

AN ENGLISH TEACHER: A CREATOR OF INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Article Received: 08/11/2022

Article Accepted: 28/12/2022

Published Online: 29/12/2022

DOI: 10.47311/IJOES.2022.4.194

Abstract

The role of an English teacher has undergone a significant transformation from that of a transmitter of linguistic knowledge to that of a facilitator, designer, mentor, and creator of meaningful learning experiences. In contemporary English language classrooms, students need more than knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structures; they require opportunities to communicate, collaborate, think critically, solve problems, create content, and use English in authentic contexts. Consequently, the English teacher has an important responsibility to design innovative classroom activities that make language learning active, experiential, learner-centred, and relevant to students' everyday lives. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also emphasizes innovative and experiential approaches to language teaching, including gamification, applications, storytelling, theatre, poetry, music, and connections with real-life experiences.

This research article examines the role of the English teacher as a creator of innovative activities in the English language classroom. It discusses the theoretical foundations of activity-based language learning, communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching, collaborative learning, experiential learning, digital pedagogy, gamification, and artificial intelligence-supported learning. It proposes a range of practical activities such as role play, language games, storytelling, debate, simulation, vocabulary challenges, peer teaching, digital storytelling, podcasting, project-based learning, classroom journalism, English clubs, problem-solving tasks, and AI-assisted language activities. The article also examines the benefits and challenges of innovative classroom practices and proposes a framework for teachers to design effective activities. The study concludes that an innovative English teacher is not merely a user of new technology but a pedagogical creator who transforms ordinary classroom situations into meaningful opportunities for communication and learning.

Keywords: English teacher, innovative activities, English language classroom, activity-based learning.

Introduction

English occupies an important position in contemporary education, higher education, employment, research, technology, international communication, and social mobility. However, knowing English theoretically does not necessarily mean that a learner can use English effectively in real-life situations. Students may know grammatical rules and vocabulary but still hesitate to speak, participate in discussions, write independently, or communicate confidently.

One important reason is that traditional language classrooms may sometimes emphasize explanation, memorization, textbook exercises, and examination-oriented preparation rather than meaningful communication. An effective English classroom therefore needs opportunities for learners to listen, speak, read, write, interact, negotiate meaning, create, and reflect.

The English teacher is central to this transformation. A teacher who creates innovative activities can convert the classroom from a place where students passively receive information into a learning environment in which students actively use language.

Innovation in language teaching does not necessarily mean using sophisticated technology. A teacher can innovate through a simple storytelling activity, a role play, a classroom debate, a peer-learning exercise, a vocabulary game, a mock interview, or a problem-solving task. Technology can extend these possibilities through digital storytelling, collaborative documents, podcasts, video creation, language-learning applications, and artificial intelligence.

Recent research supports the importance of collaborative and technology-enhanced approaches. A systematic review of technology-enhanced cooperative language learning identified positive academic, social, self-concept, and behavioural outcomes, although the researchers also noted the need to consider implementation conditions and research limitations.

Similarly, recent research on technology-enhanced English language learning indicates increasing use of digital tools, multimedia, online platforms, social-network applications, language technologies, and intelligent conversational tools.

Thus, the contemporary English teacher needs to function as a creator of learning experiences rather than simply a provider of information.

Statement of the Problem

Many English language learners experience difficulties in:

- speaking English confidently;
- participating in classroom discussions;
- developing adequate vocabulary;
- applying grammar in real communication;
- expressing ideas independently;
- listening to authentic English;
- writing creatively;
- working collaboratively;
- overcoming fear of making mistakes;
- connecting classroom English with real-life situations.

Conventional teaching practices may not always provide sufficient opportunities for active language use. There is therefore a need for teachers to develop innovative activities that promote communication, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and learner autonomy.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the changing role of the English teacher in the contemporary classroom..
2. To identify different types of innovative activities suitable for English classrooms.
3. To develop a practical framework for teachers to design innovative activities.
4. To discuss the potential benefits and challenges of activity-based English teaching.
5. To suggest strategies for improving students' communication, creativity, collaboration, and confidence.

Methodology

This article adopts a **conceptual and descriptive research approach** based on a review of literature relating to English language teaching, communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching, collaborative learning, experiential learning, technology-enhanced language learning, gamification, and AI-supported language education.

Relevant research literature and policy documents were examined to identify principles that can guide innovative English language activities. Particular attention was given to recent systematic reviews concerning technology-enhanced cooperative language learning, technology-enhanced language learning, artificial intelligence in EFL learning, gamification, and corpus-based instruction.

