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# International Journal of Trends in English Language and Literature (IJTELL)

An International Peer-Reviewed English Journal; ISSN:2582-8487

Impact Factor:8.486(SJIF);[www.ijtell.com](http://www.ijtell.com) Volume-7, Issue-2;April,May & June(2026)

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## Designing an EVM-Based Curriculum for Young Learners: Practical Steps for Integrating Virtual Enrichment into Primary and Secondary ELT

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Article Received: 02/05/2026

Article Accepted: 09/06/2026

Published Online: 11/06/2026

DOI:10.53413/IJTELL.2026.7.2.116

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### Abstract

The Enriched Virtual Model (EVM), as defined by Horn and Staker (2015), repositions online learning as the primary driver of instruction while preserving face-to-face (F2F) time for enrichment, support, and application. This article adapts EVM specifically for English Language Teaching (ELT) to young learners (primary and secondary). We translate Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model into a virtual environment, offering practical steps for teachers to design a curriculum that balances core asynchronous online lessons with engaging, interest-based enrichment activities. A sample weekly plan demonstrates how digital storytelling, virtual pen pals, and tools like Flipgrid, Canva, Edpuzzle, and Minecraft Education can foster language development. Finally, we propose assessment strategies rooted in portfolios and self-reflection, ensuring that enrichment tasks are both meaningful and measurable.

**Keywords:** Enriched Virtual Model, EVM, ELT, young learners, Renzulli's Enrichment Triad, asynchronous learning, digital storytelling, virtual pen pals, Flipgrid, Minecraft Education, portfolio assessment.

### 1. Introduction: Why EVM for Young Language Learners?

The Enriched Virtual Model (EVM) is not merely a remote learning contingency plan; it is a deliberate pedagogical framework that makes online learning the backbone of instruction while repurposing face-to-face sessions for deep, interactive enrichment (Horn &

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Staker, 2015; Clayton Christensen Institute, 2017). For young learners in primary and secondary English Language Teaching (ELT), EVM offers a powerful solution to two persistent challenges: the need for personalised pacing and the necessity of authentic, communicative practice.

Young learners (ages 6–14) are digital natives, yet they also require structured guidance, social interaction, and hands-on activities to acquire a second language effectively. EVM allows teachers to deliver core vocabulary, grammar, and listening input through engaging online modules, freeing precious classroom time for speaking, collaboration, and creative projects. Moreover, EVM’s flexibility supports differentiated instruction—advanced students can move ahead, while struggling learners receive targeted remediation during face-to-face enrichment sessions.

In this article, we provide a step-by-step guide to designing an EVM-based ELT curriculum for young learners. We draw on the foundational principles of EVM outlined in our previous work (see “The Enriched Virtual Model: Revolutionizing Blended Learning”) and extend them by integrating Renzulli’s Enrichment Triad Model—a classic framework for fostering giftedness and creativity—into a virtual ELT context. The result is a practical, actionable blueprint that any ELT teacher can adapt.

## 2. Theoretical Bridge: Renzulli’s Enrichment Triad Model Meets EVM

Before diving into tools and lesson plans, we must understand *how* to design enrichment that is truly valuable. Joseph Renzulli’s Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1977) has been a cornerstone of gifted education for decades. It proposes three types of enrichment activities:

- **Type I – General Exploratory Activities:** Exposure to new topics, ideas, and fields through guest speakers, field trips, videos, or interest centres.
- **Type II – Group Training Activities:** Teaching students how to think, feel, and act like a practitioner—e.g., critical thinking, research skills, creative writing techniques, or using digital tools.
- **Type III – Individual and Small Group Investigations of Real Problems:** Students become “young investigators” tackling authentic, interest-driven projects that result in a product or presentation for a real audience.

In an EVM environment, these three types map naturally to the online and face-to-face components:

Enrichment Type	EVM Delivery Mode	Example in ELT
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Enrichment Type	EVM Delivery Mode	Example in ELT
Type I (Exploration)	<b>Asynchronous online</b>	A curated YouTube playlist of short animated stories from different English-speaking cultures; an interactive map of English dialects.
Type II (Training)	<b>Synchronous online or F2F mini-lessons</b>	A 15-minute F2F session on how to record a Flipgrid video with clear pronunciation; an online tutorial on using Canva to design a character profile.
Type III (Investigation)	<b>F2F enrichment sessions + asynchronous collaboration</b>	A virtual pen-pal exchange culminating in a shared digital story; a Minecraft Education project where students build and narrate a sustainable city.

By weaving Renzulli’s triad into EVM, we ensure that enrichment is not random “fun time” but a scaffolded journey from exposure to expertise. This is especially critical for young language learners, who need structured support to move from receptive to productive language use.

### 3. Adapting the Triad to a Virtual Environment: Practical Steps for ELT Teachers

#### Step 1: Map Your Core Online Curriculum (The “Backbone”)

Following EVM principles, the majority of explicit language instruction occurs online asynchronously. For a unit on “Describing My Neighbourhood” (CEFR A2/B1), the online core might include:

- A 5-minute animated video introducing vocabulary (grocery store, park, library, bus stop).
- Interactive drag-and-drop exercises on the LMS (e.g., matching words to pictures).
- A recorded dialogue model (listening comprehension with auto-graded questions).
- A simple grammar tutorial (using “there is/there are” with prepositions of place).

