

RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Advancing ELT in Cambodia: Sustainability, Digital Inclusion, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

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### ABSTRACT

This scholarly research examines how English language instruction (ELT) in Cambodia can be developed into a more inclusive, holistic, and widely accepted approach to culture. Cambodia's ELT system must adapt to meet the needs of the twenty-first century, given issues like digital inequality, environmental sustainability, and the need for culturally focused education. Based on current research, the paper proposes a framework encompassing multiliteracies, teacher

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empowerment, digital technologies, and sustainability in education. It emphasises the importance of aligning ELT courses with global issues such as climate change, as well as ensuring that every student, regardless of where they are or their socioeconomic level, has access to digital education. The paper examines the connections among sustainability, digital equality, and teacher capacity, as well as possible ways to incorporate them into the ELT curriculum. Project-based learning, multimodal education, and blended learning are among the practical tools that can enable students to participate, develop critical thinking skills, and become more conscious of their surroundings. The study also emphasises the importance of incorporating Cambodia's historical and cultural background into courses to make learning more relevant and engaging. As well as demands for additional research utilising longitudinal studies, community-based initiatives, and international comparisons, the paper concludes with policy recommendations that emphasise curricular change, teacher training, and digital infrastructure. Reimagining ELT in this manner provides a roadmap for creating an education system that equips Cambodian students with the tools, knowledge, and values they need to navigate and help shape a connected world.

**Keywords:** English language instruction; sustainability; digital justice; teacher empowerment

## **FULL PAPER**

### **I. Introduction**

English language instruction has significantly changed in the twenty-first century. According to Pennycook (2017), English is no longer only a means of communication or economic growth, but also a key medium for addressing major global concerns like environmental sustainability, digital fairness, and inclusive pedagogy. Huot and Em (2024) assert that English education in such contexts must be reimagined not as a neutral or technical endeavour, but as a pedagogically transformative, culturally responsive, and socially embedded practice.

According to UNESCO (2022a), despite Cambodia's education system's remarkable resilience, significant inequities exist, notably in rural and neglected regions. Due to a lack of technical infrastructure, experienced instructors, and locally

tailored curricular materials, many people still cannot access English instruction, as Huot and Em (2025) point out. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (2019) notes, meanwhile, that including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national educational plans offers a rich basis for reconsidering English education as a platform for advancing sustainability, equity, and digital transformation.

The worldwide field of ELT is being altered by three interconnected educational challenges: the widening digital divide, the escalating climate crisis, and the growing demand for inclusive, culturally grounded teaching. Selwyn (2019) argues that the post-COVID terrain has revealed systematic inequalities in access to technology and digital literacy, a problem Huot and Em (2025) notably note is especially evident in Cambodian rural schools. Cates (2022) and Gün and Kömür (2023) contend that English schools may be excellent places for sustainability education by combining language learning with ecological awareness via project-based and content-rich teaching.

Regarding inclusion, Huot, with his co-authors (2024) underline the significance of pedagogies reflecting local histories, languages, and spiritual traditions. They claim that Cambodia's Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and Buddhist Ethics (BE) have been neglected in formal education. Any effective ELT reform must address this erasure. Against this backdrop, the present review synthesizes a body of recent research, these scholars examine a range of interconnected themes: the integration of sustainability into English curricula; strategies for mitigating digital inequities in underserved regions; the application of multiliteracies and 21st-century skill development; the role of teachers as mentors and transformative agents; and the historical evolution of Cambodian education from its prehistoric roots to the present Huot, Kuon, et al. (2024). Two primary goals of this scholarly work are pursued. Its primary objective is to compile these findings into a unified, context-aware framework for ELT in Cambodia.

## **II. Historical and Cultural Background of Cambodian Education**

According to Huot and Kuon et al. (2024), the main ways people learned in ancient Cambodia were through direct experience, oral traditions, group work, and observation, all of which arose from the need for knowledge for survival. During this time, they say, people moved from using their instinctive senses to creative senses, or from naturally gathering information from their experiences rather than having it forced upon them. This early model, they contend, aligns with modern educational priorities such as ecological awareness, intergenerational learning, and constructivist pedagogy.