The article does **not** claim empirical classroom results from a particular student sample. Instead, it develops a pedagogical framework and a set of practical activities that can subsequently be tested through classroom-based action research.

The Changing Role of the English Teacher

The traditional English teacher was often viewed as the authority who explained grammar, introduced vocabulary, corrected errors, and evaluated examinations. The contemporary teacher performs a much broader range of functions.

1.Traditional role

Teacher → Explanation → Student → Reproduction

Innovative role

Teacher → Design → Activity → Interaction → Reflection → Learning

The teacher increasingly becomes:

6.1 Facilitator

The teacher creates conditions in which students can use English rather than simply listen to explanations.

2 Activity Designer

The teacher designs tasks appropriate to learners' age, proficiency, interests, culture, and educational goals.

3 Classroom Innovator

The teacher experiments with new methods and evaluates whether they improve learning.

4 Motivator

Interesting activities can reduce monotony and encourage students to participate.

5 Language Model

Teachers demonstrate appropriate pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, discourse, and communicative strategies.

6 Mentor

The teacher provides feedback and guides students towards independent learning.

7 Digital Facilitator

Digital resources can provide students with additional opportunities to read, listen, communicate, create, and receive feedback.

8 Researcher

An innovative teacher observes classroom behaviour, identifies learning problems, tries interventions, and evaluates their effectiveness.

Thus, the innovative English teacher can be understood as a **teacher-researcher and pedagogical creator**.

Theoretical Foundations of Innovative English Language Teaching

1. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes meaningful communication rather than exclusive concentration on grammatical forms. Classroom activities should therefore give learners opportunities to exchange information, express opinions, ask questions, negotiate meaning, and interact with others.

For example, instead of merely teaching vocabulary related to travel, students can participate in a simulated travel-planning activity.

2. Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-based language teaching gives learners meaningful tasks through which language becomes a tool for achieving an objective. Recent scholarship continues to examine task-based teaching as an approach aimed at promoting real-world communicative language use. (Examples include:

- planning a trip;
- conducting an interview;
- solving a community problem;
- preparing a restaurant menu;
- organizing a college event;
- comparing products;
- preparing a public announcement.

The important principle is:

Use English to accomplish something, rather than merely talk about English.

3 Experiential Learning

Language is learned more effectively when learners connect classroom content with experience. NEP 2020 explicitly advocates innovative and experiential language teaching and identifies activities such as gamification, apps, films, theatre, storytelling, poetry, music, and connections with real-life experiences. ([Education Government of India](#))

4 Collaborative Learning

Students learn through interaction with peers. Group activities can create additional opportunities for speaking and negotiation.

Examples include:

- group discussions;
- peer teaching;
- collaborative writing;

- group storytelling;
- jigsaw reading;
- project work;
- peer editing.

Recent systematic evidence suggests that technology-enhanced cooperative language learning can support language proficiency as well as social and behavioural outcomes. ([ScienceDirect](#))

5 Constructivist Learning

From a constructivist perspective, learners actively construct knowledge through experience, interaction, reflection, and problem solving.

The teacher therefore creates situations in which students discover, use, discuss, modify, and apply language.

Innovative Activities for the English Language Classroom

1 Word Chain Activity

One student says a word, and the next student gives another word beginning with the final letter.

Example:

Book → Knowledge → Education → Development → Technology

1.Skills developed

- vocabulary;
- spelling;
- pronunciation;
- quick thinking;
- listening.

2 Vocabulary Auction

The teacher prepares a list of words and gives each group imaginary money.

Students "bid" on words they believe they understand and can use correctly in sentences.

Teams receive points for:

- correct meaning;
- correct pronunciation;
- correct sentence;
- appropriate contextual use.

This converts vocabulary learning into a competitive but educational activity.

3.Story Building Activity

The teacher begins a story with two or three sentences.

"When Ananya opened the old box, she found a letter written fifty years ago..."

Each student adds one or two sentences.

The activity can subsequently be extended into:

- individual writing;
- group storytelling;
- dialogue writing;
- dramatic performance;
- digital story creation.

4.Learning outcomes

Students develop:

- imagination;
- vocabulary;
- sentence formation;
- sequencing;
- speaking;
- writing.

5.Role Play

Role play allows students to practise language in simulated real-life situations.

