

# METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

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## Abstract :

Technology brought in modern methods to ELT. Language experts experiment and tried a number of methods - Grammar translation method, Audio Lingual Method, Situational Language Teaching Method, Content and Language Integrated Learning etc. All technological facilities like radio, audio, film, video were experimented with and useful methods were incorporated in ELT including language labs. Now technology has gone digital. Technology alters culture, language and its uses, and along with this the needs of the learners and their methods of learning. Task-based learning, Collaborative learning, Communicative Language Teaching, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Web Based language Learning etc are examples of these developments. The advancements in ICT have led us into the digital multimedia technologies. Virtual reality have been used in ELT employing Multi-User Virtual Environments as these permit the teacher to employ the best known pedagogical theories. The future of ELT lies in 'Blended Learning' which is not a singular teaching method that incorporate learners needs, learning styles, authentic and multi-disciplinary content and learning outcomes. They have altered social culture and interaction among the digital natives. This paper attempts to understand the efforts of ELT experts to find the most suitable methods to teach English Language to Digital Literates and foresee the evolving trends. A wide range of authentic ELT resources which are available to the teachers are The Cambridge University press, The Oxford University Press and British Council. English language teachers are well trained in the traditional ELT methods. But as leaders of change in the society, they should be the first to adopt and experiment with new technologies, Institutional support and expert guidance to English teachers is indispensable in this context.

**Keywords :** Digital technologies, modern methods in ELT, authentic ELT resources, Environments,

## INTRODUCTION

There is no way to teach English Language, as there is no one way to learn it. English is a language that opens up a world of opportunities for the youth, both within the country and internationally. The teaching of English expanded exponentially in the last two decades due to this very reason. This inturn has led to the attention of ELT experts to the issues of Approaches and Methods- in order to develop effective teaching/learning models which will be appropriate for the digitally literate students of higher education.

### **Methods of English Language Teaching**

The terms ‘approach’, and ‘method’ and ‘technique’ are hierarchial concepts. An ‘approach is a set of correlative assumptions about the nature of language and language learning, but it does not involve the procedure or provide any details about how such assumptions can be translated into the classroom setting, which the ‘methods’ do and are implemented through ‘techniques’. A number of language learning approaches and methods have been developed and adopted over the decades by ELT practitioners- Grammer Translation method, Direct method, Audio – Lingual method, Situational Learning Language Teaching method, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIC), Constructive Learning methods and Communicative Teaching (CLT).

### **Multimedia enhanced of English Language Teaching**

Progress of information and communication technologies had made tremendous impact on educational technologies – with the entry of digital multimedia labs. Digital Multimedia technologies have altered Language teaching and Learning in a very profound manner. English learners requirements, their learning methods, their learning styles and future applications all are changing as the digital technologies are transforming social interaction among the students of this digital generation (born since 1990). By the turn of the century, technology has gone digital. Technology alters culture when in turn alters language and its uses and along with this the needs of the learners and their methods of learning Task-Based Learning, Collaborative Learning, Communicative language teaching, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Web Based Language Learning (WBLL) etc are examples of three developments. ICT have led us into the digital technologies and they have altered social culture and social interaction.

“These shifts have brought about new contexts, new identities, new literacies, new pedagogies in the field of English language teaching and learning” (warschauer 2000 ). This paper attempts understands the efforts of ELT experts to find the most suitable methods to teach English to digital literates and use the evolving trends. ELT practitioners moved away from communicative perspective of teaching to a more social way which emphasizes the language use in authentic social environments. The new pedagogies – web based language learning, (WBLL) E – learning, M – learning etc are all an online approach to ELT as the students of higher education in the future will be digitally literates, with a distinct digital intelligence and much online experience. Virtual reality is the highest level of online user experience. Academic research in the use of multi user virtual environments (MUVES) for educational purposes

is an evolving field, but is grounded in sound pedagogical theories. All most all teaching methods can be delivered using MUVES – Lecture, seminar, collaborative learning, task- based learning, demonstration, simulation and virtual performance.

