



## **Teaching English Beyond the Textbook: Creative Approaches**

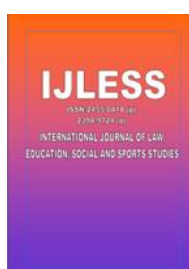
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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the creative methods of teaching in the twenty-first century with an emphasis on reimagining the traditional methods along with the technology, learner-centered pedagogy, and cross-disciplinary techniques to improve language acquisition. In a time of rising globalisation and digitisation, traditional approaches to teaching English frequently fail to meet the needs of various learners and the demands of real-world communication. The study highlights how crucial it is to redefine the traditional methods by incorporating various activities like spelling games, verse voyage, flipped teaching and peer tutoring and to use digital tools like virtual reality, gamification, and AI-powered platforms to produce engaging and dynamic learning environments. It also supports a move towards task-based and experiential learning frameworks that foster creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork. Through the utilisation of theoretical insights and case examples from several educational contexts, the paper presents a vision for rethinking English teaching in order to promote lifelong learning, cultural competency, and linguistic proficiency.

Keywords: Innovation, Flipped teaching, Gamification, Verse voyage, Padlet

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Over the past few decades, English language instruction has undergone substantial changes, driven by technological advancements and the evolving needs of a globalized world. As a vital tool for communication, cross-cultural interaction, and access to global opportunities, English is more than just a subject in school curricula. However, conventional teaching methods—often reliant on rote memorization and grammar-translation techniques—fail to meet the diverse and ever-changing needs of contemporary learners. These traditional approaches are increasingly being challenged by innovative pedagogies that emphasize engagement, flexibility, and contextual relevance.

Innovative methods in English instruction range from reimagining traditional teaching techniques to incorporating digital tools, multimedia resources, and learner-centered pedagogies. To foster active student engagement and promote deeper learning, educators must rethink conventional strategies. By integrating dynamic and interactive techniques such as spelling bees, peer tutoring, and reading contests, language learning becomes more engaging and effective. These approaches not only enhance

students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension but also encourage collaboration, motivation, and a genuine passion for learning.

Learners now have access to immersive and interactive experiences that improve language acquisition due to the usage of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, gamification, and collaborative online platforms. Furthermore, in line with learners' holistic development, modern methods place a strong emphasis on the value of critical thinking, cultural competency, and the practical application of language skills. There are difficulties with this change. The curriculum must be continuously modified to integrate new technology and pedagogical theories, institutions must make resource investments, and teachers must learn new skills. However, these difficulties highlight how English language instruction must be innovative in order to meet the increasing complexity of language use in multicultural, diverse, and technologically advanced situations. Through an examination of contemporary practices, methods, and consequences of innovation in English instruction, this study seeks to provide light on how teachers might better prepare students for success in a globalized society.

### **INNOVATION-MEANING**

According to Curtis & William (2006), innovation can be as creative as the introduction of a new toy, or it can be as advanced as the introduction of instantaneous imaging technology into photography. Innovation refers to the use of electronic technologies to provide learning opportunities for learners, which is contrary to the traditional classroom model (Robinson & Schraw, 2008). Many academics find that innovation is defined as a change, or the other way around, change may be described as the adoption of an innovation (Credaro, 2006; Rogers, 2003). Innovation can emerge as a new pedagogical theory, methodological approach, teaching technique, teaching tool, learning process, or institutional structure that, when implemented, leads to significant changes in teaching and learning, which leads to better student learning in education (Serdyukov, 2017).

### **INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH**

Learners' engagement, language acquisition, and practical application have all been improved by innovative approaches to English instruction. These developments use innovative approaches, contemporary teaching, and technology to meet the requirements of a wide range of learners. The following are some significant innovations:

#### **1. Padlet in Teaching English**

English language instruction is improved with Padlet, a flexible digital tool that encourages teamwork, creativity, and interactive learning. Teachers and students can publish, arrange, and share multimedia information, including text, photos, videos, audio, and links, on this virtual bulletin board. Using Padlet, English teachers may design dynamic and captivating exercises.

