as a novelty? Perhaps, yes. It would have stood out because all other cartoon characters I knew spoke in Hindi. Would it have accelerated my interest in engaging with the language and using it? Maybe.

What I can say for certain is that for me, a Nepali speaking individual who only had access to television in Hindi until the age of 16, the access to mobile phones and eventually the internet were two crucial moments in which I was motivated to engage with English outside the classroom. The role of the internet, the access to a public library and novels sold at small stationary shops is immense and cannot be overlooked.

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# The Post-Pandemic English Classroom and the Pedagogy of “Connect”

## A Reading of Teacher Reflections

**LEKSHMI R**

### **English Learning Practices in Kerala and the Redefinition of “Connect”**

The state of Kerala, which had a “unique achievement” in the total literacy campaign of the 1990s, earning itself the tag of model-state regarding welfare indicators (Chandran 515), has possessed a thriving relationship with the English language. Kerala’s own historical engagements with other cultures have made it essential for the people to be open towards other languages. The social necessity of English for the learners in Kerala could never be ignored, especially in the post-1990s period of economic liberalisation. With a large section of the population aspiring to go abroad or migrate to other Indian states because of limited internal job opportunities, the currency of English has always been aspirational for people in Kerala. Though English is the medium of instruction in higher education, allegedly not much focus is given in schools to develop student competence in English. At the tertiary levels, poor English performance and the lack of confidence that ensues is mostly blamed downward to school teachers. The COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of remote learning amplified many fissures in the teaching of English in Kerala.

The pandemic interventions employed by the English teachers in Kerala saw the use of digital media for improvised language learning methods, learning materials and tasks to ensure better connect with the students. Kerala restarted the academic sessions in virtual mode for the students of class I to XII on June 1, 2020 through the First Bell programme under Samagra Shiksha Kerala<sup>1</sup> and 97.5 % of the students enrolled were ensured to have smart phone accessibility at home (ASER 29). The Hello English and Hello World programmes for students till Class VII with interactive digital interactive learning material of stories, songs and activities facilitated English learning (“Samagra’s”)<sup>2</sup>. According to the report by the UNICEF, Kerala has been lauded for its timely response to the COVID educational crisis (India Case Study). Lessons in tribal languages were provided to the students from tribal communities for Class 1 under the MazhavilPoovuor Rainbow Flower project (Joseph). The stories, poems and articles on topics like the environment, hygiene, COVID-19 and prevention of diseases prepared by the students during the lockdown were collected, compiled and published under the AksharaVriksham (Tree of Letters) programme. As part of DIKSHA, 108 ‘Energised’ (QR code imposed) textbooks were introduced for students of Classes IX and X for the academic year 2019-20 in four mediums of instruction – Malayalam, English, Tamil and Kannada and QR codes were placed in textbooks with interactive audio-visual content to facilitate curiosity and the spirit of self-learning among the students (India Report, 2020). The Techie Teacher programme formulated by Samagra Shiksha Kerala aims to conduct school-level trainings of teachers to help them gain expertise in their technological needs (Roshni). Satyameva Jayathe (Truth Alone Triumphs), the digital media literacy programme for upper primary and high school students organised by Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education, gave insights into topics like ‘the rights and wrongs of social media’ and ‘fake news prevention and awareness creation’ towards making them more responsible stakeholders of the digital media (“To make students”).

Batra (407) argues that the pandemic necessitates a reimagining of the curriculum and pedagogic practices by questioning the anthropocentric biases and by bringing in the ideas of equity, social justice and gender inclusivity. The new normal came to define the idea of “connect” as realising the constitutional values and the ideals of kindness and humanity for developing persons (Dewan 5). This new definition of “connect” placed more agency on the part of the teachers. Even though the efficacies with which the English teachers in Kerala managed the situation were notable, they had to negotiate with their varied roles-administrative, familial, institutional, social- being under public scrutiny. The infamous Blue-saree teacher case in Kerala, when the recorded classes of an English teacher evoked embarrassing reactions that objectified women teachers in online platforms, becomes a marker of the changing discourses around teachers (Benu)<sup>3</sup>. Learning Curve, the educational journal by Azim Premji University has an issue titled "Coping with Lost Time" which refers to the new reality of the COVID-19 pandemic posing challenges related to the accessibility and effectiveness of the methods of distance learning. It observes that the teacher's role of scaffolding, providing inputs based on the responses of learners, and involving communities in knowledge making processes are social roles that cannot be replaced by textbooks (13). It also outlines the extra stress teachers had to bear during the pandemic as they had to handle multiple roles together. Batra considers the teachers' education curricula to understand how effectively the questions of gender disparity, communalism and inclusivity in education are addressed (415). She asks pertinent questions as to whether the Indian teachers are more accepting of government policies, less mobilised and more withdrawn into their local contexts. In another relevant discussion, the ideals of critical humanism and social justice are studied as possible counters to the increasing work regulations and a perceived loss of autonomy experienced by teachers (Sarangapani and Pappu 1200).

### **The Cultural Image of Teachers: Discourses of Deficiency**

The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown questioned the core philosophies of the education system of the nation and imposed the challenges of transforming the "moment of crisis to a moment of life-affirmation", necessitating “a mix of awakened intelligence, deep religiosity and profound sensitivity” (Pathak). For a while there were notable observations from experts about the dire need to rethink the future of education. Many of them emphasised that the situation would give way to remedying the pitfalls of conventional education that relied heavily on content delivery and its reproduction in exams aptly summarised by Kumar as the "textbook culture" (67). The digital archive of Kerala's First Bell initiative bears testimony to this long standing crisis in education as the homogenised effort is to compress the classroom modalities into a thirty minute episode format and every teacher can be found struggling to introduce interactive features along with a greater emphasis on the paralinguistic features to deliver content alternately in English and Malayalam, integrating folk and film songs, and asking the students to complete worksheets and notes from their homes. The pandemic in itself became a discourse for the classroom as all teachers in the videos begin and end their discussion by reflecting on the impact of the pandemic and reminding the students about the need to adopt precautionary measures.

A four-part series that appeared in the Mathrubhuminewspaper shows the current concerns of teachers in Kerala — in the post pandemic world of smart devices, the teacher is merely one among the many sources of learning for the students. The hierarchy of the teacher as the expert and the student as inexpert has been removed. As the classroom structures came to be compromised and access to technology became the decisive factor, the teachers started to lose their autonomy. The post-lockdown school environment does not satisfy the children as can be seen from this comment by a student to a teacher: "Teacher, your classes are very boring. Wouldn't we get these in better ways from YouTube?" (Kala). In the series, the duties listed beyond teaching range from clerical and peon work for admission, TC, salary bill and book distribution to cleaning and sanitation work in schools on account of lack of approved non-teaching staff posts in such institutions. The mid-day meal system is another major responsibility which becomes an added pressure to the head teacher and there are demands that the system be run by the local self-governments. The conditions of special

list temporary teachers are even more deplorable as they are allegedly paid negligible salaries. The result-oriented pressures also add to the agonies of the teachers. The series, through its descriptions and illustrations, portrays the images of teachers who are overworked, dispirited, physically tired and unjustifiably sexualised. The complexities of the behaviour patterns of the students are puzzling the teachers who have to watch helplessly as the students raise their demands without curtesy: "I will teach him a lesson if he doesn't give my phone back" (Kala). But as Giroux argues, learning spaces have an element of autonomy and teachers and learners can assert their agency to resist cultural domination (7). The need for psychology courses in B.Ed and D.El. Ed curricula has become more prominent in such a scenario according to clinical psychologists who evaluate the situation (Kala). On being asked about the pandemic experience, the insights shared by a few students show their skepticism in learning languages within a classroom context: "The dominance of English can be overthrown with new apps that ensure expression in all languages" (Student A). According to another student, "For the younger learners it was a major change as they relied on visual information mostly, not verbal. It narrows down the flexibility of the child's education" (Student B). The remark by another student goes, "In online platforms the discussion was less. Especially for English, the class discussions earlier used to give a lot of ideas. For my brother the idea of school turned out to be just for classes" (Student C). The sociality of the classroom experience was reduced to specific curricular outcomes in adherence to the textbook culture.

### **Teacher Reflections of the Post-Pandemic Classrooms: Paradoxical Agency**

To get an idea about the existing reflective practices of teachers, interviews with fifteen English teachers who teach in Classes VI, VIII, X and XII of two government vocational higher secondary schools each from Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode regions of Kerala were conducted and their English classroom interactions were mainly recorded in January, 2023. One of the schools from each region was co-educational while the other one was girls' only. The institutions were selected based on the broad categorisation of the 'rural', 'upcoming' and 'urban', 'popular' typologies of schools to get an overall picture. The interviews and discussions after classroom practices revealed a few aspects of the post-pandemic negotiations that happen in the English classrooms of Kerala.

The representations of pandemic practices and teacher's identity in the media employ the paradoxical discourses of agency and deficiency. The English department becomes a complementary mix of teachers with different inclinations — the conformist and the transformative paradigms of teachers who alternately hold the existing perspectives as sacred and transcend the challenges posed by the pandemic. Some of them recognise their roles as "meek dictators", as observed by Kumar (73), vouching for personal experiences of witnessing the lack in students because of the liberal grading systems and agree to the status quo. The others aspire for the persona of "reflective practitioners", a term used by Moore (4) where they become transformative teachers who exude confidence in the skills of the students and in their own teaching practices. They carefully add their faith in the new syllabus pattern and other government programmes which are focussed on the communicative needs of the learner. Both the groups were in agreement that the students need to work in improving their writing skills.

An interaction with two male English teachers from an upcoming rural school showed how various social factors work in tandem, with regard to language education. The pandemic times saw the Student Police Cadets of GVHSS Vithura setting up Kuttippallikkoodams, or mini learning centres which were later taken up by the Integrated Tribal Development Project, with one educator assigned for each centre ("Kuttippallikkoodam"). These community centres were established as part of ensuring the continuity of learning for tribal students who did not have access to even digital classrooms during the pandemic. Classes were usually held in the form of remedial discussions for a mixed batch of students, while there was one TV to telecast the KITE VICTERS classes. The reluctant tryst of the tribal students with English, aided by teachers and students of the nearby school, could be briefly seen during a visit to one of these learning centres. The paradox observed was that while English remained the key to a set of socially responsible learners and teachers to converse to the world and

develop their social responsibilities during the pandemic, the other half still remained testimony to the failure of English to reach the heart of some Indian communities.

The male teachers have the opinion that the pandemic induced more restlessness in gadget uses particularly among adolescent girls. The term they employ is "bad addiction" as they mention about girl students talking to older boys from other districts to promote their Instagram handles and trapping themselves in relationships, which gets revealed when their phones are snatched and screened by the teachers (Anver). They observe that boys turned "violent" and "aggressive" as they came to the classroom after the pandemic and they had to be reminded using force that the "teachers were not merely their friends" (Gihin).

Most of the classroom practices across regions were still structured around repetitions, reading aloud and mass answering of comprehension questions. A teacher remarks in the post-class discussion that conversations in the class should be more natural and that there would be more dynamic younger teachers who might have other inputs. He talks about the students from coastal areas who are keen to use English, girls hailing from broken families "though they wear coats on the outside" (Paul). Another teacher from Kozhikode who teaches English to higher secondary students said that in the pandemic era "flexibility is the key word" (Sujith). The observation by another teacher about the complex situations of the learners' families bring more nuances to the homogenised narratives — regarding migrant learners, specifically from inaccessible areas (Satheesan). These reflections point to the social practice of care, as discussed by Sunandan in his call to demystify sensitivity in the teaching process (152). He adds that teachers' training practices that aim at cultivating the ethics of care as a common attribute rather than romanticising it as a natural endowment should work in tandem with the community to ensure the sustained relevance of education among marginalised communities (155).

The new definition of "connect" in English teaching posed challenges to teacher status and teacher quality. A teacher identified the term "sharing" — of materials, experiences and emotions- as the catch phrase of her post-pandemic classroom experience (Indu). With an increased participation in online classes through a monitoring presence the parents are also identified as sharing in the experience of the students. The teachers place their perceptions in the nexus between rural, urban/ popular and upcoming (mushrooming) schools. They try to understand the situation and choose their strategies accordingly. In the teacher's discourse, the learner is not understood as a mere receptacle, instead, the teacher derives incentive to be more updated from the changing scenarios of learning. For instance, the teachers keep employing the common discourse of storytelling as a major method of effective English language learning by the teachers as it emphasises equality.

The aggravated set of personal and professional problems in the context of the pandemic have made the discussions of the mental health of the students more relevant among the teachers. The teachers are more responsive to the change in classroom language after the reopening of schools. The classroom language has become more inclusive and the contexts are becoming more forgiving of mistakes. The teachers are receptive to the changes in the control of classroom context, technology for professional purposes and the scope for professional outreach. They are giving more focus to aspects like paralinguistic features for effective content delivery.

## **Conclusion**

The teaching practices and roles adopted by the English school teachers in Kerala during the pandemic helped them redefine the idea of "connect" by integrating the ideas of pedagogy and the culture of human rights. While the pandemic amplified the divides at the structural and individual levels, the agency of the teachers was simultaneously sacrificed and renegotiated through multiple methods. The discourses in Kerala and the interactions with teachers show how factors related to their social agency and structural agency work in tandem to create the conditions of English learning

in the classrooms of Kerala. A student's response sums up the expectations that the teachers have to keep facing in the post-pandemic classrooms:

"The narrative of English as a medium of expression will not be replaced entirely by artificially generated language models. But these models can make it easier for people to access English. The aim of proficiency will change. Translation apps will enable people to relate with the language more, rather than imposing grammatical rules" (Student A). The key is in identifying critical thinking, inclusivity and justice as integral to the learning practices in the language classroom.

### **Endnotes**

1. The Education Department of Kerala started virtual classes from June 1, 2020 through the state educational channel, KITE (Kerala Infrastructure and technology for Education) VICTERS (Versatile ICT Enabled Resource for Students). The sessions were held from 9.30 AM to 5.30 PM, Monday to Friday for the Classes I to XII).

2. Under this initiative, children were sent webpages in PDF format in which audio-video inputs and directions are embedded and linked to YouTube. In a single click they were able to view stories, songs and presentations and follow them up with activities aimed at language enhancement. There were efforts to translate videos in English and Malayalam to other languages such as Tamil and Kannada to cater to the needs of students of other mediums.

3. The female English teacher clad in a blue saree who appeared in one of the first telecasted classes for Class XII English in KITE VICTERS channel appeared in social media fan pages for all the wrong reasons as she became the subject of male gaze and objectification. Ironically the content she discussed in the classes was pertaining to gender equality.

### **Disclosure**

No potential conflict of interest has been reported and no funding has been received for this research.

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# **Vision 2050 - Theatre as a Language of Communication for Higher Education**

## **A Reflective Research-Based Case Study on Possibilities and Approaches with the New Education Policy**

**MOHAMED ARIF & SIBU B VAZ**

### **Introduction**

“Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do. It is happening already – you can see it now! I will make a road through the wilderness and give you streams of water there” (Isaiah 43:18-19) [3]

By 2050 what would we like to have achieved & impacted through higher education - to leave as a legacy? Finland’s educational model is not the right one for everyone. The need is to introspect and reflect on life skills with a vision for growth. During the most energetic years of life – students moving from the gates of high school to the doors of employment seem to lose all hope. Creativity, communication, bonding, and achievement of the highest potential – get sapped behind the desks of higher education – with no vision for the future. Boys and Girls become Men and Women – without individual or collective identity. The lack of vision is also because of the unexplored communication of their potential as human beings in the campuses of higher education. With classroom methodology and written assessment as the norm of higher education - the grand educational outcomes are poorly visible on the international walls of fame titled ‘not employable with no vision’ in the practical reality of the real world for most students.

Welcome to theatre as a language of communication for higher education to achieve the highest potential. While there are different opinions to what is theatre - theatre director Peter Brook in his book “The Empty Space” says “I can take an empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all, that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.” [4] While this might be a quote from a theatre practitioner – it gives an introduction to the minimum requirement for an open mind — to understand theatre as a language of communication for higher education.

The indicators for future growth could be extracted from the educational policy documents for higher education, but the practicality of Vision 2050 is in the hands of institutional stakeholders. Willingness to invest in this change by management — for faculty education and holistic development of students will and should remain the foundation of growth.

- Access and equity
- Multidisciplinary
- Holistic approach
- Flexible undergraduate education

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Mohamed Arif  
Vaz Dramatic Academy  
Email: arif.script@gmail.com

Sibu Vaz  
Vaz Dramatic Academy  
Email: sibuvaz@gmail.com

- Quality enhancement
- Research and innovation
- Internationalization and Technology integration.

These areas from educational policies could be considered as milestones — while creating the new vocabulary for the teaching–learning process to take place.

“Often people are keen on getting huge publicity in the newspapers or the electronic media while announcing their programs or policies. Public memory is short. Nobody bothers to ask whether something is being done to implement them even after a year!” (Kalam and Rajan, India 2020, 268) [5]. Without getting lost in the vocabulary of AI or Shakespeare the need of the hour is to ACT now and hold oneself accountable for growth on a daily basis.

### **Background**

The need for this paper was felt as there is a lack of personal understanding and practical experience-based direction on the topic. It also brings to the forefront — the power of individual and collective intrinsic motivation of a theatre-based process — that has not been looked at beyond reasons of “performance and catharsis”.

The “will” of the management is the foundation on which any institution stands. When the ‘will’ is not visible through vibrant students — only huge structures and academic routines survive. This paper looks at the 13+ year case study by theatre practitioners at Christ College, Bangalore. The college transformed itself into Christ, Deemed to be University — with theatre as a language of communication with a Vision 2020 approach.

Visuals, project outlines, reference books, and video links are a few sources used to support this case study paper. Drama-based learning reference used to support this paper is drawn from “Edgar Dale’s – Cone of Learning” to enable internationalization and global understanding.

### **Institutional Architecture**

While future institutional architecture could be redesigned to accommodate creative ideation and implementation – for the present, the work revolves around what is available. The first indicator to this possibility is to identify enclosed empty spaces to work where students and faculty can sit in a circle to enable collaborative learning. These spaces are movable theatre labs, where experiments related to human potential are constantly explored. The first possibility explored was – working in existing spaces or creating spaces by moving existing furniture/equipment. The second possibility was using ‘found space’ for imaginative possibilities. Corridors, pathways, seating areas, spaces with artificial/natural light sources, places with creative backdrops, rethinking the library time and space dynamics, foyers, parking areas, play areas... the list increased with imagination and institutional willingness to rethink the use of space and time to achieve objectives.

### **Output of Current Educational Approach**

Can uninspired and dogmatic institutions of higher education produce inspired citizens of tomorrow? The answer to this can be found in the alumni list of institutions. How many are inspired and inspire others to achieve or come back and contribute to achieving the highest human potential with a long-term vision? The greatest leaders, public speakers, athletes, musicians, artists, inventors, and entrepreneurs.... take many hard knocks in life and attribute their learning to other sources than the formal higher education platform provided by institutions. This clearly shows that the current educational approach needs a re-look.

The need is to enable an environment of challenging opportunities to keep every generation of students intrinsically excited about learning and accomplishment — through a creative, multidisciplinary, and holistic education approach.

## **Research Goal**

The period from 2005 to 2020 was used to practically research the possibilities and outcomes in higher education. Christ College, Bangalore management had the willingness to invest in this possibility – when the theatre practitioners of this research paper proposed the Vision 2020 approach. The research goal started with the showcasing of Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam’s life story – with student performers – when he was the honorable President of India. What followed was a series of continuous theatre interventions across departments. The language of the theatre was observed, absorbed, and participated by thousands of students, faculty, and society at large– till Christ College turned into Christ, Deemed to be University. (YouTube., Christ University 50 years) [6]. Theatre started as a certificate course and evolved into an Under Graduate subject for 3 years, with annual festivals and collaborations spanning over a decade. The 2020 research goal completed an extended journey into the online space due to the advent of Covid 19 and closed with an online festival in 2021. (YouTube., Darpan 2021-Visual Theatre) [7].

The current research goal is to offer the learnings, with practical steps – through an annual Vision 2050 approach – keeping this paper at the tipping point. “This isn’t a classroom setting. We wanted this to be something that women wanted to share, that they wanted to pass on. And how much easier is it to hang the hooks of knowledge on a story?”(Gladwell, The Tipping Point:254-255) [8].

## **Upgrading Facilitation Skills**

Redefining teaching faculty as facilitators was the first step in a world flooded with information. The skill sets of a facilitator were to be understood and added to the repertoire through guided faculty training to enable a change in the system. This required a willingness and vision from the management to understand and invest in the right training with defined outcomes.

The subject/topic-based intimate interactive theatre training done for faculty at Christ, Deemed to be University enabled it to be published as one of the best practices. (Dr. Kataria Sandeep., Inclusive Education -92) [9] Training for faculty from the English department by Switzerland theatre practitioner Otto Huber, saw internationalization being imbibed into the campus culture. Teacher training for over a decade was a regular feature for over 100 participants annually– graduating with a master’s in Bachelor of Education – to become teachers and principals of schools. Theatre methodology skills for the faculty of Business Management were enabled after hundreds of performances were showcased by students of the department. “It’s a matter of plugging into the student’s energy – they will always tell me what has to be said, It’s paramount to me to give the actor tools he can use to bring to life...”(Rand and Scorgia., Acting Teachers of America- 23)[10].

100+ student teams were guided every year to have subject faculty members as their theatre team’s signing authority – to enable the journey of using theatre as a collective language of communication. The result was thousands of Higher Education students actively and passively engaged and invested in topics of their choice with intrinsic motivation. The creative outcomes were visible within and outside the campus with this facilitation approach.

