

Various tools of ICT and their practical uses in English Language Teaching

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Abstract

People live in a technologically advanced world. The pedagogy of teaching approach has also changed drastically as a result of technology's pervasiveness. In every educational setting, the terms "e-Learning" and "Technology in Education" have become trendy. Since it meets the demands of today's students, integrating technology into the classroom is crucial. The modern classroom setting is entirely distinct from the conventional one. The conventional approaches, which mostly rely on lectures and rote learning, restrict learning English to mechanical memorization and utterly fail to help students increase their English language proficiency. In addition to providing stimulus, new technologies like as the Internet, YouTube, Skype, Twitter, blogs, mobile phones, interactive boards, and many more have increased student involvement and real-world participation in the classroom. By employing cutting-edge ELT strategies, such as English songs, movie clips, dramatics, ads, sports commentary, and many more, teachers may help their students become proficient in the English language. This article emphasizes the need of using creative ELT techniques to make English language instruction simple and pleasurable. First, a brief overview of India's conventional teaching techniques is provided, and then the emphasis shifts to integrating ICT tools into ELT. The availability of several ICT tools and their useful applications are discussed in this paper.

Key Words: *E-Learning, innovative e- techniques*

I. INTRODUCTION

The amount of information available to us is exploding. There used to be a famine of knowledge, but now there is an abundance of it. Since it has successfully entered the educational landscape in the last ten years and no layperson would argue that it has significantly benefited both instructors and students, e-learning is a catalyst. The way we learn to live and the world we live in are being altered by e-learning resources. New Applications of e- learning tools as Information and Communications technologies (ICT), comprises of communication devices or applications encompassing radio; television as well as newer digital technologies such as over head projectors, projectors, interactive boards, i-pads, blogs, computers, the Internet, Cameras, Audio equipments, Scanners, Printers, E-mails, video conferencing and many more are not only influencing and supporting what is being learned in schools, colleges and universities but it is also supporting changes to the way students are learning.

PAST TRENDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

Over the centuries, there have been significant changes in language instruction generally and English Language Teaching (ELT) specifically. It was difficult for English language teachers to teach foreign students when English became a required subject in the curriculum. However, they taught English as a "knowledge" subject rather than a "skill" subject because their primary goal was to help the students pass the tests. In order to help kids comprehend and learn English, they devised the "Grammar-Translation Method," in which the teacher would explain each term to the class in their mother tongue. In its modified version, this approach is still widely used by most teachers even though it disregards the pupils' growth in oral skill. Numerous other approaches were also employed, including the direct technique, the audio-lingual method, the bilingual method, the situational teaching approach, the structural approach, communicative language education, etc., but no strategy was deemed ideal. Since then, since language instructors have always sought for better and more efficient teaching methods, ELT appears to be swinging like a pendulum between the extremes of methodology. Furthermore, the once-popular ELT trends have disappeared and have been replaced by cutting-edge ELT techniques.

PRESENT TRENDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

The 21st century presents its citizens with new options, opportunities, and challenges because technology permeates every aspect of life. In this day and age, educational institutions cannot continue to serve as merely venues for the transfer of a predetermined set of knowledge from teacher to student over a set amount of time; instead, they must encourage "learning to learn," or the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable lifelong learning. As a result, it is the duty of the teachers to adapt to the demands of the times. The goal of the day is to equip people with proficiency in the English language, and this can only be achieved through a proper combination of e-learning tools (modern technologies) and edification. The influence of incorporating e-learning resources into educational processes has challenged conventional teaching and learning paradigms. E-learning is a broad category of technology tools and systems that competent and innovative educators may use to improve teaching and learning environments. These are used to help students find learning more engaging, exciting, motivating, and meaningful. Due to their notable advancements in the integration of digital technology and English language instruction, these tools have been hailed as potentially significant enabling instruments for educational transformation and reform.

II. E-LEARNING TOOLS

1. Internet

The Internet offers a wealth of knowledge in the form of articles, conferences, seminars, and much more, in addition to genuine English-language content. In addition to administering online tests, the instructor can email assignments to the students. Children's work is always available for parents to view online. Because they may now view a webcam version online and access worksheets and notes via electronic online whiteboards, students don't miss their classes. Schools collaborate on projects and provide resources online as part of a network. Every school has a website of its own. Students can also utilize a lot of free software that is available online. Spelling Bee is one of those an internet resources, which helps the students to spell English words. The teacher can also choose the level of difficulty that s/he wants to train to his/her students.

2. YouTube

YouTube videos can be used in an ELT classroom for various aspects of English as to enhance vocabulary, accents, pronunciations, voice modulation and many more. The real advantage of using YouTube in teaching English is that it offers authentic examples of everyday English used by everyday people. The teacher can use it as a tool for improving their Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing skills. The teacher can select a part of the movie appropriate to the level of the students and s/he can show those movie clippings to the students. For the first time, s/he can mute the volume and ask the students to watch the movie attentively. Later s/he can ask the students to watch the movie once again and this time s/he can ask the students to frame the dialogues of the movie clippings simultaneously. This will improve their speaking skills. Another activity to enhance their speaking skills can be: the teacher can show a selected part of the movie to the students and further ask them to narrate the rest of the story of the movie or the climax of the movie. This will add to their creativity as well as their speech. The teacher can also prepare worksheets on the movie clippings in advance and ask the students to complete those worksheets while watching movies. This can prove a good activity to enhance their listening and writing skills. The teacher can also ask the students to write a paragraph related to the movie as: "If I were the hero of the movie _____" Or "What, according to you, should be the title of the movie?" Listening skills can also be enhanced through YouTube as news headlines are available to watch on YouTube. As the news is summarized very quickly (in the first minute for the video below), the teacher can ask students to listen to the news headlines and put those headlines in order (where they will have the headlines on a handout).

