



ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

N Maheswari

Research Scholar CAS in Linguistics Annamalai University

ABSTRACT

David Warlick states that "We need technology in every classroom and in every student and teacher's hand, because it is the pen and paper of our time, and it is the lens through which we experience much of our world."

Earlier the use of technology in the language classroom was of concern only to a small number of specialists. But in this age of information technology, there is hardly any sphere of human activity that has been left untouched by technology. Technology has made a triumphal entry into education and they have brought significant benefits to teachers and students alike. Educational institutions around the world have taken on the responsibility of preparing students for their role as productive, technologically literate citizens in the society of the future. The arrival of computers and Internet has provided a turning point in English learning methodology. With the advent of internet, the role of computers in language instruction has now become an important issue confronting large numbers of language teachers through the world. This attempt is made to discuss some of the ways that how computers and internet can aid in language learning and teaching.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

Times have changed, teachers have evolved, and new technologies such as overhead projectors, interactive whiteboards, laptop, computers and wireless internet have opened up the classroom to the outside world. Teachers who spent their lives managing with a textbook, a tape recorder and a blackboard are now adept at using PowerPoint to present grammar, playing Podcasts to practice listening skills, pulling texts off the world wide web in empowering students by giving them access to a wide range of web-based tools that allow them to learn English language. In fact, the digital revolution in learning now threatens to undermine the classroom completely as a place of study. In the following passage let us look the ways to promote effective learning environment in English Language Laboratory.

TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE LSRW SKILLS

F.M. Noel rightly says, "Good instruction is the foundation of any educational programmes and Audio-visual training aids are component parts of that foundation." "If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow" said John Dewey. Hence it is suggested to the teacher to take help of some instructional aids to teach English more efficiently and successfully. To develop the four skills on the whole, the aids like CD, Mp3 player, voice recorder, LCD, radio/podcast, TV, mobile phones, computer with internet are used to create interest and motivate the students to learn the language. In the following passage let us see how LSRW skills can be enhanced through technology.

The basic role of a language is to make a society as to be living together in co-operation; but co-operation is not at all possible without communication. For proper communication, language skills have to be enriched by understanding the grammatical components which are in turn developed by the technology-incorporated study materials, and tested through proper exercises. But, the availability of hardware and software alone will not be enough. The challenge and success of the program will hinge upon well illustrative computerized tools for learning -teaching and testing materials designed by competent teachers. Moreover, the developed tools cover the basics of language components and language skills and facilitate the visualizations in learning and testing of each topic.

Listening:

Effective Communication starts with listening. A good listener picks up good language, acquires effective body language and learns much more to tackle life better. In fact, he learns more than the others.

By listening recorded talks of experts, native speakers, lectures of

eminent persons and English sound track movies can enhance listening ability and improve their interest in learning a language. Students can be made to listen to popular songs and they can have fun by repeating the songs. Students learn different accents at a normal or near normal speed and they should also be introduced to a variety of different accents, speech patterns and voice types. Listening and focusing on native speech, including its rhythms, intonation and pitch can greatly help students to improve their pronunciation.

Speaking:

"Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively." The teacher suggests four ways to improve speaking skills with the help of technology.

The learners can watch videos of native speakers in YouTube and pay attention to how words are pronounced. In this way they can hone their speaking and listening skills simultaneously.

Allow students to do their presentation using LCD projector. They can be encouraged to capture a video of their presentation and mock interview which provides a chance to rectify the mistakes committed by them by going through the video captured.

They can also be asked to read stories or incidents which took place in the life of great personalities. Give them specific time and ask them to narrate the incident or story. Through this session, the art of storytelling will be enhanced.

To find way to reach a place they want, students can be asked to use Google Map. Let them find the direction to reach that particular place. Ask them to explain in detail about the directions on how to reach that place.