As Coedès (1968) and Harris (2005) document, the transition to formalised education began with the Indicization of Southeast Asia, particularly during the Funan and Chenla periods (1st–9th centuries CE), when Hindu and later Buddhist philosophies became embedded in Cambodian culture. Temples during this time functioned as both spiritual and educational institutions, where monks and elites studied Sanskrit and Pali texts. Ledgerwood (2006) further notes that during the Angkorian era (9th–15th centuries CE), temple complexes like Angkor Wat evolved into comprehensive centres of learning, integrating moral philosophy, architecture, and oral history into the educational process. These traditions laid the groundwork for comprehensive learning, emphasising ethical growth, compassion, and contemplative investigation.

In the meantime, Clayton (1995) contends that French colonial control, which began in 1863, undermined Cambodia's indigenous educational institutions by subordinating them to colonial administration. French was entrenched as the language of authority and elite education, while Khmer literacy and Buddhist study were gradually disregarded. Ayres (2000) emphasises how this divided system disconnected students from their cultural identity, therefore favouring Western epistemologies over local narratives.

Cambodian officials strove to restore national identity via educational reforms after independence in the 1950s. These included restoring Khmer as a language of teaching and promoting Buddhist moral education. However, Chandler (1979) records how the emergence of the Khmer Rouge in 1975 resulted in the almost complete collapse of Cambodia's educational system. Intellectuals and instructors were attacked, schools were shuttered, and formal education was substituted with ideological indoctrination and forced labour. This time, it disrupted the continuity of generations of Cambodian teachers. After the Khmer Rouge fell in 1979, Cambodia's educational system was rebuilt, mostly depending on foreign help from Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and subsequently Western NGOs. English returned to the classroom in the 1990s as a tool for regional integration and globalisation, according to Clayton (2006).

Nevertheless, he notes that efforts to place English classes in their proper historical and spiritual contexts in Cambodia were often disregarded during this reintroduction, thereby perpetuating the patterns of isolation that had persisted throughout the colonial era. Huot and Chheang (2025) argue that the history of colonial and post-conflict volatility continues to influence Cambodian ELT today. They claim that the modern curriculum largely relies on Western resources, ignoring Cambodian ecological realities, cultural narratives, and ethical traditions, thereby

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excluding local content. Furthermore, they note that teacher preparation in Cambodia usually prioritises procedural skills over culturally appropriate and student-centred methods. Additionally, they point out that teacher training in Cambodia frequently emphasises procedural skills over culturally relevant and student-centred approaches.

Persistent rural-urban gaps in educational access, as noted by UNESCO (2022a), impede innovation in English-language teaching approaches. The company adds that the predominance of exam-oriented, individualistic pedagogies brought from overseas frequently runs counter to Cambodian traditions of collaborative learning, moral growth, and social peace. Consequently, pupils may develop language competency while remaining divorced from their cultural identity and critical thinking abilities. This danger of cultural alienation, according to Chheang and Huot (2025), emphasises the need for a revolutionary change in ELT that goes beyond superficial language aims.

Huot (2025) calls for a grounded shift in ELT based on culture to address these difficulties. They recommend that educators use Buddhist pedagogies like mindfulness, ethical speech, and compassion, as well as indigenous ecological knowledge and oral storytelling traditions. These, they contend, might provide a basis for building an ELT strategy that is both locally relevant and internationally informed. Rather than seeing traditional Cambodian ideologies as relics of the past, they see them as valuable tools for future-oriented education. Including ELT within Cambodia's own intellectual and cultural legacy can help teachers create inclusive, identity-affirming classroom settings. According to them, this pedagogical reorientation promotes not only educational fairness but also national reconciliation, sustainable development, and decolonial recovery, as depicted in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** *Development of Cambodian Education and Its Affective Role on Modern ELT*

No.	Historical Age	Key Features of Education	Affective on Modern ELT
1.	Prehistoric Era (pre-1st century CE)	Instinctive learning via observation, oral narrative, and group engagement.	The importance of context-based pedagogy, ecological learning, and narratives in English language

