

ISSN 0975-3036

# ELTWeekly

India's First Weekly ELT eNewsletter

Volume I, Issue#29

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# ELTWeekly

India's First Weekly ELT eNewsletter

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# ELTWeekly

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## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The real difficulty is that people have no idea of what education truly is. We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated. The girls, we say, do not have to earn; so why should they be educated? As long as such ideas persist there is no hope of our ever knowing the true value of education.”

- (M. K. Gandhi True Education on the NCTE site)

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# ELTWeekly

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## **VIDEO: Real World English in Classrooms**

'Real World English in Classrooms' is a video about formal school component of the project "Improving English Language Teaching and Learning in Mindanao" (IELTLM). Video made by Stuart Leigh of Real World Productions, New York, NY. It focuses on English language education in the Philippines. IELTLM is a project of the Real World Alliance (Real World Productions, Ateneo de Zamboanga University, Notre Dame University at Cotabato City, Mindanao State University at Tawi Tawi, and the Philippine Broadcasting Service).

Watch the video at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/08/15/eltweekly-issue29-video-real-world-english-in-classrooms/>

To leave your comment, click this link:

<http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/08/15/eltweekly-issue29-video-real-world-english-in-classrooms/#respond>

## **RESEARCH PAPER: Use of technology in English Language Learning**

By **Pushpa Dixit**

Technology Aids for English-Language Learners:

A growing number of software programs and Web tools help educators teach academic English. Students work under an encouraging computer lab or language lab. They learn along with brightly colored posters and an impressive array of computers, projector, digital cameras, scanners, and printers, sets a vibrant scene. But it's the students who bring character and action to the fore with their laughter, curiosity, and multimedia productions. An array of technology helps engage students and provides the structured one-on-one English practice they need. Computers should be provided in every classroom, and they should use the computer lab for their English Language Learning purpose.

Computers are most popular among students either because they are associated with fun and games or because they are considered to be fashionable. Student motivation is therefore increased, especially whenever a variety of activities are offered, which make them feel more independent. Imagine a language classroom where both students and teacher use technology effortlessly and naturally, integrating its multiple elements of learning and interaction—a classroom where students weave their learning into various studies and formats, reaching into spheres of knowledge previously it was unavailable. Imagine that you are that teacher, facilitating and scaffolding learning through the components of technology integration, leading your students into areas of inquiry that invite collaboration, cooperation, and construction of knowledge. Your daily lesson plans still aim for understanding, but in new and exciting ways, challenging students and teacher alike, supported by technology-infused learning. Your students might connect with students from another country—discovering, sharing, and communicating current issues in order to publish a collaborative news story online. They would conduct research in new ways—through virtual chat rooms, Web resources, online discussions with experts, and tele-collaboration with peers. In fact, the concept of “school” and “college” become much more expansive, extending into other areas where networked learning is accessible. Students will be able to

learn with assistance from online - tutors, from electronic dialogue journals with their peers, and from experiencing real-world situations. Teachers will be able to accommodate individual learning styles through use of different technology-enhanced learning modules. And, finally, assessment and evaluation will take on new meaning, addressed in part by technology's ability to meet different learners' needs. To some, this vision might be perceived as a bold, unattainable aspiration, full of uncertainties and complexities, destined for failure. But, if one believes that learning with technology has potential for greatness and is a precursor of the future, then these scenarios should become our goals. Time may prove our vision is true or false, but one thing is clear: The Pandora's box of information technology has been opened. We cannot close it again and make our society or our schools and colleges the same as they were before.

One of the most promising uses of technology in education involves teachers helping students actively engage in learning. One can encompass many objectives, driven by the desire and need to help English teachers effectively integrate technology into the curriculum. However, the objective should be- to provide English teachers with examples, ideas, and a conceptual framework for integrating technology within the four basic skills for English Language Learning -reading, writing, listening, and speaking -through an online resource guide of lesson plans.

By demonstrating ways to integrate technology in everyday language learning curriculum through organizing instructional ideas by the four basic skills of language teaching/learning, teachers might be better equipped to understand, modify, and use technology in their own classroom. For example, telecommunications could be used for peer editing (writing), for use in literature circles (reading), or in discussions with an author (speaking and listening). Students who have difficulty in understanding text can be aided by technology's ability to offer learning in multiple formats. They can access multimedia resources, for instance, in real-time through the Internet or stand-alone software, can get definitions of specialized vocabulary, link to other textual references, get additional background information, and listen to pronunciations of unknown words. These are just a few examples of how language teachers could use technology-integration models to enliven and increase learning. Through planning and teaching with technology, teachers will simply gain more knowledge, confidence, and expertise in the field, possibly acting as mentors and tutors to other teachers, spreading the excitement of technology-enhanced learning.