**Teacher’s role:** Monitor online analytics via the LMS. Identify students who struggle with specific items (e.g., prepositions) and note them for F2F support.



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### Step 2: Design Type I Enrichment (Virtual Exploration)

Curate or create asynchronous exploratory activities that spark curiosity and provide linguistic input beyond the core.

#### Example for “Describing My Neighbourhood”:

- **Virtual Field Trip:** Link to a 360° video of a real neighbourhood (e.g., a street in London or New York). Students watch and note three new English words they hear or see.
- **Digital Interest Centre:** A shared Padlet with links to songs, poems, and short documentaries about different types of communities (urban, suburban, rural). Students choose one to explore.

**Time allocation:** 15–20 minutes, two times per week. No direct teacher intervention required; students simply engage and record one interesting fact in their language journal (digital or physical).

### Step 3: Design Type II Enrichment (Group Training – F2F or Live Online)

These are short, skill-focused sessions that equip students to tackle Type III projects. They are best delivered during mandatory face-to-face time (e.g., once a week) or via live synchronous online sessions.

#### Example mini-lessons:

- **Using Flipgrid for a “Neighbourhood Show-and-Tell”:** Teach students how to record a 30-second video describing a favourite place in their own neighbourhood. Model clear pronunciation, eye contact (with camera), and sentence frames (“My favourite place is the \_\_\_ because \_\_\_.”).
- **Canva Basics:** Show how to create a simple infographic comparing their neighbourhood to the one in the virtual field trip.
- **Collaboration Rules for Minecraft Education:** How to chat politely, share resources, and assign roles when building a fictional neighbourhood together.

**Teacher’s role:** Explicit instruction followed by guided practice in small groups. Use F2F time to provide immediate corrective feedback on language and digital literacy.

### Step 4: Design Type III Enrichment (Real Problem Investigation – Virtual + F2F)

This is the heart of the enrichment model. Students apply their language skills to an authentic, interest-driven project that has a real audience (peers, parents, another class).



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### ELT Type III project examples for young learners:

Age Group	Project Idea	Virtual Tools	F2F Support
Primary (6–9)	<p><b>Digital Storybook:</b> Create a 5-page illustrated story about a friendly monster visiting their neighbourhood.</p>	Canva, Book Creator, Google Slides	Teacher conference for storyboarding; peer feedback on grammar.
Upper Primary (9–11)	<p><b>Virtual Pals:</b> Exchange 3 letters with a partner class in another country. Final video call to ask each other questions about neighbourhoods.</p>	Padlet (letter exchange), Zoom/FaceTime (call)	Role-play call in class; writing workshop for letter drafts.
Lower Secondary (11–14)	<p><b>Minecraft Neighbourhood Project:</b> In teams, build a “green neighbourhood” with eco-friendly features, then record a 2-minute tour narration.</p>	Minecraft Education Edition, Flipgrid (narrated tour)	Planning session with blueprints; pronunciation practice for narration.

Each project spans 3–4 weeks. Students work asynchronously on individual or team tasks (e.g., writing, building, recording) and use F2F sessions for brainstorming, feedback, and rehearsals.

#### 4. Sample Weekly Plan for an EVM-Based ELT Unit (Upper Primary, A2 Level)

**Theme:** “*My Neighbourhood*” (4 weeks). Core online lessons delivered Monday–Thursday (30 minutes/day). Face-to-face enrichment session every Friday (60 minutes). Tools: LMS (Google Classroom), Flipgrid, Canva, Edpuzzle, Minecraft Education.



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Day	Mode	Activity	Enrichment Type
Monday	Asynchronous online	<b>Core lesson:</b> Watch Edpuzzle video “Places in Town” with embedded comprehension questions. Complete LMS drag-and-drop vocabulary quiz.	None (core)
Tuesday	Asynchronous online	<b>Core lesson:</b> Grammar tutorial “There is / There are” with interactive exercises. Listen to short dialogue and answer multiple-choice.	None (core)
Wednesday	Asynchronous online	<b>Type I enrichment:</b> Explore a 360° virtual tour of Covent Garden, London. Post one new word or phrase on a Padlet “Word Wall.”	Type I
Thursday	Asynchronous online	<b>Core lesson:</b> Read a short text “Lily’s Neighbourhood.” Answer true/false questions. Record a 1-minute audio describing your own street (upload to LMS).	None (core)
Friday	Face-to-face (60 min)	<b>Type II training (20 min):</b> Teacher models how to use Canva to make a “Neighbourhood Compare” infographic. <b>Type III work (40 min):</b> Students work in pairs to collect photos/drawings of their neighbourhood and a chosen virtual neighbourhood. Begin infographic	Type II & III



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Day	Mode	Activity	Enrichment Type
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**Week 2–4 progression:** Fridays continue with Type II/III support. By end of Week 4, each student or pair presents their infographic (and optional Minecraft tour) to the class during a “Neighbourhood Fair.”