Possible situations

- customer and shopkeeper;
- doctor and patient;
- teacher and student;
- interviewer and candidate;
- tourist and guide;
- journalist and politician;
- passenger and railway official;
- bank employee and customer.

Role play is particularly useful because students learn language **through doing**.

6. Mock Interview

Students work in pairs.

One student becomes the interviewer and another becomes the candidate.

Possible questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths?
- Why should we select you?
- What are your career goals?
- Describe a challenging situation you handled.

Students can subsequently exchange roles.

Skills

- speaking;
- listening;
- vocabulary;
- confidence;
- professional communication.

7. Classroom Newsroom

Students become journalists.

Groups are assigned different sections:

- national news;
- international news;
- sports;
- science;
- education;
- environment;

- campus news.

Students prepare short news reports and present them to the class.

This activity integrates:

Reading + Writing + Speaking + Listening

It can also develop media literacy and presentation skills.

8. Debate and Discussion

Debate topics can be connected to students' lives:

- Is online education effective?
- Should students use smartphones in classrooms?
- Is artificial intelligence useful for education?
- Should examinations be reduced?
- Is social media beneficial to students?

The objective should not merely be winning the debate. Students should learn to:

1. formulate arguments;
2. support claims with evidence;
3. listen to opposing views;
4. respond respectfully;
5. summarize arguments.

9.. Picture-to-Story Activity

The teacher displays a photograph or illustration.

Students answer:

- What can you see?
- Who are the people?
- What happened before this scene?
- What might happen next?
- What emotions are visible?

Students then write or tell a story.

This activity is especially useful for developing descriptive and narrative language.

10. Silent Video Activity

A short video is played **without sound**.

Students predict the dialogue.

They write conversations for the characters and then perform them.

Afterwards, the original audio can be played and students compare their interpretations.

Skills

- prediction;
- vocabulary;
- dialogue writing;
- speaking;
- listening;
- creativity.

11. Podcast Creation

Students work in small groups to create a 3–5 minute English podcast.

Possible topics:

- campus life;
- local culture;
- student experiences;
- environmental problems;
- career opportunities;
- books;
- films;
- technology.

Students prepare a script, record it, edit it, and present it.

This combines language learning with digital literacy.

12. English Language Games

Games can be used to practise:

- vocabulary;
- grammar;
- pronunciation;
- sentence formation;
- idioms;
- phrasal verbs;
- spelling.

Examples include:

Grammar Bingo

Students receive cards containing grammatical forms and identify correct sentences.

Vocabulary Charades

Students communicate a word without speaking while teammates guess it.

Grammar Detective

Students identify errors in a paragraph and explain how to correct them.

Gamification can increase engagement, although research also identifies practical barriers such as technology problems and teachers' limited preparation or skills. ([ScienceDirect](#))

13. Jigsaw Reading

A text is divided into sections.

Each group reads one section and becomes an "expert" on that section. Students then reorganize into new groups and teach their section to classmates.

This activity encourages:

- reading comprehension;
- peer teaching;
- speaking;
- summarizing;
- cooperation.

14. Peer Teaching

Students are assigned small language topics such as:

- articles;
- prepositions;
- tenses;

- synonyms;
- idioms;
- punctuation.

Each student prepares a short explanation and teaches classmates.

The teacher then provides corrective feedback.

Peer teaching changes students from passive recipients into contributors.

15. Problem-Solving Activities

The teacher provides a real-life problem.

Example

"Your college is organizing an English-language cultural festival with a limited budget. Prepare a plan."

Students must:

1. discuss possibilities;
2. divide responsibilities;
3. prepare a budget;
4. design a programme;
5. present their proposal.

Language becomes a tool for solving a problem.

16. English Club as an Innovation Laboratory

An English Club can function as a permanent platform for innovative activities.

Possible programmes include:

- English debate;
- storytelling;
- poetry;
- public speaking;
- quiz;
- newspaper;
- podcast;
- drama;
- book club;
- pronunciation clinic;
- vocabulary competition;
- film discussion.

The English teacher becomes the **designer and coordinator of a continuous language-learning ecosystem.**

17. Innovative Activities for the Four Language Skills

Skill	Innovative Activities
Listening	podcasts, songs, interviews, video prediction
Speaking	role play, debate, mock interview, storytelling
Reading	jigsaw reading, treasure hunt, news analysis
Writing	digital storytelling, blogs, newspapers, collaborative writing

Skill	Innovative Activities
Vocabulary	word games, vocabulary auction, word maps
Grammar	grammar detective, error correction games
Pronunciation	pronunciation challenges, recording and self-review
Integrated skills	projects, simulations, classroom journalism

The Teacher as a Creator: An Activity Design Framework

An innovative activity can be developed using the following model:

C-R-E-A-T-E Framework

C – Context

Connect the activity with a meaningful situation.