## **Understanding Generation Divide and Approach**

While the faculty at higher education predominantly remains the same – there has been a noticeable 20 to 25% change in the profile of students who join the campus every year. Some of the factors are socio-economic background, cultural orientation, technological advancements, and educational background. Adapting to this 100% change in student profile every 4 to 5 years means there is a constant need to adapt to the language and approach for every generation.

During the 13+ years research period– the language of theatre approach started with ‘adapting Shakespeare for English students’ in one generation, moved to ‘understanding personal stories’ for

the next generation, and finally became 'digital theatre documentation for thematic festivals' in the third generation.

### Vision 2020 to Vision 2050

While Vision 2020 was to understand and explore the possibilities of the language of theatre in higher education, Vision 2050 has to be one of – implementing the learning for whole institution transformation. With 'time' and 'resources' being in short supply for this dedicated approach – the decisions have to be strong and inclusive for impact to trickle and touch the gatekeepers and the heads of institutions simultaneously – for the benefit of students, faculty, and society at large.

The three predominant reasons which enabled the journey were

- a) 'Collective approach' by a team which understands the methodology, has the practical experience and is intrinsically committed to enabling success using this approach. The creation of a team to understand, research, and deliver results as required is a key factor to success. Training the trainer program to have a second and third line of ownership among the participants is critical for this collective approach.
- b) 'Willing participants' who are ready to take responsibility for the success/failure as part of their learning curve before and after the process. The driving force for the participants – was the visible and invisible goals that were kept as milestones. These critical aspects enabled intrinsic motivation among the participants who bought into the idea – that the success of this type of intervention is in their hands.
- c) 'Right methodology' which is arrived at by using short-term goals and a long-term visionary approach. What are the strengths of the group? How can the process and performance aspects be modulated to become critical for success? Understanding the medium and possibilities of arts, be it visuals, performing arts, machine arts, or folk arts - ensuring that different approaches work – needed constant monitoring. How much of a 'basic' and how much of a 'specific' approach is a balance – that had to be looked at from a methodology perspective.

Challenges: Budgeting is a critical aspect that dictates time, people involved, duration, modules, and implementable plans. While the practitioners were working from an intrinsic motivation – the institution was supporting to the extent possible.

The compounding benefits of the approach began to far outweigh the investment being made annually for over 13+ years and reached its natural culmination in 2020-21.

The need is now to benefit from the learning and have a fresh approach toward the new vision – Vision 2050.



Figure 3

### Understanding Goals

One cannot take a cruise ship from the port of Bahamas and hope to land on the moon. The letters and possibilities in the language of theatre have to be learned, explored, and understood to set goals of achievement. 'Simple to the complex' is the rule of thumb.

The joy of theatre, self-exploration, paired achievement, and creation in trios are some aspects that can be started as simple concepts - to get a grip on the possibilities of theatre before performances come into perspective.

### **Setting Project-Based Visible Outcomes**

Dividing the institution into its logical departmental structure with an accountability hierarchy is the first step to engaging the institution. Project-based goals for departments with visible outcomes related to the topic give clarity that engages students and faculty on the path of progress. Simple topics and achievable goals after the level 1 workshop in a maximum of 3-day period gets everyone invested with enthusiasm. Those who cross this stage are introduced to level 2 – which would be a thirty-day challenge before they embark on level 3 – which would be a masterclass of 90 days.

### **Vision 2050: Pushing the Boundaries**

Smaller tasks tend to become challenging if the larger picture is not in place. The larger goal of Vision 2020 kept the momentum going for all the smaller goals at Christ, Deemed to Be University. This experience gives the indication that it is necessary to set the goal of Vision 2050 with possibilities of what can/should be achieved. Course correction becomes a possibility only if the goal is clear. “I was looking for a solid technique. I had gone through a famous Midwestern University...”(Rand and Scorcia., *Acting Teachers of America-* 194)[11]. Unless the boundary of possibilities is stretched to great heights of imagination, the adrenalin rush for every generation to achieve something big for humanity, will be lost.

### **Model of Learning**

Just like language has letters, words, and grammar – there is a need for theatre vocabulary to be experienced and understood. Before we convince – we need to be convinced that this is the right approach. A proven model of learning which justifies this approach needs to be held as the signpost of validation.

### ***Edgar Dale’s – Cone of Learning***

To provide a global reference of communication supporting drama – Edgar Dale’s Cone of Learning (Dale Edgar 1969) [12] model has been chosen for this paper. The model reveals that 10% of what we read is remembered after 2 weeks while 90% is remembered if it is a real-life experience. Dale’s findings prove that dramatic recreation is the closest language methodology possible to enable a learning experience. The remaining learning experiences fall within this spectrum. Reading, which is highly stressed in the higher education system, is identified as the least remembered approach. This model alone is enough proof as to why theatre as a language of communication needs to be incorporated into higher education.

# The Cone of Learning



**Figure 4: Cone of Learning**

## Theatre as a language - A, B, C

What are the A, B, C letters that constitute the basics for the language of theatre? This can be identified only if we agree on the definition of theatre. Drama and Theatre as terms itself mean different things and for most people theatre is identified with performance. For the practicality of the approach in higher education we will focus on the definition of theatre as published in the paper Theatrical Tormentory Timeline (3T). “Theatre is a refining process of societal activities using identified tools through experiential methodology where participants take individual and collective accountability from its initial process to its final impact” (Vaz Sib., Theatrical Tormentory Timeline) [13]

### A

As a first step, a listing of possibilities is a good start to explore the landscape of using the language of theatre across deaneries. The following programs have been implemented and hence tried and tested in the practical atmosphere in the case study of higher education.



**Figure 5**

With this reference list — institutions can lay the road map of what could be the vision they want to achieve over a period of time.

### B

Creating specific outlines to achieve desired outcomes with target groups provides clarity. These will form the guidelines to enable clear thinking and put students on the path to understanding the boundaries and possibilities of theatre as a language of communication. The following page 1

guidelines of the intra-university festival provide an example of the specifics that provide clarity to students, stakeholders, and evaluators.

**C**  
Showcasing theatre participation and achievement of individuals and teams, as news, builds recognition and validates the responsibility and accountability of students, faculty, and the institution as a whole. This also gives visibility and serves as theatrical research proof for all those who want to benefit from this approach. It is used for validating theatre as a language of communication for social accountability.



**Figure 6: UG student’s performance which started as a classroom experience on women empowerment. The play went on to win the first prize at the University - before being identified as the best production at the Deccan Herald youth festival in Bangalore.**

### **Management Will**

With the latest in AI threatening to take over the minds of the emerging generation - the need of the hour is a strong-willed management who has the courage to empower faculty and students continuously to follow a vision. “How we interact with others and how we view ourselves will continue to be influenced and driven by the online world around us (Schmidt and Cohen., The New Digital Age-5) [14]. What is the Vision 2050 plan needs to be ‘willed’ and articulated, as the challenges ahead are multi-dimensional. As guardians of the educational galaxy, it becomes our responsibility to ensure human capabilities are constantly enhanced to empower humanity using the language and possibilities of theatre. The roadblocks due to lack of deep understanding are many, so the caretakers of higher education have a goal to achieve. To ensure humanity is alive and well for every generation through a facilitative and collective participatory approach. The Chat GPTs of the future that produce abridged versions of Shakespeare’s Tempest should not rock the boat of creative possibilities. Guided and focused research publications with student action are the future.

Following is the bird’s eye view of the future academic cycle of activity.



**Figure 7**

Thinking inside the box is the new creative ideation for higher education.

### Conclusion and Future Work

For an institution with a weak 'will' hundreds of proofs might not be enough to change their approach. An institution of higher education with a strong will needs no proof to move in the right direction. The purpose of this research is hoping to help stop doing the same thing over and over again and start creating opportunities in which every student can participate in collective growth. "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." – Albert Einstein Opportunities that only a multi-disciplinary holistic language called theatre can provide - to fulfill a national and individual educational policy for the development of all. The question is who will step up to take responsibility as the target group for collective accountability and growth. Done in 5-year cycles the process improves by a small tipping point every year - to create the next wave of compounding effect of growth for the institution, faculty, students, and society at large.

Month	Activity	Target Group
January	Vision and Mission	
February	Theatre Festival	
March	Dramatic Freeze	
April	Theatre and Research	
May	Summer Workshop	
June	New Directions	
July	Showcasing Theatre	
August	Stories of the Nation	
September	Solution to Teachers	
October	Inspiring Individuals	
November	Children of Hope	
December	Celebrations	



The language of theatre holds innovation and repetition together beautifully  
“Nothing works like the power of the compound effect of simple actions done right over time.”- Hardy  
Darren., The Compound Effect [15].

### **Continuous Research and Development**

Institutions of higher education are expected to serve as storehouses of knowledge imparting new direction and approaches to society. What will be the research publications and development approaches of each and every institution of higher education? Only time will tell - when the empty pages of institutional experience are willingly converted into performed and published life lessons by students and faculty. We the practitioners along with the community are waiting and watching to enable the same.

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# Artificial Intelligence and Teaching English

**SUMEETA CHANDA**

## **Introduction**

Persson says that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has not yet been defined, and “attempts to define it gives rise to semantic controversies.” He defines research in Artificial Intelligence to be the design of machines whose behaviour in a situation would be deemed intelligent if the same were observed in human activity. An alternative question would be “can machines think?” (88) There are six kinds of applications for Artificial Intelligence. They are Game-Playing Programs, Problem-Solving Machines, Inductive Machines, Question-Answering Machines, Some Applications, and Simulation of Cognitive Processes. Game-playing programs make use of decision-making in complex and changing environments. (90-100)

UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers 2018 says that the Internet of Things is “the network of computing devices embedded in everyday objects”; for example, computers, smartphones, smartwatches, and other devices capable of sending and receiving data over the Internet. The IoT is a disruptive technology, and it has already transformed many areas of everyday life, including education. (17)

The use of AI tools requires that one be familiar with computer programming. Even in the case of ChatGPT, it requires that one is familiar with constructing efficient queries so that it can deliver the intended results. In India, all school children could be taught computer programming so that by the time they are in college, they are prepared to utilise the availability of free technologies like the ChatGPT. Learning to work with AI is an indispensable skill for the future job market.

## **Teachers and New Technology**

Broad says that new inventions in the realm of domestic appliances made with the intent to make life easier for housewives, unwittingly ended up creating more housework for the housewife in the American home. For example, the open hearth was replaced by the wood burning stove. This was to be the source of indoor heating as well as the cooking apparatus. Now, men and children have less household work to do because the stove consumed less firewood. But this led to more work for the ladies, because now they started to cook more variety of food in order to maintain their increasing social status. The housewives received next to nil help from anyone else in her household. There were similar results from the invention of the vacuum cleaner, and the washing machine.

The new technology always briefly satisfied the labour-saving promise, but eventually led to increased labour from the housewife. The result of this was that despite having access to helpful technology, housewives appeared pale, exhausted, and sick.

An important lesson to draw from this situation is that new technology must be assessed with careful attention to the social, cultural, and political systems within which they will be used. Technology usually does not deliver the social and political results that its designers had intended or predicted.

AI tools such as ETS's products are owned privately by company who claim that it will save time for teachers in their writing courses. David Owen, in his book, *None of the Above: Behind the Myth of Scholastic Aptitude* (1995) discusses the effects of AI testing on education. He researched ETS as a journalist, and found that the company showed secretiveness, deceptions, arrogance, and disregard for students and teachers. (221-223)

The arrogance, biases, and disregard for teachers and students by ETS will reflect on the behaviour of their product. AI is a tool that learns to mimic human behaviour; therefore, it learns the arrogance, biases, and disregard for teachers and students. This could cause the AI to display such behaviour towards its users, that is, the test takers.

### **Artificial Intelligence Revolution in India**

Vempati says that the recent developments in AI in the world should alert the policymakers in India to upgrade their Information Communications and Technology (ICT) policies. In order to prepare Indians for the near-future job market, it is essential to incubate AI-based innovation, establish AI-ready infrastructure, and prepare the people with the requisite AI skills. They say that "The National Education Policy must make radical recommendations on alternative models of education that would be better suited to an AI-powered economy of the future." In today's economic times, the sequential system of education and work has become outdated because the nature of jobs shift rapidly requiring the workers to acquire and leave behind new skills in a matter of years. (1-2) The National Education Policy must make its policies keeping in mind the long-term view of the skills economy. It should evaluate the relevance of the sequential education system of the present, and ensure that a smooth transition is made into alternative systems of education, that which will be relevant for the economy of the future. Such new policies must start before the present system begins to become obsolete. (16)

For students whose major is not a science subject, the university could encourage such students to take courses related to computer programming. The university could hold courses to teach programming skills and computer literacy to literature majors. Literature majors could effectively utilise AI in their writing and research tasks.

### **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)**

Law et al say that the Indian state governments, implementation agencies, and certifying agencies will be the institutions or providers of various courses in order to help develop digital literacy in India. The salient point of the initiative is to make one person digitally literate in every eligible rural district by 30 March 2019.

The government's Digital India vision is to train rural people to use digital devices for specific functions. The objective is to build up the nation digitally, and reduce the digital divide among the people.

The Ministry of Electronics & Communication Technology will have supervised the project. NGOs, Industry, Government authorized centres, Common Services Centres (CSCs) and authorized educational institutions will train people. Digital literacy is the literary focus that it develops. For example, it develops media literacy, ICT literacy. The vision is that "Digital literacy is a person operating several digital devices like Tablets, Smartphones, etc, and sending and receiving of emails, browsing the Internet for information and undertaking digital payment, etc." (40-41)

While all students in towns and cities have some access to computer literacy, the students in villages are completely devoid of such facilities. The government could provide computer programming skills to village children.

### **Writing with GPT-3**

Su et al say that “AI is an interdisciplinary subject that simulates human intelligence.” It simulates the human thinking process. AI’s main task is to show approximate human intelligent behaviour. ICT has played an important role in the process of second language acquisition. This also makes the skill of writing in English as a second language more intellectualised and more humanised. The research on second language learning tools has a long history. The phonograph for learning English phonetics, cassette recorders in the classroom, application of multimedia technology, AI-assisted reading, are all examples of ICT tools used to learn English as a second language. (2)

Since most educated Indians know the English language as a second language, it is important to pay attention to tools that are made to teach English to non-native speakers. These are the kinds of tools that could be used in Indian universities to facilitate learning, and research work, in order to make learning and research more efficient.

Su et al say that in the learning and evaluation of English as a second language, AI tools have been widely used. They were developed over a course of four stages. The first stage was to make courseware in high-level language. The second stage was to make courseware with writing system. The third stage was to apply multimedia network information technology in a large area. The fourth stage was to combine expert system with AI program application.

The review-writing AI developed over a course of three stages. First, it was focussed on the development and application of the primary evaluation system. Ellis Page and others developed the Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) system in the 1960s. Page Essay Grade (PEG) provided the score without any feedback. The second stage focussed on intermediate intelligent feedback, which was incorporated into the AWE system. This could scan, evaluate, diagnose, and score an essay. There was a lack of computer corpus. This caused problems in the surface feedback information. The third stage, which is now, is the advanced intelligent network evaluation system.

At present, the Automated Essay Grading (AEG) is widely used in the world. This is the same system used by the TOEFL Internet-based examinations, as well as in their manual evaluations. Other tools used in English writing review are the Writing Roadmap (McLaughler), Peer Mark (Turnitin), Calibrated Peer Review (University of California), Peerceptiv (University of Pittsburgh), Peer Scholar (University of Toronto). The technology they use is the Big Data technology, which can evaluate the author’s linguistic skills and cognitive ability, and can provide real-time feedback.

Sharples says that students could employ AI story generators to write essays. Essays are an integral part of academic assessment since the early nineteenth century. This began with students in Europe being required to write scholarly papers for discussion in seminars. Essays are still used in academics because they are easy to set and assess depth of understanding. It also trains students in how to express arguments. In the recent years, the essays have come to include narrative, argumentative, reflective, responsive, and analytical papers. (1119)

The generative “Transformer” AI systems such as the GPT-3 democratises cheating and plagiarism. A student can generate an essay with the help of GPT-3 instead of writing it themselves. How can a teacher detect that an essay was written by a computer and not by the student?

Gaining access to GPT-3 is straightforward. Anyone with Internet access can sign up to the OpenAI website, create an account and click on the “Playground” tab. The user then has to type the prompt of the essay, such as the title, set the maximum length of the output (about 3000 words), and click on the Submit button. It takes GPT-3 a few seconds to generate a typed and formatted essay.

GPT-3 or Transformer AI is a general-purpose language machine, which is the more sophisticated version of the text completer tool found in smartphones. The tool looks back at the previous 750 words it has written, then continue to generate further text to complete a short story, a blog, or student essay. Teachers could prescribe only written assignments as exams, that is, without giving any written assignments for homework. But exams are formal and time consuming. "Teachers alternatively could assign reflective and contextualized written assignments that could not be generated by AI." For example, a teacher could assign each student to perform an independent research project, then ask for a written report on the project.

One way to employ AI in teaching would be to make the AI generate text (essay or research) on a topic, then ask students to "critique these and write their own better versions." "The teacher could explore with students the ethics and limits of generative AI." For example, how does it feel to interact with the AI who has no intrinsic morals, no ethics, no context knowledge, and no first-hand knowledge (experience) about the world?

Transformer AI is being used in education through chatbots, text summarisation, language translators, essay generators, and tools for creative writing. The AIED community is developing new generative AI tools for writing, reasoning, and conversation for learning. (1120-1125)

### **ChatGPT in Higher Education**

Sabzalieva et al say that ChatGPT is a generative AI tool that has reached popularity within two months of its launch. The latest free version of ChatGPT is the GPT-3.5. (3) They say that ChatGPT allows people to interact with a computer in a conversational way, that is, one does not need to have computer programming skills in order to be able to use ChatGPT. GPT stands for "Generative Pretrained Transformer" and the name belongs to a family of natural language models developed by OpenAI. It produces original results, that is the text generated by this program is original work. It uses Natural Language Processing (NLP) to learn from Internet data. "It provides users with artificial intelligence-based written responses to questions or prompts."

ChatGPT has been trained on 570gb of data representing 300 billion words, and it has around 175 billion parameters. It can be thought of as a "computer robot" with whom one could discuss any topic. The user interface is friendly, and it can be used to ask for data, analysis, and opinion. It however does not take a stand or a definite position in terms of its opinions. Future versions of ChatGPT are expected to have the capacity to interpret data, and have more advanced writing abilities. (5)

It has already been applied in higher education. Because of its ability to generate and assess information, it could improve the process and experience of learning for students. In order to be able to do this, ChatGPT can be used as a standalone device, or it can also be integrated into other platforms used by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

ChatGPT can perform many simple and technical tasks. For example, basic research, calculations, proofing, and it could be incorporated to augment teaching and learning. Other examples include Possibility engine, Socratic opponent, Collaboration coach, Guide on the side, Personal tutor, Co-designer, Exploratorium, Study buddy, Motivator, Dynamic assessor. (9)

The most relevant tools for English Literature seem to be Possibility engine, Socratic opponent, Collaboration coach, and Guide on the Side. In Possibility engine, students write prompts and use the Regenerate function to generate alternative responses, In Socratic opponent, students enter prompts in the structure of a conversation or debate. Teachers can ask students to use this feature to prepare for debates or discussions in class or seminars. In Collaboration coach, students can work in groups to find out information to complete assignments. In Guide on the side, teachers can generate content for class or course, and advice to help students learn concepts.

ChatGPT's impact on higher education has been immediate. Its application in higher education is extensive, but many universities have banned it and several countries have blocked it. The main concern is about academic integrity in terms of plagiarism and cheating if students use it to prepare or write essays and exams. This has greater implications for subjects that have a greater written component such as English Literature.

Existing tools to detect plagiarism may be ineffective in the case of ChatGPT because it produces original content. The development of other applications that can detect AI generated writing is in due course. Universities have either banned it, or have changed their assessment methods. ChatGPT is not regulated, which is a concern addressed by UNESCO. "A group of over 1000 academics and private sector leaders have published an open letter calling for a pause on the development of training powerful AI systems. This cessation would allow time for potential risks to be investigated and better understood and for shared protocols to be developed."

ChatGPT is not governed by ethical principles, and cannot distinguish right from wrong. It learns all the cognitive bias in the training material it has been provided with. The results it provides must be critically analysed, and compared with other sources of information. Gender and other forms of discrimination are found in all AI. (10-11)

### **Writing with a Chatbot**

Lin et al say that they developed a chatbot that helps teachers to deliver writing instructions. By working with the chatbot, the post-secondary students (writers) developed a thesis statement for the argumentative essay outlines, and the chatbot helped the writers to refine their peer review feedback. They conducted an analysis on how the writers fared on writing with chatbot. They also collected student testimonials about their chatbot experience.

Important pedagogical and research implications for chatbot-guided writing instructions, and the use of learning technology have been addressed. Many educators have started to diversify instructions by adopting educational technology.

Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) have been developed. They offer learners customised instructions. ITS has limitations such as limited instructional values, lack of student modelling, and limited interactivity. If a chatbot is programmed on the supplementary side of ITS, it may help facilitate a real-time dialogue that supports thinking and learning processes.

An ITS is given the teacher's role by presenting learning materials and feedback to students. A chatbot is a supplementary conversational program that interacts with users such as in a human-like conversation, question answering, user support, or tutoring.

Chatbots have been defined as "text-based, turn-based, task-fulfilling programs, embedded within existing platforms." In educational research, a chatbot has always been implemented with an intention, such as promoting class engagement or promoting critical thinking. (78)

In Lin et al's study, a writing chatbot was used in the university to a writing activity. It acted as a supplementary activity to in-class writing. Learning writing skills requires that one interacts with the chatbot via several inputs and outputs.

Theoretically speaking, building a chatbot for writing purpose could help the writer with dialogue when needed. The chatbot can help students to generate thesis statements. By working with the chatbot, students can evaluate their ideas for their thesis statements.