3. Skype

Using Skype provides unlimited possibilities for the teachers and students to collaborate with each other anywhere in the world. It provides immense opportunities for the students in a foreign language class to connect with classes in other countries to practice their language skills. Through Skype the teachers can provide mentoring or homework help to the learners. The Students can read, present, or perform for other students and also collaborate with other students on writing or research projects. They can also participate in professional development activities within or outside the school district.

4. Twitter

Twitter, a gift of Technology, is a social networking application that could help in improving students' English to a greater extent. As an online education technology tool, twitter's impact on engaging students in learning concepts is unlimited. The teacher can use a dozen activities for using an online education technology

tool to engage students in classroom activities to develop a better understanding of concepts. The teacher can select any genre for the story and begin the activity with a story opener which is tweeted to the students for contribution to the story line. Once all twitter network participants have contributed to the development of the story line, the teacher can analyze their work. This involves editing, story structure, creative writing, and proper use of grammar. The teacher can ask the students to select a word of the week and tweet it around the network requesting synonyms, homonyms, and antonyms of the word. Once all responses are received, the teacher can check them for accuracy and develop a link of the difficult words for strengthening the vocabulary of the students. The teacher can also conduct Online Debates through Twitter. It can be done with the students of the same classroom or the students of the different classrooms on the class twitter network. Examples include “Pen is mightier than sword”, impact of fast food restaurants on health issue, and many more.

5. Smart Boards

Interactive whiteboards are good replacements for traditional whiteboards or flipcharts as they provide ways to show students everything which can be presented on a computer's desktop (educational software, web sites, and others). SMART boards help teachers use a student-centered approach to teach language arts. Language arts teachers can use SMART Boards to improve reading and comprehension, and teach grammar and writing. With a SMART Board, teachers can combine video, audio, Web browsing and word processing to teach students interactively. The teacher can use smart board to enhance students' language skills in play way method. For e.g. 'Pictogram' (Draw a picture and guess the word) can be played. With younger learners spelling races are very popular. Word games are an excellent way of settling classes and revising vocabulary. S/he can use anagrams or jumbled sentences for the Learners or s/he can also ask the synonyms or antonyms or the lexis or collocation words. The teacher can use different colours when writing. For e.g. While teaching grammar the teacher can use the Blue colour pen for the nouns, the Yellow colour for the verbs, the Red colour for the adjectives and the Green colour adverbs.

For e.g.: The young (Red Colour) boy (BLUE) jumped (Yellow Colour) from the tall (Red Colour) tree (Blue Colour) quickly (Green Colour). The teacher can also display paragraphs with errors and ask the students to edit the paragraphs or proofread them. To teach writing skills the teacher can also use a story starter and ask the students to write a class story or chain story or peer story. S/he can also write sentences based on photographs as it will teach them the usage and functions of the language. S/he can further use photographs of persons (i.e. characters from book, persons from history) and can ask the students to write in “bubble” about their thoughts.

6. Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones as a learning tool has a wide variety of applications. The teacher can ask the students to make a photo documentary using the camera function on their mobile phones. The teacher can assign a theme for the documentary to the students. After taking a sufficient number of photos, the students can upload the documentaries prepared by them to websites such as Flickr and type narrative descriptions for each picture to share with their teachers, classmates, family and friends. Instead of taking out a dictionary, the students can simply use their translator, and instead of trawling through books for a piece of literature, they can find the book online books and be directed to a specific word.

7. Podcasting

Today the students are listening to news clips, music, and video clips via the Web. They are no longer watching movies at the theatre or on the TV, they are watching via computers and hand held DVD players. The teacher can reach to these students in one new way i.e. through podcasts. A podcast is a series of digital-media files which are distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and computers. Utilizing podcasts in the classroom is very easy. The teacher can download many free ESL podcasts on the Internet to use in class. S/he can assign a podcast assignment for homework and form a discussion on the topic the next day. The teacher can also assign a music podcast that introduces students to the culture as well as how the language is often used creatively or the news channels through which the student can also learn the use of intonation and stress.

8. Blog

Blogging has become increasingly popular, especially in the realm of education as they are a great way to share information and generate discussion. Instead of text books and traditional methods, many educators prefer using these new techniques to help teach students and gain experience with various forms of social media. Setting up a course blog doesn't have to be complicated. Educators can use a free platform such as BlogSpot, Word press, or Tumbler to host the blog. Nowadays, blogs can also display photos and some people are using them with audio and even video, the teacher should encourage the students to visit blog frequently. S/he should

respond to student posts quickly, writing a short comment related to the content s/he should also ask questions about what the learner writes to create stimulus for writing. Writing to the blog could be required, and it may form part of the class assessment. Students should be encouraged to post their writing homework on the blog instead of only giving it to the teacher.

III. CONCLUSION

Since English has become a universal language and its value in the world has increased significantly over the past few decades, if language teachers continue to teach the language in the same way, the necessary goals of learning the language may not be met in the current global scenario. In the past, learners were not given any productive, creative, or constructive activities to develop the four language skills. The 21st century is a time of technological advancement, and as such, the use of modern technological tools has become a popular trend in English language instruction.

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