No.	Historical Age	Key Features of Education	Affective Modern ELT on
			teaching is emphasised.
2.	Funan and Chenla Periods	1st–9th century CE: Emergence of temple-based education; Hindu and early Buddhist doctrines; literacy in Sanskrit and Pali.	Suggests the possibility of ethical, values-based language education grounded in spirituality and regional traditions.
3.	the Angkor Period (9th–15th century CE)	Formalising Buddhist education, moral teaching, and knowledge codification in monastic institutions	Provides guidelines for incorporating mindfulness, moral reasoning, and reflective learning into ELT
4.	French Colonial Rule (1863–1953)	French, as the language of authority, and the Khmer language and Buddhism, which are emphasised in official education, are undervalued.	Left behind a dual-language heritage and institutional inclination toward foreign frameworks in education, especially ELT.
5.	Post-Independence (1953–1975)	Revival of the Khmer language and Buddhism in curricula; modest expansion of education infrastructure.	Inspires local-language pride and possibility for contextual curriculum development.
6.	Era of the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979	Elimination of official education; targeting of intellectuals and	Caused a generational disturbance in

No.	Historical Age	Key Features of Education	Affective on Modern ELT
		instructors; knowledge substituted by dogma.	educational continuity; calls for trauma-informed, reconstructionist ELT.
7.	Reconstruction after conflict (1980s–1990s)	Education was rebuilt with help from Vietnam, the USSR, and subsequently the West; non-governmental organisations introduced English.	English came back without a complete cultural context, with ongoing gaps in relevance and regional adaptation.
8.	Global Integration Period 2000s–Present	English curriculum expansion, integration with ASEAN, and an emphasis on employment and globalisation.	English is seen as essential for mobile use; however, it remains disconnected from Cambodian sociopolitical and environmental settings.

### III. Bringing Environmental Sustainability into ELT

Interdisciplinary frameworks underpin the integration of sustainability into ELT. Drawing on critical pedagogy developed by Freire (1970), ecolinguistics by Stibbe (2015), and global citizenship education by De Andreotti (2014), this approach posits that language is ideologically charged and can influence environmental attitudes and behaviours. English education, according to Cates (2022), should incorporate environmental topics as a matter of moral and civic obligation. In Cambodia, where deforestation, pollution, and climate vulnerability have a direct impact on communities, such an approach is both pedagogically and morally imperative.

Alcantud-Díaz and LLoret-Catalá (2023) suggest that by aligning ELT with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 (Quality

Education) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), teachers may help students build their language competency and eco-critical consciousness. They underline that the flood of sustainability materials promotes global awareness, multidisciplinary thinking, and the ability to act ethically in response to common environmental problems.

Transposing the ideas of sustainability into ELT classroom activities requires fundamental, active, and locally relevant teaching strategies. Huot and Em (2024) offer three essential tactics that are especially well-suited to English language teaching in Cambodia. These techniques not only improve language learning but also promote environmental awareness and critical thinking. Content-Based Instruction (CBI) comes first. This technique incorporates environmental topics such as climate change, waste reduction, and ecological conservation directly into English language instruction. Using real-world texts such as NGO reports, environmental news items, and case studies, students improve their vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension while also interacting with important global concerns. CBI helps students to explore complex subjects using English as a tool, therefore enhancing linguistic competency and environmental literacy.

The second method is Project-Based Learning (PBL), which promotes collaborative, inquiry-based investigation of local environmental issues. (Kokotsaki et al., 2016). Under this framework, students work in groups on relevant projects, such as creating sustainability-related posters, conducting surveys for their local communities, or running awareness campaigns, all in English. These initiatives encourage the use of language in genuine, purpose-driven situations while also developing critical 21st-century skills such as cooperation, creativity, problem-solving, and public communication.

PBL promotes both language relevance and civic involvement by basing language assignments on students' real experiences. The third method, eco-critical literacy, emphasises critical analysis of environmental stories in numerous media and formats. Students are challenged under this lens to consider how popular culture, news articles, poetry, and commercials present sustainability and ecology (Saad & Zainudin, 2022). They might examine parallels like "Mother Earth," evaluate instances of greenwashing, or critique the ideological bent of environmental discourse. Through this active engagement, pupils not only acquire analytical skills and interpretive abilities but also develop ecological consciousness. It emphasises language development as a tool for contesting and reinterpreting environmental cultural myths. These three pedagogical strategies, CBI, PBL, and Eco-Critical Literacy, together provide a solid, context-sensitive structure for integrating sustainability into ELT. Cambodian students may improve their critical thinking and

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sustainability skills in both local and global contexts by taking environmentally aware, socially sensitive language programs.