## **Language Learning**

\* Honing Skills by Integration of Technology:

Online tools and other technologies help students hone basic language skills they can later apply in authentic social settings. The students spend most of their day listening and not interacting with the language as much. But technology mixes things up, captures students' attention, and engages them in a way traditional classroom instruction doesn't. Students go to the computer lab and make PowerPoint presentations and write a lot of letters and essays. They like writing on the computer better than writing with a pencil. A multimedia reading program that helps students develop English fluency is one of the programs they use in the lab. Another application is language-learning software, which helps those associate images with English words and sentence structures to build their vocabulary. It's really great, because it's geared to individual students. The idea is that they are always being challenged.

Designing effective lesson plans using the Internet helps students explore ideas, acquire and synthesize information, and frame and solve problems. Internet projects provide students with opportunities to become more creative problem-solvers through understanding inter-relationships and experiencing real-life situations. Also, increasing the possibilities for tele-collaboration enables students to learn more about worlds beyond their physical spheres, further expanding their understandings and horizons.

1. Writing Skill - Publishing online:

One way to increase interest within and among students is to make writing authentic. And now, teachers have multiple ways to create and encourage writing with an audience in mind-through the vastly expanding technologies of the Internet. Students can experience the thrill of seeing their words made public, with the increasing popularity of online publishing and web pages. The writing process, when it is experienced online, has a new dimension, a distinct interactive quality. Research shows that using computers to write and publish is highly valuable, identifying levels of skills and ability. Writing skill is also improved by integrating computers and it makes a difference. It is seen that the students who used computers for writing at least once or twice a month had higher average writing scale scores than those who reported never or hardly ever using computers for this purpose. It also infers that publishing one's writing is correlated with higher performance level of writing. Researchers found that students whose teachers asked them to define purpose and audience once or twice a month outperformed their peers whose teacher never or hardly ever asked

them to do so. The difference what the students found is expressed in the comment of one of these students.

“The difference I feel when I am writing for the Internet is that you know everyone is going to see it-not just the teacher. I try to use stronger words. I try to be more careful in how I say things. You know that it will be seen by everybody. I say things in different ways than I would in something that was just going to be a grade. Something tells you that this has to be good, so I try to put more thought into it.”

Through this student’s words we can sense how important the process of writing becomes when it is authentic, when it is for someone else besides the teacher. English teachers have always struggled with the fact that they are usually the only reader of students’ writing. Now they have viable alternatives through technology integration that not only provide students with opportunities to experience an authentic audience, but increase student motivation to refine and improve writing. As it is realized that writing can and should be for someone else besides the teacher is a powerful incentive to becoming involved in English Language Learning. Publishing and reading online is one of the many ways the Internet can capture and maintain interest in the English Language Learning classroom.

Some of the teachers believe that students don’t really acquire language by performing computer tasks divorced from an authentic learning environment. Instead, they need social interactions that make them actively use language to negotiate meaning. Much of today’s language-learning software is rooted in old Second Language Acquisition and English as a Second Language research that treats listening, speaking, reading, and writing as separate areas and posits that students can learn general language out of context, and then apply it specifically later. The key is to use technologies that allow learners to focus on text and to engage with real-life audiences and issues. The biggest problem related to English-language learning is not so much developing oral-conversation skills, but gaining academic written-language skills. One of the things that has been seen is that when students talk about things in online discussions, they use more complicated vocabulary, because it is easier to see what’s been written by others and incorporate it into their own writing.

The Internet itself can provide a lot of food for thought. The final outcome of their research can be typed using a word processor. A word processor can be used in writing compositions, in preparing a class newsletter or in producing a school home page. In such a Web page students can publish their project work so that it can reach a wider audience. That

makes them feel more responsible for the final product and consequently makes them work more laboriously.

## 2. Reading skills through Internet

When someone announces they have been online, they have most likely been reading and writing. Most of us correspond on a daily basis by using e-mail and have trouble logging off of the Internet because there is always something more to read. Yet reading the Internet is an aspect that is oftentimes overlooked or de-emphasized in classroom curriculum.

