

Reports of Virtual Workshops Conducted by ELTAI

Virtual Workshop on ‘Using QR Codes in Language Education’ (May-June 2021)

Revathi Viswanathan

The pandemic has led teachers to handle classes remotely. Consequently, it has created opportunities for teachers to enhance their professional skills through online workshops and various other activities. Considering this need in the current situation, English Language Teachers’ Association of India (ELTAI) has been offering various professional development programmes for practising teachers. The association has been organising weekly webinars on various topics relating to teaching and learning; about 55 webinars have been conducted so far over the period of a year with specialists from various countries as the key speakers in these webinars dealing with topics of current interest and relevance to language and literary studies.

As part of such efforts, ELTAI conducted (in May-June 2021) a week-long Virtual Workshop on ‘Using QR Codes in Language Education’. The workshop contents were delivered through Edmodo and nearly 30 participants attended the workshop. The resource persons who conducted the workshop were Dr. P. N. Ramani, Dr. Xavier Pradeep Singh, and Dr. Revathi Viswanathan. The objectives of this workshop were:

- To create awareness of QR Codes among teachers
 - To provide instruction on creating QR Codes for audio, video, text, and other files
 - To provide hands-on experience in scanning, creating, and using QR Codes.
- To begin with, Dr. Ramani explained the

significance of the workshop and its scope, and gave an overview of the topics to be covered.

After these introductory remarks and broad outline of the technical sessions, Dr. Xavier introduced QR codes to the participants: what QR Codes are; what kinds of content can be stored in them, and why they are safe to use in education. Then, he explained how to scan QR Codes using a smartphone as well as the webcam on a computer; he also set practical tasks to the participants to scan some codes and explore the content stored in them. In the third session, he showed how to create or generate QR Codes using online generators, followed by activities that required the participants to generate such codes for storing different kinds of information.

These sessions were followed by Dr. Revathi’s presentations, which dealt with the method of creating QR Codes for videos, audio files, and text files. Each presentation included a related task for the participants to try out individually and submit the completed tasks online. The pedagogical aspect of using QR Codes in teaching was also discussed as part of the presentations.

Dr. Ramani discussed the possibility of using web-based resources in literature and language (with examples), and creating QR codes for those resources. He suggested that teachers should try to select relevant resources based on their students’ interest, and then offer them to students in the form of QR Codes. He also discussed the possibility of creating surveys, polls, and

formative assessments using Google Forms, creating QR Codes, and sharing them in Google Docs for students to access and respond to.

The workshop was well received by the participants, whose feedback was positive and encouraging, motivating ELTAI to plan

and provide more such opportunities for teachers to benefit from, even during the Covid19 pandemic and lockdown conditions.

Dr. Revathi Viswanathan, ELT Consultant and Teacher Trainer, Chennai, India

Virtual Workshop on ‘Digital Tools for Teachers’

P N Ramani

Another virtual workshop was conducted by ELTAI, close on the heels of the one on using QR codes, also for teachers at various levels. The importance of such online programmes for teachers in these times of the pandemic and our efforts to fight it through vaccines as well as personal and social norms of behaviour cannot be overemphasized.

The overall aim of the workshop was to provide teachers of English step-by-step guidance on how to use various, simple digital tools that are available for supporting and enhancing their students’ learning in their classes, both online and offline (or face-to-face, whenever these become feasible in the present situation) and to enable them to get clarity on the tools and their use through interactions with the resource persons.

The resource persons for this workshop were Dr. Xavier Pradheep Singh, Dr. Revathi Viswanathan, Dr. Jaya Ramakrishnan, and Dr. Shravan Kumar, all of them specialists in the use of technology for teaching English and very active contributors to ELTAI’s professional development efforts for a long time. The resource persons are specialists in technology use in the sense that they are not only quite knowledgeable about the tools but have also used them effectively in their own

teaching – they represent best practices in their use.

Dr. Xavier took the participants through online platforms such as **Webinarjam** and **Google Meet** and showed how these could be used by teachers to provide instruction to their students; he also dealt with **social networking sites** like FaceBook for supporting classroom instruction. Dr. Revathi demonstrated how the well-known tool of **blogging** could be used creatively in teaching and learning for maximum effect. In addition, she introduced the participants to another effective tool, **Padlet**. Dr. Jaya showed how to use **Google Sites** and create class, school, or college magazines and encourage and foster collaboration among students and teachers. Dr. Shravan, on his part, demonstrated how to put the much-misused/abused tool of **WhatsApp** to more productive use as an effective teaching-learning tool, rather than dismiss it as having a distracting and negative effect on students’ learning.

This virtual workshop was also well received by the participants, who, we hope, would explore the use of these and other digital tools in their own teaching practices.

Dr. P. N. Ramani

Letters to the Editor

Hearty Congratulations!

I got my copy of JELT yesterday and I went through all the articles with great interest. I find the quality of articles is of high standard this time, and I place on record my appreciation of the efforts you have put in.

Thank you for including my book review. Prof. Lal (of Trivandrum Chapter) is the editor and has done commendable work in bringing out this book.

I hope to see many more good issues under your editorship.

Sathuvalli Mohanraj

After reading [the article] ‘Enhancement of Reading, Writing, and Speaking Skills in Primary Online Class’ by Nilofer Rashid Reza in Vol. 63, No. 1, January-February 2021, I am unable to stop myself from appreciating all her efforts to strengthen the reading activity.

If this can be done for the primary class, this can be enhanced for higher classes also.

Really, it is a motivating article for the researchers. . . .

My appreciation is [also] for two articles and for the book review [in Vol. 63, No. 2, March-April 2021].

To storify a poem/novel is an interesting attempt. I would be very happy if it is tried in all classes, but my curiosity is not fulfilled as

no illustration was there, especially when videos are discussed. Teaching an accentual pattern is a very good article to improve the pronunciation of the students, but this has to be carried out only by well-trained teachers.

My appreciation to Anuradha for her attempt to make the students write plays and produce. In my experience, it is a real tool to improve the [proficiency] of English not only in writing but also to get rid of the inhibitions of the student. . . .

In brief, this volume of JELT was quite useful to the researchers.

Dr. S. Padmasani Kannan

With reference to [an] article published in the Journal of English Language Teaching (JELT) of ELTAI (Vol. 63/2 March-April 2021), I intend to share some of my professional and academic observations with a view to seek and share ideas among our respected members of ELTAI.

Some of my observations are:

[The] article “Teaching Accentual Patterns in English to Engineering Students” is very informative, relevant, and useful for students and teachers to imbibe and apply. The input shared is good enough to meet the basic needs of phonetics, pronunciation, and spoken English. . . .

Kantesh Kumar Singh