Emphasising the interplay among global, national, and local settings, this “glonacal” approach shows that integrating sustainability into ELT should not be seen as an externally mandated objective. (Moodie, 2021). Instead, it is a flexible, adaptable framework that encourages environmental stewardship while improving language learning. Far from an ideological incursion, sustainability-themed ELT helps teachers design more relevant, multidisciplinary learning opportunities that equip their students to interact with pressing global concerns. (Cates, 2022; Huot & Em, 2024). This integration also closely aligns with many of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, SDG 4 (Quality Education) emphasises inclusive, fair, and relevant educational opportunities. ELT with sustainability materials solves this by tying language education to practical problems, therefore improving student involvement and global awareness. SDG 13 (Climate Action) emphasises the importance of education in developing climate awareness and motivating behavioural change. By arming students with the vocabulary and critical thinking tools required to grasp and react to environmental concerns, English classes may help to support this.

At last, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) is supported by cross-border initiatives and international cooperation, in which English serves as a common language for intercultural communication and cooperative learning on sustainability issues. According to Cates (2022), integrating sustainability into ELT practice can significantly advance Cambodia’s progress toward its SDG targets. By doing this, not only do national and international policy goals align, but English education’s function as a platform for enabling students to become clear, ecologically conscious, and socially conscious global citizens also changes. **Table 2**, which lists the main educational approaches for introducing sustainability in Cambodian ELT environments, further illustrates this integrated picture.

**Table 2.** *Pedagogical Approaches for Including Sustainability into ELT in Cambodia*

No.	Strategy	Description	Classroom Example	Results
1.	Content-Based Training (CBI)	Embeds environmental themes into English courses to foster	Using articles on deforestation or climate change, reading	Enhanced vocabulary retention, topic-specific

No.	Strategy	Description	Classroom Example	Results
		both language and ecological awareness.	comprehension exercises	knowledge, and global awareness.
2.	Project-Based Learning (PBL)	Students examine local environmental challenges and provide solutions in English.	Organise a group initiative to raise awareness of plastic pollution in the Mekong in English.	Improved critical thinking, collaboration, public speaking, and environmental stewardship.
3.	Eco-Critical Literacy	Eco-critical literacy examines depictions of nature, the environment, and sustainability in literature, media, and conversation texts, media, and discourse.	Compare media depictions of climate change; debate analogies for "Mother Earth" in poetry or advertisements.	Improved analytical abilities, ecological awareness, and media literacy.

#### **IV. Digital Equity, Multiliteracies, And Transformative ELT in Underserved Cambodian Contexts**

Digital equity is one of the main structural behaviours and challenges affecting the future of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Cambodia, especially in the underserved and rural areas. Huot and Em (2025) explain that rural areas of Cambodia still have limited and underdeveloped digital infrastructure, and that almost 80% of the population resides in these areas. In this setting, rural learners lack access to electricity, the internet, or the digital devices needed to engage in modern learning. This rural reality is clearly visible compared to urban areas like Phnom Penh, where learners have access to and greater availability of electricity, internet, and digital tools. The outdated infrastructure, old teaching tools, and

limited energy access further widen the gap in resource availability. This leads to the exclusion of rural learners from a vast majority of interactive online English learning resources (UNESCO, 2022c).

Empirical data well support the issues surrounding this digital divide. UNICEF reported that in 2022, 35% of rural households had a smartphone or computer, compared with almost 70% in urban households. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and intensified these inequities. When schools needed to move quickly to online and blended learning, many rural schools lacked the technical, pedagogical, and institutional support to respond. Consequently, educational inequities, especially in digital literacy, language skills, and general achievement, intensified. (Cates, 2022). Instead of digital learning being a neutral, positive innovation, during the pandemic, it became a means to reproduce and amplify existing socio-economic inequities. In Cambodia, scholars and policymakers have identified a variety of barriers to digital exclusion. Rural areas have very little infrastructure, so people do not have access to affordable high-speed internet. (MoEYS, 2019). The second barrier is digital illiteracy; in rural areas, teachers and students often lack the skills and confidence to use technology in the classroom. This perpetuates a cycle of exclusion. (Selwyn, 2019)). The third barrier is the economy. Many people do not have the devices, data plans, or internet access needed to stay connected. UNESCO (2022b) attributes this to the deep-rooted economic inequalities in Cambodia's education system.