Teachers can create brainstorming boards for creative writing tasks, where students can share ideas for characters or story plots. Similarly, it provides a cooperative vocabulary-building platform where students contribute new terms along with definitions, synonyms, and examples of how to use them.

Additionally, Padlet facilitates interactive reading and comprehension tasks. By writing passages or questions on the board and letting students answer in real time, teachers may promote critical thinking and peer interaction. Students can post multimedia projects, essays, or research findings for peer and teacher commenting, making it a great tool for project-based learning. Students of all ages and skill levels can utilize the platform because of its visually appealing and intuitive interface, which guarantees inclusion.

**Case Study:** A teacher in a middle school English class used Padlet to help students with a unit on creative storytelling by assisting them with their writing and critical thinking. Several of the 25 students in the class were English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, and their levels of English ability varied.

With the help of the teacher's "Creative Storyboard" Padlet board, the students worked together to create the components of a shared narrative. Character development, setting descriptions, dialogue drafting, and story brainstorming were all done on separate portions of the board. Students contributed ideas, left comments on those of their peers, and voted on the most interesting ones using the "like" button.

The multimedia elements of Padlet were used to further engage the students. Richer narrative elements were inspired by the addition of images, films, and audio snippets. For instance, a brief video clip spurred creative story twists, while an image of an enigmatic woodland sparked conversations about descriptive vocabulary. To help struggling students with their brainstorming, the instructor also provided leading questions and prompts.

At the conclusion of the assignment, each student turned in a short story that included aspects they had produced together on the Padlet board. Padlet was used to re-upload these articles for teacher and peer review. By enabling peers to offer helpful criticism, the platform's comment function promoted a positive learning environment.

## **2. Quizizz**

As defined by Moeller et al. (1998), "Today, education is immersed in a technological revolution." As a result, technology plays a crucial role in assisting and improving English language learning. One such technology is Quizizz.

Quizizz is an interactive, game-based learning platform that has proven to be a useful resource for English language instruction. It is a great tool for students of all skill levels since it blends serious learning with enjoyable and engaging components. Teachers can use Quizizz to create tests on vocabulary, grammar, literary analysis, and reading comprehension. They can also use Quizizz to teach skills like sentence structure, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language.

Instructors can use the platform to create their own tests or select from a large collection of pre-made quizzes. Instructors can either assign Quizizz quizzes as homework for self-paced learning or utilize Quizizz in live mode to create a competitive, real-time quiz environment during lessons.

Students may learn from their errors immediately thanks to the rapid feedback feature, which is very helpful while learning a language. Quizizz could be used to review vocabulary in a standard English session. For instance, a teacher might design a test that includes sentence completion exercises, synonyms, antonyms, and word definitions. The platform's multimedia features enable the addition of pictures, sound, and video, which can be very beneficial when teaching word pronunciation and context.

## **3. Flipped Teaching in English**

In English education, flipped teaching, often known as the flipped classroom model, is a novel strategy that modifies conventional learning dynamics. This approach exposes students to new material outside of the classroom, usually through teacher-provided digital resources including podcasts, books, and videos. After that, interactive exercises, conversations, and group projects take place in the classroom to enhance comprehension and help students apply what they have learned at home.

In an English literature class, for instance, students may read an article or view a video lecture about literary devices like personification, similes, and metaphors before class. In groups, they examine a poem or tale throughout class, pointing out and talking about how these literary strategies are used. This practical exercise strengthens the ideas covered in the pre-class readings. Flipped teaching works especially well in English because it gives students more time to participate in active learning in class. Activities that encourage critical thinking and the use of language practically, such as role-playing, peer evaluations, debates, and creative writing, are available to students. In order to learn grammar,

students may view tutorials on certain rules at home and then use those rules in class through games or writing assignments.

#### 4. Collaborative Book Reading Month

An interesting English education program called Collaborative Book Reading Month encourages students to read more, improve their comprehension, and work together as a team. Through a month-long reading and analysis of a book, the class as a whole combines individual and group work to enhance comprehension and appreciation of the material. Collaboratively, students enhance their English language proficiency while cultivating critical thinking, communication, and teamwork abilities.