Navigating the sources on the Internet gives teachers the opportunity to teach analytical skills, helping students evaluate authenticity and appropriateness. The Internet has explicitly taught students that different methods of discourse need to be read differently. The acquisition of English Language Learning places great demands upon the reader, since it imposes various forms of interpretive constructs. And through reading the Internet, students experience the multiple aspects of reading, of bringing personal meaning to text. Web site, for example, lists several methods for analyzing and judging. Internet sites that can help both students and teacher decide if it is worth further research. Reading advertisements, brochures, journals, job-requirements, etc. online enriches reading ability as well as provides information too. Reading emails, newsletters and reports makes a student more comprehensive in English Language. To develop the reading skill, student can be given a role play of a news reader. It should be recorded and later on it should be shown to the class and judged by the teacher as well as the students that what mistakes were made by the particular student while reading the news. The criteria should be given to the students and made them aware of those criteria well in advance. Another and most interesting task is to read e-books and one can hone the reading skill.

## 3. Speaking skill: Using Technology

The teacher can ask a class to develop a multi-cultural calendar. After discussing two or three different cultures, brainstorm with students various other cultures and have pairs of students decide what ethnic or religious culture they would like to learn about. After researching holidays and customs of cultures have students enter data in a calendar layout. Create the calendar by using the Calendar Wizard. In a separate word document, have students write a synopsis of the holiday customs. Display the calendar in class and discuss the various holidays as they appear through the school year.

Through the interaction of computer-based learning, teachers of language learning should be able to increase student interaction, learning, and reflection, empowering students to create their own knowledge structures and become active participants in the learning process. It is through this understanding of the unbreakable relationship between technology and language learning that English teachers can move their students to a deeper level of understanding—beyond a surface knowledge of mere facts to a more intense and satisfying scrutiny of the world around them. And, by making technology-integration a viable and essential part of their everyday instruction, these teachers can take advantage of technology's abilities to effectively transform learning in the classroom, creating unlimited opportunities for excellence.

By sending E-mail and joining newsgroups, students can communicate with people they have never met. They can also interact with their own classmates. Furthermore, some Internet activities give students positive and negative feedback by automatically correcting their on-line exercises. Although students can still use their books, they are given the chance to escape from canned knowledge and discover thousands of information sources. As a result, their education fulfils the need for interdisciplinary learning in a multicultural world. A foreign language is studied in a cultural context. In a world where the use of the Internet becomes more and more widespread, an English Language teacher's duty is to facilitate students' access to the web and make them feel citizens of a global classroom, practicing communication on a global level.

#### 4. Listening skill: Use of Language Labs

If a student is desired of enhancing his/her listening skill one has to communicate with electronic pen friends, something that most students would enjoy. Teachers should explain how it all works and help students find their key pals. Two different groups from different countries can arrange to send E-mail regularly to one another. This can be done quite easily thanks to the web sites providing lists of students looking for communication. It is also possible for two or more students to join a chat-room and talk on-line through e-mail. Chatting will provide you both the skills simultaneously, listening as well as speaking with the native speaker.

There is a wide range of on-line applications which are already available for use in the foreign language class. These include dictionaries and encyclopedias, links for teachers, chat-rooms, pronunciation tutors, grammar and vocabulary quizzes, games and puzzles, literary extracts. The World Wide Web (www) is a virtual library of information that can be

accessed by any user around the clock. If someone wants to read or listen to the news, for example, there are a number of sources offering the latest news either printed or recorded. The most important newspapers and magazines in the world are available on-line and the same is the case with radio and TV channels.

The Internet and the rise of computer-mediated communication in particular have reshaped the uses of computers for language learning. The recent shift to global information-based economies means that students will need to learn how to deal with large amounts of information and have to be able to communicate across languages and cultures. At the same time, the role of the teacher has changed as well. Teachers are not the only source of information any more, but act as facilitators so that students can actively interpret and organize the information they are given, fitting it into prior knowledge. Students have become active participants in learning and are encouraged to be explorers and creators of language rather than passive recipients of it. This allows the learners of a language to communicate inexpensively with other learners or native speakers. It also provides an opportunity to develop both the skills- listening and the speaking skill simultaneously. Audio-video aids and also listening of BBC and CNN channels can help the students in honing the listening skills.

## **Conclusion**

The conversation about technology in class-rooms is trapped in the wrong subject. The question should not be: “Does the technology work as a fix for the old?” It ought to be: “How can we develop and choose visions that will use this immensely powerful technology to create and support powerful new forms of learning?” These technology-integration ideas are just a few of many that could be used to develop lesson plans organized through the four basic Language Learning Skills, supporting English teachers in their instructional planning. By showing teachers how technology can be incorporated into the curriculum, as well as offering additional ideas for technology integration within the technology-based learning could be a natural part of all instructional design for teachers of English Language Learning. After all, our relationship with language is very much like what students experience when learning with technology-working in spaces unbounded by rules and amenable to adaptation and creativity. Examples of technology-enriched curricula that link the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening with corresponding models and ideas for instructional intervention might just well create the spark that English teachers need to develop instruction that benefits from new and multiple ways of English Language Learning.

