

The Use of Information, Communication, and Technology in English Language Teaching

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Abstract : A new model of technology used to improve teaching and studying literacy to arrange the class is just one way to improve the teaching and learning process. Teachers can come up with different models in their teaching processes based on the prior observation, research and investigation, related to cultural awareness and scientific designs through technology. The teachers should provide some evidences and implications for the arrangement of classes and more efforts need to be made in order to get a full understanding of relations network technology establishment in the interactive class especially in English Language Teaching (ELT).

Keyword: Technology, Teaching and Learning Strategies

Introduction

Technology plays a significant role in our modern life, it almost everything around us such as work, banks, health, traffic, communication, and education. Technology improved and facilitated education in many ways including the use of computers and e-learning a matter that makes education available to everyone who seeks for it even if he/she cannot join a university for whatever the reason is. The Internet and computers provide many facilities at home and work place as anyone can share his experiences and thoughts with the entire world through blogs, Wikis and web-sites. There is substantial evidence in the right hands and used appropriately for specific purposes in specific contexts, ICT can be an effective tool in supporting teaching and learning. However, it is now firmly established that its introduction into schools does not by itself improve the quality of education or raise attainment. Effectively introducing technology

into schools is also largely dependent upon the availability and accessibility of ICT resources (e.g. hardware, software and communications infrastructure). Clearly if technology cannot be accessed by the teacher, we know that state funding for such resources is scarce, and that ICT resources tend to be more available in urban than rural areas. Schools are increasingly being equipped with computers for teaching, learning and administrative purposes, connectivity is improving and students are enthusiastic about using computers for learning, despite the lack of equipment available. Some countries are developing digital content for use across the curriculum. Children of this new generation have no boundaries at all, they have on line friends whom without the internet may have never seen and they can find their information about anything while sitting in their living rooms by goggling it through their mobiles which are connected to the internet (Ashish, 2012:94). Teaching a foreign language to young students who do not normally use it outside their classroom is certainly a very difficult task so teachers need to use a variety of techniques, activities, and strategies to create an interesting environment that attracts learners' attention and motivates them to learn better.

Over time, teaching methodologies, educational programs and materials go through changes due to innovative educational theories and improvements in technology. Technological innovations have gone hand-in-hand with the growth of English and are changing the way in which we communicate, work, trade, entertain and learn for non-native users of English, frequently from Asian countries. 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 domain, but rather widely available to many for example : web-based learning, the use of CD-ROMs and interactive computer programs are considered as the new forms of education of the future. Lately, in all over the world, distance education and e-learning programs have been commonly used in teaching English as well as in other areas of education. As distance education becomes more popular, teachers must consider students' perceptions of e-language learning (Peters, 2001) cited in Cahyani, H., & Cahyono, B. (2012). Technology does not operate independently to create a learning environment. In addition to cognitive learning, another important indicator of distance learning success is affective learning, which represents the attitudes students develop about the course. In addition to factors such as computer access, time constraints, individual computer skills and hardware issues (Peters, 2001) cited in Cahyani, H., & Cahyono, B. (2012).

Learner socio-cultural backgrounds, previous knowledge and learning experiences also contribute to their perceptions of the learning process. Internet program is designed to enliven the classroom environment and make EFL learning interesting, authentic and interactive for students. Rousseau (1933) cited in Futurelab(2003) argues that the most effective and socially appropriate education arose from a student's interaction with the natural environment. According to Hennessy, S., Harrison, D., & Wamakote, L. (2010), technology enhanced learning environment has the potential of simulating the natural environment, providing meaningful connections with the real world, and social interaction of the learners with the Internet. Language classroom is the perfect place to rekindle the tradition of communicative skill enhanced by digital technology. As a whole the teachers enjoyed the ICT-enhanced instructional style, which was highly motivating to the students and helped in the learning process. On the other hand the feedback from students was very positive. They equally enjoyed learning more and indicated that the Internet material helped them better understand the content of the revised course. The internet materials helped them to get the latest and updated information. Teachers say that they have effective materials, which helped them to illustrate certain points to the students in an easier and faster way. They themselves confessed that internet upgraded their knowledge. Through the use of technology, students are now encouraged to perform greater self-learning. The effectiveness of ICTs for teaching and learning, however, is largely dependent on how much the context is understood. Thus, there is a need to relate educational technology to actual challenges experienced by both students and lecturers. O'Hagan (1999) suggests that educational technology can be used to present and provide content, assess students learning, provide feedback, scaffold student learning and enable peer-to-peer collaborative learning.