The chatbot is expected to assist students in two areas in the writing process. The first is to draft a thesis statement, and the second is to offer peer review feedback.

Data collected as a result of learner's conversations with the chatbot lead to some questions. When working on the thesis statements, does the chatbot enhance the writing? How do students perceive the use of a chatbot?

A conversation with the teacher is key to learning. Engaging students with a chatbot as the instructor might support the writing and learning. (79)

### Teaching English

Lewis says that the teaching of English literature, and the teaching of spelling, grammar, and rhetoric are two different things. It is unfortunate that both the lessons are taught by the same department, as the best teacher of literature might not be good at teaching grammar or rhetoric. He says that the teaching system relies too much on the kindergarten methods, even for the teaching of literature by emphasising on discipline. (187)

There is an amount of thoroughness required of students in reading. The average student has a small vocabulary, and it is desirable to have this vocabulary extended, for example, if the teacher were teaching *Macbeth*, then the first lessons are those of Padlock, Graymalkin, kerns, gallowglasses, Bellona's bridegroom, and other expressions that the average student does not understand. The teacher may then ask the student to look those expressions up, and find their meanings. The average student is unlikely to look them up unless he or she is prodded, and the teacher insists on having everything explained. It is a dry way of learning about expressions in English.

The teacher's objective is to make the student find literature attractive, but counterintuitively he makes the student dislike the method of having to look up several expressions. But if the student does not understand the meanings of those expressions, it can be said that he did not learn Shakespeare, or he does not know Shakespeare. Without studying Shakespeare's language, much of the beauty of *Romeo* and sublimity of *Lear* will be lost on the student because he has not studied Shakespeare's language. (188)

The teacher faces problems in teaching about literary and historical allusions that students find all the time. Should the student look up an allusion each time that they find one? Allusions are not made to be looked up. There is a pleasure to be derived from an allusion whose significance we understand, and that pleasure will be lost if we do not know the significance of the allusion. But if the average student is compelled to look it up he loses more than he gains. For example, Wordsworth's sonnets on "Personal Talk." This sonnet has allusions to Una and Desdemona. Wordsworth concludes saying:  
Two shall he named, pre-eminently dear, -  
The gentle lady married to the Moot;  
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb.

If we know the allusions, we are aware of the associations, and emotions that they signify. If we had never read *Othello* or *The Faerie Queen*, and we looked up the allusions, then we would learn that Desdemona was the heroine of *Othello* by William Shakespeare. She was married to the hero who murdered her out of jealousy. Una personifies truth in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Her humility was symbolized by a lamb. We would have learned the facts about the works, but the soul of the allusion would be lost on us. The only way to reach the soul of the work is by being familiar with the alluded work. If we cannot reach the soul of the work, we should not look up the references given by the allusions. The knowledge obtained from books of references is not knowledge. The time saved from looking up allusions could be spent on reading *The Faerie Queen* and *Othello*. This would stimulate the pleasure in studying literature which close reading could hamper.

AI tools such as Transformer AI, ITS, and chatbots can be used to look up and retrieve information about the meaning and significance of a work or an allusion. The teacher could use AI as assistants in their teaching.

### **Conclusion**

There are AI tools that can be used in the reading and writing of English literature, in the process of teaching. These tools have their drawbacks, and it will be the work of the teacher to customize the tools to fit the needs in their curriculum. This also means added work for the teacher. The teacher would have to be cautious about plagiarism and cheating, if tools like ChatGPT has been used for writing assignments. Tools such as ETS's products can be used for assessing written works by students for whom English is their second language. These technologies can be utilised in education if the university affords their implementation, and has measures against plagiarism that can detect content generated by an AI. Finally, it depends on the nation's education policies as to how far these tools are utilised in schools and colleges.

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# Why Students Should Utilise ChatGPT in their Assignments

**VARDAAN NAYAR**

In recent times, Artificial Intelligence has become the next big thing, a development in technology that has captured the attention of the entire globe. On the one hand, AI has existed in research circles for many decades now; historically, the term Artificial Intelligence has been used since the late 20th century, ever since the foundational conference at Dartmouth. Since then, some sort of Artificial Intelligence has found its way into most businesses and government practices. A 2022 IBM report on the adoption of Artificial Intelligence suggests that India and China have seen an Artificial Intelligence adoption rate of 60% in IT companies (IBM, 2022). This technology, perhaps more than others, contains the potential to change and shape the future of humanity. Artificial Intelligence has been defined along multiple axes, with two broad considerations. One group of thinkers insists that Artificial Intelligence is “the science and engineering of machines with capabilities that are considered intelligent by standards of human intelligence” (Jansen et al., 2018) while the other cohort of thinkers consider AI an attempt at making computers “do the sort of things that minds can do” (Boden, 2016). The difference is clear; one group of thinkers insists on modelling Artificial Intelligence Systems on humans and human standards, and the other considers intelligence to be a trait that is not unitarily human.

Although Artificial Intelligence is set to revolutionise every sector of society, one of the major implementations of this technology is AIEd: Artificial Intelligence in Education. The educational sector has seen the presence of AI since the 1960s (Simon Newell’s unfinished creation, Merlin, was one of the first conceptual AI tutoring systems). The first Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) were discussed and developed around the 1970s (Doroudi, 2022). Since then, multiple advances in AIEd technology and the development of online modes of study have led to the establishment of AIEd as a veritable subset of Artificial Intelligence. As such, a considerable body of research has explored Artificial Intelligence not just as a viable element within education but as invaluable to the future of education.

Given the impact of this technology on education, this paper attempts to understand the ways in which Artificial Intelligence has been used in education, listing out the various methodologies and attempts at integrating AI into education. Once a foundational understanding of AI has been established, this paper explores how AI might play a role in education from the perspective of the student in a very important facet of education: assignments and evaluations. This section shall outline the role of AI in critical essay-type assignments and propose an integration of AI into the assignment writing process that does not remove authorship from the student and allows pervasive AI systems such as Chat GPT to be transparently included in the assignment writing process. This section will mainly ask: “How would our notions of authorship, authenticity and creativity be affected if we admitted to utilising Artificial Intelligence to augment our own thought processes?”

## **AI in Education**

The current uses of Artificial Intelligence in education are varied and multifaceted. Due to early development and ideation of Artificial Intelligence as a tool in education, this field has developed very

nuanced software for each learning objective. As of now, Artificial Intelligence does not fulfil the requirements of “strong” or general artificial intelligence; it has no access to other cognitive states, nor can it be considered a “mind” (Searle, 1980) in its own right. What does this mean for education? Artificial Intelligence in Education (henceforth referred to as AIEd) might benefit from the fact that AI is still a tool where expert handling is required to ensure good output, and decision-making is penultimately the responsibility of a human agent. Research has identified three paradigms for AI in education: AI as a directing force, AI as a collaborative guide, and the third paradigm, which puts the learner in control (Ouyang and Jiao, 2021). It is worth discussing the ways in which AI has become AIEd.

The first implementation that shall be discussed is the Intelligent Tutoring System (ITS). Intelligent Tutoring Systems have their roots in Skinnerian Behaviourism (Nwana, 1991). The earliest variations of this system provided simple correct/incorrect replies as feedback, and the lesson plan is predetermined in the system. A modern and easily accessible iteration of the ITS is Duolingo, which teaches languages to users through set lesson plans and modules. Next, Adaptive Learning Systems are able to tailor the lesson plan to each student’s needs (Hakkal, Lahcen, 2022), hence leading to a learning environment that is focused on the needs of the learner. The most famous example of Adaptive Learning Systems is Knewton. Knewton creates knowledge maps for the student and offers real-time monitoring of student progress (Peng et al., 2019). While these two form a short example of pedagogical tools in education, AI has also been used in novel ways to encompass other aspects of learning. For example, a study in 2016 outlined how volition might be a key component in education. Using an online mathematics course, Kim and Bennekin (2016) implemented a virtual change agent that provided emotional support to enrolled students. The results showed that volition support was highly beneficial to the effort regulation of participants (Kim and Bennekin, 2016, 370), and also positively affected student performance (372). A survey of the field disclosed that AIEd was being used along three main parameters: administration, teaching and learning (Chen et al., 2020). AI was also tested in ways that transform the role of education and question the very aspect of assignment feedback, by providing automatic feedback to student work (Crompton and Burke, 2023).

Armed with a brief understanding of the various methods of implementing AI into education, we may consider a real-life example of how education is being affected by Artificial Intelligence on a large scale. The next section discusses Chat GPT and how it can be implemented into the process of writing college assignments in a way that augments and positively impacts student interaction with generative technology and their education.

### ***AI and Authenticity: Can AI Write My Assignments?***

Since its launch in November 2022, OpenAI’s ChatGPT has introduced the concept of Artificial Intelligence to the masses with its free and accessible nature. Chat GPT quickly gained 100 million monthly users, much faster than any consumer application before it (Reuters 2023). Due to its global appeal, Chat GPT enjoys a large user base, with countries such as USA and India leading the way in terms of using Chat GPT (SimilarWeb). This free and powerful tool has inevitably found its way into academia, challenging the notions of authorship, authenticity and plagiarism. Armed with how AI is used in education from the context of teaching and distribution of education, we can approach a real-life scenario that might be all too familiar to educators, students and administration: Chat GPT being employed to write assignments. At this stage of AI integration, perhaps the question should be asked: “To what extent would an assignment written jointly by a student and AI be considered ethical and authentic?”

### ***What Makes an Author?***

Before tackling Artificial Intelligence in authorship, it is important to establish how authorship is traditionally attributed to individuals. The Indian legal system considers the “first proprietor” of the work (Copyright Act, 1957). British legislation discusses how the author of any work is “one who creates it”

(Copyright, Design and Patents Act, 1988). Insofar as “personhood” means protection from law and establishment of rights, generative models do not meet this criterion and cannot be considered the authors of any written work. While this is the legal definition, some academic circles have also considered accountability for one’s work to be part of authorship (Walker, 2023). It should be noted that for the sake of this paper, an assignment shall be considered a piece of written work, and the student shall be considered its author. Hence, when discussing authorship, I encourage you to see assignments as pieces of publishable work and students as authors of said work. Another important factor to note is that narrow AI is the subject of this study, not machines that can think on their own. With this in mind, we may now establish what makes an author or how someone is considered the “author” of any written work. Ede and Lunsford (2001) outline an interesting departure from the individualistic authorial process through the act of collaboration. For them, the author is considered to be a modern invention closely tied to property rights and capitalism (Ede, Lunsford, 2001). I seek to establish that authorship would not be negatively impacted if AI is implemented ethically and in a collaborative manner. My departure is also different due to the context (academic assignments) and the nature of collaboration (Human-AI centred collaboration). Research into the meaning of authorship in assignments has been discussed in Diane Brunner’s “Who Owns This Work?” (1991). Certain sections of this paper are interesting and relevant to the discussion of authorship in the context of college assignments. The student is the author of their assignments. However, the primary audience for students that write assignments is judgmental; their teachers read the work and grade based on the quality of work (Brunner, 1991). As such, there might be anxiety about gaining better grades and enhancing the student’s work with artificial assistance. While this may be considered an unethical practice at first, given the penetration of Chat GPT in universities, simply ignoring the presence of this technology should not be the course of action. To this extent, I put forward the claim that Artificial Intelligence, specifically generative AI, should be included in the writing process and, if used ethically and consciously, will not impact the authorship of one’s assignments. Generative AI can be a tool for students to increase the quality of their work, and for lecturers, this would lead to increased transparency between teachers and students. Before that, we may clarify a central question about Chat GPT: is it an expert system? Unlike ITS, Chat GPT and other general conversational AI cannot be considered an intelligent system. For example, research on how Chat GPT can be used in medical education (Eyesenbach, 2023). Unlike an expert system, Chat GPT requires constant supervision to ensure accurate information and is also prone to errors, omissions or falsifications. Hence, it cannot be considered an expert or Intelligent Tutoring System and does not display much deep or critical engagement with the text.

Additionally, Chat GPT is not an educational database, nor does it claim to be trained on educational data specifically. This is important for an integral aspect of the assignment writing process: citation generation and the validity of these citations. Chat GPT does not generate accurate or proper citations for questions that it is asked. To illustrate my point, I asked Chat GPT a reasonably straightforward question: “Provide a list of papers that discuss AI and sustainability”. Sure enough, the software quickly sent me a list of citations that looked authentic on the surface; once I clicked on them, however, the issue became clear: these papers were not related to Artificial Intelligence or sustainability in any way! One of the results was “Learning to Optimise Non-Rigid Tracking”, and the other was “Wireless Home Assistive System for Severely Disabled People”. Open AI (Chat GPT’s creator company) have also made no claims as to the educational proficiency of the model. Why is it so popular among students if it is such an academically faulty system?

I would argue that due to the software’s free, accessible and straightforward layout, more and more students are drawn to Chat GPT and are taking advantage of the human-like, conversational tone of the software. In a Twitter survey of how students use and perceive Chat GPT in Namibia, the major reasons for using this software were speed of responses (42%), accuracy (28.70%) and free access (23.15) (Castillo et al., 2023). Hence, its presence in the classroom should neither be underestimated nor banned.

## How Should Chat GPT Be Utilised in Classrooms?

In the wake of this technology, many countries and institutions have banned Chat-GPT from their spaces. While some of these concerns, such as data privacy and ethical concerns (such as Italy and China) (Divya Bharti; India Today, 2023), are legitimate, certain educational institutions, such as France's Science Po, which has banned the software for reasons related to fraud and plagiarism (Reuters, 2023). While imposing bans and disciplinary action for using Chat GPT might seem like a good idea at a surface level, it is crucial to keep in mind the long history and various forms of implementing AI in the classroom. Hence, it would be even better to integrate Chat GPT into the learning process, especially in writing assignments. The question we are faced with now is how and to what extent.

To answer this question, I can chart a scenario where a student uses Chat GPT to build an assignment. Assuming that an assignment is provided with the intent to improve student understanding of the topic at hand, there are a few broad possibilities: implementation of Chat GPT as a more generalised and conversational variant of writing assistants such as Grammarly, using Chat GPT as a way to bounce ideas off of an entity that has access to large amounts of data, or entirely depending on Chat GPT for writing assignments. Let us dispel the most accessible possibility first; if a student solely depends on Chat GPT for their assignment and does not interact with their sources, then it should be considered plagiarism in the original sense. It should be considered plagiarism since there are reports of Chat GPT not being deemed an author in the academic sense (Nature, 2023). Chat GPT is also not a reliable source of information due to its propensity for inaccurate or unreliable answers. A study in 2023 about the various types of errors in the system found that factual errors made up a majority of errors produced by Chat GPT (Zheng et al., 2023). Chat GPT also does not have access to the internet and is an isolated conversational agent (Ali et al., 2023, 4).

How could Chat GPT be utilised in the process of writing an assignment? This generative software is of great help when starting an assignment; one can gain an elementary understanding of the subject and the question at hand. Chat GPT can also provide a basic outline or structure of an assignment, helping the student by filling out any potential gaps in their existing methodology. Chat GPT can be used to gain contextual knowledge that the student might not have caught on a preliminary reading. The most important way to implement Chat GPT in assignment writing is by ensuring that the student *conversates* and critically analyses the question and the sources within. Teachers must question what the aim of their assignment is: whether they seek to obtain a written document that contains x number of words and a checklist of information that is required by the question or a process of work through which the student gains a deeper understanding of their subject, and meaningfully contributes their critical thought into the written work. Another way that the improper use of Chat GPT can be used is Implementing Chat GPT requires educators to understand the technology and teach their students how to utilise it ethically and conscientiously to ensure that the quality of their assignments is not compromised and authorship remains a human endeavour. The following points may help educators to implement Chat GPT in their classrooms:

1. Training educators in the use of Chat GPT and other AIEd technologies will not only make the teachers less anxious about generative AI and AI in education but also encourage judicious and ethical use of this technology in their classrooms.
2. Chat GPT is not an educational tool, yet it can create arguments and defend them to some extent. Hence, interacting with Chat GPT as a conversational tool will only deepen the understanding that a student has with their text.
3. If teachers can harness this technology in their classrooms, they can also warn against Chat GPT's drawbacks (lack of educational training, tendency to provide faulty information and incorrect citations)
4. Chat GPT can still help with structural doubts or clarify doubts when first starting out with a project. Chat GPT is also a great tool for gaining insight into the topic that might extend beyond

the scope of Google due to the ability to generate new responses in a conversational and exploratory manner.

5. Chat GPT could also provide an analysis that might have slipped the student's mind, which the student can then verify with the source and learn from the software.

Chat GPT may also shift teaching styles to more open-ended, reflective methods of questioning students. Open-ended questions go beyond the correct/incorrect binary and address skills that go beyond gaining the right answers (Badger and Brenda, 1991) and are also a viable option in classroom instruction (Çakır et al., 2016). Shifting to questions that encourage students to interact with their sources and support the authorial identity of the student could also curb the incorrect usage of Chat GPT in education.

I invite educators to take this moment in history as an opportunity to restructure the questions assigned to students. Chat GPT can play an important role in the creation and development of assignments if the proper utilisation of the software is not looked down upon or restricted in the educational context. Rather, its risk and issues should be outlined to teachers and students so both parties know how to mitigate and minimize improper or unethical usage of Chat GPT in the process of writing assignments.

I am aware that this is not a fool-proof system. Plagiarism is a serious offence, and Chat GPT is surely making this problem increasingly difficult to assess. However, as plagiarism detection softwares and other sources prepare their systems to detect AI written content, I also encourage educators to see Chat GPT as a free and powerful tool that is helpful for creating assignment outlines, brief summaries and explaining concepts to students.

This is not to say that using Chat GPT is not without its concerns. There are always ethical considerations to understand when utilising generative AI, and Chat GPT is not without its own sets of biases and drawbacks such as privacy (a study noted that Chat GPT, in its process of processing user data, may also capture data such as phone numbers or contact information if provided to the chat bot (Shahriar et al., 2023)). However, with proper training and awareness, I believe educators can, and should integrate Chat GPT into the classroom setting.

### **Chat GPT Usage Scenarios**

The following are a few use cases for Chat GPT that are non-disruptive to the process of writing assignments:

#### **1. *Gaining a brief overview of the subject***

User: Give me an overview of the modernist literary movement

Modernism is a significant literary and cultural movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, lasting roughly from the late 1800s to the 1940s. It was a response to the rapid changes brought about by industrialization, urbanization, and the shifting social and political landscape of the time. Modernist writers sought to break away from traditional forms and explore new modes of expression, often challenging established norms and conventions.

One of the defining characteristics of modernist literature is its experimentation with form and style. Modernist writers sought to capture the fragmented, subjective nature of human experience by employing innovative narrative techniques, non-linear storytelling, and stream-of-consciousness narratives. They often employed unconventional structures, such as fragmented narratives, multiple points of view, and disjointed timelines, to reflect the complexities of modern life.

Another key aspect of modernist literature is its preoccupation with the inner workings of the human mind and consciousness. Writers explored the psychology of their characters, delving into their thoughts, emotions, and motivations. Sigmund Freud's theories on the unconscious mind greatly influenced many modernist writers, who incorporated elements of psychoanalysis into their works.

Moreover, modernist literature often questioned the stability of language and meaning. Writers were interested in the limitations of language to fully capture and communicate human experience. They employed wordplay, ambiguity, and symbolism to convey multiple layers of meaning, leaving room for interpretation and reader engagement. This emphasis on the ambiguity and open-endedness of literary texts challenged traditional notions of authorial control and definitive interpretations.

Modernist literature also responded to the cultural and social upheavals of the time. It reflected the disillusionment and fragmentation caused by World War I, with many writers grappling with the loss of faith in traditional values and the breakdown of established social structures. Themes of alienation, isolation, and the search for meaning often pervaded modernist works.

Prominent modernist writers include James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, William Faulkner, Franz Kafka, and Samuel Beckett, among others. Their works, such as Joyce's "Ulysses," Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway," Eliot's "The Waste Land," and Beckett's "Waiting for Godot," are regarded as prime examples of modernist literature.

In summary, modernism in the literary tradition was a movement characterized by experimentation, fragmentation, introspection, and a questioning of established norms. It sought to capture the complexities and uncertainties of the modern world and explore new forms of artistic expression. Its influence continues to resonate in contemporary literature and art.

## **2. Providing a structure and layout for assignments**

User: Give me an outline for an essay about modernism and surrealism

Title: Modernism and Surrealism: Exploring the Intersection of Artistic Movements

### I. Introduction

- A. Briefly introduce modernism and surrealism as significant artistic movements of the 20th century.
- B. Present a thesis statement that highlights the interconnectedness and shared aspects of modernism and surrealism.

### II. Overview of Modernism

- A. Define modernism and its key characteristics, such as experimentation, fragmentation, and a focus on subjective experience.
- B. Discuss the historical and cultural context that gave rise to modernism.
- C. Provide examples of prominent modernist writers, artists, and their works.

### III. Overview of Surrealism

- A. Define surrealism and its core principles, including the exploration of the unconscious, dreamlike imagery, and the liberation of the mind.
- B. Discuss the historical and cultural context that led to the emergence of surrealism.
- C. Provide examples of notable surrealists, their artistic techniques, and representative artworks.

### IV. Shared Themes and Influences

- A. Examine the overlapping themes between modernism and surrealism, such as the exploration of the human psyche, the rejection of traditional forms, and the challenge to established norms.
- B. Discuss the influence of psychoanalysis, particularly Sigmund Freud's theories, on both movements.
- C. Highlight how modernist literature and surrealism shared a common interest in portraying the complexities and uncertainties of the human condition.