As we approach the 21st century, we realize that technology as such is not the answer to all our problems. What really matters is how we use technology. Computers can/will never substitute teachers but they offer new opportunities for better language practice. They may actually make the process of language learning significantly richer and play a key role in the reform of a country's educational system. The next generation of students will feel a lot more confident with information technology than we do. As a result, they will also be able to use the Internet to communicate more effectively, practice language skills more thoroughly and solve language learning problems more easily.

The teachers who adapt technology for English language teaching as a second language are really benefited. The students I have seen using it really enjoy it and are learning a lot of the academic words they need. Their vocabulary is enriched and they can become fluent in English speaking. The audio-visual aids make the class room environment live and interesting to the students. They can learn English by the direct method and in a very natural way.

\*\* ELTWeekly would like to thank Pushpa Dixit for contributing this research paper.

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<http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/08/14/eltweekly-issue29-research-paper-use-of-technology-in-english-language-learning/#respond>

## **BOOK OF THE WEEK: Research-Based Strategies for English Language Learners: How to Reach Goals and Meet Standards, K-8**

By **Denise M. Rea**

### **Book Description**

As a teacher, you know that two of the biggest issues in education today are increased accountability and surging ELL enrollments. So what do you do when every student in your class is expected to meet standards, but some don't speak English? You reach for *Research-Based Strategies for English Language Learners*. It features ways to support all students while meeting curricular mandates and without losing any precious planning or teaching time.

*Research-Based Strategies for English Language Learners* addresses standards through four proven, effective scaffolds for learning: modeling, contextualizing, thinking about thinking, and reframing information. Within each scaffold Denise Rea and Sandra Mercuri offer ideas for strategy-based instruction that make learning more active, experiential, collaborative, and cognitive for all children. Rea and Mercuri give you everything you need to use these strategies, including lesson plans and suggestions on implementation, as well as a review of the research supporting each lesson and scaffold. Finally, they tie it all together with lessons on conversational and academic English that give students the linguistic awareness needed to become more proficient in their new language and to succeed in school.

Useable across curricular areas, adaptable to grades K-8, and ideal for classroom teachers, ELL specialists, and Title I teachers, *Research-Based Strategies for English Language Learners* is the practical, classroom-tested resource you've been looking for. Use it and discover reliable strategies for connecting second language learners (or any learners) to content and curriculum.

### **About the Author**

Denise Rea is the Director of Multiple Subjects for Fresno Pacific University. She has taught the primary grades in bilingual and English immersion classes, and has worked as a teacher

educator and literacy coach. She currently teaches elementary student teaching candidates language and literacy methodology, and embeds strategies for working with English language learners and Title I students in her instruction.

### **Book Details**

- Paperback: 128 pages
- Publisher: Heinemann (August 28, 2006)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 0325008108
- ISBN-13: 978-0325008103
- Price: \$15.75

### **Customer Reviews**

#### ELL Teacher

This book explains what good teaching is for English learners. It talks about why certain strategies work and why teachers should use them. The authors also include concrete lesson plans that show exactly how to teach lessons using the strategies. When there are so many SDAIE strategies out there, it's helpful to know which ones are effective and when to use them. The book is a quick read and easy to use.

Get more details here: <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/08/13/eltweekly-issue29-book-of-the-week-research-based-strategies-for-english-language-learners-how-to-reach-goals-and-meet-standards-k-8/>

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## WORLDWIDE ELT EVENTS

### **Profiting from Learner and Teacher Investment in ELT - ICELT, Malaysia, November 10-11**

ICELT invites papers for the following:

- Papers: 40 minute presentations
- Workshops: 80 minute presentations
- Research reports: 15 minute presentations (MA and PhD students)

The abstract must not exceed 150 words while the bio-data must not exceed 60 words.

Deadline for proposals: 15 September 2009

### **Proposals**

Foreign speakers are advised to send in proposals before the 20 August 2009. Foreign speakers will be notified of acceptance by the 1 September 2009.

All full papers sent in will be considered for publication.