R – Relevant Language

Identify the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or discourse required.

E – Engagement

Make students actively participate.

A – Application

Require learners to use English to complete a task.

T – Technology/Tools

Use digital tools when they genuinely improve the learning experience.

E – Evaluation

Assess both the learning process and the final performance.

This framework emphasizes that innovation is not simply adding technology. Pedagogical purpose must come before technology.

Characteristics of an Innovative English Teacher

An innovative English teacher should demonstrate:

Creativity

The ability to generate new classroom ideas.

Flexibility

The ability to modify activities according to learner needs.

Empathy

Understanding students' fears, interests, abilities, and learning differences.

Digital literacy

The ability to select appropriate digital resources.

Communication skills

The ability to model effective language use.

Reflective practice

The willingness to evaluate teaching practices.

Research orientation

The ability to use classroom evidence to improve teaching.

Cultural sensitivity

The ability to incorporate local and global cultural contexts.

Technology: Tool, Not Teacher

Technology can enhance English teaching, but technology alone does not guarantee effective learning.

A systematic review of English teachers' digital technology integration found that technologies were frequently used for teacher-centred purposes and identified teacher beliefs, competence, confidence, resources, professional development, and sociocultural context as important factors influencing technology integration.

Therefore:

Technology should serve pedagogy, not replace pedagogy.

A teacher should ask:

1. What language skill will this activity develop?
2. Why is technology necessary?
3. Will students actively use English?
4. Is the technology accessible to all learners?
5. How will learning be assessed?

Local Context and English Learning

English activities become more meaningful when teachers connect them with students' social and cultural environments.

For example, students can prepare English presentations on:

- local festivals;
- historical monuments;
- local agriculture;
- traditional food;
- regional literature;
- folk arts;
- local environmental issues;
- community occupations.

This approach enables students to understand that English is not merely a foreign textbook subject; it is a means of communicating their own experiences and culture.

Benefits of Innovative English Activities

Innovative activities can potentially:

1. increase student participation;
2. create more opportunities for language use;
3. develop communication skills;
4. improve confidence;
5. strengthen vocabulary;
6. encourage collaborative learning;
7. develop creativity;
8. promote critical thinking;
9. improve learner autonomy;
10. connect classroom learning with real life;
11. support digital literacy;

12. provide opportunities for formative assessment.

Recent reviews indicate positive possibilities for technology-enhanced cooperative and self-regulated language learning, although effects depend on the design and implementation of interventions.

From Teacher-Centred to Learner-Centred Classroom

Traditional Classroom

Teacher

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Lecture

↓

Notes

↓

Memorization

↓

Examination

Innovative Classroom

Teacher

↓

Activity Design

↓

Student Interaction

↓

Communication

↓

Reflection

↓

Feedback

↓

Application

↓

Independent Learning

The teacher does not disappear in the learner-centred classroom. Instead, the teacher's role becomes more intellectually demanding because the teacher must design, facilitate, observe, assess, and improve learning experiences.

Therefore, the central principle should be:

Innovative pedagogy first; appropriate technology second.

Conclusion

The English teacher of the twenty-first century is increasingly required to be more than an instructor of grammar and vocabulary. The teacher is a designer, facilitator, mentor, researcher, innovator, and creator of meaningful language-learning experiences. Innovative classroom activities can transform English from a subject that students merely study into a language that they actively use. Role play, storytelling, debate, simulation, games, peer teaching, journalism, podcasting, project work, digital storytelling, problem-solving tasks, corpus-based learning, and

appropriately designed AI-supported activities provide diverse opportunities for students to communicate and create. The central issue, however, is not whether a teacher uses the latest technology. The essential question is whether the teacher creates meaningful opportunities for learners to use English purposefully. NEP 2020's emphasis on innovative and experiential language pedagogy—including gamification, apps, theatre, storytelling, poetry, music, and real-life connections—provides a strong policy context for such approaches in India. The innovative English teacher therefore acts as a creator of possibilities. A classroom becomes innovative when students are encouraged not merely to remember English but to speak it, question it, explore it, create with it, collaborate through it, and connect it with their real lives. An innovative English teacher does not simply teach the language; the teacher creates situations in which learners discover that they can use the language.

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