## 5. Essential Tools for EVM Enrichment in ELT

The following tools are young-learner-friendly, widely available, and align with EVM’s asynchronous + F2F structure.

Tool	Best for	How it supports EVM
<b>Flipgrid</b>	Video discussions, presentations, pronunciation practice	Students record asynchronous video responses. Teacher can give video feedback. Perfect for Type III final products.
<b>Canva</b>	Visual design (posters, infographics, digital storybooks)	Free templates for young learners. Supports multimodal literacy. Work can be embedded in portfolios.
<b>Edpuzzle</b>	Interactive video lessons with embedded questions	Ideal for core online lessons and Type I exploration. Teachers can track who watched and answered.
<b>Minecraft Education</b>	Collaborative building, problem-solving, narrative creation	Highly engaging for Type III projects. Built-in chat and camera features allow language production.
<b>Padlet</b>	Shared interest boards, virtual pen-pal letters, brainstorming	Simple, visual, and asynchronous. Can be used for Type I word walls or Type II collaborative planning.



## 6. Assessment Strategies: Beyond Traditional Tests

One common concern with EVM and enrichment is *How do we grade creative, self-directed work?* The answer lies in two complementary strategies: **portfolios** and **self-reflection**.

### 6.1 Portfolio Assessment for Enrichment Tasks

A digital portfolio (using Google Sites, Seesaw, or a simple LMS folder) collects evidence of a student’s enrichment journey. Include:

- **Type I evidence:** Screenshot of a Padlet post; link to a watched video with a one-sentence reaction.
- **Type II evidence:** Completed Canva infographic; draft of a letter with teacher feedback; recorded Flipgrid practice video.
- **Type III evidence:** Final digital storybook or Minecraft tour video; peer feedback forms; presentation recording.

### Rubric for Type III projects (simplified for young learners):

Criterion	Emerging (1)	Developing (2)	Proficient (3)
Vocabulary use	Uses only core words	Uses core + 2-3 enrichment words	Uses core + 5+ enrichment words naturally
Pronunciation	Often unclear	Mostly clear with occasional errors	Clear, with good intonation
Creativity / effort	Basic product, minimal detail	Some original ideas	Highly creative, goes beyond requirements
Collaboration (pair work)	Difficulty sharing tasks	Works well with guidance	Proactive, equal contribution

### 6.2 Self-Reflection and Goal Setting

Young learners need explicit scaffolding to reflect on their learning. Provide simple reflection prompts after each Type III milestone.

#### Example reflection form (primary level):

*My Enrichment Project Reflection*

1. What did I learn about English in this project?
2. What was the hardest part?



3. What am I proud of?
4. Next time, I want to try... (draw or write)

For older learners (secondary), use a more structured “Learning Log” with prompts related to self-regulation (goal setting, time management, help-seeking). These logs can be shared during F2F teacher conferences.

**Linking self-reflection to grades:** Instead of penalising low initial performance, assign credit for *completing* reflections and acting on feedback. This encourages a growth mindset and aligns with EVM’s mastery-based progression (Horn & Staker, 2015).

### 7. Practical Tips for Overcoming Challenges

While EVM is powerful, teachers of young learners must anticipate and mitigate common difficulties:

Challenge	Solution
<b>Unequal home internet access</b>	Provide offline options: Download Edpuzzle videos; allow students to complete reflections on paper and photograph upload. Use F2F time for catch-up.
<b>Young students struggling with self-regulation</b>	Use a <b>visual pacing tracker</b> (e.g., a checklist with emojis). Pair students with “learning buddies” for accountability. Start with one enrichment day per week, then gradually increase.
<b>Parental resistance</b>	Host a virtual orientation explaining EVM and Renzulli’s model. Show examples of student projects. Provide a simple “Parent Guide to Enrichment.”
<b>Time for Type III projects</b>	Integrate enrichment into existing class time. For example, replace one traditional test per term with a Type III project. Use Friday F2F sessions for sustained project work.

### 8. Conclusion: Empowering Young Language Learners Through EVM

Designing an EVM-based curriculum for young ELT learners is not about adding more technology or more work; it is about *reorganising* what we already do so that online learning frees up face-to-face time for what matters most: authentic communication, creativity, and personalised support. By adapting Renzulli’s Enrichment Triad Model to the virtual environment, teachers can move from a one-size-fits-all textbook approach to a



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dynamic, interest-driven experience where every child has the opportunity to investigate, create, and share in English.

The sample weekly plan, tools (Flipgrid, Canva, Edpuzzle, Minecraft Education), and assessment strategies (portfolios + self-reflection) provide a concrete starting point. Remember that EVM is inherently flexible: start small with one enrichment project per term, listen to your students, and iterate. As the research summarised in our previous article confirms (Smith & Jones, 2023; Lee et al., 2022), EVM can significantly boost engagement, self-regulation, and language outcomes—especially when enrichment is purposeful, scaffolded, and student-centred.

The future of ELT for young learners is not choosing between online and offline; it is enriching the connection between them. EVM, grounded in Renzulli's triad, shows us the way.

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