### **ICELT Speakers**

Annie Hughes

Barry Tomalin

Brian Tomlinson

Fatimah Hashim

Alan Maley

Carolyn Graham

David Nunan

**ELTWeekly**

<http://eltweekly.com>

Ghazali Mustapha

Rahma Ibrahim Al- Mahrooqi

Saleh Salim Al-Busaidi

Stephen J Hall

Lee Su Kim

NS Prabhu

Malachi Edwin Vethamani

Phan Le Ha

For further details and pre-registration, please visit: <http://icelt.com.my>

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**Third CEMLL symposium - Making Multimedia work in the Digital Lab,  
Belfast, September 18**

Building on the success of our previous symposia in London (2007) and Nottingham (2008), the Centre for Excellence in Multimedia Language Learning is hosting a third symposium on the use of digital labs to be held in Belfast on Friday 18th September 2009.

This event aims to bring together digital lab practitioners to share examples of good practice in the use of digital labs for language teaching. With the focus on how labs are used in teaching and learning, rather than on the technology itself, delegates will have an opportunity to discuss their language teaching with peers and to share practice-based research.

Theme: Making Multimedia work in the Digital Lab

Venue: University of Ulster, York Street, Belfast

Date: 18 September 2009

Time: 09:15 - 16:00

Cost: There is no charge for attendance at this event

Registration Deadline: The deadline for registration for attendance at the symposium is Friday 11th September 2009.

Accommodation & Travel : Belfast has a range of accommodation available and is served by two airports.

For further details and pre-registration, please visit:

<http://www.cemll.ulster.ac.uk/site/Symposium/index>

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### **International conference on interactive media in pedagogy, Gujarat - India, January 8-10**

Computers and technology play significant roles in our personal and professional lives today. In fact, they are playing dominant roles in the classroom and, whether we like it or not, are widely accessed by teachers and learners for varied purposes. The ubiquity of technology is something that can no more be denied, and therefore, needs to be addressed from a pedagogic platform. The aim of this conference is to explore, investigate, examine, evaluate and of course, critically probe the possibilities and limits of technology in the teaching of literature, language and education in general.

However, delving deeper, the conference also wishes to explore the tenuous, and yet, deeply enmeshed relationship between language and literature. That the two cannot be separated, and yet have been, is often seen as contentious and deeply ideological in nature. The questions then are: can technology play a role in bridging the gap that has been created? Could it be fruitful to teach the language to enrich literary experience and vice versa? Can technology, again, act as a buffer zone?

The conference, thus, would look into (re)defining literature, language and education vis-à-vis technological developments and how the three can be brought together into a meaningful relationship.

#### **Details**

International conference on interactive media in pedagogy: learning English in and beyond classrooms

8-10 January 2010

H M Patel Institute of English Training and Research

Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat, India.

For further details and pre-registration, please visit:

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/conferences/international-conference-interactive-media-pedagogy>

To leave your comment, click this link:

<http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/08/13/eltweekly-issue29-worldwide-elt-events/#respond>

## **ARTICLE: Making Effective Use of Short Stories in English Or Foreign Language Teaching**

By **Larry M. Lynch**

A Proven Method of Language Acquisition

One of the most effective long-term methods of learning a language is that of an on-going series of readings. In fact, among the ways native speakers of English, French and other languages continue to improve and grow their first language (L1) skills, reading ranks very high up on the list. Whether or not language learners are able to wade through a complete book or novel, reading short stories is a time-proven method of language learning and acquisition.

Edgar Allan Poe

The “invention” of the short story, then Horror story and the Detective mystery story are all credited to Edgar Allan Poe who first began publishing series of less-than-book-length stories in the mid-1830s. Many of his most popular and famous stories have been passed down through the decades and filmed as full-length feature films. Among the more noteworthy of his Horror and Detective / Mystery stories are these, my personal choices:

- The Fall of the House of Usher published September 1839
- William Wilson published in 1839
- The Murders in the Rue Morgue published in April 1841
- A Descent Into the Maelstrom published May 1841
- The Masque of the Red Death published in May 1842
- The Pit and the Pendulum published October 1842
- The Tell - Tale Heart published January 1843

- The Gold Bug published June 21, 1843
- The Black Cat published August 19, 1843
- The Premature Burial published July 31, 1844
- The Purloined Letter published in 1844
- The Cask of Admontillado published November 1846

Detailed information on Edgar Allan Poe, his life and his collected works is available from the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore.

But why are short stories so useful and effective in English language teaching and learning?

### **Advantages of Short Stories in English Language Teaching and Learning**

There are several distinct advantages in using short stories in ELT. The principal advantages include but are not limited to:

- The controlled length of short stories
- The concise writing with carefully selected vocabulary and lexis
- The use of contemporary or colloquial language
- Insertion of authentic, natural dialogue
- Short stories typically maintain high interest and attention levels

### **But Will Language Learners Read?**

With the difficulty normally associated with getting foreign language learners to read, short stories quite readily lend themselves to capturing and holding the often brief attention spans of learners in societies which are predominantly non-reading ones. Get the learners interested in the story's beginning and leave it from there, Poe will more than likely do the rest with his inimitable, attention-grabbing style and in-depth visual imagery.