Even with all the barriers in place, research has identified cost-effective solutions to enhance digital equality and multiliteracies. Huot and Em (2025) state that costly technologies are not the only viable solutions. Innovative methods that do not require sophisticated technologies, such as SMS, educational radio broadcasts, mobile applications that can be used offline, and instruction on basic mobile phones, can be effective for learning in areas without internet access. These methods also provide access to materials for learning English and are considerate of the economic conditions of rural Cambodia.

Empowering teachers is needed to create a transformation in teaching. Teachers need more than simple training. They also need to learn how to use a variety of digital tools in English Language Teaching and incorporate them into their teaching. Huot and Tep (2025) suggest that successful professional training encompasses digital skills and uses a student-centred approach and culturally appropriate teaching that considers the local context. When teachers use technology creatively, digital tools can be used for more than simply replicating traditional teaching methods. When used correctly, technology can improve student participation, communication, and critical thinking.

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In this context, Project-Based Learning (PBL) enhances 21st-century multiliteracy and skills as an innovative teaching practice. Students engage with and examine local environmental challenges, conduct community surveys on their mobile devices, and create various digital outputs, such as short videos or presentations. This approach develops critical thinking, digital literacy, and civic awareness while also improving second-language (L2) proficiency. (Cates, 2022; Van, 2020). In the case of multiliteracies, they have concrete, socially relevant competencies.

For these innovations to have a sustained impact, an integrated approach to policymaking is necessary. Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010) argue that achieving digital equity will be difficult if initiatives remain isolated. Developing digital infrastructure should remain a national-level priority. The government should work with telecommunications companies to extend the coverage and reduce the cost of broadband access for economically disadvantaged users. Meanwhile, teacher professional development should address the concrete 'real' integration of ICT rather than the 'real' integration of ICT through digital policies. (MoEYS, 2019; Selwyn, 2019). Digital literacy should be integrated systematically and instructionally into the curriculum across all subjects at all levels of the national curriculum, starting from the earliest grades, to ensure that multi-literacy is acquired progressively and not in a disjointed manner.

Providing low-cost access points is just as important. Community-based digital learning initiatives with subsidised devices made available through cross-sectoral collaboration and digital learning hubs can address these access points. Digital learning hubs can be used as community spaces for technology and learning for students who do not have access at home. All these approaches illustrate the various parts needed to address Cambodia's digital divide, rather than expecting a single technology to solve the problem.

The drive for digital equity will always intersect with the evolving landscape of ELT in Cambodia. A transformative ELT framework for the future will need to embed sustainability, multiliteracies, teacher empowerment, and cultural relevance as interdependent dimensions. Teaching English in the context of the environment and other relevant social issues can help cultivate responsible global citizenship; equitable digital access can help ensure that such learning opportunities do not only create a privilege for urban elites. Also, incorporating ELT within Cambodia's cultural heritage, local knowledge systems, and traditional values, including Buddhist ethical principles, will help ensure that modernisation will not lead to the loss of identity. As Huot and Em (2025) note, digital equity is not an end in itself; it is the starting point

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for creating a more inclusive and equitable educational ecosystem that will enable Cambodia to build the necessary capacity to meet the educational needs of the 21st century, as captured in **Table 3**.

**Table 3.** *Digital Equity and Multiliteracies in Cambodian ELT*

No.	Focus Area	Key Challenges	Core Strategies	Outcomes
1.	Digital Access	Poor rural connectivity; lack of devices	Infrastructure expansion, subsidised devices, and community learning hubs	Reduced rural–urban digital divide
2.	Digital Literacy	Limited ICT skills among teachers and students	Practical ICT-focused teacher training; curriculum integration	Improved digital and language competence
3.	Low-Tech Solutions	Inconsistent internet access	SMS-based learning, radio, and offline mobile tools	Inclusive access for remote learners
4.	Multiliteracies	Textbook-based, rote ELT practices	Multimodal texts, media, and digital storytelling	Critical, digital, and linguistic skills
5.	Project-Based Learning	Limited authentic language use	Mobile-supported PBL on local issues	Critical thinking and civic engagement
6.	Policy & Sustainability	Fragmented ICT policy implementation	Blended learning; curriculum reform; partnerships	Resilient, future-ready ELT system

**V. Learner Development and Teacher Engagement**

In Cambodia, where formal career counselling and institutional support structures are limited, Huot, Hok et al. (2024) emphasise that teachers are frequently students' most accessible and influential mentors. They inspire learners, guide them toward educational and vocational aspirations, and often function as the sole source of guidance regarding future pathways. This mentoring role is amplified in under-resourced settings, where teacher encouragement can significantly influence students' persistence, self-efficacy, and academic achievement.