Reading

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader" says W. Fussel Man. Watching T.V, listening to music, chat with friends is fun—reading is boring isn't it? But some ask why should I read a newspaper if I can get the news from T.V? We teachers should make them to understand that reading will improve our range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

There are several ways in which technology can be used to improve reading ability. For example: Students can get news from various sources on the internet. Students can be asked to pick articles of their interest. Articles that include photos can provide excellent clues to what the piece is about. Such visual cues act as a tool to help the students anticipate and predict the direction the article will take. Try to guess its meaning from the context of the article or the

sentence. Instruct them to read the article once again and to take notes immediately what they have observed. Ask them to summarize the article and insist them to try to use the new vocabulary they learned while reading. Gradually students can be instructed to read the easier one to a challenging one. If students daily fix some amount of time exclusively for reading and over a period of time, it will become a practice.

Writing

Good writing skills are essential for effective communication. Gerald R. Ford once said –“If I get a chance to go the college again, I would concentrate on two areas: learning to write and to speak before an audience.” We teachers should insist the students to learn on how to communicate skillfully.

Web page/Weblog:

A simple web page is fairly easy to make. It can be accessed by anyone in the world. It is a good device to publicize information. For example: they can write articles, post newsletters, class syllabus, announcements, short stories and poems. If students learn a little more about web page surfing the net, they can create fairly artistic web pages which look professional.

Web Surfing:

Quiz activity can be done by web surfing. Ask them to surf net to find out the answers for the set of questions given. It can be related to technical or general knowledge. They can also be asked to get information regarding higher education in abroad. For example: Identify the university to pursue higher education? What kind of courses offered? Is it necessary to sit for TOEFL or IELTS? How long it is valid? Is accommodation facility good enough? Undoubtedly, the activity web surfing kindles students' motivation for learning and also helps to develop their self-learning.

ADVANTAGES AND BARRIERS OF USING TECHNOLOGY

Advantages

One of many benefits of learning a language is that students can experience the language rather than merely studying it. Since students love to use computers and technology, it cultivates a strong motivation for the students to learn the language through using something they love. Moreover, using computers can increase students' desire to develop their linguistic skills faster and increase their positive attitudes toward learning the target language better than those attending traditional classes.

Another benefit is that using computers could boost the spirits of shy students. They can be greatly benefited by learning English language at their own pace.

Barriers

The barriers can be classified in the following common categories as financial barrier, misuse of technology, lack of technical knowledge and fear and acceptance of technology.

Financial Barrier:

Hardware and software cost much more money than giving out written materials. However, in order to overcome these financial barriers, we need to get support from the institutions. Availability of high quality software is the most pressing challenge in applying the new technologies in education.

Misuse of Technology:

There are many teenagers who don't use technology appropriately and they waste their times over chatting, games and worthless programs. Because of these reasons, teachers still have a fear of technology and the internet. This is a major barrier in adoption of technology in the language lab by the teachers.

Lack of Technical knowledge:

A lack of technical knowledge is another barrier. Many instructors do not understand how to use the new technologies. Improper use

of technologies can affect both the teacher and learner negatively.

Fear and Acceptance of Technologies:

We live in a time change. Change has become so rapid, so turbulent, and so unpredictable. Wrong conceptions about the use of technology limit innovation and threaten teachers' job and security. Instructors are tending not to use technologies that require substantially more preparation time, and it is tough to provide instructors and learners access to technologies that are easy to use.

CONCLUSION

Educators have found that software tools can be extremely beneficial in addressing the needs of English Language Learners. The ability of tools to read every kind of text material from text books to internet pages offers students unlimited exposure to academic, business and technical texts as well as many opportunities to increase their fluency and comprehension.

Engaging students in language learning via technology is a continuing challenge that requires time and commitment. As we are in the 21st century, we realize that technology is the need of the hour in learning a language. The gen Y students will feel more confident and they will also be able to use the Internet to communicate more effectively, practice language skills more thoroughly and solve language learning problems more easily.

Pennington's findings found that the majority of students' opinions were positive towards technology as a tool in learning English Language. As technology continues to develop, language teachers should respond by using technology based activities for the classroom. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that instructors take every available opportunity to familiarize themselves with technology skills.

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