### V. Artistic Techniques and Innovations

- A. Explore the experimentation with form and style in modernist literature and surrealist art.
- B. Discuss how modernist writers employed techniques like stream-of-consciousness, fragmented narratives, and nonlinear storytelling.
- C. Analyze the surrealist art techniques, such as automatism, juxtaposition, and the use of unexpected and illogical imagery.

## VI. Impact and Legacy

A. Discuss the lasting impact of modernism and surrealism on subsequent art movements and contemporary culture.

B. Examine how modernist literature and surrealism expanded the boundaries of artistic expression and challenged traditional notions of art.

C. Highlight the continued relevance and influence of modernism and surrealism in contemporary literature, art, and popular culture.

## VII. Conclusion

A. Summarize the main points discussed in the essay, emphasizing the interconnectedness and shared aspects of modernism and surrealism.

B. Reiterate the significance of these movements in shaping the artistic landscape of the 20th century and beyond.

C. Conclude by reflecting on the ongoing relevance and enduring impact of modernism and surrealism in artistic expression and the exploration of the human experience.

In this way, the student is able gain the fundamental or basic aspect of a topic; however, their engagement with texts (for example, on a hypothetical essay about James Joyce's *Ulysses*) is untouched. Chat GPT and other generative technology should be encouraged in classrooms in such use cases, to bolster student knowledge of their fields.

## Conclusion

This paper has attempted to understand the development and implementation of AI in Education. There has been a long and varied history of AI in education, with Intelligent Tutoring Systems being implemented even before we had any futuristic notions of Artificial Intelligence. Keeping this in mind, a case has been made for the proper integration of Chat GPT into the classroom, specifically in the process of writing critical, essay-type questions. I have argued that due to its free and accessible nature, Chat GPT is unavoidable in the educational context. In fact, I am arguing that Chat GPT should be included in the process since it provides feedback on arguments, and points out potential flaws in a student's argument. Chat GPT may also help in creating a structure for assignments, and building a brief overview of the subject at hand. However, this double-edged sword should be handled with caution and restraint due to the generalised and non-educational training of Chat GPT. In order to reduce plagiarism and educate students about this technology, teachers should discuss generative technology and draw attention to the educational benefits of this software. Even if a student utilises Chat GPT in a way that fosters interactions with their questions, notions of authorship and agency remain the same, since no content is being plagiarised in the process of writing assignments, and students are critically engaging with their sources. If used properly, Chat GPT has the potential to revolutionise education in a positive way.

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# Rethinking Higher Education in Post-Pandemic Situation in Bangladesh

**SADIA AFRIN SHORNA & IFFAT JAHAN SUCHONA**

## Introduction

The sudden spread of COVID-19 caused a surge of uncertainty in the education world. It led to the closure of standard classrooms at all levels of education globally, including elementary, middle, and high schools. Over time, an increasing number of institutions in Bangladesh decided to offer online courses utilizing whatever resources and time were available. However, it was difficult for low-resource institutions, teachers, and students to adopt the Internet rapidly. Stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, and the general public) expressed concern that neither teachers nor students were adequately prepared to face this new normal reality due to contextual and technological constraints such as inadequate infrastructure, unstable connectivity, frequent power outages, lack of digital devices, and insufficient technological skills. However, the effect of the pandemic is still with us. As Bangladesh has stepped into the post-pandemic era, many educators and researchers argued whether we should get rid of the virtual learning or there can be both, a mix of virtual and onsite learning. In the present scenario, this study has been done to ascertain the pandemic's impact on the method of instruction.

A great deal of damage was done to the world by the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak. COVID-19 was first discovered in Wuhan, Hubei, China, in December 2019. Besides healthcare systems and educational sectors, COVID-19 has harmed different sectors worldwide. Due to the rapid spread of this lethal virus, mankind is still in an unusual situation with future anxiety. All sectors of society had to adjust to this unexpected catastrophe without prior experience. Every academic institution had to adapt and start working promptly (Schleicher; Weeden & Cornwell, as cited in Bashir et al.). Online education was swiftly adopted by most nations, including Bangladesh, although many teachers were unprepared. Online teaching and learning require dependable internet and devices that can connect to online classes. Internet access is difficult in developing nations. Urbanites have better internet access than ruralites.

The rapid spread of a deadly virus has put humanity in a unique scenario with impending dread. Numerous countries have prioritized unprecedented preventive measures like strengthening health facilities, shutting down all educational institutions and also prohibiting social gatherings. Social distancing affects education, health, business, tourism, and more. All these measures had unexpected effects on the schools, colleges, and universities. Online education kept students and teachers off campus. But if affected both parties as to succeed, students had to adapt to new delivery methods and teachers had to monitor learning.

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Sadia Afrin Shorna  
University of Asia Pacific, Bangladesh  
Email: [sadiaphdele20@efluniversity.ac.in](mailto:sadiaphdele20@efluniversity.ac.in)

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Iffat Jahan Suchona  
University of Asia Pacific, Bangladesh  
Email: [iffatjahanphdele22@efluniversity.ac.in](mailto:iffatjahanphdele22@efluniversity.ac.in)

## **Review of Literature**

As a precaution against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Bangladesh chose to close the schools, just like many other countries. So, students from the primary to the secondary level are forced to stay home instead of going to the classroom preserve their social distance. During the lockdown period, students were less social and concerned, angry, and depressed than in within-person comparisons.

During the pandemic, tertiary-level students worldwide have faced more problems with their education than ever before. A study by Al-Tammemi et al. showed that the COVID-19 situation caused students to worry about schoolwork, social and economic issues, and fear of getting sick. The pandemic had a significant effect on tertiary-level students' social lives. They couldn't go to school and see their friends and teachers. Some of them ended up losing part-time jobs and their mental health because they felt more angry, worried, and bored. Also, several of them stopped studying due to the lack of financial support.

The closing of all educational institutions halted face-to-face teaching-learning sessions, disrupting academic programmes. Due to the shutdown, learning platform was switched to online. Online learning made pupils uncomfortable and upset. They struggled with switching to online lectures, adapting to new online assessment methods and workloads, communicating with teachers, and dealing with many online education issues like device availability, internet access, cost, etc. Even scientific researches and educational conferences were cancelled or relocated online, preventing students from networking for scientific communication and job searching (Nicola et al.).

Another problem was that technology issues hampered communication and teaching/learning due to rising trends. Bashir et al. state that both teachers and students may get frustrated with online lessons because of the drawbacks of the software and learning management system used. Patricia studied 270 college undergraduate and graduate students in the United States, with a mean age of 21.9. She discovered that the students had difficulty concentrating at home. She stated that the home setting was not conducive to attending lectures because of several distractions, such as family members, noise, and chores. She discovered that pupils experience stress and difficulties in online learning and performing school assignments. Gillett-Swan said that online students may face some personal challenges such as finding difficulties to operate technology and feeling stressed due to out of comfort zone. Thus, students may not learn as well if they do not feel confident using technology and do not care about interacting with their peers in online classes.

Patricia noticed in 2020 that students from many ethnic minority groups in the United States couldn't properly join online classes because they weren't provided with enough tools to help them understand course materials and do their assignments. Because of this, online classes' teaching and learning levels proved much worse than in on-campus classes.

Assessment is an important part of any teaching and learning program, and developing effective methods to evaluate students is always hard. Hence, new methods must be created to work in the distance teaching-learning setting considering some common problems with online assessments such as plagiarism, working together, and cheating.

Cheating has been described as a prevalent issue in traditional face-to-face examinations in Bangladesh. In online examinations, it becomes very difficult for the teachers to examine student behavior all the time. Online exam surveillance technology has been deployed in Australia (Selwyn et al.), but due to the unpredictable internet connectivity in Bangladesh, this technology has not been employed properly. Furthermore, a range of assessment strategies is required to assure the quality and efficacy of online assessment (Gaytan and McEwen), which necessitates teacher and learner

education. The truth is, teachers and students both struggled with online assessments. Moreover, teachers need to address student concerns regarding alternative evaluation methods.

### **Rationale**

In the selected two private universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh, researchers conducted a quantitative survey with teachers and students to ascertain the pandemic's impact on the method of instruction. The key objective was to gain a better understanding of how students and teachers view teaching and learning following COVID-19. If the teacher-student perception is identified, the obstacles and benefits can be utilized in teaching-learning instruction even after the covid 19 circumstance.

### **Research Questions**

This study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the major challenges that teachers and students faced in the online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are the advantages of offering classes online both during and after the pandemic?
3. Which mode of instruction do the students prefer after COVID-19 pandemic?

### **Research Approach**

#### ***Methods and Design of the Research***

To evaluate the changes in mode of instruction caused by the shift from classroom learning to online learning, we developed an online survey in Google forms and distributed it to undergraduate students at two Bangladeshi private universities. There were a total of 15 items that addressed the three research questions that were adapted and modified.

### **Findings**

The following are the findings of the research.

#### ***Challenges faced by Teachers and Students***

##### ***Tools used by students online***

Students had to list the tools they used for online classes. During quarantine, 95.2% of respondents had internet access at home, with 57% reporting a reasonable connection speed. 94.8% had a laptop or desktop, and 58.6% didn't share it. 75% of students utilized a laptop for online classes, and 39.9% used their phones. Students used computers (22.1%) and tablets (8.2%).

Towards the end of this category, students were requested to list any technical issues they had speaking with their teachers in real-time. As seen in the table below, network and internet connectivity problems (51.3%) were followed by poor acoustics (52.8%), with 14.9% of students unable to speak and 37.9% of instructors unable to hear. 38% of image transmission failures are related to student inability to communicate and teacher image quality. 22.1% had no issues.

#### ***Obstacles to online instruction***

We got students' attitudes regarding synchronous online education while they were experiencing it for the first time. As a result, we asked them to score the entire procedure on a scale of 1 (I don't like it at all) to 5 (I really enjoy it). The majority of students gave it an average rating of 3 (33.2%), while 43.6% picked the highest positive ratings, ranging from 4 (28.9%) to 5 (12.7%). On the other hand, 22.2% believe distant education is subpar (8.9% for 1 and 15.3% for 2).

#### ***Psychological factors***

When asked what stressed them out when taking online classes during the quarantine period (see Table 4), most students said, "had to spend hours in front of a computer screen" (75%). "Fatigue/difficulty to focus" is ranked second (44.9%), followed by "feeling lonely or alienated" (28.8%). 10.8% of those polled also mentioned "disruption to family life," while 16.3% said they had no impact.

### **Assessment-related factors**

Students were mostly unfavorable to online evaluation, and 68% disagreed about its fairness. Cheating and plagiarism also hindered students and teachers. One kid said: Online assessments aren't fair. No teacher can guarantee honesty. Everyone desires a high CGPA. Students called the pandemic assessment "questionable," "unfair," and "impossible." Students (67%) cited exam preparation, comfort, and grade impact. 69% of students worry about their poor internet connection and that some students would cheat in online exams because supervising all students is impossible.

### **Advantages of Online Classes**

Some students thought pursuing their education online would save them time, especially if they had to commute far. Several students said that some teachers gave them the lesson materials beforehand so they could prepare. By this, the students also liked being able to study and ask questions. Many students watched the videos posted on Google class as often as they needed to understand the lesson. This was not possible in an onsite class. Moreover, for the teachers, there was an option of class recording in google meet and zoom which was beneficial for many students. For example, if someone fell sick and could not join a class, he/she could ask for the recorded lecture from the teacher.

### **Post-Pandemic Teaching-Learning Mode**

Private institutions used concurrent online learning exercises, including video lectures and handouts, to keep students studying. Due to their closures, some private universities have implemented instruction and guidance for students by distance learning, digital learning environments and solutions, where necessary and independent knowledge persuasion was paramount (Parkes and Barrs). They have also created an e-content repository, which publishes materials of pedagogical specialists for working in e-learning environments.

Students and parents still choose in-class learning and teaching. Based on COVID-19's slow spread, private universities are considering a blended learning approach to pursue effective learning in more health-protective conditions (e.g., more minor meeting/interaction frequencies) and reduce student pressure of physical nearness (Mali and Lim). Thus, the epidemic has affected Bangladeshi university education and student life. Blended learning—online and face to face (F2F)—has supplanted F2F learning in most academic institutions, especially private universities. Most institutions offer online business communication, English, and research method courses. The COVID-19 epidemic has profoundly affected academics' professional and personal life, highlighting blended learning's benefits and drawbacks (Mali and Lim).

### **Recommendation and Conclusion**

Online learning was still popular in Bangladesh during COVID-19. The diverse experiments with collaborative learning, innovative learning, cooperative learning, and experimental learning have shown that by embracing available, easy-going, and inexpensive technologies in education and by incorporating physical and online activities while formulating learning goals and evaluating learners' expected learning outputs, more unexplored and valuable learning experiences can be anticipated. A blended learning method may also aid colleges during pandemics. Though students' relative and positive perceptions about face-to-face (F2F) and blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic are still rising and developing, financially, blended learning is seen as an alternative to traditional F2F learning and teaching by students and private universities. F2F favors blending without COVID-19. F2F learning is better received. However, before implementing blended activities, a university must consider the many variables of blended learning management and experience, such as teachers' and students' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, age range, access to technological infrastructure, university technology readiness, and related issues, time, and hours. Systematic study on integrating technology into university teaching and learning may lead to policy implementation,

capacity building, and low-cost solutions that can spark change. Online/blended learning can be mapped out through study. A quality online/blended learning approach could help teachers and students enthusiastically handle any problem now and in the future.

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# Resolving the Jigsaw of Post-Pandemic Pedagogy

## Meditations and Reflections on the Post-Pandemic Undergraduate Classroom

**MAXLIN M MAXY**

The pandemic has drastically changed the entire life of a student. The daily routine of waking up early, packing bags, sitting in a classroom and listening to a lecture has been disrupted. Nobody could have associated mobile phones or computers with the process of learning. Pandemic made us realise and come to terms with the fact that technology is critically essential to education. Students were denied the physical access to friendships and their mentors. Studies prove that this period of alienation might have paved way to lower emotional growth and wellbeing in them. School and college phase are truly crucial in determining one's personality. But what replaced the atmosphere of college was the "technology". Technology became their best friends. Students who were reprimanded not to touch the phones and computers were encouraged to use it all day. What made this huge paradigm shift? It is the coronavirus pandemic. The repercussions of the pandemic had its toll on the student and the teaching community.

The undergraduate students are the community in focus on the paper presented. Undergraduate student classrooms witnessed historical changes because of the pandemic. The survey conducted brought out the realisation that students were already incensed with the conventional methods of teaching and was eagerly waiting for a shift. The pandemic gave way to a system of education that is very flexible and fascinating. When many of the colleges were enclosed and academics were slowed down, one of the A Grade colleges in Kerala, St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam made use of an effective and viable e-learning platform called Moodle. Such a learning management system was already put into practice by the college.

Moodle LMS is a secure, open source LMS that can be customized for any course or teaching method you choose. It creates an engaging and secure learning experience for students ("LMS Platform"). There are course pages into which each of the courses could be aligned. The features are outstanding which deftly enables the teachers to track the students' academic investment. The teachers can track the activities of the student, moderate discussions and conduct quizzes. Moodle is totally a customisable online learning system which has numerous features which will be explored through the paper.

Feature 1: Complete ownership and control

As an open-source platform, we can have control of everything from data privacy and security to the site's functionality. Plus, the network of Moodle Certified Partners and Service Providers can ensure a scalable, reliable and resilient Moodle site with enhanced security and data protection ("LMS Platform").

Feature 2: Can give a personalized look and feel

We can add our own brand colors and logo with custom themes.

Feature 3: Easy add-ons

Moodle Certified Integrations are powerful and trustworthy add-ons that will extend our online learning ecosystem. Plus, it has more than 2,000 open-source plugins that extend the platform ("LMS Platform").

Feature 4: Translated into 140+ languages

We can use Moodle in our desired language or multiple languages at once.

Feature 5: Mobile learning

We are able to access content, submit activities and assignments on-the-go or offline with the Moodle App.

Feature 6: Competencies and learning plans

We can import or manually create competency frameworks and assign learning plans to individuals or groups of learners ("LMS Platform").

Feature 7: Reward and recognise learners

Enables us to celebrate achievements with badges and certificates.

Feature 8: Create social online learning experiences

We are encouraged to foster collaborative learning with web conferencing, forums and assignments; enable peer review in workshops and self-reflection in blogs; and keep learners updated with calendar, messaging and notifications ("LMS Platform").

The survey was conducted among students of Cochin College and St. Teresa's College, a B-grade and an A grade college respectively, affiliated to MG University, Kottayam. The study gave insights on the perception of the students and faculty in both these institutions regarding the post pandemic pedagogy. St Teresa's College, Ernakulam, is an autonomous women's college established in 1925 by the Carmelite Sisters of St. Teresa. The institute is affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. With a CGPA of 3.57, St Teresa's College is accredited by NAAC with an 'A++' grade. The institute got 37<sup>th</sup> place in NIRF College Rankings 2021. The college had introduced the Moodle app much before the pandemic and that helped students to easily amalgamate into the changes ("St. Teresa's College"). The Cochin College, Kochi, established in 1967, is affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and is accredited with B+ grade by the NAAC ("The Cochin College").

A student's survey form was circulated among the students of St. Teresa's College and Cochin College to find the best results. Students from St. Teresa's reported that the Moodle introduced helped them immensely during the pandemic. This survey included students from both institutions wherein seventy two percent studied during the pandemic, fourteen percent before and after the pandemic. The mode of instruction was just textbooks, blackboard and library for seven percent of the students, Google classroom and Moodle for twenty eight percent, combination of conventional and innovative methods for sixty five percent of them. Students were asked about the changes that they felt, after the pandemic and answered that education has become more technologically dependent, thus more effective. Apart from traditional mediums like books, teachers and libraries, students have started exploring other sources for gaining wisdom. Information is extracted from resources like online lectures, videos and websites. Lecture notes are now being shared through online mediums and some classes conducted and scheduled through online mode, even after the reopening of colleges.

Teachers have recognised the importance in using teaching aids and providing additional material outside class because the pandemic forced them to evaluate their teaching methods. For e.g., using ppts and other visual aids. Along with positive progress, students reported that, there's been regression not only on the side of the student's absorption of the ideas but also on the side of many teachers who merely provide very surface level classes without sufficiently engaging the students to process and critique the material they are dealing with. The way in which students found it hard to interact in online video calls have translated into them being reluctant to participate and engage in physical classrooms too. Another student recorded that one of the major changes witnessed, is the fact that there is no pause for the regular academic curriculum. Normal physical classes, when interrupted by unforeseen circumstances, but that did not stop classes for the day like they used to, due to the fact that online platforms are available to students throughout.

The second change would be the changes it brought about in the lives of students and how they perceive education. Opinions and methods to understand and practice have changed so much that there is hardly a need for textbooks and notebooks. This change has both positive and negative aspects. However, online platforms provide a new way that also intrigues and helps students become more interested and curious about the subjects they focus on. Others have critiqued the methods introduced and reported that the students were asked to do more assignments. Speed of completing tasks or tests was influenced by each of their technical knowledge too.

The next question was about the changes that students would like to witness in the undergraduate classroom. Students answered that they require more practical sessions than theories, teachers' attention should be given more to weaker students and group activities should be promoted more. Instead of linear lecturing, using other teaching methods that aid in student's holistic understanding of the course material would boost not just classroom participation but result in better examination scores because it invokes a conceptual understanding of the material in comparison with a factual or rote memorization. Also, engaging in critical discussions about the matter students learn, along with more review sessions, practice tests would encourage students to have a better idea of the syllabus and promote deep understanding of the material that will surpass the stale purpose of cramming the material solely for the exam. Students also suggested that the assessments turn more creative and engaging.

Another question pointed to the number of hours that students would spend in the library before the pandemic. Surprisingly, seventy percent of the students responded that they spend only less than one hour and thirty percent more than one hour. This might be due to the availability of teachers and materials from them that detained them to access the library for resources. The changes were very swift and a question was prepared to understand how the students adapted to the changes in academia. They detailed, "Everything was sudden. I think it was like I had to adjust and adapt, if I wanted to receive a bachelor's degree. Therefore, I quickly rescheduled all my activities. It was hard at first because of the unavailability of electronic devices" (Navaz). Another student said, "Not going to college was hard. But I soon became comfortable and explored new ways of learning and comprehending" (Ranjith). Students also mentioned about the various alternatives they found for libraries other than Google. They include Zlibrary, libgen, Moodle, YouTube, AI information platforms like ChatGPT, NPTEL, SWAYAM online courses, JStor, archive.org, and Padshala.

Some researchers claim, "Robots will become the new educators". How far will the introduction of robots into academia prove effective? Fifty seven percent of the students believed that the alternatives adopted for conventional teaching helped in their academic progress. Although, the alternatives have taken the place of conventional methods, the role of a teacher is greatly debated. The question was raised to the set of students from both the colleges and they answered, teachers are very vital and needed. Thus, it was understood that, no matter how advanced or personalized technology becomes, it cannot be placed in equilibrium with a regular classroom structure that involves close interaction and fruitful exchange between students and the teacher. Students learn more than the required syllabus, they learn to cooperate and develop empathy, and this cannot be taught by a computer system (Kareem). Another student commented that a teacher is required to guide the students in the right path. Role of a teacher has not become redundant with the arrival of technology (Meenakshi). One student quoted, "What we have is information; to turn it into practical, applicable knowledge, the guidance of a teacher is necessary, a teacher is very important because they provide a gateway for breaking down knowledge, we can't process academic papers and difficult concepts just by reading them, it's important for someone who has a good understanding of those things to help you process the difficult concepts in easier ways. Teachers also serve to challenge you and your existing knowledge. I believe a teacher or a guide is an indispensable part of an education system" (Saheer). As the colleges have incorporated more technological innovations for teaching, it is essential to know whether the students are with the flow or do they feel that the technological intervention is



meaningless. Technology can help students immensely provided there is meaningful engagement with it, can save time, effort and money. Technology has definitely opened up new avenues for students to explore with new courses to learn and ventures to improve their skill set. But they shouldn't be limited by these opportunities and should instead look at them as the sources of inspiration to excavate on the possibilities of their discipline and the related fields. Students opined that technology has made academics more accessible, flexible and easier to grasp the topics. Technology has helped greatly outside the classroom when you don't understand a certain concept, you can probably access useful YouTube videos that explain it to you very well, but access to such large volumes of information has also stifled the need for students to conduct their own research or come up with their own ideas for assignments and projects since they can probably be plagiarized by whatever they find on the internet.