Why teachers use ICT

A range of studies have looked at why teachers choose to use ICT. Tella et al(2007) found that computer use by teachers was driven by intentions to use it, and that perceived usefulness was also strongly linked to those intentions. The implication is that teachers will be inclined to use technology if they perceive it to be useful. Furthermore, ICT needs to be linked to specific needs of learners. It is most effectively used as a learner-centred tool, instead of within a more traditional pedagogy. The real challenge for educationists is, how to harness the potential of

ICT to complement the role of a teacher in the teaching and learning process. Teachers who lack the chance to develop professionally in the use of modern ICT feel under threat. From the aforementioned, we can conclude in concurrence with Cox, Preston & Cox (1999) that the factors contributing to ongoing use of ICT by teachers include: Making lessons more interesting, more enjoyable for teachers and their students, more diverse, more motivating, and supportive of productive learning. Overall, it is clear that the psychological factors of a teacher's own beliefs and attitudes to ICT and pedagogical innovation are both primary facilitators and barriers to teacher use of technology in the classroom. Those facilitators have been elaborated above, and we now take a closer look at the barriers that impede successful ICT classroom use.

Technology Changes Quickly

The pace of technological change has accelerated to the point that almost any personal technology currently being explored is likely to be not only commercially available within ten years but also available cheaply enough for mass publicly-funded use by students. The rule of thumb over the nineties that the power of a PC doubles every 18 months without any increase in real cost. Computers have become increasingly available and inexpensive. The lowered price points have affected the growth in computer use. It also have resulted in internet connectivity being a reality in schools. Moreover, the increased availability in both computers and internet connectivity has resulted in a concomitant increase in literacy-related uses, because software has incorporated the computer's capability for graphics, moving video, audio and hyperlinks.

The increase in availability and use of hardware has moved hand in hand with increased use and availability of literacy-related software. For example: Sales of audio books for listening are booming and electronic books can reproduce accurately the print and fonts as found in paper books. But perceptions of the importance of technology to children's future are equally important to changing definitions and conceptions of literacy and to the integration of technology into language arts. If the schools do not fulfill the needs of new technology, they will be viewed as out of date, irrelevant, or not preparing children for demands of an increasingly technologically oriented workforce.

The Application of New Technology

ICT can enhance the quality of education in several ways through increasing learner motivation and engagement, by facilitating the acquisition of basic skills, and by enhancing

teacher training. ICTs are also transformational tools which, when used appropriately, can promote the shift to a learner-centered environment. If designed and implemented properly, ICT-supported education can promote the acquisition of the knowledge and skills that will empower students for lifelong learning. When used appropriately, ICTs—especially computers and Internet technologies—enable new ways of teaching and learning rather than simply allow teachers and students to do what they have done before in a better way. These new ways of teaching and learning are underpinned by constructivist theories of learning and constitute a shift from a teacher-centered pedagogy—in its worst form characterized by memorization and rote learning—to one that is learner-centered. The explosion of technology and internet use in society has placed enormous pressure on schools and teachers to include and integrate technology into the lessons. New and experienced teachers will regularly come in contact with new technology they have no experience with. They will thus need to learn how to approach and master new technologies, as well as existing technologies already in the classroom. Teacher education programs should not simply prepare students to use the technology currently in schools, they should anticipate future developments and help students cultivate strategies for learning and using new technology as it becomes available.

Teaching and Learning Strategies are in the Foreground

Papert (1995) cited in Willis, J. (2001) points out used a parable to illustrate the point that it is not enough to add technology to existing practices; students must use technology to reform practice. In the foreground should be innovative teaching and learning strategies. Technology cannot be inserted into education in the abstract. The way it is used supports a particular approach to teaching and learning.

A computer in the back of a classroom could, for example, deliver drills to students on basic sentence punctuation, or it could support a group project such as a class newsletter. Preservice teachers should be aware of numerous forms of teaching and learning including 'teacher-centered' or direct instruction, as well as the many forms of student-centered instruction. And they should understand how technology can support these forms of instruction. Improving education depends, not on teaching teachers to apply. Moreover, technology should be integrated across the entire curriculum, and participants in all areas of teacher education should help to develop and implement an integrated plan that provides students with the models, mentors,

content, practice, and experiences needed. If teacher education students are to graduate with strong skills, positive attitudes, including the idea of lifelong learning, and a thoughtful approach to using technology in their classrooms, it will be necessary for them to experience technology at all levels of their preparation. As with any profession, there is a level of literacy beyond general computer literacy. In education this more specific or professional literacy involves learning to use technology to foster the educational growth of students. To develop that professional expertise students will have to see instructors model appropriate uses; have opportunities to learn how to use technology to support learning; see technology used appropriately in schools; and have many opportunities to develop and teach technology-supported lessons themselves under circumstances that support professional growth.