### **Consider this terrifying excerpt from “The Pit and the Pendulum”:**

“Down - steadily down it crept. I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. To the right - to the left - far and wide - with the shriek and the plunge of a damned spirit; to my heart with the stealthy pace of the tiger! I alternately laughed and

howled, as the one or the other idea grew predominant. Down - certainly, relentlessly down! It vibrated within three inches of my bosom! I struggled violently, furiously, to free my left arm.”

You can feel and imagine the ravings of a man slowly being tortured to death as he waits to be slowly, methodically sliced in two by the descending cold steel from which, it seems, he has no escape.

### **Use of Short Stories in English Language Teaching - A Never-Ending Supply**

A virtually unending supply of fresh, original short stories is almost always available from a broad range of reference sites and resources such as short story contests online and in print, online and print libraries, both public and private, author and writing websites - and, Public Domain repositories like Gutenberg. English language teachers and learners need never lack for fresh, original short stories to read or use for language teaching or language learning.

**Prof. Larry M. Lynch** is an EFL Teacher Trainer, Intellectual Development Specialist, prolific writer, expert author and public speaker. He has written ESP, foreign language learning, English language teaching texts and hundreds of articles used in more than 120 countries. Get your FREE E-book, “If You Want to Teach English Abroad, Here’s What You Need to Know” and English language teaching and learning information at: <http://bettereflteacher.blogspot.com>. Need a blogger or copywriter to promote your school, institution, service or business or an experienced writer and vibrant SEO content for your website, blog or newsletter? Contact the author at the above blog address for more information.

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Larry M. Lynch](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Larry_M._Lynch)

\*\* ELTWeekly team would like to thank **Prof. Larry M. Lynch** for contributing this article.

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# ELTWeekly

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India's First Weekly ELT eNewsletter

## **RESEARCH PAPER: Bridging the gap: Vernacular medium to English medium**

By **Sunil Shah & Surendra Gohil**, Lecturers, H.M. Patel Institute of English Training and Research, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Dist: Anand , Gujarat - INDIA

Abstract:

“CAN A CHILD STUDY IN A HINDI/VERNACULAR MEDIUM SCHOOL TILL CLASS 4 OR 5 AND THEN BE SHIFTED TO A GOOD ENGLISH MEDIUM ONE?” is a question asked by a parent in the ‘Sawal’ section of the website <http://www.ibibo.com>. This is also a concern of many other parents in India. This paper seeks to answer this question with the help of a study, wherein the researcher has prepared and tryout some material based on Functional English to develop oral competence of the students of class IV and V who are at zero level or near to zero level competence. In such a task it is obvious that structural approach may not prove to be fruitful, hence the researchers prepared and tried out some materials based on Functional English for initial level of language instruction.

**The significant questions which the paper deals with are as follows:**

Can the students at zero level be taught through Functional English?

Is there significant improvement in students' oral skills through the material prepared?

What are the difficulties for compiling and preparing material for the zero level language instruction level students?

What should one keep in mind while preparing materials at the initial level of language instruction ?

### **Introduction:**

The medium of instruction is very important at every level of education and more so during the elementary education, as that is the time when a child is exposed to the vast world of

knowledge. It is a long held debate in India whether the medium of education should be the universally recognized English language or the regional language. There are pros and cons of both the options. While English is important when one grows up and goes into a professional life, regional language has an advantage of being easily understood, thus helping the students grab the right information and understand better. Educationists around the world have debated this issue but to no concrete result. In India, with its multilingual background, there cannot be one accepted medium of instruction. Though Hindi has been accorded the status of the national language, it is yet to gain a whole-hearted acceptance in many parts of India like South and East India. Thus, many state-run schools follow the language of their region to impart education. However, in urban India, English is the preferred medium of education for obvious reasons. Even people from economically weaker backgrounds and those who do not speak English themselves prefer to send their children to English-medium schools.

The prime reasons are preference of English as a medium of instruction in higher education and its worldwide acceptability. There are no good professional courses available in regional languages. Thus, it is believed those who study through regional languages tend to lag behind to those who have studied in the English language. Studies have been conducted worldwide to find out a better medium. Purists reckon that language is not just a means of communication but also a cultural window which introduces one to the social and intellectual surroundings. Language development leads to educational development, which in turn leads to national development. Till a long time, the medium of instruction in India was the dominant regional language from primary to the high school level. English was only introduced as a subject after the primary level. English as a medium of instruction throughout schooling was only found in a few schools. This trend worked in the favor of many but gave inferiority complex to a lot others. People who could not speak or understand English started feeling that they were no good. The point is highly debatable.