It is absolutely true that, technology has made academics vibrant by expanding access to information and providing innovative learning tools, but it has also regulated students' imagination to some extent, as excessive reliance on technology may limit creative thinking and exploration. However, the issue of inaccessibility of technological innovations still remains a question for the post pandemic education. Technology is still not accessible to many strata of society, leaving marginalised students to fend for themselves in difficult times like the pandemic, resulting in poor distribution of resources and sometimes even creating gaps in learning for many students (Babu).

The personal interview conducted among the students and faculty from the institutions under study prove that the emergence of an e-learning platform Moodle widened their realm of knowledge and equipped students from St. Teresa's College to enjoy the swift changes (Babu). Dilsha Navaz, a student from the 2019-2022 batch of Cochin College reported that no platform such as the Moodle was introduced and has only been incorporated lately to the academics in the year 2023. The college adopted Google classroom for the instruction only after 3-4 months following the close down of colleges. Notes and other resources were uploaded on google classroom. The students would submit assignments and worksheets though the G classroom. Internal exams were conducted through an online mode with no surveillance and the semester exams were made offline following the covid protocol (Navaz). Whereas, Hrithika Ranjith, a student from St. Teresa's College of the batch 2019-2022, reported that Moodle was in vogue in their college from 2019, much before the pandemic, hence both students and teachers were well aware of its working and the pandemic only made them shift their learning space from college to private spaces, and the practice of using the Moodle for uploading video lectures, conducting discussions and teachers commenting on the statements made by the students, submitting the assignments according the schedule prescribed by the system continued in the same pace towards an absolute online learning (Ranjith).

The research has corroborated that the only way to resolve the jigsaw of the post pandemic pedagogy is to make technology play the most important role. Technology should be made equally available for everyone, which will aid in the smooth conduct of online teaching and learning. However, the study teaches us that a teacher is nevertheless a teacher in the hearts of the students. The teacher will forever act as a mentor to the holistic development of a child. Even though technology cannot be a definite replacement for a teacher, technology and the changes that we have witnessed after the pandemic will make learning the most impactful experience. Technology is the new future, the imminent partner to education. The pace of change cannot be deftly comprehended by the conventional methods and the pedagogy has to indubitably espouse, Education 4.0.

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# Navigating the Unequal Academic Terrain of Universities

## English and Academic Literacy Acquisition

**VRINDA BHATIA**

In October 2022, the launch of Hindi-language medical textbooks in Madhya Pradesh was reported in media, marking a rare instance of a public conversation on language and higher education. At the launch, the government's narrative was one of making technical knowledge accessible to students from Hindi-speaking backgrounds, with the translation of three textbooks being a first step of the many, in a long-term move towards Hindi as the medium of instruction. In the following weeks, academics rightfully raised concerns (Nair; Lem) about this exercise: there was the worry about the overemphasis on Hindi, that too a standardised variety of the language. It was also pointed out how it will limit the opportunities available to these students, given the nature of English dominance in these disciplines' knowledge production and dissemination. Similarly, the question of feasibility of teaching in every student's local language came up: when there is so much migration among students, how can multilingual teaching be possible? Apart from the politics behind and potential consequences of this move, a quick look at the translated textbooks could tell us how the content, especially the technical terms, were largely in English, and only the script had been changed to Devanagari, raising questions about the nature, quality, and purpose of the translation.

None of the criticisms imply that translation is not needed: universities are spaces which bring together students with extremely different linguistic capitals, the student body especially vary in the degree of exposure to English. It is acknowledged that English is a gatekeeper to higher education (Academics for Creative Reforms 27), and even as the enrolment numbers of previously underrepresented groups in higher education are going up, there are "subtle" forms of exclusion that cannot be captured by statistics (Deshpande and Apoorvanand 191) of which English language is one. Yet, as Deshpande et al underline in their report reviewing social sciences materials in Hindi, the central concern should not be one of uni-directional translation to local languages. The argument for bringing in local languages to social sciences is not one for reasons of pedagogical scaffolding, or for inclusion of particular groups. In this light, they also emphasise on moving away from a chauvinist approach to translation, and distinguish between a social sciences argument and a social justice argument, where the former is about "the benefits that these measures (translations) bring to Indian social science" (10). What is recognised then is the need to create a sensibility of critical bilingualism among students. At the same time, the conversation cannot happen without examining in-depth the place of English in the classroom. While access to English is unequal and as a result, it perpetuates existing socio-economic hierarchies, the emancipatory possibility of English, as a language that belongs to no singular region and no dominant group in the country can lay claims of purity on, has also been emphasised by anti-caste scholars over the years. In his *chaturvarna* classification of Indian languages, Hany Babu posits English as outside of the strict hierarchy of four kinds of Indian languages: Sanskrit, Hindi, scheduled languages and non-scheduled languages (117). Thus, the conversation on social-linguistic exclusion in higher education cannot simply look past the role of English. On the other hand, by bringing the conversation on English teaching to the centrestage, the elephant in the room of social exclusion through language can also be addressed. This involves shifting gaze to courses on communication, or courses on English for Academic Purposes and the like.

Even without getting into the regional hierarchies among languages and among higher education institutions, even without bringing to the fore the questions of lack of funding and resources, the linguistic picture presented is complex. Here, the departure point then is an attempt to unpack the linguistic challenges as understood by participants, that is students and teachers, and reflections on what the way forward to work through these is.

### **Beyond Medium of Instruction: Interviewing Teachers and Students on Language in Higher Education**

There is little to no documentation of students and teachers' metalinguistic beliefs or language ideologies within higher education space. Along with that, there is a need to carry out deeper investigation into how language itself is conceptualised (theoretically, institutionally, socially, and pedagogically), what the sociolinguistic context of the university is, and most importantly, how teachers and students understand the place of language in the activities of the university. In an initial attempt to arrive at a preliminary understanding of the latter, I conducted a pilot study in January and February 2023, where I interviewed 13 faculty members and students, teaching/studying in different universities (state, central, private, distance learning), across disciplines (STEM, humanities, social sciences, vocational courses). The participants were located in and belonged to multiple states (Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Assam, Maharashtra, West Bengal), which ensured a wide set of languages as well as different linguistic contexts of teaching-learning.

The pilot study included in-person and telephonic semi-structured interviews and the questions were different for students and teachers, while falling under the broad theme of the language question in higher education. For students, the questions ranged from investigating their schooling experience, disciplinary training and challenges and struggles in the classroom, from where the question of language emerged in conversation. On the other hand, the focus in conversations with teachers was more on how they gauge the linguistic diversity of the classroom, what approaches (both social and pedagogic) and mediational strategies they adopt when students struggle with English. With both teachers and students, there were questions that aimed to explicate their awareness of language support in their institutions, as well as their opinions on the usefulness and feasibility of a recent policy statement on language in higher education. I also made an attempt to understand what students and teachers would consider good language pedagogy: would it pertain to the language used in the classroom, in curricular material, in assessment practices, or something more too?

This exercise—admittedly limited and not representative of any one social group—provided some initial insights into how teachers and students are navigating the sociolinguistic setting of universities.

### **“Khud se Apni Madad Karni Chahiye” (The Student Should Help Themselves): Insights from Student Interviews**

A dominant strand from student interviews was the acknowledgment that difficulties with English led to shame, which peer groups and teachers help in combatting. The conversations also revealed the role of region/setting in shaping the student's relationship with the language and participation in the university. For example, in Delhi University, a Hindi-speaking student who is not proficient in English would face different challenges from a Malayalam-speaking student primarily due to the kinds of social support available. There was no consensus among students in which language should guide teaching-learning practices in the university, but a pattern was observed where students could participate more freely (including in their takeaways from classroom learning, in sports and extracurriculars, even in activities like buying books and stationery) if they shared a common language with the setting. Students who were in advanced degrees reflected on their own trajectory of learning the relevant register of English, shared the role of reading/discussion groups, as well as technology. The interesting—and unfortunate—finding was that most students weren't aware of or even had an imagination for institutional linguistic support they or their peers could rely on.

### **“Ultimately you’re preparing them for jobs”: Insights from teacher interviews**

Parallely, the teacher interviews revealed pedagogic strategies that they used if students came from non-English speaking backgrounds, or if they didn’t share an academic vocabulary with them. For example, a participant who studied history in English throughout but was teaching in a Bangla-medium college in rural West Bengal shared his initial struggle with technical terms in Bangla, and how he solicited students’ help in translating. This became a dialogic pedagogic tool, as well as a way to bridge a possible linguistic gap in a bi/multilingual classroom. A common thread of concern went beyond language, however. Teachers teaching in non-metropolitan, monolingual universities too expressed concern about student engagement, where student disconnect from the curriculum and/or mismatch between student motivation and institutional requirements seemed to be the cause. That not all students are participating, that they are here for degrees, or that teachers themselves are too overworked to put in the effort were common refrains. This also underlined how the number of languages or multilingual settings is not the primary problem, but how we employ linguistic tools to relate with the disciplinary knowledge is.

### **Introducing Academic Literacies**

The confirmation of the need to move beyond ‘which’ language is also echoed by recent work on multilingualism. To engage with the question of language in higher education or fairly to carry out any social justice education, it is necessary to be attentive to how we conceptualise language or language use in our pedagogic or research practices. Accordingly, there is a need to move beyond the notion of “a language” (Agnihotri 82), and take as default the construct of multilingualism to explore how students linguistically mediate their educational experience. Multilingualism helps in approaching linguistic practices as continuous, since language-in-use itself doesn’t have clearly marked boundaries; as they contest with power dynamics and institutional demands, without limiting the conversation to debates around ‘which’ language should be used to taught different disciplines.

To look at linguistic practices also means looking beyond language as a mere code. Lucia Thesen and Van Pletzen, in their introduction to *Academic Literacy and Languages of Change*, operationalise the notion of “languages” as:

“The use of the word 'languages' in the plural form signals the many meanings of the term, including language as in which language, in the richly multilingual environment we work in; language as in semiotic system; language as in 'discourse' (ways of knowing), and as in 'metalanguage', i.e., as in ways of talking about something” (2)

This also provides the base for defining the sociolinguistic context of the university, which goes beyond mere code, or a perception of multilingualism as only use of multiple languages. It is also while focussing on practices that academic literacy becomes pertinent as a construct. The shift from language to literacy is not only to focus on a technical aspect instead of a philosophical or label-based one. Literacy here does not imply the cognitive capacity to read or write, or a checkpoint list of qualifications one needs to be considered ‘literate’. I am employing the understanding of literacy as borrowing from the New Literacy Studies school, where literacies are understood be plural, socially embedded practices that are in an ideological relationship with each other. Work under NLS has employed the anthropological lens to identify literacy practices in specific contexts, to pay attention to the processes that make certain modes and forms dominant. A similar approach can be used to build critical, reflective programmes on language learning in universities, after there has been investigation into what students learn in the university classroom, and how they do it and how they resist or exercise power through it. This will require that the various social and linguistic layers of academic discourse are defined, demystified and opened up for change. Practically, it would require a demand for actively functioning English language programmes, even if they are of a remedial nature, as is recommended by UGC.

## **Reflections on a Humanities and Social Sciences Journey through Public Universities**

As a student of two different public universities—Delhi University for five years and then Jawaharlal Nehru University for two, and as someone occupying a dominant caste, upper-class position, reflecting on my own journey with academic literacies has proven meaningful too: this includes recognising sources of learning that were easily available as a function of resources and networks, as well as instances where I could ‘hack’ the system due to a confidence (and a general English proficiency) granted by my social position, especially through schooling in English in Delhi. As an aspiring teacher, or even just a student of educational studies, a critical examination of my participation in the discursive practices of higher education allows me to identify areas where it could have been different: where I could have intervened, where a practice acquired personally could have been democratised, and also, where I have co-constructed safer social practices around navigating literacies.

In the literature classroom in an elite college, the overemphasis on perfecting rhetoric could overshadow many other practices that are key to identity-building and understanding. The space was also interesting because through stories and critical material, you were always immersed in social discourse, and it was through the literary narrative that many of us were making sense of the world around us. However, this didn’t always translate to making sense of the classroom immediately around us. Perhaps it was the competitive environment due to which the disciplinary training never permeated so far inside us that we used its tools to reflect on our everyday, or act agentively in the surroundings. There are memories I have of some people disengaging from the classroom—physically or verbally—after the first few months because others dominated the conversation. Yet, this didn’t lead to any form of stepping in, even as I would discuss this with my peer group. Then, there are memories of seeing readings in Hindi at the photocopy shop, that specific faculty members left with the shopkeeper, because there was no institute-level provision for making translated readings available in other languages. In retrospect, a community-level effort could have helped address the dearth of material, and possibly created a space to engage with the same.

My own failure to ‘master’ the desirable literary academic rhetoric then, while it created a sense of questioning the norms, also led me to explore other ways of belonging to the institution. This, too was through practices that built a valued linguistic capital: by joining editorial committees of academic journals, or participating in conference organising committees. In the subsequent institutions I have been a part of—perhaps due to a lack of concentrated elite voices in the classroom or a lack of an insecure impulse to ‘prove’ my intellectual standing—interventions have been possible, and helpful. These have—I hope—moved from a superior peer mentoring attitude to a more collaborative, friendly learning atmosphere where notes are not shared but compiled together. And where, sometimes, the negotiation with power has meant coming to terms with the limits of individual agency too.

## **On Acquisition, Learning and Pedagogy of Academic Literacies**

Within the discipline of linguistics, the debate on language acquisition versus language learning is an old one. Acquisition—whether it is thought to be cultural-evolutionary or an inherent capacity—is understood to be subconscious, while learning is thought of to be conscious, done through explicit instruction. This is expanded on in most work on second language acquisition where it is said that natural communicative settings in second language (often English) would provide the equivalent of an acquisition location (for example, practicing to speak the target language in everyday settings), whereas formal instruction would help with learning the technical aspects of the language. Yet, what this approach—as dominant as it is—neglects is the social-political tension present while learning a language, especially when it involves learning it in specialised spaces (such as universities). Whether literacy, especially academic literacy is acquired or learned can be a part of the same debate, but it is important to not get tangled up in the semantics. Academic literacy is acquired for a large part because the conventions are mystified, and how these literacies develop are a combination of socialisation and linguistic practices distributed over many years. At the same time, to suggest that explicit instruction

(or learning) can resolve the processes of opaqueness and catering to selective students that are inbuilt in the design of higher education would be a disservice to the student who hasn't had the access to modes of acquisition: it will assume that there are pre-determined, correct literacies that can be delivered to the student, without making the student themselves a part of the democratisation process. Lea and Street's model of academic literacy (369) as one that is "concerned with meaning making, identity, power, and authority, and foregrounds the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge in any particular academic context" prove most relevant to this project.

After enough documentation of experience, it is clear we need to arrive at a means of collective intervention while navigating various contradictions. One contradiction is that the crisis of academic literacy is experienced in classrooms first, yet teachers in higher education are rarely part of conversations on pedagogy. Another contradiction is that English teaching happens in a ghettoised, remedial format and doesn't often engage in dialogue with the disciplinary discourse. Yet, what can be said with certainty is that the space of language teaching in higher education can provide potential cracks where language politics can be engaged with, where critical language awareness can be developed, where it is the marginalised student who can be centered. To echo Allan Luke's take, "in some ways, the critical will be easier" (369) in English language teaching classroom, which is a space for the "linguistic and racial other".

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# English as Second Language Learning in India

## Challenges and Resolutions

**SWATI SINGH**

### Introduction

In India, English is the second largest medium of instruction in schools after Hindi. The number of students has increased in English medium schools in current scenario. As a result, a large number of English medium schools have started in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. The real struggle is, most of the schools apply methods to teach the language seems inadequate. Children find difficulty in attaining reading and speaking skills. They have a limited revelation to English in their learning environment. As per the research in this area, there are a large number of schools in India where students are not able to communicate, read and understand the mode of instruction. Due to this, children undergo poor language skills and it affects their learning outcomes critically.

The problem of language learning varies from urban to semi-urban and rural area. As the students of urban area are comparatively good, because they have exposure of English at home. Their parents are educated so that students are quite familiar in the mode of instruction. But students from semi-urban and rural areas have inhibitions about English as second language. They want to learn English because they consider it as the opening of opportunities. They take so much pressure to learn English, and simultaneously have fear in speaking, reading and writing. Children suffer in writing, reading, speaking and understanding English due to anxiety of judgement. This study stresses on the suitable methods for English teaching so that a large number students can get benefit. In order to realize the appropriate method of teaching in Indian classrooms, we should know the existing methods of teaching. Some most predominant methods are as follows:

**Grammar-Translation Method:** Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) is the oldest method of Language teaching. It is widely applicable in foreign language teaching. The method has been prevalent from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In current scenario too, this method is used to teach foreign language and English in the classroom. GTM method of teaching is also known as “Classical method”, “The Traditional method” because in past days it had been used to teach classic languages such as, Latin and Greek. GTM method was originated to teach English language, but it was applied to teach other modern languages in Europe and US.

GTM method aims to teach language by enabling the students to read the literature of the source language, to know the grammatical structure of the source language, vocabulary building, and written translation into and out of the target language with a special focus “on the form, and not the meaning” (Krashen, 128).

**Direct Method:** Direct method of teaching was established in England (1900) and it has contrastive approach to GT method. As Direct method focuses on target language and don't use native language in the process of learning. It is a method of teaching foreign language stressing on to improve the oral skills. The main purpose of this method is to acquire the fluency in second language as similar to the native language. It is based on question-answer patterns and rules of grammar are taught through presentation.



**Monitor Hypothesis:** Stephen Krashen gave the theory of learning under the term Monitor hypothesis. According to Krashen, language acquisition is more effective than language learning. Where acquisition is a natural-phenomena that one is acquired subconsciously, language learning is conscious process, people are given formal instructions in this process. In Monitor model, person's learned system acts as a monitor to check what is being spoken. Person checks internally before speaking second language (Krashen).

**Suggestopedia:** Suggestopedia was developed in the 1970s by psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov. It was affirmed by UNESCO as the second language learning technique. This method of teaching stresses on the comforts of students. The process of teaching is divided into three phases:

1. Deciphering—teacher introduces some written and oral content specially the foreign language text and translation in native language to the students.
2. Concert session—this session has two options active and passive. Active deals with reading a text at a normal speed by the teacher and followed by students. Passive suggests the students to relax and listen to the teacher. Soothing music are played in the background while passive session is going on.
3. Elaboration—in this phase, students share to the teacher what they have learnt. They express it via acting, songs and games.

We have seen the most prevalent methods of teaching. There are various researches have been conducted that discovers the suitable method for language teaching. In Indian context, a lot of projects have been done in order to find the challenges and solutions in diverse regions. For this paper, I have reviewed some articles related to action research undertaken by ELT professionals. The articles are retrieved from ELTRéP Awards in India published online by British Council.

### **Review of Literature**

An article by T. R. Murlikrishnan, “The role of translation in second language learning with specific reference to specialized technical course” stresses on the role of first language (L1) in second language (L2) learning. The study advocates the relevance of translation method of teaching despite knowing the fact that this method had been criticised by a number of scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century. However, various researchers find this method appropriate for second language teaching as it has maximised effects. The study concludes that L1 is stepping stone in learning the L2 successfully.

Bhanu Shankar in his paper, “Shared reading strategies using bilingual methods to improve listening, speaking and reading skills in young learners between the ages of four and eight” aims to improve learning outcomes in language by applying ‘Shared reading methodology’. This method is used to improve language acquisition within young students. They use this method to teach students through story telling activities. Along with this, other engaging activities were provided that help in enhancing their language learning.

“The teaching of English grammar in Hindi medium high schools in Jharkhand” by Robert Slattery discusses problems and challenges that have been faced by the students of Jharkhand region. The study analyses the cause why after ten years of learning English, students are not able to write or speak grammatically correct sentences. The study is an empirical study based on interviews with teachers, observations of students in the classroom. The study suggests that the problem is in the methodology that has been adopted by the teachers to teach students English.

Subhra Sarita Samal in the article, “Phonological awareness training for learning to read in early ESL contexts: A study of young learner in Odisha” focuses on reading problems and evaluated the effectiveness of phonological awareness (PA) training in the improvement of those learner's reading skills. The study concludes that introductory classes of Anganwadi preschool does not focus on sound

awareness while teaching of rhymes to the students. Rhymes are meant to teach sound patterns to the little students. The study also reveals that English textbooks also limited in PA activities that is essential for acquiring reading and speaking skills.

The paper, “An Assessment of ICT implementation for English language teaching in secondary schools in Bihar” by Chanchala Tiwari and Ranjit Singh stress on the role of ICT in teaching-learning process. Government committees recommended blended learning technology with education. The findings of this research reveals that the perceptions of English language teachers of Bihar of the use of ICT for teaching English are favourable.

Maruthi Kumari Vaddapalli in “The Effect of Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) instruction on improving the paragraph writing skills of engineering students” investigates about SRSD instruction to know whether it is an effective way to improve writing skills. The study concludes that teacher of engineering colleges should get training in teaching writing skills so that they can teach them efficiently.

