

The Enlightening Snippets as Value Added Edutaining ELT Materials for language skills and life skills – a Pedagogical Appraisal

G.S.Suresh

Asst. Prof. (English), Department of English, Mepco Schlenk Engg. College, Sivakasi, India

Abstract

This paper is a peppy and a happy proposal to the bibliophile and technophile teaching fraternity of English to beef up their pedagogy and materials time after time by evolving a conglomeration of Value Added Edutaining Snippets – ELT materials (VAESs) comprising feel good and life good enlightening snippets drawn from the mass media and from self-created ideas. A set of nine refreshing VAESs has been put forward with a pedagogical implication of setting a congenial scaffold to hone up the language skills (LSRW) of learners of ESL. Besides teaching language competency, the focal part of the paper is moral and motivational education that is primarily propagated through VAESs that sprawls around motivational and inspirational anecdotes that we witness in our day-to-day life. Thus this paper is a micro effort to notch up macro effect in teaching and learning English as a second language.

Key words: value added edutaining / enlightening snippets, congenial scaffold, motivational /inspirational anecdotes.

INTRODUCTION

“English, Internet and Media are the success combo of the 21st century”

Gone are the days when teaching and learning community sailed against a sea of challenges for acquiring adequate sources to widen their knowledge as societal structures, place, time and money were the great constraints. But that kind of depriving and biased environment has been absolutely and dramatically controlled, deleted and altered by technology that has powered the human race with ‘one touch – one mail – one call ’ micro move to connect the world of knowledge reservoir wherein confluence of creative and innovative minds is a happy happening event. Hence, this hi-fi wifi era of information and technology has widely opened the gate of knowledge and opportunity for enhancing one’s knowledge.

At this juncture, as far as the updating of ELT materials is concerned, even though the learners have oodles of materials and methods to strengthen their English skills, they could be rightly guided and facilitated only by language teaching community. The language teachers need to do away with the stereotypical teaching and learning methods by creating and implementing VAESs to hone up the language skills. VAESs not only perk up the drooping minds and the learning spirits of heterogeneous language learners, but also stimulate them to emerge as people of moral values and responsible individuals. Hence this paper turns up as a wakeup call to the eminent teaching fraternity to top up their ELT materials and pedagogies by creating VAESs to suit the raising needs and changing moods of the modern learning community.

“Successful innovations recognize that people don’t do always the right thing or make the necessary leaps to bridge the gap between familiar and genuinely new ideas” - Tom Kelly.

The USP of VAESs

As per the board of studies, a common standard is followed to teach language skills across the academic sphere with the objective of equipping the learners with language competency. This common standard in fact seems to have lost its impact and thereby it has become a stereotypical method wherein comes the need of diverse material requirement and there hops out an idea for creating the add-on material called VAESs. Unlike the objective of the common standard, the fulcrum point of VAESs is to teach language skills with life skills which are the USP of VAESs which pave path for both the teachers and learners to indulge in diverse knowledge updation. They comprise of enlightening and rejuvenating facts and figures of trend setters (Alysia Montano – the flying flower of America), history creators (Barack Obama – the dream of Martin Luther Jr.) and motivational snippets (Waka Waka – you are good soldier) etc. VAESs keep the learners mood buoyant towards acquiring language skills.

Most of the students move to higher studies with language incompetence owing to their depriving backgrounds such as illiterate family, financial conditions and poor schooling and learning. They face a threatening challenge of mingling with their metropolitan heterogeneous peers and thereby they become dejected and lose their hope wherein VAESs gear them up to strive hard with strong determination and perseverance to reach their goal. The language learners who struggle to speak in English are made to realize their potential as LSRW skills are just a micro task compared to macro tasks in VAESs.

“Each one of us can learn to be a better observer simply by taking stock of our environment” - Tom Kelly.

The trimmed list of mind-blowing and enlivening VAESs

1. Alysia Montano: The flying flower of American track and field.
Daring to soar high with surprising differences and perspirations.
USP: Being 34 weeks pregnant, ran the heat and won the hearts on 27 June 2014.
2. Barack Obama: The name of change and the dream of Martin Luther King Jr.
USP: Magician of words “Yes We Can.”
3. Robin Williams: The lesson of stress management.
USP: Doctor of humour.
4. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam: The lesson of dedication and creation.
USP: The nation’s inspiration and a constant motivator of youngsters.
5. Waka Waka- FIFA 2010 Theme song
A song of determination and will power.
USP: The firing and inspiring lyrics and music.
6. Narendra Modi: The lesson of smart strategy and smooth execution.
USP: Individuality, Coordination, Planning, Performance and Progress.
7. Self - interview: A peppy attempt of diverse thinking.
USP: Room for creativity through cut, copy, modify and present.
8. Thirukkural: The daily knowledge capsule for harmonious living.
USP: Short verses with profound themes.
9. 3 + 1 ESES (English Skills Enhancement Strategy)
3 (food) + 1 (reading and learning English constantly and concretely)
USP: It taps the learners’ conscience to involve in sincere reading.

