

ELT@I at the TESOL Affiliate Network Forum 2020

Hello and welcome to everyone present at this forum, and Namaste!

I am Professor Ramani and I proudly represent the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELT@I), an affiliate of TESOL, at this TESOL Affiliates Network Forum 2020.

A brief note on ELT@I: Our association, the oldest professional association of English teachers in India and perhaps in the world, with over four thousand members and fifty chapters across the country, organized its golden jubilee annual conference last October and its peer-reviewed, flagship journal, *Journal of English Language Teaching (JELT)*, published its golden jubilee number in 2015. The journal and the association were both launched by Padmashree S. Natarajan, a great educationist from Madras, the bimonthly journal much earlier than the formal association.

ELT@I has been offering its services in all areas relating to English studies in India. Over the years, it has conducted and supported hundreds of workshops, seminars, and conferences at local, regional, and national level on a variety of themes and topics of relevance. It has thus provided several fora, including the journal, for English teachers and researchers in English language studies nationwide, to share their views, practices, and perspectives with fellow teachers across the country. Events conducted in recent years include face-to-face workshops on virtual learning, blended learning, flipped classrooms, use of digital tools for teaching and learning in the 21st century, and so on.

In the wake of the current lockdown necessitated by the spread of the Corona-19 virus, ELT@I has taken the initiative to conduct online professional development programs and, on this occasion, I would like to share our experience of conducting two such programs.

The first was a free, six-week online workshop on Shakespeare conducted using Edmodo and thirty-five English teachers across the country registered for this. The following topics are covered in this workshop:

1. Getting to know *King Lear*,
2. Notes on *The Tempest*,
3. Enduring relevance of *Much Ado About Nothing*,
4. *Coriolanus*: Critical observations, and
5. Developing sensitivity to literature through *The Merchant of Venice*.

The main posts on these topics were made by four senior teachers acting as resource persons and these were followed by discussions through online posts on the same platform.

The other program recently started is a free, twelve-week online refresher course using the same tool, Edmodo, and the topics being covered include:

1. Continuing professional development,
2. Learning strategies and learning styles,
3. Action research,

4. Class management,
5. Time management,
6. Catering for individual differences among learners in the class, and
7. Professional etiquette.

Eighty-seven members of ELT@I have registered for this online course, with eight presenters as resource persons, obviously an increase in the number of participants and presenters.

We are planning to conduct more courses and workshops online. The response to both the online programs has been reasonably good. It has, however, to be noted that the quality and quantity of interaction could be improved by introducing more online programs and suggesting how to have meaningful and productive discussions online. Besides, more and more practising teachers should be

encouraged to become online learners as a significant step towards their own professional development.

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[Editor's Note: This is the text of the presentation made on behalf of ELTAI, an Affiliate of TESOL International Association, at the TESOL Affiliate Network Forum 2020 held online at 10 am (EST) {7.30 pm IST} on April 20th, 2020. There was another online session at 3.30 pm (EST) on April 22nd. The presenter is grateful to ELTAI for nominating him to represent ELTAI at this event. The TEN affiliates, which participated in the Forum spread over the two days were: BETA; CATESOL; ELTAI; GATESOL; NILETESOL; NYSTESOL; SPELT; TESOL Greece; TESOLANZ; and TEX TESOL II (Sant Antonio).]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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