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Importance of Technology in Teaching and Learning English Language

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ABSTRACT

Since the dawn of human civilization, the world is changing with breathtaking speed. Life is not static, change is the law of nature and every educational organization has to keep pace with changing environment, which is beyond human control. Need for education is inevitable even if it isn't necessary under law. Technology has played a vital role in revolutionizing our world in many aspects. Computers and language teaching have walked hand in hand for a long time and technology has contributed as a teaching tool in the language classroom. In language teaching and learning, we have a lot to choose from technology: Radio, TV, CD player, Computers, The internet, Electronic Dictionary, Audio Cassettes, Power point videos, Mobile devices, Skype and DVDs. Internet and software have heralded a new era in many aspects of our lives, to which education is no exception. As a result of the application of cyber technologies, both teaching and learning are facilitated. Students learn faster and easier than before because of the use of technology.

Computer based effective teaching offers powerful, interesting and new way of providing knowledge to students. Today all the educational institutes maximize the potential of student learning through the implementation of computational tools. Technology is evolving with a lightning speed. Imagine when learning is mixed with technology, wonderful outcomes will be there. Teaching in a physical classroom remained the dominant form of delivering lectures for a good number of centuries. But setbacks of traditional teaching styles led to the development of online learning or multimedia teaching. This paper tries to bring out the importance of Technology in teaching English language. It also aims to make English teachers aware of the strategies to use it in an effective manner.

KEYWORDS: Technology, Language learning, Computer assisted learning, Mobile

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INTRODUCTION

The use of technology in various fields has been so successful and beneficial for teachers to reach some particular goals especially in education and for those who are learning a foreign language and literature. In every step of our lives, the significance of technology is seen and enjoyed in these days. Web- based technologies and powerful internet connections provide various new possibilities for the development of educational technology. English is the only language that has attracted many people around the world, for the most part due to the globalization. Students learn faster and easier than before because of the use of technology in educational institutions. It is quite clear that English has become a necessity today.[1]

With the spread and development of English around the world, English is used as a second language in a country like India and for some people the 1st language. It enjoys a high prestige in the country. At present, the role and status of English in India is higher than ever as evidenced by its position as a key subject of medium of instruction, curriculum. As the number of English learners is increasing, different teaching methods have been implemented to test the effectiveness of the teaching process. The tradition of English teaching has been drastically changed with the remarkable entry of technology. Technology provides so many options as making teaching interesting and also making teaching more productive in terms of improvements. Technology is one of the most significant drivers of both social and linguistic change. The use of English language has increased rapidly after 1960. At present, the role and status of English is that it is the language of social context, political, sociocultural, business, education, industries, media, library, communication across borders, and key subject in curriculum and language of imparting education". Since there are more and more English learners in India, different teaching methods have been implemented to test the effectiveness of the teaching process. One method involves multimedia in ELT in order to create English contexts. This helps students to get involved and learn according to their interests. It has been tested effectively and is widely accepted for teaching English in modern world. Technology is utilized for the upliftment of modern styles; it satisfies both visual and auditory senses of the students. With the spread and development of English around the world, English has been learned and used by more and more speakers.

Need for education is inevitable even if it isn't necessary under law. Life is not static, change is the law of nature and every educational organization has to keep pace with changing environment, which is beyond human control. One has to update his knowledge to keep the activities under his direction and suitable guidance. Every educational organization needs to have well teachers and experienced people to perform the activities that have to be done. Teachers are creative, intelligent people, and once they learn to use technology in their professional lives -- for

keeping records, for creating documents, and for enhancing their own learning -- they will soon discover the many ways in which technology can enhance what they are doing with their students. As with anyone involved in education, student or teacher, a personal growth plan should always be included. One never develops socially, intellectually, or academically, without consistently learning new things and striving to further oneself.[2]This can include classes as a part of a continuing education program, receiving regular input from students and consistently attempting to improve their teaching style, or trying new ideas or strategies on regular basis. As teachers, we often search for new methods of instruction, new skills to implement in the classroom to meet the needs of our students. Most of us also possess a commitment to lifelong learning, constantly striving to improve our abilities in subject matter, pedagogy, and educational technology. The tools enhance and facilitate the learning process. This gives the learner a reason to use the application, and along the way, the learner understands how the application works. [3]

DEFINITION OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a tool that can change the nature of learning. There is no one accepted definition of what constitutes technology. The term is used very loosely to describe a variety of ways computers are integrated into the learning process. Simply put, technology is a word that is used to describe different things to different people. Technology is a term that is used by many to describe, study, and evaluate the various ways. Computers are integrated into education, both inside and outside of classrooms. The reality is that technology is a complex, dynamic, and ever-changing part of our society and world today and, given this, it is important to have an informed approach towards its role within our own sphere of influence. Instruction is the way we teach and Technology is what we use to help us teach. Instruction can take place with or without technology. However, technology can be used to help facilitate instruction. Technology can be anything that is used as a means to help us, but it does not necessarily have to be electronic. A good definition of technology should include "the systematic application of scientific and other organized knowledge to practical tasks". Technology is designed to make a person's life easier.[4]

IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY

The importance of technology in our everyday and academic lives is increasing. "Technology has become a powerful catalyst in promoting learning, communications, and life skills for economic survival in today's world". We are all familiar with the extravagant promises of technology: It will make our students smarter -- and it will do it faster and cheaper than ever before. Technology is a powerful tool with enormous potential for paving high-speed highways from

outdated educational systems to systems capable of providing learning opportunities for all, to better serve the needs of 21st century work, communications, learning, and life.[5]

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ENGLISH

As the use of English has increased in popularity so has the need for qualified teachers to instruct students in the language. It is true that there are teachers who use 'cutting edge' technology, but the majority of teachers still teach in the traditional manner. None of these traditional manners are bad or damaging the students. In fact, till date they are proving to be useful also. However, there are many more opportunities for students to gain confidence practice and extend themselves, especially for ESL students who learn the language for more than just fun. For them to keep pace with ELT and gain more confidence they have to stride into the world of multimedia technology.

THE GROWTH OF ELT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

21st century is the age of globalization and is important to grasp on various foreign languages and English language comes first. English Language Teaching has been with us for many years and its significance continues to grow, fuelled, partially by the Internet. Graddol's study (2000) suggests that in the year 2000 there were about a billion English learners- but a decade later the numbers doubled. The forecast points to a surge in English learning, which has peaked in 2010. The same study indicates that over 80% of information stored on the internet is in English. For the first time there are more Non-Native than Native users of the language and diversity of context in terms of learners, age, nationality, learning background etcetera has become a defining characteristic of ELT today. With the rapid development of science and technology, the emerging and developing of multimedia technology and its application to teaching, featuring audio, visual, animation effects comes into full play in English class teaching and sets a favorable platform for reform and exploration on English teaching model in the new era.[6] It's proved that multimedia technology plays a positive role in promoting activities and initiatives of student and teaching effect in English class. Technological innovations have gone hand in hand with the growth of English and are changing the way in which we communicate. It is fair to assert that the growth of the internet has facilitated the growth of the English language and that this has occurred at a time when computers are no longer the exclusive domains of the dedicated few, but rather available to many. With this there has been a very significant proliferation of literature regarding the use of technology in teaching English language. Mostly these writings unequivocally accept technology as the most essential part in teaching. In a sense, a tendency to emphasize on inevitable role of technology in pedagogy to the extent of obliterating human part of teacher by technology part has been very

dominant. And as a result if we neglect or ignore technological developments, they will continue and perhaps we will never be able to catch up, irrespective of our discipline or branch. For this reason, it is important for language teachers to be aware of the latest and best equipment and to have a full knowledge of what is available in any given situation. Teachers can use Multimedia Technology to give more colorful, stimulating lectures. There are many techniques applicable in various degrees to language learning situation.[7]Some are useful for testing and distance education, and some for teaching business English, spoken English, reading, listening or interpreting. The teaching principle should be to appreciate new technologies in the areas and functions where they provide something decisively new useful and never let machines take over the role of the teacher or limit functions where more traditional ways are superior. There are various reasons why all language learners and teachers must know how to make use of the new technology.

ADVANTAGES OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

To Cultivate Students' Interest in Study

Nowadays, the stereotyped traditional teaching methods and environment are unpopular while multimedia technology featuring audio, visual animation effects naturally and humanely makes us more access to information besides, with such characteristics as abundant-information and crossing time and space, multimedia technology offers a sense of reality and functions very well, which greatly cultivates students' interest and motivation in study and their involvement in class activities.

To Promote Students' Communication Capacity

Traditional teaching has hampered students' capacity to comprehend certain language and also understanding to structure, meaning and function of the language, and makes the students passive recipients of knowledge. So, it is hard to achieve the target of communication. With teachers' instructions leading students' thought patterns and motivating students' emotions, the multimedia technology seeks integration of teaching and learning and provides the students greater incentives, The PPT courseware activate students' thinking; the visual and vivid courseware rand help them to transforms English learning into capacity cultivation. And such in-class activities as group discussion, subject discussion, and debates can also offer more opportunities for communication among students and between teachers and students. So multimedia technology teaching has uniquely inspired students' positive thinking and communication skills in social practice.[8]

To Widen Students' Knowledge to Gain an Insightful Understanding to Western Culture: The multimedia courseware can offer the students abundant information; more plentiful than textbooks, and help them to get of displays vivid cultural background, rich content and true-to-life language materials, which are much natural and closer to life. Not only could learners improve their listening ability, but also learn the western culture. Grasping information through various channels can equip the students with knowledge and bring about information-sharing among students and make them actively participate in class discussion and communication.