Learning Is Contextual

The dominant framework for teacher education today is constructivism, and one of the core concerns of constructivism applied to education is context. Constructivism, and related theories of learning and meaning making, argue forcefully that isolated learning, learning out of context, is generally not as useful or as valuable as learning in context. If we accept that assumption, then technology should be introduced and explored in context. Students should learn many uses of technology because they are integrated into their course work and field experiences. They are 'authentic' experiences instead of laboratory exercises. They should see their professors and mentor teachers modeling innovative uses of technology or they should be expected to use it in their own learning, and they should have opportunities to explore creative uses of technology in their own teaching. Jang, S-J. (2008) states preservice teachers should be exposed to regular and pervasive modeling of technology by preservice teacher educators, content specialists, and mentor teachers.

The role of teacher education in facilitating integration of ICT

In many developing countries, most teachers have minimal or no ICT skills themselves and therefore cannot develop these in learners. Two of the most important supports for ICT integration into teaching and learning are effective Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Both have the greatest impact on the beliefs and practice of teachers, and yet professional development time in particular is often not budgeted for

(Venezky, 2004). A growing body of research in this area shows that a more promising way forward is a sustained professional development programme. In recent years, there has been an encouraging emphasis on in-service development, supported by enlightened national ICT policy initiatives. The pedagogical changes necessary to make most effective use of ICT. Learner-centred environments which learners interact with peers in teams and teachers take a more facilitating role, is a major challenge for practitioners and teacher educators. Many teachers are intimidated by technology and are very comfortable with their established teaching styles. To effect change, the pedagogical and educational gains that use of the technology might bring need to be made explicit. Teachers need support and leadership from their school managers and necessary time for their own professional development and trialling of new approaches. Many initially feel threatened by the perceived loss of control in the classroom as students, who are usually more adept at using technology, can quickly access information and challenge the teacher's role as the primary source of knowledge. Teachers who engage in appropriate professional development, however, learn how to manage their classrooms more effectively and to use the technology to create a more stimulating learning environment (Olakulehin, 2007).

The impact of ICT use on classroom teaching and learning

Providing ICT into the classroom can have a considerable impact on the practice of teachers, in particular when ICT is conceptualized as a tool that supports a real change in the pedagogical approach. Not only do the teachers need to change their roles and class organization, they also need to invest energy in themselves and their students in preparing, introducing and managing new learning arrangements. Some need to acquire basic ICT skills. Teachers also need to determine which applications have added value for learning in their subject area. While doing this they need to be aware that this is not a one-time activity, as the information environment is continuously changing. Perhaps most important and challenging for teachers is determining which basic subject, social and management skills students need to function in such environments. The change can impact on assessment tasks, with new learning environments moving away from summative methods of assessment to formative approaches and open-ended products (such as reports and research papers created by groups of students). These different aspects are time consuming, and result in an increased teacher workload. Some things can be done to reduce the workload. Teachers can be encouraged to share resources with others, locate

good practices on the web (where available) and adapt these to their local circumstances. Planning lessons involving computers can take considerable time and demands complex scheduling and resourcing. Therefore, teachers using computers in the classroom should not act in isolation from each other. They need access to resources which will supply ideas and material for different classroom applications, including peers who are also developing their own pedagogies and resources (Leach et al., 2005).

Conclusion

A new model of technology used to improve teaching and studying literacy to arrange the class is just one way to improve the teaching and learning process. Teachers can come up with different models in their teaching processes based on the prior observation, research and investigation, related to cultural awareness and scientific designs through technology. The teachers should provide some evidences and implications for the arrangement of classes and more efforts need to be made in order to get a full understanding of relations network technology establishment in the interactive class especially in English Language Teaching (ELT). Technology, computer and internet connection will become one of the torches that can do this. It creates a fairly positive learning environment for students to learn English in an informal, stimulating, meaningful and enjoyable way with the help of audio and visual images. It combines the methods of the use of modern technology within the internet and computer programs and applied them to language instruction. With continued efforts and further improvements, technology computer and internet connection is expected to mature into a program that benefits many language learners around the world. As the more knowledgeable languageteachers are the more successfully they can implement the internet service in their language classroom (Singhal, 1997). It identifies a need for teachers and teacher educators to integrate ICT into subject teaching and learning using contemporary pedagogical approaches. Ideally teachers will be assisted to work collaboratively over time with peers, and to learn from one another's innovations and experiences. Teachers who engage in appropriate professional development, however, learn how to manage their classrooms more effectively and to use the technology to create a more stimulating learning environment (Olakulehin, 2007).

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