Aim

By VAESs, this paper paves way for a sea of pragmatic teaching and learning outcomes. They are stimuli both for language teaching community and learning community. Hence, VAESs set a congenial scaffold to the teaching community...

- To embark on innovative methods
- To garner enlightening materials
- To impart value based education
- To adapt diverse pedagogy instead of traditional methods
- To kindle patriotism and honesty
- To create stress free and encouraging learning ambience
- To foster humanity and a sense of equality
- To simplify and liven up language learning
- To constantly brush up the language skills
- To transform as a joyful story teller from being a stereotypical teacher
- To be a mentor and motivator of slow learners

On the other brighter side, VAESs create comfortable room for the learning community...

- To shrug off their stage fear through sharing a lot of snippets
- To understand and overcome language related stress
- To become rough and tough towards challenges
- To stay calm and composed at failures
- To build comfortable rapport with colleagues
- To be ever prepared to meet competitive situations
- To become thinkaholics and workaholics
- To gear up towards constant reading
- To plunge in lots of language activities every now and then
- To keep abreast of the news every day
- To encourage and support everyone

Thus, as per the aforementioned points, application of VAESs is certainly believed to create a remarkable impact on both the teaching and learning community.

Pedagogical Implications

To substantiate the aim and objective of this paper, one of the VAESs is presented for appraisal.

Alysia Montano: The flying flower of American track and field.

Daring to soar high with surprising differences and perspirations.

USP : Being 34 weeks pregnant, ran the heat and won the hearts on 27 June 2014.

“My life philosophy has been to be bold and courageous” - Alysia Montano.

ALYSIA MONTANO RAN THE 800 m IN US TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS DESPITE BEING 34 WEEKS PREGNANT.

Despite being 34 weeks pregnant, Alysia Montano ran the 800 m on Thursday in the US Track and Field Championships. The five-time national champion finished in 2 min 32.13 sec in the qualifying rounds, only seven weeks before she's scheduled to give birth to her first child. That the 28-year-old former University of California star finished last in her heat didn't matter one bit to the crowd gathered at Hornet Stadium. Trailing the lead pack by more than 120 m for most of the race, Montano received a rousing ovation as she finished her first lap and the cheering grew louder when she finally crossed the finish line.

"I've been running throughout my pregnancy and I felt really, really good during the whole process," Montano said. "I just didn't want to get lapped and be the first person to get lapped in the 800 m."

Montano, who won the 800 national titles the past four years, was never in danger of being lapped. She took a nice relaxed pace from the start and maintained it throughout. That was according to the plan Montano laid out after consulting with her physician. Not only did doctors give Montano permission to run, they encouraged her.

"That took away any fear of what the outside world might think about a woman running during her pregnancy," Montano said. "What I found out mostly was that exercising during pregnancy is actually much better for the mom and the baby. I did all the things I normally do, I just happened to be pregnant. This is my normal this year."

On the international level she has exhibited a bold, front running style, challenging other runners to keep up with her. She distinguishes herself by wearing a flower in her hair while running, a personal affection she adopted to assert her femininity while training with men.

Source:

<http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2014/jun/27/thirty-four-week-pregnant-montana-800-m-us-race>

Learning Outcomes

This article is rich with two themes one of which deals life skills and the other deals language skills thereby it becomes an informative and educative source of teaching the language. Thus it is named as Value Added Edutaining Snippets.

Life Skills

Alysia Montano's passion and love for athletics is awesome. In spite of being 34 weeks pregnant, her determination to participate in the 800 m heat proves her dedication towards her career...thus a number of much needed values such as motivation, dedication, determination, perseverance, die hard attitude and dare to be different could be positively developed from this motivating article and it is up to the teachers and learners.

Language Skills

The title of the article "Alysia Montano ran the 800 m in US Track and Field Championships despite being 34 weeks pregnant" kindles the curiosity in the learners to read it further. In the course of reading the learners take down the meanings of words, phrases and idiomatic expressions which would gradually enrich their vocabulary. Further an attempt is made to grasp the theme of the article that leads to paraphrase the whole article. This learning activity ultimately enriches the learners with language competency.

Thus various enlightening snippets can be suitably extracted from various free sources and converted into ELT materials to create enormous interest among language learners.

"Tell me I forget. Teach me I remember. Involve me and I learn" - Benjamin Franklin.

CONCLUSION

In spite of promising degrees earned from renowned institutions...

In spite of growing in a hi-fi / wifi modern world...

In spite of living in the era of information and technology...

In spite of spending lakhs and lakhs on education

In spite of living ¼ th of life in schools and colleges...

Unfortunately a majority of learners go unemployed and unproductive due to communication incompetency. So advanced teaching aids and methods alone are not sufficient to make a student competent in English, creating interest and setting buoyant mood in the learners is also very essential to acquire language skills which would be ideally catered by pragmatic VAESs.

"It is wise to act in a manner feasible in time and Method; or else seek viable alternatives."(Thirukkural 673)

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