However, when it comes to higher education and especially the professional courses English medium is a must. It would not be proper to think that streams like Engineering, Medical, MBA or any technical course can be imparted in a regional language. When we talk about professional courses in vernacular medium the problems which we come across are acceptability and terminology. There are not enough terms in the regional languages that can define the concepts in these fields. Also, even if one were to get this education in the regional language, he/she cannot use it professionally as the whole world does not understand the same language and they end up becoming misfits.

This discussion leads us to further discussion about whether a child studying in Gujarati or Vernacular medium be shifted English Medium from class IV or Class V .

“CAN A CHILD STUDY IN A HINDI/VERNACULAR MEDIUM SCHOOL TILL CLASS 4 OR 5 AND THEN BE SHIFTED TO A GOOD ENGLISH MEDIUM ONE?” is a question asked by a parent in the ‘Sawal’ section of the website <http://www.ibibo.com>. This is also a concern of many other parents in India. This paper seeks to answer this question with the help of a study, wherein the researchers prepared and tried out some material based on Functional English to develop the oral competence of the students of class IV and V who had had no exposure to English language or were at zero level or near to zero level of English language competence. In such a task it is obvious that structural approach may not prove to be fruitful, hence the researchers prepared and tried out some materials based on Functional English for initial level of language instruction.

The significant questions which the paper deals with are as follows:

Can the students at zero level be taught through Functional English?

Is there significant improvement in students’ oral skills through the material prepared?

What are the difficulties for compiling and preparing material for the zero level language instruction level students?

What should one keep in mind while preparing materials at the initial level of language instruction ?

The research was taken up at Swaminarayan Vidyapith[English Medium Girls School CBSE], Karamsad. The school also encourages admissions to students from vernacular medium (Gujarati) in class IV and class V English medium. The English language competence of these students is at zero or near to zero level. These students are admitted on the basis of their aptitude towards learning.

It is also misleading to think that such children will only learn simple language, such as colours and numbers, nursery rhymes and songs, and talking about themselves at the initial stage. Of course, if that is all they are taught, that will be all that they can learn. But children can always do more than we think they can; they have huge learning potential, and the foreign language classroom does them a disservice if we do not exploit that

potential(Cameron,2001). Hence it is extremely necessary to prepare and try out materials to help such learners in bridging the gap of 6 years. The researchers prepared some materials which they got validated from experts, which would help such students to develop the required communicative competence.

### **Objectives of the study:**

The researchers undertook the project with the following objectives.

1. To prepare material based on functional English, which will be helpful at the zero level of language instruction.
2. Try out of the material prepared for the initial levels of language instruction.
3. To find out the effectiveness of material based on Functional English at the initial level.

### **Variables:**

In the present study, the Material prepared by the investigator is manipulated as the independent variable to verify its effect in the development of the oral skills the sample group is assumed to be dependent variable.

### **Limitations of the study:**

The present study includes preparation and tryout of some material based on Functional English. These prepared materials covers only limited topics and techniques. The researchers focused only on developing oral skills and not other skills related to general competence of English. The study is limited to a few samples only, namely a group of 25 students admitted to class IV and V with zero or near to zero level of competence in English. The study only covers the geographical area under Swaminarayan Vidyapith , Girls School. The duration of the experimental teaching was that of thirty hours including the input session.

### **Research methodology:**

The present study is experimental in nature. The researchers followed the One group pretest-posttest design.

Materials for teaching the beginners:

Teaching absolute beginners requires the teacher to pay special attention to the order in which new language is introduced. The teacher lesson plan plays an essential role in making sure that new language is introduced slowly and incrementally. This 20 point program provides a syllabus to take students from speaking no English at all, to being able to fulfill basic communication needs including; giving personal information, and describing their daily routines and the world around them.

Obviously, there is a lot more to speaking English confidently than these twenty points. This 20 point program has been designed to provide a strong base on which to build while, at the same time, providing learners with the most important language skills they will need to get going.

When teaching absolute beginners, it is very important to proceed methodically building on what has been introduced. These exercises will appear very simple. But we should remember that the students are taking very little steps to quickly establish a base on which to build. To begin teaching absolute beginners it is important to use gestures, pointing and what is often called “modeling”.