We can see these studies are a part of project. The studies are based on different states of India and identifies the challenges in teaching-learning English as a second language. But there is one thing common in all the studies, the struggles of students to acquire written and oral proficiency in English as second language. This study is fundamentally pondered upon the choices of methodologies made by the teachers to teach English.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

After careful exploration of these studies, we have understood the challenges teachers face while teaching the students. Some questions arise regarding the aptness of methodology for teaching such as:

- What should be the method to teach English as second language?
- How teachers perceive the attitudes of the students towards method of teaching?
- How should teachers implement the methodology in teaching?

In order to find the answers of these questions, one should be able to understand their students well, their background, level of learning and so on. Teacher can make questionnaire for students, interact with them, take interview, discussions, etc. Once we learn about students' attitude, we will be able to choose the correct methods of teaching.

Various studies revealed that in Indian states, students have little exposure in out-of-school. In most of the cases students are the first generation to learn English as second language. The scenario is different from those students who live in urban, metropolitan cities where their parents are educated and working. Their knowledge and proficiency are higher than other students. So, in the process of second language learning, various factors play crucial role. If we look upon the methodology, we can clearly see that distinction is made between methods of teaching. Some methods are specifically focus on writing skills and have association with first language. While some methods are designed to concentrate on speaking proficiency. Every method has pros and cons. If we take Grammar Translation method, it is considered to be the most effective teaching method in terms of writing and error free grammar in L2 learning. Student with this method acquire fundamental base in second language, they gain mastery in grammar rules and can write error free sentences. But it has some major setbacks, students are not able to express properly in spoken form. Their speaking proficiency is not good as compared to writing. Simultaneously, some methods like Direct method, Suggestopedia, Read-out-loud have special focus on speaking skills. They work on the oral proficiency of the learners and provide great fluency after learning. But students are weak in grammar rules and there are chances that their writings are filled with grammatical errors.

The study concludes that we need multi-model approach to teach Indian students English as second language. India is a land of diverse cultures and languages. We have seen, the research conducted in the states of Telangana, Odisha, Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar. Each state has its own language which has been spoken by the people. And English is used as second language, formal mode of instruction in schools. The studies also revealed that students are unable to communicate in reading, writing and speaking. One method is not enough for teaching, we should combine two or more method for effective teaching. In order to start from beginners' level, we should choose GT method of teaching. After that we should apply the methods that focuses on speaking proficiency like Direct. By applying the multi-model approach, we will be able to accomplish great success in teaching the students English as second language.

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# The 'Falleness' in Research in English Studies

## An Interpretation

**NIVEDITHA B**

What it means to be a researcher in English Studies today? In India, we need to ask this question as research output in the humanities and English Studies is so dismal. Mere browsing of research topics and reading their respective introductions in Shodhganga reveals a shocking comparison between the Indian and the Western academia in terms of 'doing' research. This compels us to re-examine the theses produced so far in the English studies and investigate whether they have accomplished the fundamental aim of knowledge production! However, that would be one bigger project and therefore I would restrict my argument in this paper to show that it is the failure to cope with the cultural difference is the main reason behind the failure in teaching English Studies and Research. I do so by taking my personal experience into account and by invoking a few concepts of Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher.

Before discussing the fate of English Studies in higher education, I think it is worth to cast light on the way English is taught in the schools. During the school days students are introduced to this cosmopolitan language, the same way as the other two vernacular languages they study. The students remain uninformed about the difference in cultural backdrop of the target languages. Since the culture of the latter forms the part and parcel of our day-to-day life, the learning of language and culture goes hand-in-hand. In contrast, English as a foreign language demands its conscious impartment. Nonetheless, the teachers assume that the students know it and *take for granted*, the concept of culture and the fact that it is an inseparable part of a language. Although the literary and cultural aspects of English are introduced to the students at a later stage of their schooling, their connection with the language is not established. Therefore, the perception of English becomes a reduced one — they see English as mere a language, a language of utility.

This flaw in imparting English in the early education leads to faulty practices in the higher education. The students are expected to develop LSRW skills in a rote manner. The entire fraternity believes that English is being taught and learnt as a means of job opportunities i.e., English for employability (N.S.Gundur). However, the poor foundation laid while teaching this second language does not allow majority of the students to develop even the expected communicative competence. It is evident in the following words- "Our curriculum is teaching our students neither the so-called most sought-after speaking and listening skills nor inculcating the culture of appreciating literature and developing communicative competence. It appears we are caught between liberal vs. utilitarian aspirations". (N.S.Gundur, 137). The teachers, who are no exception to this kind of learning follow the tradition, encounter no problem and advance the students to the next level by nurturing their prevailing conception.

Further, Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* is an exemplary work that explains the trauma of a man caught between such utilitarian and cultural aspirations. Unlike Okonkwo (Protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*), who succumbs to the colonial hegemony of the British, his grandson Obi Okonkwo, protagonist in the referred novel, welcomes the English dominance and manifests his support to it by leaving to Britain to pursue his education. Upon his return to his native, as against to his anticipation, his life

turns miserable as he could hardly manage the hybrid life resulted from the crossbreeding of African and Western Cultures. Obi's situation, juxtaposed with the situation of current generation, teaching and studying English Studies in India, does not appear to be different at all. We are Indians, studying English Studies without an understanding on how are we supposed to embrace it. This unexamined acceptance of English Studies has left us perplexed, leading towards failure in making informed choices in English Studies and Research. Here is an experience of my own — an antithesis between my PG and research experience.

I am a student of Science and came to do my Masters in English only because of the popularly prevailing conception that an English teacher is paid well! I also had a desire to master the grammar skills so that I can become a *good* English teacher! After all, why is an English teacher paid well? The assertions I just made are not just the statements but marks the belief of our society. This frame of reference about English Studies comes to me from the schools and colleges that I studied. Although I got my admission, it took a great deal of time for me to become an insider of the discipline. Fortunately, I got to experience the *real* sense of English Studies at my department wherein the curriculum of the two papers—"Critical Theory" and "Critical Humanistics" played a pertinent role in building an idea on English Studies and on the scope of our discipline. I was trained in advanced reading and writing and various issues on which the research could be initiated were discussed. By the time I completed my Post Graduation, my earlier views had vanished creating a different me.

The real problem started when I went to one of the state universities to pursue my PhD. I was shocked at the huge difference in the understanding of the discipline itself, reducing it something extremely superficial. The term research had lost its reference and in the name of research something else was in play! This was a master stroke for an aspirant who had been there with a dream of doing the Best Research. The topics of research were chosen with no bona fide objective. PhD for the sake of degree, for the sake of job promotions was the mantra. More than anything the actual attraction was towards the salutation, *Dr.* Everyone wanted PhD, but not the pleasure of working to achieve the same. My experience of research is not my experience alone, but there are many who accept the irrationality, call it inevitable, and resume to call themselves the researchers without doing research. Ultimately, I quit without bothering about the financial loss that I incurred as I strongly predicted the future —on the day of my viva-voce, I would not lift my head with pride to say that I have completed my research — at least that I have done some research!

Upon reflecting and initiating a micro research project into the meaning assigned to English Studies and Research by two different universities, one can opine that the knowledge of culture and the way to deal with it is indispensable for advanced learning. It also suggests that our discipline has a *past* without which the very existence of it would be nullified. It is important to look back at this past as our present and future is very much based on this. As Martin Heidegger puts it, "we are rooted in the past and thrust into a future. We inherit a past tradition that we share with others, and we pursue future possibilities that define us as individuals." (Polt, 5). From these words it is evident that our present question of the problems in teaching English Studies can be resolved if we attempt an understanding and interpretation of the history of English Studies because past always *retains*. We have to predict the possibilities based on this past and proceed to shape our future. Therefore, the first and foremost thing we have to do is to look for those possibilities.

What are those possibilities? How then can we attain at these possibilities? We, as human beings have a habitual disposition towards doing what others do. We do things just because others do. English Studies is also suffering from this herd mentality — blindly following others without knowing why it is being followed by them. According to Heidegger, "assertions are essentially communicable to others. The originator of the assertion makes it in the presence of the entities that the assertion is about. But as the assertion is passed on from one person to another, it is accepted by people unfamiliar with the original evidence for it, simply because it is what 'they' say" (Inwood, 52). Heidegger

refers this act of following others without thinking on our own as *inauthenticity*. At the same time, he refers those who values their own self and try to think independently going to the roots of anything in question as *authentic*. Further, Heidegger says: “Again, Dasein submits to the power of the ‘they’ — it does, says, feels and thinks things simply because that is what ‘they’ do, say, feel, or think” (Inwood, 52). And calls this state of inauthenticity as *fallenness*.

What is significant to us is our discipline has its origin in West and we venture to build our discipline the way the people of West do. This is just like making pizza our routine food. We often tend to forget that there is an immense difference between the two cultures. This in turn results in an unconscious constant conflict between the culture of the West and the culture of our own. This flaw of ours somewhat complements what Heidegger calls as inauthenticity resulting in *Fallenness* in teaching English Studies. Therefore, we should receive the ideas of the west, make appropriate adaptation, and then utilize it in order to prosper our own culture. Also, English Studies as a discipline has evolved over the time from English as language to English as literature and then to English as cultural studies. Leave aside the outsiders of the discipline, the insiders’ cognizance on this is also limited; we must realise and internalise the fact that we are not natives to the language and have to make the finest possible distinctions on ‘what’ and ‘how’s of English Studies; Also, as Aniket Jaaware rightly observes, the major problem of the English discipline is that it lacks a well-defined object of knowledge (Simplifications, 11). Researchers are unclear about what to focus on. Hence, a keen look at research in English Studies itself is the need of the hour to attain clarity on what constitutes research in English Studies.

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# Cultural Variations Affecting English Language Instruction and Vice Versa

**NOOR FATHIMA**

## **Introduction**

In order to improve students' linguistic comprehension, this article will examine how culture and language are inseparable and offer suggestions for how to put instructional methodologies for second language teaching through culture into practise. Languages and cultural backgrounds vary among people who reside in various parts of the world. Although they can initially seem to be two separate subjects, language and culture are connected and have a mutually beneficial impact. Languages are both the products of, and symbols for cultures, according to Gleason (1961). Cultural patterns of cognition and tradition are frequently clearly coded in language, and language development frequently affects the culture it is associated with.

According to Armour-Thomas and Gopaul-McNicol (1998), language is a social institution that both shapes and is shaped by society. This indicates that language is a social activity that is both formed by and shaped by the institutions of society in which we live and work, rather than a separate, independent creation. There is unavoidably some sort of "transfusion" happening between language and culture, because language cannot exist in a vacuum (Fairclough, 1989). The idea of culture in relation to language will therefore also need to be explored as part of learning a new language.

Cultural practises are a way of life, according to Condon (1973). People's actions and ideas are often influenced by their own cultures, regardless of where they live. The dimensions of culture are numerous. As well as the beliefs, values, and tangible items that shape our way of life, it also contains ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools that define a population during a specific time period. Everybody's cognitive and affective conduct is set within the setting of their culture. It affects how people perceive themselves and their attitudes, and it may also have an impact on everyday activities like hobbies. Culture is a product of habit as well; habit develops into tradition, and tradition develops into culture. Locals start with routine behaviour and move on to develop widespread preconceptions. Condon continued by saying that stereotypes attribute to people group characteristics only based on the cultural group to which they belong. Stereotypes from different cultures have an impact on how people think, act, and communicate. According to Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981), culture and communication are inextricably linked because culture not only determines who communicates with whom about what, how, and when, but also influences how people encode messages, interpret messages, and determine the situations and conditions under which different messages may or may not be sent. Without culture, we are unable to comprehend the motivations and lives of others or relate to their issues and passions. Our innate ability to create culture makes it a potent instrument for building societies, expanding human knowledge, and fostering interpersonal connections. But culture is brittle. Cultural characteristics are prone to loss and are constantly evolving. If we don't cherish it, we will eventually lose it.

The scientific study of language is called linguistics. It is a fundamental discipline since it unites the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences (Harris, 1951). Because of its contributions to other fields as well as its own accomplishments, linguistics is a fascinating field. What is language and how is it represented in the mind? is one of the many problems that the study of linguistics attempts to

address in the area of language. The primary goal of linguists is to define and explain language. It is a field that examines the similarities and differences between various languages. Along with psychology, anthropology, sociology, and archaeology, linguistics is a social science that has a lot in common with other social sciences. Because of this, it is necessary to include psychological aspects, such as learning capacity and perception, as well as social elements in order to comprehend how language changes. To utilise language effectively, we must comprehend the structures and purposes of the languages that are used in our social interactions.

Sociolinguistics is the study of how language use affects social factors such as cultural norms, worldviews, and situations in which language can be utilized (Crystal, 1987). It also aims to show "how these options are constrained, and how certain 'types' of people end up making similar and different choices," as well as the reasons behind speakers' conscious and unconscious language decisions during communication (Kiesling, 2016, p. 2). Therefore, communication between two different people is not always simple, especially when they come from very different cultural and language backgrounds.

Nonetheless, ESL students and English language instructors can be considered in this context as they come from very different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Subsequently, the most vital knowledge any foreign language teachers should master to bridge the gap between them and their international students is sociolinguistics and cross-cultural studies. While the target language is being taught to students who hail from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, they need to master more than the pedagogy, teaching, and learning attributes. Eventually, they need to understand how sociolinguistics works and how to use it in practice.

### **How Language and Culture Dominate Society**

Societies that exist in various parts of the world have varied cultural backgrounds, upbringings, values, attitudes, and languages. Although language and culture appear to be two distinct domains on the surface, they are intertwined and have an impact on one another. According to Gleason (1961), languages are not just the byproducts of cultures; they are also their emblems. A language's development frequently has an impact on the culture it is linked to, and linguistic structures frequently contain explicit coding for cultural patterns of cognition and behavior. Moreover, language is a social institution that is influenced by society (Armour-Thomas & Gopaul-McNicol, 1998). This indicates that language is not an independent construct but rather a social activity that is both formed by and shaped by the institutions of society in which we live and work. Undoubtedly, language cannot exist in a vacuum, and language and culture are constantly "fusing" with one another. Learning a new language requires comprehension of the cultural norms of the target society.

The necessity to include cultural knowledge in the teaching of second and foreign languages has been addressed in academics by language teachers and researchers in the field of applied linguistics, according to Kumagai (1994). Numerous studies have been conducted by sociolinguists, communication theorists, and anthropologists regarding the close connection between language use and the cultural values that govern it. According to Alyasery (2018), culture encompasses all of the taught human behavioral patterns. The first English anthropologist to use the phrase in this sense was Edward B. Tylor, who wrote the book *Primitive Culture* in 1871. Culture, according to Tylor, is that complex whole consisting of knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, tradition, and other abilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Of course, it's not only a problem for men but also for women who both have it and produce it. Since Tylor's time, the idea of culture has dominated anthropology's research. Although culture is a strong tool for human existence, it is also a fragile phenomenon. Because it just lives in our brains, it is continuously changing, and it's possible that we would lose. Our written languages, ruling administrations, structures, and other things built by humans are merely cultural artifacts. However, they are not cultural. It is of course the values of the society that are closely embedded in the language through which the culture is reflected. Along with learning of foreign



language, culture is also brought to the forefront. One cannot acquire language skills without understanding the social, cultural, and philosophical features of that language. Therefore, teaching a foreign language requires one to get equipped with the culture of that language.

It cannot be denied that culture is quite possibly reflected in language and the core values of the society that are represented through culture. As a language, culture and values are inherently connected and embedded with one another. To learn any new language, it is indicated that it cannot be learned without its culture. A foreign language cannot be taught without the comprehension of the social, cultural, and philosophical facets of the targeted language. Therefore, teaching a foreign language substantiates the knowledge incorporated with the target culture. McKay (2003) implies that language learning course is molded by culture linguistically and pedagogically. Culture is variedly discussed with its definitions. Lederach (1995, P.9) delineates culture as “the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to social realities around them”. Klinger et al (2005) speculate culture is a system of shared beliefs, customs, behaviors, and artifacts.

The recent study by Bada, 2000; Byram, and Kramsch, 2008; Dai, 2011 manifests the noteworthy presence of teaching culture in teaching foreign or second languages in the last couple of years. It has been brought to the notice of the language teachers that the one who teaches language should be familiar with the culture because language and culture co-exist and cannot be separated hence it becomes prominent that a thorough knowledge of the target language is required before understanding and teaching it. Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981, P.24) stated that “language and culture are interdependent and inseparable as culture dictates who is going to whom, about what, and how the communication will proceed”. Hence, culture is completely bound by communication and it is molded based on the situations and conditions, concerning purely everyday engagements.

As an academic routine of the teacher to plan a lesson, and design the activities and practices that suit the newly adapted learning environment, it becomes a priority that the understanding of the culture of that language is required at the primary level. Concurrently, students must be prioritized with such activities that prompt them to get the core knowledge of the target language and culture in transmitting the meanings and references of that speaker. It becomes the basic responsibility of a teacher to introduce culture in the language learning class to bring in the interpretation of global effects in different facets of society to incorporate the consciousness of various cultures of the world. By doing this, the learner is facilitated for being competent in the use of language in the cultural context.

Given this, Furstenberg (2010) opines that through culture the factual representation is not only enhanced but also there is a possibility of shaping and molding human behavior and its tendency in the specific environment. This confirms that culture is dynamic and also transnational and it is seen through language expressions. Hence, culture and language are mutually dependent that influence one another. It is with the help of language, the articulation of history and the living and thinking is expressed ( Brown, 2009). According to Jiang (2000), no culture exists without language and no language without culture. Therefore, language and culture are inextricably interwoven and cannot be separated from one another. And teaching the language, and culture cannot be neglected as the target language that is set especially in a language classroom (Dai,2011; Zhao,2011). Nevertheless, the question arises as to what level of culture can be considered part and partial of foreign language learning courses.

### **Language and Linguistics Structure Evolved to Create Meaningful Communications**

The question is: How is language represented in the mind and what is language? The main goals of linguists are to define and explain language. It is a field of study focused on the similarities and differences between various languages. Along with psychology, anthropology, sociology, and archaeology, linguistics is one of the social sciences that has a lot in common with other social

sciences. For this reason, to comprehend how language evolves, we must consider psychological factors, including social skills, perception, and learning factors. We must comprehend the structures and language features that contribute to using language effectively, it must be used in our social interactions.

Language structure has several different aspects that reflect the organizational framework of how our minds work with the world. Douglas (2000) asserts that there are four distinct facets of language. Competence and performance, production and understanding; nature and universal grammar, and also nurture. Before examining the data, three questions must be taken into the linguistic framework:

1. What are the laws or tenets that govern the creation and use of sounds (phonology, or the sound pattern)?
2. How do audio clips express meaning and how does meaningfulness sound connected to construct terms of words and sound patterns)?
3. How are the words combined to construct sentences and phrases?

### **The First Step in Learning a Language should be to Comprehend its Sonic Patterns**

Every language exhibits obvious patterns. How the speaker combines various sounds to form symbols and how the sentences that are made up of symbols are significant. According to Douglas (2000), each language's structure is composed of four separate parts: phonetics, semantics, grammar, and pragmatics. Some similar linguistic structural patterns exist as others are quite different, though. Language structures are frequently a factor in some people's struggles to acquire foreign languages such as Chinese for instance.

The English language has completely distinct and various structural types. However, as humans have a natural and inherent ability to learn, the structure of a language may be learned. Language acquisition suggests the principle, that language students often go through a transformative time while taking language classes. The learner needs to compare his first language's grammatical structures to the acquired new language to comprehend its patterns. The bilingual education system is a prime instance of this. According to theories of bilingual education, to learn a new second language, the learners will come up with a foreign language. It is quite natural and certain that they frequently feel lost the first time. However, after becoming accustomed to learning the language norms and overall structure, they eventually become interrelated with the language. (Krashen, 1994).

### **Cultural Learning is a Component of Second Language Acquisition**

As stated by the National Standards for Project for Foreign Language Education (1996), before they have grasped the cultural context in which the new language is used, students cannot genuinely master a new language. This implies that a key component to succeeding in the learning of a second language is having a grasp of the culture. The learning of culture and language can both be compared to a child's initial encounters with the family he or she was born into, the neighborhood where he or she resides, and the setting in which they or reside (Lu,1998). When we are young, we develop the first language that comes naturally to us, moreover, we are constantly fed by society, our environment, and our culture. Likewise, when we borrow a new language, we must also adapt the fresh language components that are embedded in the culture.

The way instructors perceive a student's culture may help or impede that student's ability to learn a foreign language (Stevick, 1982). Cultural sensitivity is essentially necessary to teach a second language or to be bilingual. Moreover, intercultural training is crucial. If children receive cultural education, they are exposed to a diverse environment, and if they are exposed to culturally foundational stuff, because of their prior knowledge of the first language, they can learn the second one more easily. The culture of a second language will make comprehension simpler.

In his book, *Linguistics across Cultures*, Lado (1957) notes that if a student's native language and a second language include many aspects that are significantly different from each other, the student is likely to run into problems. It's safe to assume if this is the case, second language acquisition is required whenever there are similarities, this facilitates the learner's mother tongue and that language since languages typically have syntax, pronunciation, and other different structures. Perhaps cultural acceptance and understanding will help to increase the diversity of resolving the linguistic barriers and students' difficulty in learning can be gradually reduced.

### **Methodology**

The questionnaire was created to carry out this research by using a five-point Likert scale to determine the instructors' perceptions of foreign culture and its practices in an English language classroom. After a pilot study, certain modifications were made to the questionnaire. The university's English Language Center executed it on all of the (121) teachers there. The questionnaire covered teachers' attitudes toward cultural elements (aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic or sociolinguistic) in the teaching and learning process as well as actual practices of cultural awareness and teaching, constraints in an English language classroom, and teachers' actual practices of cultural awareness and teaching.