### **Multi User Virtual Learning Environmental**

MUVES enable a shift in methodologies from – teacher – centered to learner – centered, lecture method to interactive mode, traditional teaching aids to multimedia aids and face to face ( F2F ) teaching to online teaching synchronous learning is instruction and collaboration via the internet, involving tools such as – live chat , Audio and video conference, online slide shows etc; Asynchronous learning methods involve the tools such as E – mail, bullitens boards and file attachments etc.

### **Mixed Learning**

The English language educators utilizing a wide body of research on comparative studies on the effectiveness of ‘ Face to face ‘ and online teaching and leaning methodologies, realized that the most optimal methodologies are the ones that were able to find the right ‘ blend’ for the course. ‘ Blended learning ‘ can also be considered as a contribution of computer support collaborative learning methodology with content - based instruction and task – oriented techniques. Experts believe that the future of ELT lies in “Blended Learning” which is not a singular/linear teaching method, but a method that incorporate learners’ needs, intelligence, competencies learning styles, authentic and multi-disciplinary content, assortment of multimedia tool, multiple learning environment and learning out comes.

### **ELT Equipment**

Mixed Learning in ELT includes a curriculum which combines technology and course books, CD – ROMS , online exercises, e – lessons , e – workbooks , websites, web quests, authentic text etc. Alternatively faculty can construct their own materials or activities by creating a class website or blogsite or Wiki or podcasts or threaded discussions and using authoring software such as – Hot potatoes, Max Author etc, available for creating exercises and activities.

The digital lab is a network of computers loaded with appropriate software. A wide range of authentic ELT resources are available to teachers at all levels. The Cambridge university press, the oxford university press and British council have vast pools of ELT resources available to teachers on their websites. Self study DVD – ROMS, English video interviews with international speakers, Reference and vocabulary testing tools, activities for such student motivation and tips on using new technologies.

English language teachers have to be in synchronize with social reality of the students who are all digital literates.

“Merely introducing technology into the classroom does not guarantee the expected innovation in learning. While software and hardware may be in place; the ‘ human ware’ must be in position too“ (Warschaner and Meskill 2000 ).

Blended learning also integrates formative and summative assessment methods for students , teachers and peer to peer. Gavin Dudeney in his internet project work studied the methodologies of ‘task based learning’ and ‘co operative language learning’ two of the most used methodologies in the last 20 years of English Language Teaching.

Designing a MUVE purely for educational progress can be prohibitively expensive. ‘Second life’ ( SL which has been in existence since 2003) is a MUVE and is being used for educational purposes in Higher Education. Universities are providing grants to conduct research on designing and developing courses and instructional tools in “Second Life “. It is already teaming with millions of digital literates who are studying, working, trading or simply touring and entertaining themselves. More than 150 universities, colleges are already offering courses in second life and for English language. Students and teachers’ organizations such as – British council, English village , Confucius institute and avatar language etc, are already offering courses to learn and teach English.

## Conclusion

The working group of higher education of the planning commission government of India, in its XII five year plan intends to spread the coverage of ICT to all the 360 universities ( and 17,625 colleges in India )with provisions for access to global, multimedia educational resources, collaborative communication networks among faculty and students access to e – journals and e – books, maintenance of e – libraries and digitization of thesis and maintenance of non – book material catalogues etc.

The contemporary student who happens to be a digital native comes to the class with a distinct digital intelligence, a set of gadget operating skills and web knowledge that can be utilized to engage them in English language learning. In fact it is the most logical approach and teacher should accept this emerging trend and design curriculum and courseware accordingly. English Language Teachers will need to keep abreast of Multimedia technological advancements and align their skills, technology and attitude towards them. Only then they will be able to source, access, modify, prepare and update teaching material, method and also design, plan and execute language skill development activities. .English language teachers are usually well trained in the traditional ELT methods. But as leaders of change in the society they should be the first to adopt and experiment with new technologies, institutional support, encouragement and expert guidance to teachers is indispensable in this context.

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