REVIEW ARTICLE

Teaching English through IT

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ABSTRACT

Language is a living and dynamic entity and its growth or stagnation depends upon its socio-cultural conditions in the society. With the coming of information technology, there has been revolutionary change in the linguistic forms and use of English language. Educational technology is the practice of facilitating learning and through it we can improve our performance by using and managing appropriate technological system. Technological innovations have gone hand in hand with this language in the past also. But the introduction of IT has altered ways of teaching English to a large extent in this digital world of communication. It has immensely helped the learners to enhance their pedagogical skills through the use of radio, television, fax, mobile phones, cinema, internet, etc which have brought astonishingly revolutionary change in the learning of English language. Indiscriminate use of technology has started marring the intrinsic worth that a language carries with itself. Besides, well edited and prepared and presented lecture makes the class lecture lifeless. IT tools   cannot substitute the teacher for igniting new minds with ideas for achieving great heights in their lives. Technology should add value to context, not to distract from the real purpose of learning. My concern is what to do with technology that needs our attention

In the era of information technology which has facilitated to a large extent the learning easy. But in mad pursuit of the learning of technology has made to all of us mechanical. Technology like science which is a boon also bane when used inappropriately. Learning of language also can be made convenient when used appropriately. This can help in making the English and language classrooms a site of active learning and critical thinking. Trainers can use technology to enable their pupils to meet people of different cultures, explore the worlds of past and present, do reliable primary-source research, through different processes they can do numerous activities, and much more than this.

In the past, books were the only major source of gaining knowledge. The students were supposed to learn any language even without appropriately knowing the background, intonation and the culture of the particular language speaking people. Much of learning was to be done through imagination. There was huge gap in the learning of native speakers and second language learners. With the development of technology, the language learning became easier.

Technology can be used to enable students to explore fundamental curriculum issues and answer any questions. Learners can use the internet, electronic media and other online sources to gain information. They can use MS office and various other programs to store, organize, and analyze information. Learners can also integrate different programs like web publishing, multimedia desktop publishing, video and audio editing, and graphics designs to create and present information in innovative and engaging ways. There are scores of educators and researchers deeply concerned with how our schools are going to prepare students for the twenty first century. To enhance the skills of creativity and creative thinking, communication between different cultures their collaboration during this digital age literacy, we need classrooms where students may work in teams and use technology for building and creating meaningful content which reflects the understanding of the students. In such situations, trainers act often as facilitators and mentors rather than always fond of super knowledge. Technological equipped classrooms are quite different from the ones where our most reverend teachers attained proficiency, practiced and taught. Resultantly, helping teachers effectively for using new technology to support students and student-focused learning will involve indulging teachers in new collaborative learning environments supported by emerging technologies. There are several prominent studies that demonstrate a strong relationship between technology use and higher academic performance and technology-using teachers supply much anecdotal evidence to show that technology helps educators teach better and students learn in a better way. Finally, teachers can adopt technology resources to develop and tailor instructional materials to better meet individual needs. In all, technology use can improve further thinking by engaging learners in genuine, complex deeds within relatively learning contexts.

It discusses different approaches and techniques which can assist English language students to improve their learning skills by the proper use of technology. In such techniques are web sites for online English language learning, computer assisted programs for language learning, electronic dictionaries, presentations, chatting or email messaging programs, listening CD,DVD-players, and watching videos. Technology ushers in fundamental structural changes that can be integral to achieving significant improvements in productivity of the learners. Technology is used to support both teaching as well as learning. Use of technology in classrooms with digital learning tools such as laptops, smart screens and hand held devices; expands course offerings, experiences, and learning materials. Online learning opportunities and the use of open educational resources and other technologies can increase educational productivity by accelerating the rate of learning; reducing costs associated with instructional materials or program delivery; and better utilizing teacher time. It is well known that our new life is highly affected by the era of information technology used in various spheres and it plays an important role in today in the development of human society. The fact is that it is indispensable to take advantage of the modern technological facilities in aiding the task of English language education. They need to practice in hearing, reading, speaking, and writing language in order to improve their experience and skills. For doing such tasks, they are in need of using various tools which can help them learn the language easily and effectively. The effect of technology has become huge in teaching and learning the language in addition to the instructor's role. In other words, the role of the instructor together with the role of the technology can lead to advanced learning results. During the sixties and seventies of the last century English language learning laboratories were being used in various educational institutions by establishing language laboratories. Traditionally, laboratory was consisted of a number of small cabinets, provided with a cassette deck, a speaker and a headphone for each one. Teachers would use a centralized control panel to observe and control their students' interactions. The helpful advantage of that type of technology was that verbal behavior of learners would help them to quickly gain proficiency of the second language. English language skills mean the development of the main parts or elements of the language which