To ensure inclusivity and engagement, the teacher chooses a book at the beginning of the month that fits the students' interests and skill levels. The book may be a modern work, a classic novel, or a genre that appeals to the students. The instructor breaks the book up into digestible chunks, assigns homework assignments, and sets aside class time for debates, discussions, and related activities. Collaborative exercises including character assessments, group discussions, thematic investigations, and role-playing book scenes are the main focus of in-class sessions.

For instance, students can examine a particular chapter in small groups, highlighting important topics, vocabulary, and stylistic components before presenting their results to the class. Multimedia tools can be incorporated by educators to enhance the interactive experience. For example, students can make chapter summaries into digital posters or movies, write blog entries from the viewpoint of a character, or make quizzes based on the book's content. Teachers can also make the material more engaging by planning entertaining activities, such as a "literary debate" or a "book-themed costume day." Students keep reading notebooks throughout the month, recording new words and reflecting on what they have learned. At the conclusion of the exercise, students can demonstrate their comprehension and creativity through a culminating project, such as a group book review or an imaginative retelling of the tale.

#### 5. Concept Maps in Teaching English

A learning technique called concept mapping was developed by Novak and is predicated on the notion of organizing and displaying knowledge using graphical tools. Important ideas are typically encapsulated in circles or boxes, while connections between ideas are denoted by a line that connects two ideas. The most general notion is at the top of the hierarchical diagrammatic network representation of concepts, while the individual concepts are grouped downward in the spatial arrangement.

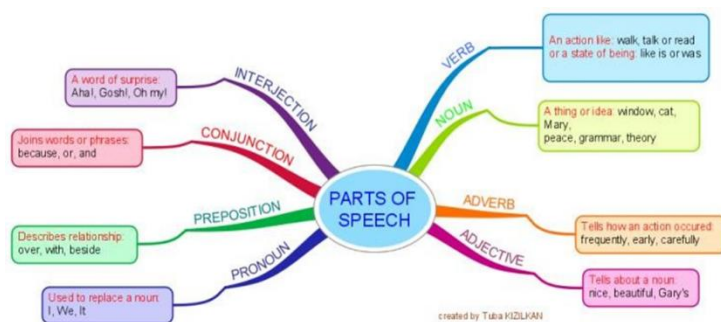


Figure1: Concept Map for Parts of Speech

Students can construct visually beautiful and shareable concept maps by using digital tools such as Lucidchart, MindMeister, or Canva.

In addition to giving students a way to organize their ideas, concept maps help them develop stronger bonds with the language, which improves understanding and retention.

## 6. Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is an efficient method of teaching English that makes use of peer-to-peer learning and teamwork. This method pairs or groups students to support one another's language learning and development. Compared to traditional teacher-led instruction, this approach creates a more collaborative learning atmosphere where students may share ideas, get answers to questions, and practice their English in a less intimidating setting.

Organized activities are one method to put peer tutoring into practice. For instance, when it comes to vocabulary growth, more experienced students can mentor their peers by defining words, discussing synonyms and antonyms, and constructing sentences. Similarly, students can critique one another's writing during assignments, offering helpful criticism on coherence, grammar, and sentence construction. These exercises promote mutual accountability for advancement and active learning.

As part of peer tutoring, reading comprehension sessions may pair more proficient readers with those who need assistance. They can read sections of the work together, discuss the themes, and conduct text analysis. Since teaching others typically deepens one's own comprehension, this collaborative approach enhances the abilities of more skilled pupils while simultaneously assisting struggling learners.

## 7. Spelling Games

As Klimova (2015) noted, the game is a natural means for young learners to understand the world around them. Therefore, it should be a part of their learning, including foreign languages. Using games is one of the innovative concepts in teaching English to young learners. Children like to play games by nature. Language games give children chances to do something with the language in an enjoyable and stimulating way.