Moreover, Cambodian teachers contribute to the development of essential life skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication, that are often overlooked in rigid, exam-oriented curricula. These soft skills are vital for learners to adapt to a rapidly changing, globally interconnected workforce. Huot, Hok, et al. (2024) argue that equipping students with such competencies is not a supplementary task but a core responsibility in the broader project of national development. UNICEF (2022) highlights that disparities in educational access between urban and rural areas further underscore the importance of teacher engagement. In contexts where structural inequality persists, teacher motivation and relational commitment often determine whether students succeed or disengage from learning entirely. Teachers in Cambodia often go beyond their conventional roles, serving as both mentors and educational reform advocates. As mentors, they create psychologically safe, inclusive environments where students feel respected and supported.

According to Huot, Hok et al. (2024), this kind of mentorship, rooted in empathy, listening, and trust, is especially crucial in a society where traditional family support systems may be strained or inaccessible. Teachers also act as change agents by shaping the educational ecosystem from within. They influence classroom pedagogy, advocate for curricular reforms, and contribute to policy dialogue, thereby shaping the responsiveness of education to local needs. As Cambodia adapts to social and technological transformations, teacher engagement in reform processes is vital to ensuring that the education system remains both relevant and inclusive. By taking initiative and demonstrating leadership, teachers help bridge the gap between top-down educational reforms and grassroots realities, promoting an educational culture grounded in context, equity, and innovation.

Teacher agency, the professional autonomy and capacity to shape one's pedagogical practice, is essential for effective engagement. Huot, Hok, et al. (2024) argue that enabling teacher agency requires sustained investment in professional development, robust support systems, and formal recognition mechanisms. Training is foundational. Teachers need continuous, needs-based development in key areas

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such as digital pedagogy, inclusive education, student-centred approaches, and facilitation of critical thinking. Professional development programs must be contextually tailored to Cambodia’s challenges, equipping teachers to adapt to diverse classroom realities. Support systems are equally vital. Many Cambodian teachers, particularly in rural areas, work in isolation.

UNESCO (2022a) suggests that fostering peer mentoring networks, collaborative teaching practices, and resource-sharing communities can mitigate professional fatigue and enhance instructional quality. Recognition, through awards, advancement opportunities, and adequate compensation, further boosts teacher morale and retention. Teachers working under challenging conditions, especially in underserved regions, must feel that their efforts are visible and valued. Institutional recognition reinforces their professional identity and commitment to learners’ growth.

In brief, Cambodian teachers are central to student development, not only as educators but as role models, mentors, and agents of change. Their engagement significantly affects students’ motivation, academic persistence, the acquisition of life skills, and career readiness. However, for teachers to fulfil these responsibilities effectively, they must be supported through systemic investment in professional development, collaborative networks, and formal recognition. Strengthening teacher agency in this way is crucial to realising Cambodia’s broader goals of educational equity, social cohesion, and sustainable national progress as described in **Table 4**.

**Table 4.** *Teacher Engagement Strategies in Cambodian ELT*

No.	Strategy	Description
1.	Student Motivation and Career Guidance	Teachers guide students in setting goals, exploring careers, and staying motivated academically.
2.	Life Skills Development	Teachers help students build soft skills like communication, critical thinking, and teamwork.
3.	Mentorship and Emotional Support	Teachers create safe, inclusive spaces and provide emotional support, especially when family guidance is absent.

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No.	Strategy	Description
4.	Advocacy and Educational Reform	Teachers advocate for changes in policy, curriculum, and pedagogy to meet evolving societal needs.
5.	Professional Development	Ongoing training in pedagogy, technology, and inclusion equips teachers to stay up to date and effective.
6.	Collaborative Support Systems	Peer mentoring, resource sharing, and collaboration improve teacher morale and instructional quality.
7.	Recognition and Incentives	Formal recognition, career advancement, and fair compensation increase teacher retention and morale.