### **Participants, Methods of Data Gathering, and Evaluation Techniques**

A written survey questionnaire and an interview were the two approaches employed in this study to gather data. Surveys can be used to get exact data from a large number of participants. Surveys are used, among other things, to find out about people's attitudes, values, behavior, views, habits, desires, ideas, and beliefs. Surveys are also useful for providing demographic information and guiding policy. From a broader standpoint, surveys are used primarily for the following three tasks: description, justification, and exploration (McMillan & Schumacher 1989). The purpose of this study was to describe EFL teachers' views and opinions regarding the role of culture in the EFL classroom and their behaviors in that regard.

Interviews and questionnaires are the most commonly used data collection methods in survey research. In order to obtain the most accurate data possible, both equipment are used in this thesis. This is also believed to improve the research's validity and dependability. The researcher structured not only the questionnaire but also the interview. Three key sorts of information were intended to be gathered by the questionnaire: how ELT teachers define culture, what place they give it in ELT, and whether or not they incorporate target language culture into their own teaching. Although less in-depth and structured than the questionnaire, the interview sought to verify the written responses provided by the participants and to elicit verbal insights into the attitudes of ELT teachers on the role of culture in their own practices. To elaborate on the information gleaned from the questionnaires, in other words, the interview was created.

The questionnaire was piloted with 20 EFL instructors from Khartoum University's Foreign Language School, English Preparatory Department, in order to gather data regarding the items' clarity and determine whether they extract the information that this study seeks to elicit. The 20 teachers who took part in the pilot study did not take part in the main investigation. In the pilot study, every questionnaire was completed on paper, and the researcher watched as the individuals filled it out. The teachers claimed all but one of the questions were understandable and clear, and that it took them an average of 30-35 minutes to complete. One of the questions lacked the direction to check "just one" or "all appropriate" as appropriate. The participants admitted that choosing the options for the questions that best reflected their opinions was not difficult for them. However, it was discovered during the survey analysis that some respondents had added a few small remarks like "sometimes" and "not always" when their opinions were not specifically requested. In response to the pilot study, the researcher made the necessary adjustments and changes to improve the questionnaire's clarity and directness.

The reliability of the Likert scale items in Part B of the second half of the pilot research was statistically examined. Reliability study revealed a comparatively good consistency ( $\text{Alpha}=.8207$ ). The conclusion reached after 20 participants, though, might not be all that persuasive. Before the questionnaire was presented to the real participants, it was reviewed by two different native speakers as an additional control step.

Five Saudi Arabian universities—Alkharj University, King Khalid University, Sultan University, Dammam University, and Shaqra University—received 200 copies of the survey, 40 for each of their preparatory schools. The questionnaires were distributed towards the conclusion of the Fall 2003–2004 semester with the hope that teachers would have a better knowledge of their pupils' perspectives. By submitting an official application to the Foreign Language Schools at each university, permission was gained to carry out this activity. Alkharj University turned down the invitation, despite four of the universities agreeing to take part.

The questionnaires were returned at a rate of 75.2% for the participating schools. 88 out of 160 teachers completed their surveys within three weeks, which may be a good return rate. Twenty nine (29.2%) teachers teaching at SU, 25 (25.6%) teachers teaching at DU, 15 (15.6%) teachers teaching at KKU, and 19 (19.6%) teachers teaching at SU submitted the survey questionnaires. In addition to the surveys, a follow-up interview with 40 randomly chosen instructors—10 from each of the universities—was conducted. However, only 24 of the 40 selected professors were available to participate in the interview. Due to time and distance restrictions, 8 interviews were performed over the phone.

The three main components of the data analysis were the interviews, Questionnaire Part 2 B, and Questionnaire Part 2 A. The questionnaire did not contain any open-ended questions; hence frequency counts of the items were used for analysis. Frequency counts of the prepared options were performed for the 16 items in Part 2 A of the questionnaire to determine the preferences of the teachers. By assessing the percentage of teachers who placed culture in one of the ranks between 1 and 10, the rank-ordering item was examined. Additionally, frequency counts of each item based on how they were distributed throughout those ranks were computed. The rates of markings were merely counted for the items (1st, 4th, and 11th) that required the teachers to select just one alternative. The same calculations were used for Yes-No choices (6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th, 13th, and 16th questions). However, these questions also needed more investigation about Yes/No responses by checking any pertinent justifications for doing so; as a result, the percentages of how often each justification was marked were also tallied. Finally, for the third, fifth, fourteenth, and fifteenth items, indicate the percentage of participants who marked each alternative.

Total scores for each statement and for each participant were computed on the attitude scale (questionnaire part 2 B). In order to see the teachers' overall tendencies toward culture in ELT, their total scores were displayed. The results of instructors' attitudes also included total numbers and mathematical means for each assertion. Data was further compared with teachers' experiences overseas to see if there was any connection between having lived in the US and/or UK and having favourable attitudes regarding cultural components.

Finally, a code-book created specifically for this study was used to codify the open-ended material from the interviews. The alternatives of the questionnaire items, which directly connect to the interview questions and the three research questions, were taken into consideration while creating categories in the code-book. Basically, frequency counts of the teachers' responses were calculated. We compared the percentages of replies from the questionnaire and the interviews.

## Findings

All of the teachers, in some way or another, noted the challenge of providing a single, specific definition of culture while responding to this question, which is interesting but not altogether unexpected. The general definitions of 20 (89.2%) teachers—out of the 24 participants who had been interviewed—centered around the sociological definition of culture, emphasising "the traditions or rules that govern the interpersonal relations, familial relations, and social relations in a community" when pressed for more specific responses. Among the 3 (12.5%) participants, "the aesthetic components of a community, such as literature, music, and folklore," were characterised as "culture." The "legends" were also mentioned in the definition provided by a teacher from this group. Finally, highlighting what the majority of academics refer to as "the big/capital C," two (8.3%) teachers described culture by saying that it "encompassed everything we see around us." This opinion was given by one who said: "Bits and pieces from every choice you placed in the same questionnaire question." The majority of instructors who responded agreed with the questionnaire's findings (see Table 1) in that they believed culture to be a sociological concept.

### Culture as Defined by Teachers from a Broad Perspective

Areas	Number	Percentage
Media, music, literature, and art of a community	15	15.0
Home life, family structure, and interpersonal relationships in a community	35	35.0
Institutions, traditions, and customs	19	19.0
What individuals do at work, at home, during their free time, and while they are having fun	14	14.0
Communication target requires social and paralinguistic aptitudes	9	9.0
The conceptual framework encompassing clothing and food as semantic domains	4	4.0
Others	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

In response to the third interview question, which asked the teachers to describe the cultural knowledge they include in their courses, 16 (65%) interviewees said they focused on "British/American people's distinctive customs, traditions, and beliefs that differ from those of ours." One teacher said, "I think pupils are more interested in learning about the distinctions between our everyday features and those of theirs, and I do what fascinates them." 6 (18.7%) of the teachers reported that they "clarified idioms and words that led the pupils to misconceptions." The remaining 4 (3.3%) teachers stated that they frequently provide special knowledge about "holidays and festivals such as Easter and Halloween."

The results of the follow-up interviews show that most participants tend to define culture in the sociological sense (Adaskou et al., 1990), i.e., as being made up of customs, traditions, beliefs, and interpersonal dynamics of a community, when it comes to the first study question. Because participants overwhelmingly stated that teaching about culture in their classrooms meant highlighting the sociological distinctions of the EFL learners of non-native global populations, it appears that this definition also applies to their opinions about teaching language in particular.

### What are the Subjects' Views on Including Cultural Content into their Instruction?

Due to their conviction in the advantages of doing so, 15 (62.5%) instructors said they included cultural content in their lessons. "Culture and language go hand in hand, as I said in the questionnaire. In order to acquire the language more effectively, they (students) must study about culture. They can better understand the motivation behind the English language by learning about British or American

culture. They will become better English speakers if they become aware of cultural differences. When they encounter a native speaker, they will particularly comprehend it.

Sometimes it's impossible for me to explain a statement to the pupils without elaborating on the cultural references it contains. "My students want me to explain cultural details when they come across them," the teacher said. One instructor (4.2%) added that she omits cultural components because of time restrictions. "I have a timetable to catch, and discussing cultural aspects takes a long time. I don't have a lot of time. The interviewers were asked to share their opinions on whether or not second-language English learners in particular should be exposed to British and American culture in relation to the same research subject. In terms of their students' English competence, 11 (43.8%) teachers said that knowing about other cultures would be beneficial. 2.8% of the teachers specifically mentioned the advantages of knowing about other cultures in addition to these two. 10 (41.6%) of the individuals agreed as well, but they confined the problem in terms of differences and similarities. "Too much attention, in my opinion, is unnecessary. They should be informed of the main contrasts and commonalities. "In my opinion, it is unnecessary to place too much attention on this. We ought to outline the main contrasts and similarities for them. "Yes, they should... For our kids, however, basic analogies of American and British culture suffice. One (4.2%) instructor gave a negative answer to the question, implying that the children already have the requisite knowledge of British and American culture.

94.5% of the educators said they used cultural information in their lessons. The same number of participants (95.8%) agreed that it was essential to provide cultural context for English language learners. The interviewers' favourable opinions toward incorporating cultural material into their training appear to be demonstrated by these results.

### **What Significance do they Attribute to the Target Language's Culture in their Instruction?**

When presenting cultural material to their students, 12 (50%) teachers said they wanted them to "gain a global perspective of diverse cultures and people." "In my opinion, the best motivation for learning a language is becoming aware of other cultures and appreciating how different people are from one another. One can pick up a language out of pure curiosity. We discuss the problems in Africa, the greatest cheese in Italy, and bullfights in Spain in class. We contrast aspects of our culture with British and American cultural traits. They learn about the beauty of different languages and civilizations while concentrating on the English language. "For instance, I don't want to concentrate too much on popular American culture. I explain to them that although American culture is one of many different cultures, it is a part of the language they study. When introducing cultural information to their pupils, 11 (45.8%) of the teachers' main objective was to "help them develop stronger communication and understanding abilities." These pupils will read extensively. The books are replete with cultural knowledge, so students must comprehend what they read completely. "We want to improve their linguistic ability. Successful communication involves cultural understanding, which is part of that proficiency (italics added).

Finally, 1 (4.2%) of the teachers said that, if at all, target language culture played a small part in teaching other languages. As a result, the responses to the final interview questions were consistent with the results of the questionnaire, with the results showing that half of the subjects believed that the most crucial function of cultural information in EFL classrooms was to promote better communication.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study enunciates the English foreign learner of any cultural confinement, facing the similar issue when targeted to learn English as their second-language.

Further, investigating the research, the following techniques have been identified from various texts that have been put together as follows:

## **Six Techniques for Instructing Second Language in a Cultural Setting**

There are many distinct aspects to learning a second language, such as communicative competency, grammatical competence, vocabulary competence, and linguistic mastery, without the exception of cultural awareness (Thanasoulas, 2001). Teaching a second language entails more than simply giving lectures on grammatical structures or picking up new vocabulary; it should also cover cultural topics. To enhance the instructional context content, cultural goals and events need to be carefully planned and incorporated into second language lessons. Six suggestions for culturally appropriate techniques found in second-language schools are described below. (Thanasoulas, 2001)

### ***Technique I: Offer Materials that Promote Cultural Learning and Making Use of the Right Tools can be Beneficial***

Students participate in real cultural encounters. These resources may include movies and news, web pages, television programs, broadcasts, newspapers, periodicals, and other printed things. The age and level of language competency of the children can be taken into account when teachers modify their usage of cultural resources. To begin with the language learners, for instance, by viewing and listening to audio and video excerpts from a television program in the target language that focuses on social norms like greetings, the instructor may provide the pupils with a thorough translation or a chart, graphic, or outline to find meaning while they hear a conversation or watch a video. Using the right audiovisual materials can improve students' understanding of the target culture and their learning of a second language.

### ***Technique II: Transferring the Use of Proverbs***

Common sayings are discussed in using the target language that can aid students in understanding how proverbs differ from or are the same as in their native tongues. This can aid them in comprehending how changes may highlight the history of a nation's culture (Ciccarelli, 1996). Using adages from the Bible as a guide, a tool for comparing two cultural spheres assists kids in comparing and contrasting objects and different cultural nuances. It's also a good idea for pupils to investigate the ideals underlying that are frequently depicted in the culture and that of the target language.

### ***Technique III: Use Role-Playing as a Sociocultural Strategy***

A sociocultural approach to instruction might also benefit from the use of classroom role-play. The most effective strategy now used in second language training is a sociocultural strategy (Wertsch, 1991). The main objective of an intercultural approach is to prepare pupils for dialogue and cross-cultural communication. As stated by Savignon, sociocultural tactics are one of the most effective methods for pupils to attain communicative proficiency in a second language while maintaining sociocultural competence. Furthermore, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) claimed that role-playing games can be used to test cultural conduct and communication practices. As an illustration, students can act out an occurrence that resulted in a misunderstanding across cultures in one of these role plays.

### ***Technique IV: Empower Students to Investigate and Communicate from the Standpoint of Culture***

It is a succinct explanation of some cultural elements in the target language combined with the conflicting element from the linguistic backgrounds of the students. The opposing element might be presented and more effective contrasts are brought by the students themselves. Taylor and Sorenson go on to say that you can show them things or pictures which are indigenous to the target culture. This will improve the integration of the culture. After that, the students must find out more information about the subject, either through independent research or by giving pointers to look into. They can choose to either write a summary or talk to the class about the importance of culture. For instance, Brigham Young University already has made available "Culturgrams," which are brief cultural summaries, of 100 different countries. The family living, attitudes, customs and courtesies, and

historical elements of each culturagram are separated. Students can contrast and compare their culture with other civilizations, traditions, and practices by using Culturagrams.

#### ***Technique V: Students as a Cultural Asset***

Viewing students as cultural resources is important since second language classes are now more diverse than ever in terms of culture and ethnicity. The resources that are given to teachers can be used. Students from other countries, immigrants, or international students can convey elements of their cultures in the classroom as authoritative sources. Through these presentations, students can arrange and draw connections between their own culture and the culture of the target language, in addition to learning about the diversity of cultures.

#### ***Technique VI: Use of Technology to Facilitate Learning Culture***

Make use of computers to help students learn about the culture. According to educators (Salaberry, 1999; Rost, 2002), second language and culture learning can benefit greatly from modern computer technologies. Learners of second languages can have more freedom in the classroom and the flexibility to work on their course materials whenever they like by using a computer and one of the many language study software programs that are available. Students who study a second language typically come from many cultures and regions. Because a typical classroom has a limited amount of space, it is challenging to establish a wide variety of distinct learning settings. Multicultural activities can be offered through the use of digital technology without the students being in the classroom. Computers are meant to make things simple and to build a variety of virtual places to suit the needs of any learner. With the help of 4 billion internet sites and the interactions of 580 million users on the network, a sizable library is currently run.

Learners of second languages have access to appropriate resources and learning information anytime, anyplace via computers and the Internet. Instantaneous access to websites in other countries is possible, thanks to the World Wide Web. Resources written in the target languages can be found, and learners can discover the cultures of various nations. These websites offer information on a wide range of subjects, such as news, sports, entertainment, and health. They offer numerous opportunities for cultural learning so that students can develop their cultural awareness while honing their reading and language abilities.

ESL native teachers urgently need to brush up on various cultural and linguistic nuances because ignoring them may have a severe impact on their students' learning outcomes and sense of self-efficacy. Teachers are expected to professionally connect regularly with pupils who are different from their mainstream learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, to prevent misreading their students' behavior and assessing their level of learning competency, teachers must be linguistically and culturally competent. For example, Gay (2003) stated that "teachers must be multicultural themselves before they can effectively and authentically teach students to be multicultural" (p. 4) and asserted that "culturally responsive teachers... [can] validate, facilitate, liberate and empower ethnically diverse students by simultaneously cultivating their cultural integrity, individual abilities, and academic success" (Gay, 2000, pp. 43–44). The self-efficacy of instructors would also increase with cross-cultural instruction. This will assist them in recognizing and addressing the needs of their pupils, thereby empowering them on both a personal and intellectual level (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2016).

Also important is the faculty professional development (PD) awareness of multiculturalism-related themes at universities and colleges. The American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE, 2002) stressed the importance of faculty professional development concentrating on cultural, language, and diversity issues. O'Hara and Pritchard (2008) conducted a study on a program intended to give teacher training to faculty members at a California State University campus where professional development in cultural diversity was emphasized as a consequence. According to reports, faculty



members now have a greater grasp of diversity. This gave the academic staff the resources they needed to create some of the best teacher preparation courses. Similarly, offering professional development courses to school districts would also be beneficial, especially given the ongoing demographic and diversity changes that schools see every year. Giving instructors the finest pedagogical approaches that must have been missed from the teacher's curriculum, would enable teachers to successfully fulfill the different requirements of their pupils. (Hope and Naff, 2016)

### **The Significance of Cultural Background Knowledge in Language Teaching concerning Aural Comprehension**

Therefore, when teaching English, it is important not only to impart knowledge and develop language proficiency in our students but also to emphasize the importance of teaching relevant cultural background information. Many students who are being taught aural comprehension express frustration because after spending a lot of time listening, they have not learned anything. What is the cause? On the one hand, the content may be challenging and some students may have very bad English, but a more significant factor is that they may not be familiar with the cultural backgrounds of the United States and England when it comes to learning English accents and the U.S. accent respectively. Aural comprehension tests a person's overall ability, which includes their degree of English proficiency, breadth of information, analytical prowess, and creative capacity. On the whole, it is directly tied up with the knowledge of American and British culture, politics, and economics.

Perhaps we have all had the experience that, no matter what the subject is, when we listen to familiar material, we tend to be understanding. Even though the book contains some unfamiliar words, we may infer their meanings from the context. However, we may feel somewhat tough if we come across some unexpected stuff or anything that is directly tied to our cultural heritage. Even though the subject matter is simple, we lack the necessary cultural background knowledge to understand anything more than its literal meaning. The study stated, "The road to November is uphill all the way." November is a contraction for "the eleventh month of the year." However, this phrase refers to "the November presidential election". Another example is the phrase "red-letter days," which is short and easy to understand and refers to holidays like Christmas and other significant days. But, without the teacher's explanation, students frequently struggle to understand them. Due to this, it is essential to include cultural background when teaching English.

### **Cultural Background Knowledge Is Required for Oral Comprehension**

Similarly, speaking involves more than just intonation and pronunciation. Students can only communicate more effectively and enhance their conversational English through extensive reading, mastery of challenging language subjects, and familiarity with western culture. When the material is drawn from real life and helps students become familiar with standard pronunciation and intonation, speak English appropriately for any occasion, and understand the western way of life and customs through language, etc., teachers should place an emphasis on the actuality of language in oral training and adopt some material that is close to daily life. If not, misunderstanding and resentment will arise. Let's examine a few instances.

Numerous English expressions are fixed and cannot be changed arbitrarily. For instance, "How do you do?" has the response "How do you do?" Instead of asking, "How much do you charge me?" most people ask, "How much, please?" Or "How much do I owe you," or "Waiter, bill please," when paying a bill. substitute "Excuse me, sir." We've finished our meal. What is the cost, kindly?" "Who's speaking, please?" should be said when requesting the other person's name on the phone. or "Who are you, please?" rather than "Who is it?" Where are you? Which is your last name? Or "What is your unit?" Oral communication requires speakers to employ appropriate vocabulary for the situation, as well as proper pronunciation and tone. We could give countless instances of expressions that, while they are correct grammatically, are inappropriate for the situation.

One day, after a student lectured, he sought counsel from a foreign guest. The foreign visitor was taken aback when he said, "I am desirous of examining your feeling on the talk." "Your English is too beautiful to be true," he said. The pupil, however, did not agree with the remark. He claimed that the phrase was taken directly from the book. The visitor clarified that expressions like "desirous of exploring your sensations" should be substituted with "I'd like to hear your views on the lecture" or "May I have your views on the lecture?"

### **Reading Requires Cultural Background Knowledge**

A certain level of language proficiency is necessary to read English articles, although reading comprehension ability is not completely based on one's proficiency in the language. Cultural background knowledge is also crucial. Reading is an activity influenced by combining one's linguistic expertise with their cultural background knowledge and other professional information. As well as a process of ongoing inferences and adjustments based on the available linguistic and cultural-historical context and rational thinking Chinese individuals typically study the language without any issues. However, when we read English articles, we can see how Chinese culture and western culture vary. Hence, Cultures frequently present us with various challenges.

In English works, several allusions are derived from literature, history, and other sources that are now accepted slang. Without comprehension of European culture and history, these allusions are not always easy to appreciate, and without comprehension, there may not be much enjoyment. A Herculean task requires enormous physical or mental stamina. Hercules was a physically strong hero from Greek mythology. He was given twelve nearly impossible chores to do as retribution for terrible wrongdoing. Hercules accomplished everything and received immortality as payment. Example: He completed the Herculean effort despite it being difficult.

While some of these allusions can be found in dictionaries, others have emerged as a result of the ongoing changes in society and language. Without knowledge of a particular nation's advances, one would have been at a loss as to the significance and implications of expressions and idioms like those below: An image from Pepsodent toothpaste commercials depicts a smile with pearly white teeth. Pepsodent is one of the more well-known toothpaste products in the USA. Idioms have a significant role in a society's language and culture. They are frequently challenging to comprehend and use properly. They are essentially impossible to decipher from the individual word meanings. Even the same words can have distinct meanings in English idioms, as shown in the examples below: As a result, a learner should first learn not to dismiss idioms merely because they are composed of straightforward words. If he's unsure, he should keep an eye out for similar expressions with contradictory meanings and look them up in a dictionary. When he first uses them, he's likely to get into a lot of difficulties, but he shouldn't give in, much less give up. He'll succeed if he persists and works hard enough, and everything will work out in the end.