**Some of the teaching points included in the course are as follows:**

- Introducing oneself/ others
- Identifying items or people in the classroom and the school
- Introducing and asking for identification.
- Seeking information
- Basic Greetings
- Personal Information
- Telling the Time
- Talking about their Daily Routines

**Methods of data collection:**

The investigator followed the following method for data collection

Internal pretest (prepared by the investigator)

Internal posttest (prepared by the investigator)

The researchers prepared the questions to check the oral skills at the initial level, the researchers took the pretest in the form of audio-recording of the responses. The marks were allotted as per the marks allotted to questions asked by the researchers at the time of actual audio -recording. Following the treatment of the material produced by the investigators posttest was taken in the same manner as the pre-test.

### **Analysis and interpretation of data:**

The data were analyzed on the basis of the scores obtained by the sample group in pretest and posttest. Several types of statistical parameters were used to verify the validity of the findings of the experiment. They were-

- i. Measures of Central Tendency or averages- the mean, the median and the mode;
- ii. Measures of spread or dispersion- S.D.;
- iii. Measures of relationship- correlation, C.V.;

The data was analysed on the basis of the scores obtained by the students in the pretest and posttest. Simple statically methods were used to interpret the data.

### **Highlights of the analysis :**

The mean scores made by the students in the pretest are 3.6 and post experimental test 11.6.

There is a difference of 8 marks between the pretest score and posttest score which is positive.

Mode of the score showed positive increase of +7, where as Median showed positive increase of +7. ( Mode pretest=5, posttest=12, Median pretest =+5 and posttest=12)

There is a high standard deviation ( 3.588 ) in posttest score compared with low standard deviation ( 2.638 ) in pretest score. The standard deviation is seen high in the posttest as some of the students who did not do well in the pretest have done extremely well in the post test.

The correlation of coefficient between scores of pre and post experimental test was positive and worked out at + 0.364.

Coefficient of variation is also low ( 30.93 ) in post test score compared with coefficient of variation in pretest score ( 73.277 ).

All the students of the sample group have improvement in their score in post test. However there is difference in level of improvement in all the students.

### **Observation by the investigator:**

Although the learners were new to the language they actively participated in the different activities conducted during the tryout of the materials for the initial level of language instruction. Initially the students were not comfortable with the new language they were learning but different games and activities motivated them. However, it was the brighter students who took initiative in answering the question and participation in class. But gradually all the 25 students started taking active interest in these classes.

The results show that all the 25 students have shown improvement .However, there were a few students who were not able to cope with the level of the class. The reason behind this could be lack of effort on the side of the learner. One of the students confessed that they were listening to the language for the first time. It was observed that the students were gradually gaining confidence to use the new language.

They were more involved and seemed motivated in learning English Language. Add the end of day 7 of they were able to use language more confidently and fluently than they have thought of. It was observed that the learners made a conscious attempt to talk in English language with their peers. They were able to comprehend each others language. Other qualities as cooperation, negotiation, consensus making and leadership developed as they worked together. Communication was not only with the students but also with the teacher.

At the end of the treatment it was observed that the students were able to communicate in a purposeful manner appropriate to the context. They were found more enthusiastic to use the language with these teachers of other subjects and their seniors. Their stage fright decreased as some of them were able to perform well in the school assembly. They also appeared to listen to each other more carefully.

### **Suggestions for further research:**

Materials for the Initial level of language instruction should be prepared in consultation with the needs of other faculty teachers also. Through such a coordinated effort materials will become more relevant for the learners. These materials will teach language items but students should feel that they are learning something relevant to their studies. More materials should be prepared which will take care of other language skill i.e. listening , reading and writing. These materials which are for the initial level of language instruction will be liked by the students if it is related to their subjects and needs. Such material should be prepared and tried out as it will helps the students to bridge the gap between them and English language as they have not got the exposure to the language in vernacular (Gujarati) medium schools.

### **Conclusion:**

This study was undertaken with the aim of preparation and tryout of some materials based on Functional English at the initial level of language instruction. The researcher did face some bottlenecks while carrying out the experiment. Based on the observations, taken during the tryout of materials the researchers drew some suggestions.

During the research the researchers faced few problems. The difference in their level of understanding was a barrier as the researchers had to make some changes in the procedure of tryout of materials. These difficulties helped that the researchers how to prepare such materials, which steps to follow and how to teach students at the initial level of language instruction in a better way.

The study proved to be useful for both the investigator and the students. These materials were useful to develop the oral skills of the students. These materials provided the learners the confidence which is required to learn a new language. This study will be useful for not only practicing teachers but also for future researchers and material producers.

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\*\*\* ELTWeekly Team would like to thank Sunil Shah & Surendra Gohil for contributing this research paper.

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