To Improve Teaching Effectiveness

Multimedia teachings enrich teaching content and make the best of class time and break the "teacher centered" teaching pattern and fundamentally improve class efficiency. Due to large classes it is difficult for the students to have speaking communication. The utilization of multi-media sound lab materializes the individualized and co-operative teaching. The traditional teaching model mainly emphasized on teachers' instruction, and the information provided is limited due to traditional classes. On the contrary, multimedia technology goes beyond time and space, creates more vivid, visual, authentic environment for English learning, stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time meanwhile increases class information.

To Improve Interaction between Teacher and Student

Multimedia teaching stresses the role of students, and enhances the importance of "interaction" between teachers and students. A major feature of multimedia teaching is to train and improve students' ability to listen and speak, and to develop their communicative competence. During this process, the teacher's role as a facilitator is particularly prominent. Using multimedia in context creation creates a good platform for the exchange between teachers and students, while at the same time providing a language environment that improves on the traditional classroom teaching model. In this way, teachers in the classroom no longer blindly input information and force students to receive it in a passive way.

CREATES A CONTEXT FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

Multimedia teaching creates a context for language teaching. This method makes the class lively and interesting, as well as optimizing the organization of the class. Multimedia has its own features such as visibility and liveliness. During the process of multimedia English teaching, sounds and pictures can be set together, which enhances the initiative of both teachers and students. When using multimedia software, teachers can use pictures and images to enrich the content of classes, and also imagine different contexts in the process of producing teaching courseware. Students in

the class can use multimedia to understand the class in a clear way. Through the whole interactive process, it is apparent that using multimedia in ELT is effective in nurturing students' interest in learning English, as well as enhancing teachers' interest in English teaching.[9]

LEARNING

Base of teaching is on the learning. For better teaching, we must know how we can learn. According to this matter we must assist that how human learn and then we can design teaching programs for easy and effective learning. Also, for recognition of learning we must know about theories of learning which are important in learning. There are many theories of learning but four theories are effective for teaching program which are, Behavioral Theory, Social learning, Learning by Observation, Cognitive (gestalt) Theory. But before any explanation about theories of learning we should know a definition of learning. *What is learning*? Learning all such realms breeds hope. What is learnable, we can potentially teach- a fact that encourages parents, educators, athletic coaches and animal trainers. *What learning has?* We can potentially change by new learning. No matter how unhappy, unsuccessful or unloving, we are, that need not be the end of our story. Of all the world creatures, we humans are the most capable of changing our behavior through learning. By definition, experience is key to learning. Conditioning is the process of learning associations.

WEB-BASED LEARNING

In recent years the terminology has been changed for web based learning; it was called as technology based or distance learning, online education, in the end it is now called e-learning and web based learning. A variety of basic language skills can be developed with the help of web-based language learning activities. It is known that; there are four basic skills in English which are listening, speaking, writing, and reading. These skills can be put on the web and made interactive in a variety of ways. One of these ways is internet communication tools such as e-mail, blogs and chat. These tools provide integrated environment for teachers and students. Students generally feel positive about web-based learning tools, when they are:

- well-designed, easy to learn, user friendly
- when the tool is good as support, not as replacement of lectures

TECHNOLOGICAL AIDS ROLE IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Skype

Nowadays almost all messenger services have audio functions and technological equipment such as laptop computers, also have cameras on them. So students can talk with their instructors

and peers far away. "Skype is a relatively newly emerging technology and the potential application of it to language and literature learning and teaching needs to be further explored". And students can speak with native speakers of language and compare their pronunciation. In addition to improving their literary knowledge by discussing intended literary works with native or native-like speakers of English, especially university professors, students can improve their speaking too. Speaking skills can be developed by using this application.

Mobile Devices

Today's world has been changed over the years and besides technology has been changed in other words it has been developed. Mobile learning is one of those technologies which has been used for a few years. Before going further into details it must be specified that mobile learning means that people are learning whenever and wherever they want with their mobile phones, PDA's and other technological devices. Mobile learning is also defined as "any service or facility that supplies learner with general electronic information and educational content that aids in acquisition of knowledge regardless of location and time". Vavoula and Sharples (2002) suggest three ways in which learning can be considered mobile as "learning is mobile in terms of space, it is mobile in different areas of life, and it is mobile with respect to time". As it can be understood from these definitions that, mobile learning system is available for delivering education to learners anytime and anywhere they need it. Mobile phones are the most popular devices among people.[10]

Ipods

IPods are one of the mobile media devices which enable users to produce, organize, deliver, and use media also users can share texts, images, audio or video with their peers and teachers. The technology and pedagogy of using podcasting and iPod could be in improving listening skills in case of language learning.

CONCLUSION

Language learning does not only occur in the classroom and should not stop after the learners leave the classroom. So, technological devices should be always used by students and teachers. In order to provide an interaction between language learners and teachers or peer to peers. Internet connections and mobile devices are of the most popular and useful ways in language learning. The development of Web-based language teaching and learning activities continue to be an exciting and growing field. While computer programmers, instructional designers, and computational linguists steadily push the extremes of the field, language instructors can use the basic tools of internet. It can be said that, researchers have enough research on web based language

learning, from now on, they should begin interactive language lessons and encourage teachers to create their own web based activities.

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