

English Language Teaching and Learning With Technology: A Study

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Abstract

In the educational practice, the responsibilities of teachers and learners are being revolutionized by the electronic gadgets and information and communication technologies. The intervention of modern electronic gadgets and the advanced communication systems has been constructing a teaching and learning environment as more conducive for the educational process. The recent researches point out that students learn effectively when the gadgets and the communication systems are properly connected with the learning environment. The teachers' knowledge to hook up the learning process with the gadgets and communication systems makes the learning process more fruitful. The reason being online learning mode will not be the best possible way to reach the success, the combination of face to face instruction with online learning components supports the learners for active self-directed learning opportunity. Combining the traditional classroom method with another learning opportunities such as virtual classrooms, Library, field experts, communicating with communities and modern electronic gadgets (mobile, iPod, etc) is called blended learning. The purpose of this article is to discuss technology and the role of the teacher and the learner in making the blended learning as more effective in English Language Teaching.

Blended Learning refers to a mixing of different learning environments. The phrase has many specific meanings based upon the context in which it is used. A Blended learning approach can combine face-to-face instruction with computer mediated instruction. Blending traditional teaching with other teaching technology tools should find a harmonious balance between online access to knowledge and face-to-face human interaction. Blended Learning improves the ability of the learner for the personalized learning.

Blended learning provides a conducive atmosphere for learning English language learning. In a foreign language learning process the learning process session makes the learner to get more acquainted with the target language. Blended learning is more effective because it provides an authentic environment for the interactions such as :

1. Student – to – student interaction
2. Student – to – Teacher Interaction
3. Student – to – Community Interaction
4. Student – to – Material Interaction
5. Student – to – Technology Interaction

The role of the teacher is extremely different from the technology, whereas the technology can't replace the teacher. A clear understanding of the distinction between the roles of the teacher and the technology makes teaching and learning process a fruitful.

The challenges vary for different people in different contexts in learning a foreign language. An array of methods and approaches are often used to introduce new language, and a variety of technologies are utilized to make the best use of practice opportunities. The optimal condition for effective language learning in the modern days is as accepted by the most of the English language practitioners who are incorporating all possible technologies into teaching practice.

The Technology Assisted Learning(TAL) and the Technology Based Learning(TBL) is now expanding the possibility for the rich healthy learning environment. The Internet Technology is now the integral part of study aid, Inside and Outside the classroom. It makes the learners to participate actively in the learning process during the course of their study and afterwards the learners realize that learning is a lifelong process.

The inborn curiosity to use the modern technology which encompasses the visuals and the sound attract the learners to acquire knowledge through NET (Self-awareness). The learners now realized that the NET is the source from which they can learn various subjects. For any assignments, homework and projects that is assigned in the classroom they are ready to search the NET to gather and to exhibit him/herself as a **NETIZEN** among his classmates. The youngsters are fascinated by the modern Technology. They like to be a part of the modern world(self-motivated). So it is quite easy to create a healthy learning environment by the facilitators for the learners, on campus learning and off campus learning.

Self-Direction and Self Confidence

The person who wishes to continue learning the English language independently has to first learn how to do it, and has to build up his or her confidence in their ability to do it. The learner has to be directed to learn in an open and constructive manner independently by the facilitators (practice in self-direction). The second one, self-confidence, is one of the most important aspects of psychological preparation, and facilitators must seek to find techniques which will achieve this. This is one of the most important skills of any teacher.

For self-direction and Self Confidence

The facilitators should have some degree of control over the pupils for duration of particular activities. There are two aspects of it which has to be taken can by the facilitator on the learners.

1. Giving pupils opportunities for making decisions about
 1. when they perform certain learning tasks and
 2. Where they perform them at a later stage it might be appropriate for pupils to make decisions about
 3. Whether they perform certain learning tasks.
2. Giving pupils opportunities to gain periods of independence from the teacher – as in some forms of group work, for example, or project work.

Self-Monitoring(Techniques for promoting autonomy)

This is the process by which the learner maintains a record of his own progress through the syllabus. It may be a checklist of items covered, and / or it might include (at a late stage, perhaps a self rating on each item.

The main characteristics of **Internet Learning Environment** is

- 1) The focus of education is not on teaching but on learning and services (Learner-Centred education).
- 2) Teachers and Students are life-long learners.
 1. Educational opportunity is not just local but also national and global (Global Education)
 2. The process and content of teaching and learning are based on the needed competency with the opportunity of learning-while-doing activities (Adaptive Educational Resources)
 3. Time-and Place-independent education (Autonomy in learning)
 4. Interactive educational resources.

The recent interest shown in learner-centredness in teaching, apparent in concepts such as learner autonomy, self-directed learning, or syllabus negotiation, revolves around a redefinition of the role students can play in their learning. In a learner-centred approach, students are seen as being able to assume a more active and participatory role than is usual in traditional approaches. Students' contribution and enthusiasm are greater if they can decide on how activities are structured.

In recent years, there has been considerable interest in learner autonomy, and self-direction in teaching. In part at least, this arises from the need to cater for teaching in situations where a traditional classroom based approach is not feasible. There can be a variety of reasons for this. Students may not have sufficient free time to follow a traditional course, there may insufficient demand for a given language to justify setting up a standard teacher led course, or budgetary retrievals may place limits on staff student constant time. Faced with real world constraints of this nature, the teaching profession has looked for new approaches to teaching which allow students to attain their goal with less direct teacher support. This has involved a re-examination of what students can contribute to their learning of a language, and experimentation with teaching methods designed to exploit students' 'autonomous' learning potential.

“Autonomy is not an absolute concept. There are degrees of autonomy, and the extent to which it is feasible or desirable for learners to embrace autonomy will depend on a range of factors to do with the personality of the learner, their goals in undertaking the study of another language, the philosophy of the institution (if any) providing the instruction, and the cultural context within which the learning takes place.” (Nunan 1996:13)

Logically, however, student roles cannot be redefined without a parallel redefinition of teacher roles. In an Internet-based lesson, rather than being a single omniscient source of knowledge himself, a teacher is a facilitator helping students build their own learning strategies. What learners acquire with the Internet is less under the control of the teacher. The teacher’s role includes planning, analyzing, organizing, co-ordinating, and problem-solving in a student-centred environment.

There are many resources on the internet already, and teachers and students have tried to use them in various ways. However, there has been little research done on how to use the resources most effectively. We need to investigate ways to use the technology for better language teaching.

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