### **Writing and Translating Require Knowledge of Cultural Context**

In a similar vein, an understanding of cultural context is necessary for both writing and translating. Even the most basic expressions in translation cannot be handled without taking into account the unique context and customs of the target language. Cultural background information is crucial when writing. Why is it so simple to determine whether an article was written by a Chinese person or a natural English speaker? On the one hand, it's presumably because the majority of Chinese students haven't yet grasped the language; on the other hand, it's possibly because there are culturally-based distinctions between Chinese and English writing styles. Chinese narratives and descriptions appear to be a little bit more "flowery" or ornamental than in English.

The propensity of Chinese pupils to utilize an excessive amount of adjectives is one of the prevalent mistakes in this area. Needless to say, successful writing requires the use of adjectives. However, if not handled carefully, they may have the reverse result and swiftly snuff off interest and cause

boredom. People who speak Chinese and English appear to view the use of standard terms and phrases differently. Cliches and trite language are discouraged in good English writing. On the other hand, Chinese lettering applauds carefully chosen "four-character statements". You would consider the following to be a horrible example of writing if you were a native English speaker: He had a sound sleep and was as alert as a daisy when he awoke.

Because they were and still are so colorful and effective at getting their point across, clichés and hackneyed comments initially caught people's attention. However, due to abuse, they started to lose their allure and freshness. Compared to the majority of Chinese writers, English-speaking authors tend to produce less confrontational, compelling writing, such as social or political articles and editorials. The goal is to let the evidence speak for itself. Therefore, one notices very limited use of words like "we must," "we should not," "it is improper to," "it is illogical," and "resolutely demand." The language is typically modest, and the tone is typically subdued. In the present facts are obviously of the utmost importance in Chinese social and political works, but great emphasis is also placed on militancy and clearly stating one's position. This attitudinal discrepancy is significant. There are other differences besides the three that were previously highlighted. If we couldn't get to know these, we wouldn't create a typical English composition due to our differences.

### **Investigating Cultural-Based Activities**

Human behavior includes linguistic conduct, which varies from culture to culture. The term "communicative activities" in this context refers to those that require active communication from students, like role-playing, information-gap exercises, exercises in problem-solving, etc. If a teacher of English wishes to explain to the students how people generally eat. The most effective method is usually to provide the students with English directions on where to find the menu in a restaurant. After discussing topics like having a table reserved, how to order and pay, etc., the students can role-play. This will both assist create a strong impression and demonstrate how well the students grasp them. This method is helpful in that it can complement the activities focused on communication and cultural content.

### **Conclusion**

This article aimed to describe how culture and language are inextricably linked and to provide ways to put into practice, the educational techniques used to increase students' phonological competence by teaching foreign languages using culture. Understanding various cultures helps us to recognize the diversity of viewpoints on the world. We can create teaching methods and pedagogies for second languages by developing an understanding of the connection between culture and linguistics. No doubt, language proficiency is rapidly becoming a necessary skill in today's information-driven environment. According to Kramsch (1993), understanding culture is a necessary ability when learning a language. It is important to learn culture and language simultaneously to truly understand language. After all, as we absorb more cultural concepts, we become more proficient in the language, and as we become more proficient in the language, we become more competitive. Owing to this, it is largely recognized by the English teaching community in language instruction, eventually, culture has a major impact. To sum up, language is not only meant for communication but it also traces the existence of culture embellished with nature and attributes of its kind. The importance of background knowledge in language learning has been raised over time, giving a history of the nation's presentation. The suggested answer to the issue is to use a language, background knowledge, and conventions that are in the target language. Nevertheless, the purpose of English skills, the traditional listening, speaking, reading, and writing curriculum has been abandoned in favor of a more culturally relevant curriculum. As a result, it opens up a space for future venues to assist students in bridging cultural gaps, second language teachers should pay closer attention to the diversity of cultures, identify significant cultural items in every varied aspect while designing a language curriculum for the higher education, and apply appropriate teaching methodologies to learning activities.

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## INSTALLATION

# Learning to Learn

## Deliberating Constructionism in Language Learning

### APARNA VINOD

*“Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.” - Marc Prensky*

With new generation learners embracing technology and disengaging from traditional educational practices, educators must now evaluate not just "how we teach" but also "what is worth teaching." One of the biggest challenges this presents is the dichotomy between 'learning as receiving' and 'learning as constructing'. How can we design learning experiences to bring forth understanding and not merely transmit information to a generation of “digital natives” for whom technology and information are ubiquitous? This is the challenge of the modern-day teacher.

Despite the fact that it has existed in theory for over a century, Constructionism has only recently gained widespread attention and interest, owing to its success in the STEM space. However, there is no reason to limit its application and efficacy to STEM topics, and this panel aims to demonstrate its relevance and success in language learning.

Using a student-led project titled "Building Pronunciation and Vocabulary Skills to Fluently Communicate in the English Language" from the course "Learning to Learn," which was anchored on constructionist and active pedagogies, this panel will deliberate on applying similar learning approaches to language learning. The project, led by six students from linguistically diverse and marginalised backgrounds, will be presented for its use of creative and critical learning and thinking strategies.

The panel will unpack and discuss the framing of the course, outcomes and the student experience in terms of:

- Learners leading their own learning
- Using visual techniques to record thinking
- Engaging in social and cooperative learning
- Extending learning to their immediate contexts

This panel aims to provoke a discussion on how creative pedagogies such as Constructionism can help “digital immigrant” instructors struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language.

# LEARNING TO LEARN - Retrospective Journey Map

## Stage 1 - Setting the Frame

### Abstract

What is the best way to educate students for the future is a question that continues to rage in the education debate.

Within the learning sciences, various approaches and frameworks guide classroom pedagogy. Recognising the role of the facilitator as a complex one these frameworks define ways to create engagement and learning.

While there is agreement on the need for transformative innovation within classrooms, designing learning that builds the mindset of interconnection and collaboration is a constantly challenging endeavour. Many factors add to the complexity of classroom pedagogy, the biggest being the dichotomy between instruction and construction.

How can we design learning spaces and experiences to bring forth understanding and not merely transfer information is every teacher's challenge?

Using a retrospective journey map, I reflect on my course 'Learning To Learn'. By mapping the various pedagogical stances and methods, this document captures the tools and techniques used to build understanding, learner agency and self regulation in a multi-domain setting with 74 students.



### 1 PERSONAL MANIFESTO OF PRACTICE

In order to enable the integration of my practice as a critical pedagogue and learning designer, I set out to define a practice manifesto before creating the course plan.

The manifesto also assisted in identifying the frameworks needed to support Learning To Learn. The manifesto helped specify the aspects of my practice that could be used within this classroom setting.

- Partner, not instructor
- Apply design pedagogy to other domains of knowledge
- Adapt course outcomes to include learner diversity and needs
- Apply practicality and changeability to teaching techniques
- Assess for understanding
- Develop dialogue, teamwork, and observable artefacts
- Construct and assist domain integration
- Use active learning strategies



### 4 COURSE DESIGN

Developing social skills, working in teams, communicating clearly, appreciating different points of view, and taking responsibility for one's own learning process are highlighted as important skills of the future in the World Economic Forum's (2018) report, "Future of Jobs" & Sustainable Development Educational Goals of The United Nations (UNESCO, 2017). The learning outcomes and objectives of the Learning To Learn course were positioned within this context.

The course was modelled using tools and techniques to:

- Build a culture and mindset for self-directed learning.
- Unpack content using active making and reflecting using the 'designing as problem solving' approach.

The course framework integrated skills, habits, software applications, and collaboration to create a learner-centric experience.



### 2 LEARNER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

This course was designed to blur the line between teaching and learning. The learning outcomes focused on developing favourable learning attitudes and capabilities. A learner-centred pedagogic design was developed to increase the learner's sense of ownership over their knowledge.

- Active and interactive pedagogical techniques that shift from instruction to discussion
- Utilizing media other than writing or text to facilitate learning
- Scaffolded contextual tasks to develop confidence and agency
- Plan for collaboration; peer learning is beneficial and underappreciated
- Generating thought-provoking questions and prompts to allow the learner's voice.
- Use visual displays and artefacts to make the learner's progress visible.



### 5 ASSESSMENT OF FOR LEARNING



#### Diagnostic Evaluation (ungraded)

Use scaffolded classroom activities to assess the knowledge, abilities, skills, weaknesses and strengths of the students



#### Criterion - Referenced Assessment (graded)

Evaluate student performance in relation to predetermined goals

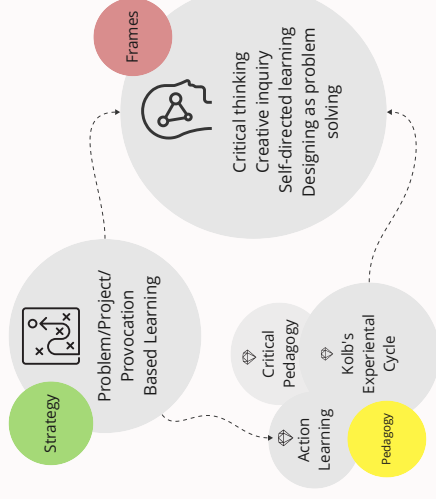
#### Project Based Learning (graded)

Through planning, creation, and completion of projects, students developed understanding.

- they conducted an authentic, situated inquiry around a 'problem to be solved' / 'driving question'
- they worked collaboratively to find solutions
- they produced tangible and publicly accessible objects that addressed the driving question



### 3 PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES/FRAMES



### 6 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DESIGN

Classroom seating arrangements influence the classroom climate, students' relationships, and their academic development. In the Learning to Learn classroom, students were given the freedom to construct their own affiliative groups and peer cultures. However, a large majority of the classroom activities were devised to be the 'invisible hand' that dispersed homogenous grouping.



**Small Groups**  
to promote student cooperation and interaction



**Culturally Responsive**  
to accommodate student diversity and social dynamics



**Inclusive**  
to support students with significant academic and social needs

# LEARNING TO LEARN - Retrospective Journey Map

## Stage 2 - Pedagogy in Action

Aparna Vinod | Associate Professor |  
School Of Liberal Arts and Design Studies |  
Vidyaship University

### Course Outlay

The three modules that made up the Learning to Learn course each had distinct learning objectives and focal areas.

It was crucial that the course was paced to enable learners to embrace design pedagogy and studio approaches with the least amount of resistance as it was being offered to students without design backgrounds.

### Many Personas

Gaining the student's faith in the classroom as a place for experimentation, failure, autonomy, and diverse expression was originally more difficult. This was also based on their prior personal experience in traditional classrooms where teachers transmit all knowledge. They became more at ease with PBL and action-oriented techniques as the modules gradually unravelled.

As the course developed, I was required to take on different roles and stances as the my focus was to promote student agency and self-directed learning attitudes. Holding the learner's space uniquely for each module was a the dance between 'letting go' and 'gathering in'.



#### MODULE 1 DEVELOPING CURIOSITY & INSIGHT

The first module focused on giving students the opportunity to come up with ideas, consider broad concepts, form opinions, and create positions. They learned how to map disparate ideas, thoughts, and experiences using visual tools. During this stage, they were urged to apply visual techniques without becoming fixated on perfection.

**Artefacts developed** - Visual maps, Installations, Reflective Journal  
**Abilities & Skills** - Creativity, Collaboration, Curiosity



#### MODULE 2 STRATEGIES TO LEARNING

The learners were introduced to thinking routines and learning strategies in the second module. They reasoned and defined using experimental and discovery-based activities such as Semantic Mapping, Think Pair Share, and Annotations. Tools were used to dissect a range of subjects and media, including ecology, caste, and local history.

**Artefacts developed** - Making Thinking Visible, Annotations, Logs, Notes, Visual notes, Diagrams  
**Abilities & Skills** - Analysis, Critical Thinking, Communication, Thinking interdependently, Thinking about Thinking



#### MODULE 3 HABITS OF THE MIND (PBL)

In module 3 learners used the project based learning approach. By emphasising on student interest rather than a fixed curriculum this phase built upon self-directed and inter-disciplinary learning activities. This phase saw learners, defining their own roles, managing time, directing tasks, developing and synthesising new knowledge, organising information and iterating on solutions.

**Artefacts developed** - Discipline specific projects, Documentation, Project journey map  
**Abilities & Skills** - Creativity, Collaboration, Initiative, Grit, Communication, Negotiation, Adaptability, Openness to continuous learning

Influencer

Co-designer

Facilitator of  
higher order  
learning



Provocateur

Ethical &  
caring mentor

Guide &  
Opponent



Well-informed  
coach

Assessor

Motivator



**Disposition:** Alert, Aware, Open

**Disposition:** Creative, Flexible, Empathic

**Disposition:** Intentional, Reflective

MODULE 1

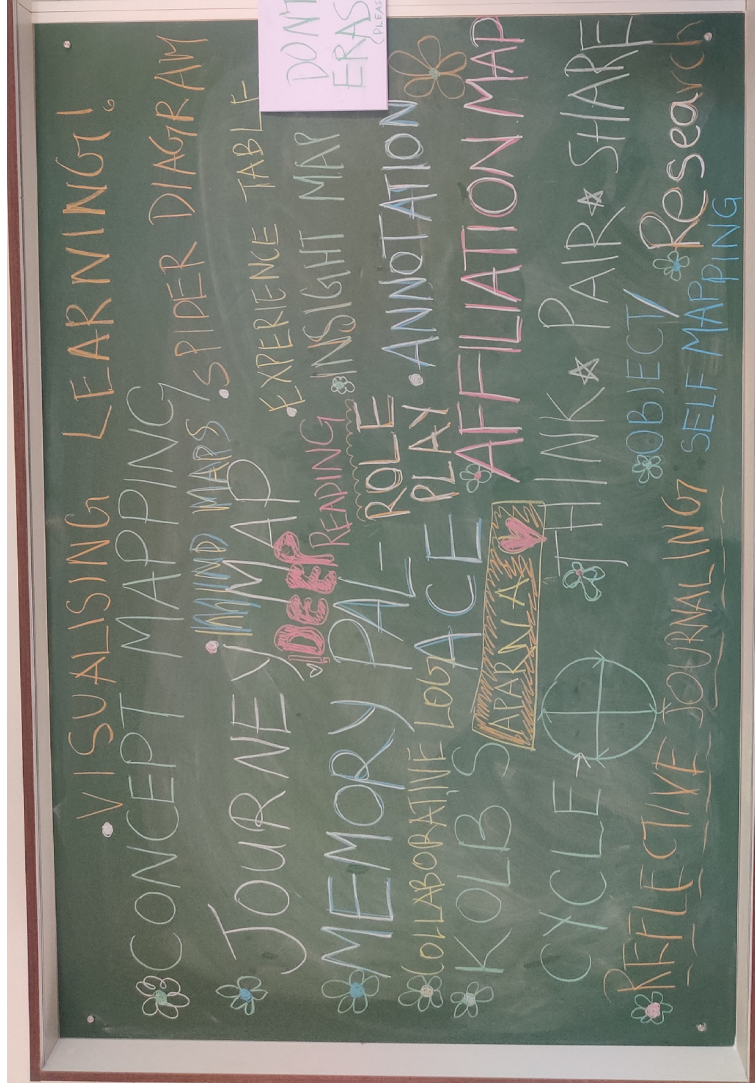
MODULE 2

MODULE 3




# LEARNING TOOLS & AIDS

## Stage 2 - Pedagogy in Action




A challenging learning environment was created in the Learning to Learn course using a number of hands-on methods. Rigour is frequently taken to entail just covering more of the same old academic material. However, lecture-style curricula are disconnected from situations in the real world. Increasingly, all students must learn to reason, communicate, problem solve, and work collaboratively.

The pedagogy adopted in the Learning to Learn classroom was rigorous, relational, and dynamic. These approaches challenge students to reflect on their learning, involve them in practical activities, foster teamwork and critical thinking, and help students develop these vital abilities.




**TOOLS USING TACTILE EXPERIENCES**

- Experience Table
- Roleplay
- Installation building
- Mini projects



**TOOLS TO VISUALISE LEARNING**

- Poster making
- Visual Note-Taking
- Self/Object Mapping
- Metacognition maps




**TECHNOLOGY AS A LEARNING AID**

- Canva
- Miro
- ChatGpt



**TOOLS TO DEVELOP PERSONAL LEARNING HABITS**

- Thinking Organisers
- Annotation
- Reflective Journaling
- Diagramming: concept maps, affinity diagrams, spider diagrams, insight maps, and personal journey maps
- Memory palace
- Deep reading/skim reading



**TOOLS FOR RESEARCH COLLABORATION AND RECORDING**

- Collaborative Learning Log
- Think Pair Share
- Project proposal writing/checklist
- Reflective Journaling

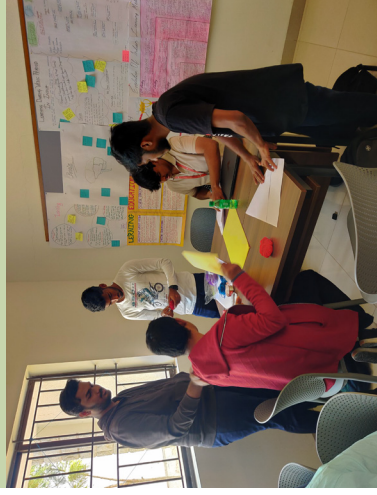
Aparna Vinod | Associate Professor |  
School Of Liberal Arts and Design Studies |  
Vidyaship University

# PLAN TO OUTCOME

## Conclusion : Agility and Reflexive Practice

Aparna Vinod | Associate Professor |  
School Of Liberal Arts and Design Studies |  
Vidyashilp University

My starting position as a facilitator (represented in Phase 1 of this document) was anchored on a **Manifesto of Practice**. This meant that I went into this multi-domain classroom with my own illusions and assumptions, which were at times torn down by reality. On various occasions, I had to adjust the pedagogy to meet learner needs and support students in making learning meaningful. This reflexive approach helped me build durable and flexible understandings of student motivations, variability and learning attitudes.



**Assumption:** VISUALISING THINKING COMES TO ALL LEARNERS INTUITIVELY

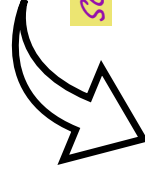


**Reality:** Even simple representations such as mindmaps were not easy for all learners. Learners were hesitant and worried about perfection. They also did not see visualising and diagramming as learning actions.

**Action :**

- Created simple opportunities to convert facts into pictures.
- Created class activities that allowed students to make unusual connections using diagramming, mapping, and wordwalls.

**Assumption:** STUDENTS WILL ENTHUSIASTICALLY EMBRACE SELF DIRECTION AND AUTONOMY IN LEARNING EXPLORATIONS



**Reality:** Students are preconditioned to believe that every question has a single answer and look to the teacher for cues to singular solutions.

**Action :**

- Scaffolded activities to connect ideas from simple to complex

**Assumption:** TRANSDISCIPLINARY THINKING AND LEARNING IS BUILT IN OBVIOUS, AND A NATURAL RESPONSE

**Reality:** Students don't naturally start off building connections unless directed routines introduce them to this way of engaging with the world.

**Action :**

- Used activities and material that make connections explicit using graphic forms that show relationships.
- used "show and share" routines so that everyone is joining the dots and participating in making representations for all to see.
- Encouraged uncertainty and used tools that represent multiple interpretations.
- Created opportunities to bring other lessons, personal experiences, and concepts into explanations.

**NOTE FOR THE NEXT ITERATION**

Create opportunities for learners to self assess and bring in their own rubric



# LEARNER NARRATIVES

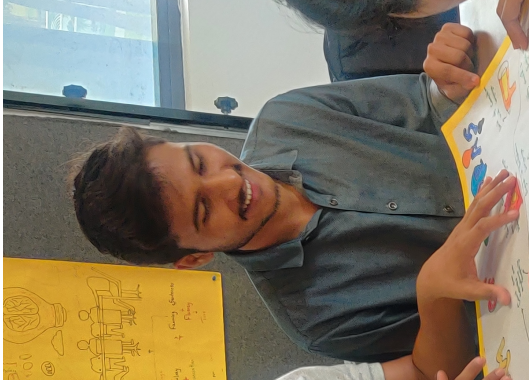
## Stage 3 - Learning in Action

Aparna Vinod | Associate Professor |  
School Of Liberal Arts and Design Studies |  
Vidyaship University



For me LTL has been a subject where I learned the way to learn by creating my own learning pathway. It was never about the subject but it was me. So I feel this subject has transformed my learning style and given me a new perspective towards the world of learning. It also made me believe that we should just start learning and doing things until we receive the desired results.

**Samdeep Kumar**  
**Student of Management Studies**



The "Learning to Learn" class was a truly unique course. It taught me to think in a different way, enabling me to find solutions to problems more effectively. One of the key techniques emphasized in this course was the use of annotation, along with various other learning methods. Instead of being told what to do, the course encouraged me to take ownership of my learning and figure things out on my own. This course also teaches me that one solution is not the end of that problem, as long as we think the solutions will come and that solution will be better than the old one. So we have to do iterations instead of stopping at only one solution

**Raghu**  
**Student of B.Tech. Data Science**



At first, I wasn't entirely sure how this course would benefit me. Since I've been learning since birth, I already knew how to learn. So, why this course?

This course provided me with a variety of simple learning tools, including Think-Pair-Share, Annotation, Concept Mapping, etc. Throughout the course, I didn't feel burdened, but responsible. In the final project, we choose our problem to solve and decided everything as a team. I'm not a creative person. However, I discovered through this course that one does not need to be an excellent artist to create a display chart. The audience is more drawn to the ideas.

**Amar Singh**  
**Student of BA (Hons)**



The Learning to Learn course and project on English speaking have been very useful in my learning journey. The project component allowed me to apply these concepts practically. It enhanced my problem-solving skills and reinforcing skills learned in this course.

**Vivek**  
**Student Of B.Tech Data Science**