Spelling games are an entertaining and engaging method for pupils to increase their vocabulary, strengthen their English spelling abilities, and improve their language recall. These games accommodate a variety of learning styles, make learning fun, and actively involve pupils. Some popular spelling games that can be used in English teaching are:

- **Spelling Bee** - A classic game where students compete to correctly spell words. The teacher reads a word aloud, and students spell it out loud.
- **Word Jumble** - Provide scrambled letters and challenge students to unscramble them into meaningful words. For example, scramble vocabulary words from a recent lesson, like "erunctoiva" for "vocabulary" or "iatrfceons" for "interactions."
- **Word Ladder** - Start with a word and challenge students to change one letter at a time to form new words, reaching a target word. For example: Begin with "cat" and transform it to "dog" (cat → cot → dot → dog).

## 8. Verse Voyage

"Verse Voyage" is an inventive and captivating method of teaching English through poetry study. This approach focuses on introducing students to poetry as both readers and writers in order to explore language, rhythm, and emotion. Because it fosters creativity, critical thinking, and linguistic inquiry, Verse Voyage is especially useful for helping students comprehend English in a fun and meaningful way.

Students take a "journey" across several poetic landscapes as part of a Verse Voyage exercise. In order to inspire students to investigate topics like love, nature, identity, and social challenges, the instructor presents poems from a variety of genres, cultures, and historical periods. Every poem becomes a "destination," and students examine its tone, metaphorical language, rhythm, and structure. For

instance, students could study the imagery in *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* by William Wordsworth or the contemporary free verse form in *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou.

The experience is further improved by incorporating technology. Pupils can videotape their recitations or compile digital poetry anthologies using tools like Padlet or Canva. To motivate pupils, educators might also use multimedia components, including recordings of spoken word performances.

#### 9. Reading Competition

An excellent way to teach English, develop a love of reading, increase fluency, and improve comprehension is through reading competitions. Students feel motivated and excited by these activities, which inspire them to interact closely with literature. There are many different types of reading competitions suited to different age groups and skill levels, such as comprehension competitions, expressive reading events, and speed-reading challenges.

**Case Study:** A month-long reading competition was arranged by an English teacher at a secondary school to motivate students to read more and enhance their comprehension and critical thinking abilities. The "Reading Champions" tournament was intended for a class of thirty pupils with different levels of English ability. The students' English proficiency and reading habits were significantly impacted by the competition. Many students said they felt more comfortable reading and expressing themselves. After constant practice and support, a shy student who had trouble with expressive reading at first was recognized as the "Outstanding Expressive Reader."

As students reviewed books and exchanged recommendations, the gathering also encouraged teamwork and created a collaborative learning atmosphere. The instructor observed notable progress in the class's vocabulary, understanding, and critical thinking. According to student feedback, the competition made reading more enjoyable and fulfilling.

#### 10. Handwriting Competitions

Students can improve their writing abilities and develop a love of legible, clear writing by participating in handwriting competitions. Such contests aid students in honing their handwriting while emphasizing grammar, spelling, and sentence structure in the context of teaching English. Additionally, they foster the discipline, patience, and attention to detail that are necessary for good communication.

### Conclusion

Innovations and the application of different creative teaching techniques are crucial in English language education. For the finest English instruction, the instructor must efficiently use engaging games, interactive exercises, contemporary methods, and emerging technologies. In addition to accommodating a variety of learning preferences, these approaches give pupils the communication and critical thinking abilities needed in today's society.

To make learning English more efficient, enjoyable, and relevant for future generations, it will continue to be crucial to embrace and modify novel teaching methodologies as education develops. Additionally, the function of the teacher has changed from being the only source of knowledge to one of guidance and facilitation. Teachers are now resource curators, critical thinking mentors, and co-learners who encourage curiosity and perseverance.

In line with the educational objectives of the twenty-first century, this change equips pupils to succeed both academically and in a world that is changing quickly. Incorporating innovative teaching methods into English instruction signals a time when language acquisition will be more powerful, inclusive, and accessible. By adopting these strategies, teachers may encourage lifelong learning and provide students with the skills they need to communicate successfully and confidently in a globalized world.

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