are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Every language subject or area has different educational tools that are likely suited with it. The use of computers in listening problems provides students with visual and voice inputs which can enhance their level of information and ideas, and improve their listening skills. Computer-based audio tests are very important in reinforcing the understanding skills of the listener. Listening to TV and radio educational language programs is another technical way for developing the understanding ability of the learners. However, the student listening to the program has to be careful in selecting the specific programs that are suitable for his/her needs. News satellite television channels like the BBC, are also useful for practicing audio-video content. The use of CD, DVD-player devices are another modern tools for listening comprehension. CD-DVD players are electronic instruments used specifically to run audio- video content. Lectures and other examinations can be saved on these audio CD-DVDs for latter use by the ELL students. Tap-recorders are other although old technical listening tools, and their use is fast decreasing these days. However, they are still be utilized in some cases and are attached with some English language learning text-books. Computers can perform several tasks simultaneously and run programs at a very high speed. Learning computer programs can check exercises after they are practiced by students, move students step by step from easy to more difficult problems according to their abilities of the learners. Computers can also be used to check and correct answers for the learners, and to simulate tests in an easy to understand manner. Computers can raise the interest of reading for learners by the use of simple and easy to understand text.

Many computer programs can be used to improve the glossary, speaking fluency of the language, and full comprehension of the topics. There are many web sites which are prepared basically to improve the various abilities of English language learners. There are a large number of resources available for learning in the form of newspapers, tabloid, weekly, bi-monthly, monthly magazines, journals, electronic libraries, dictionaries, thesaurus, encyclopedias, and newsletters, etc. Browsing such resources and sites will definitely enhance the learner's vocabulary and reading comprehensive ability. There are numerous other ways for improving the vocabulary of the learner is to serve them as per the convenience and the use of electronic dictionaries which are designed specifically for English language learners. Such dictionaries have many built-in functions which are not provided in book dictionaries. Applications of electronic dictionaries are also easy to use and represent quick tools for quick vocabulary acquisition. Many modern computer programs can generate voice signals and record and decode human sound also. These types of programs are defined as artificial intelligence computer programs can prove to be a very useful tool for improving the speaking capability. Practicing with such computer programs will strengthen vocabulary and pronunciation abilities of the learner. Modern concept of chatting is the process of voice communication between the speaker and the listener through the use of internet. This process is also very beneficial to the learner provided if the other side speaker is a native language talker.

Computer based programs can be used to develop the writing skills of English language. Comprehensive passages and paragraphs in a foreign language can be very challenging for the second language learners. However, the use of technology based programs can make the writing task much easier and enjoyable, and can enable them to express their thoughts more clearly and effectively. Use of grammar competence can also be improved with the aid of computer aided programs. The learner can also highlight a specific part of the written text by editing, bolding, italicizing, underlining, or changing the font size and color of the text with the aid of these programs. Computer programs have the capability of automatically checking the spelling and grammar mistakes. So, the use of the computer as a tool in studying grammar is quite motivating for the students instead of through the process of traditional writing with a paper and a pencil.

Electronic mails are a modern way for any sort of correspondence through the internet medium. Use of e-mails can be a very powerful means for the improvement of writing skills. Learners can use e-mails to respond and can store to the incoming messages using some formal statements. The use of this technology in learning English language has become a real necessity these days. Technology must be used for a right cause— that is, taking the fundamentals and technology learned over for applying it to a final project, where creativity and uniqueness is required and rewarded. Technology must not be used for the sake of using technology, must

have the clear objective in their minds. Students must not try to remain guinea pig in IT enabled classes. Some faculty, in an effort to use the latest buzzword rather than using technology as a tool for learning like paper and pencils. When learners focus too much on the use of technology, they lose vision of the real benefit of technology , which is to facilitate learning process in the classrooms.

To conclude, we have to maintain the humanizing aspect along with the use of technology. The harmony can be attained by maintaining the balance.

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