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## **VI. Conclusion and Implications**

There are numerous implications for policy, practice, and research for what is possible with the new vision for English Language Teaching (ELT) in Cambodia. While Cambodia is experiencing rapid social, technological, and environmental changes, the ELT paradigm must shift. It can no longer act solely as the teaching of a language and the learning of its associated grammar and vocabulary. It must be a diverse form of education that embodies multiliteracies, critical and analytical thinking, the appreciation of diverse cultures and civics, and that is relevant to the country's socio-economic priorities.

At the policy level, there is no question that curriculum reform is a priority. A revitalised ELT curriculum in Cambodia should promote multiliteracies, including digital, visual, and intercultural communication, and prepare learners to communicate in increasingly complex global scenarios. Addressing sustainability in ELT, including the social and environmental dimensions, increases the relevance of English to the everyday challenges of Cambodian learners. Additionally, incorporating aspects of Cambodia's cultural heritage, history, and values is equally important. This should be conceived as localisation and help ensure that the ELT classroom does not feel alien, culturally empty, or externally imposed.



The reforms to Cambodia's English Language Teaching (ELT) system focus on three main areas: integrated skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) teaching, teaching English through Content-Based Instruction (i.e., teaching English alongside other subjects, such as Geography or Science), and the introduction of the 21st-century skills teaching framework to be integrated into the ELT curricula. For Cambodia to achieve the above reforms, it needs to train teachers and provide them with the necessary support and resources to develop the professional teaching skills required for each reform. Teachers need to develop appropriate language and teaching skills (including the ability to use digital resources, teach for sustainability, and manage culturally diverse classrooms) so they can implement the above-mentioned reforms. Teachers must also be provided with digital skills and other teaching strategies that use a learner-centred approach. Teaching with a learner-centred approach is of utmost importance to overcoming the challenges of student-centred teaching. Teachers, especially those in rural areas, should be the focus of any initiatives to improve their teaching, as they often work with the fewest resources and have limited opportunities for professional development.

Addressing Cambodia's ongoing digital divide is also essential. In rural and underserved areas of the country, where the need for digital devices, internet access, and online learning resources is most significant, there is insufficient access to all three. If there are no sustainable policies that provide affordable resources and improve technology, digital access, and digital inclusion, the new ELT will likely worsen, rather than improve, inequities in education. In these areas, a combination of public and private institutions, low-cost technology, and community-centred digital learning solutions will be most effective in improving access. Improving access to technology and the internet is essential for improving education in the country. Implementing these digital resources will support the country's long-term development.

At the classroom level, pedagogical innovation best transposes policy aspirations into practice for meaningful learning experiences. Project-based learning explicitly provides students the opportunity to link the English language to local realities and community, the environment, and social issues, utilising language for authentic purposes. Multimodal pedagogies using text, images, audio, video, and digital media support knowledgeable, creative idea expression and the development of thinking and analytical skills. Teaching that is culturally responsive to Cambodian history, traditions, and values, because of blended learning and culturally responsive teaching. Enhances students' engagement in English. Furthermore, blended and hybrid teaching and learning models offer multiple learning pathways, especially in

situations where infrastructure is limited and online or face-to-face learning cannot be fully delivered.

The innovation of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Cambodia provides a rich context for research. For example, there is a need for longitudinal studies to assess the impact of integrated approaches to multiliteracies, sustainability, and digital inclusion on language proficiency, critical thinking, and civic engagement. Community- and participatory research focused on rural students, teachers, and community actors, for example, can ensure that these stakeholders are involved in identifying the curriculum and pedagogy. Cambodian rural areas. Such a comparative study in the region and with Cambodia's neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia may help identify adaptable practices and identify common areas of challenge in the reform of ELT.

The Cambodian educational system must start regarding English Language Teaching (ELT) as a valuable educational tool rather than an academic subject. ELT can be an integral part of developing ELT-informed, resilient, and globally active citizens when coupled with digital equity, teacher empowerment, sustainability, and culture. To achieve this, a vision must be sustained over time. Policymakers must modernise the curriculum for a more inclusive approach and build the necessary infrastructure. The use of technologically advanced pedagogical tools must be supported and coupled with reform of innovative and reflective practice. Researchers must assess educational and infrastructural reforms critically and adapt the findings to the Cambodian context. To summarise, the most innovative ELT frameworks can improve the desired outcomes of contemporary language learning while strengthening the more culturally equitable and progressive educational objectives of the Cambodian system.

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