

## **Technology in Teaching and Learning English Language**

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**Abstract:** *As technology advances, it can be difficult to keep up and adapt to the advancements in both our personal and professional lives. Instructional technology (IT) has become an important part of teaching and learning within the classroom as well as working with fully online environments. Resources for educating and assisting faculty about the best practices for using technology have become crucial. These resources need to go beyond how to work with specific software and educators need to understand the ways in which these new tools can make a significant difference in student learning. Teachers have an especially important role to play in technological advancements, as incorporating technology in the classroom can be both a learning tool for students and a teaching tool for the instructor. Using education technology in classes helps teachers realize a better and more effective learning. This paper tries to analyze the necessity of technology to language teaching and also brings out the numerous ways that teachers can use technology in the classroom. It also focuses on the problems faced by using these technologies.*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In recent years much attention has been focused on the use of technology in classes. New technologies offer opportunities for taking account of individual aptitude and interest. Use of technology in the classes gives students the chance of learning faster and more permanent. Today, most teachers have not only been exposed to the internet but also have access at home or at school. In fact, a large number of schools are being retrofitted to place the internet in every classroom. Even more exciting than this is the newest technology: Wireless. A school can purchase a 'Portable Classroom'. This consists of laptops networked together, allowing students to work at their desks WITHOUT wires. If the laptops are networked to a printer, students can print from their personal computer to the classroom printer.

The role of the classroom teacher is the crucial factor in the full development and use of technology in the schools. The transformation of classroom technology from hardware, software, and connections into tools for teaching and learning depends on knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers who are motivated and prepared to put technology to work on behalf of their students. The attitudes of teachers are important factors influencing use of education technology in classes. Teachers need ample opportunities to practice with the technology and gain confidence in its use. Teacher professional development is absolutely essential if technology provided to schools is to be used effectively. Simply put, spending scarce resources on informational technology hardware and software without financing teacher professional development as well is wasteful.

### **2. THE GROWTH OF ELT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY**

With the rapid development of science and technology, the emerging and developing of multimedia technology and its application to teaching, featuring audio, visual, animation effects

comes into full play in English class teaching and sets a favorable platform for reform and exploration on English teaching model in the new era. It's proved that technology plays a positive role in promoting activities and initiatives of student and teaching effect in English class. Technological innovations have gone hand –in hand with the growth of English and are changing the way in which we communicate. 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 domains of the dedicated few, but rather available to many. With this there has been a very significant proliferation of literature regarding the use of technology in teaching English language. Mostly these writings unequivocally accept technology as the most essential part in teaching. In a sense, a tendency to emphasize on inevitable role of technology in pedagogy to the extent of obliterating human part of teacher by technology part has been very dominant. And as a result if we neglect or ignore technological developments they will continue and perhaps we will never be able to catch up, irrespective of our discipline or branch. For this reason it is important for language teachers to be aware of the latest and best equipment and to have a full knowledge of what is available in any given situation.

### **3. TECHNOLOGY USED IN CLASSROOMS**

There are numerous ways that teachers can use technology in the classroom and many are already doing it. Some Institutions use interactive Smart Boards in place of traditional chalk or white boards in their classroom. These flat screen monitors are networked with the teacher's classroom computer and the school's internet connection. Interactive lessons in math, spelling, science and other subjects can be put on screen for students to participate in. The boards use touch screen technology and in some cases, students are given handheld remote "clickers" that act as controllers for answering questions presented on screen.

Teachers can use technology to give more colorful, stimulating lectures. There are many techniques applicable in various degrees to language learning situation. Some are useful for testing and distance education, and some for teaching business English, spoken English, reading, listening or interpreting. Some teachers encourage students to sign up for email updates or text message alerts to receive homework assignments and reminders for tests and projects. Many students respond well to these types of communications and thus, respond better to the assignments themselves.

Educational book publishers have also jumped on board the proverbial technological bandwagon by making books available online and interactive activities that supplement the curriculum being taught. Many teachers take advantage of these supplemental activities by permitting students to go online during class to complete them or encouraging students to visit the publisher's websites and complete the activities at home. Similarly, many of these ancillary websites, as well as other computer software, allow teachers to track their students' progress and understanding of material.

### **4. CHANGE IN STUDENT AND TEACHER ROLES**

When students use technology as a tool or a support for communicating with others, they are in an active role rather than the passive role of recipient of information transmitted by a teacher, textbook, or broadcast. The students actively make choices about how to generate, obtain, manipulate, or display information. Technology use allows many more students to actively think about information, making choices, and executing skills than is typical in teacher-led lessons. Moreover, when technology is used as a tool to support students in performing authentic tasks, the students are in the position of defining their goals, making design decisions, and evaluating their progress.

The teacher's role changes as well. The teacher is no longer the center of attention as the dispenser of information, but rather plays the role of facilitator, setting project goals and providing guidelines and resources, moving from student to student or group to group, providing suggestions and support for student activity. As students work on their technology-supported products, the teacher rotates through the room, looking over shoulders, asking about the reasons for various design choices, and suggesting resources that might be used.

## 5. HOW TO INTEGRATE TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOMS?

**Research:** Research is the number one reason to use the internet in education. Students have a wealth of information open to them. Often, when they are researching obscure topics, school libraries do not have the needed books and magazines. The internet helps solve this problem.

**Creating a Website:** A project that can help integrate technology while truly getting the students excited about school is website creation. The teacher can publish a website with the class about information the students have researched or personally created. It may include a collection of student-created short stories, a collection of student-created poems, results and information from science fair projects, historical 'letters' (students write as if they were historical figures), even critiques of novels could be included.

**Creating a Blog:** Blogs are an interactive way for students to communicate their ideas. The blog can be used for regular classroom assignments. After students have read a piece of literature or completed an assignment, they can comment on the classroom blog. This is particular success with students who are afraid to share ideas in class. Using the blog, these students can communicate in a more comfortable environment. Once a week the teacher reviews the comments and questions in class. An additional benefit in using the blog format is that the same one can be used for several classes so that students can share ideas with students who aren't in their class.

**Online Assignment:** A newer area of the internet to explore is online assessment. The teacher can create his / her own tests online through own website. These require knowledge of the internet, so many new users might not be quite ready for this.

**Digital Presentations:** While it is still important for students to master the research process, the product of research is not limited to a printed research report. Students can demonstrate their learning in a digital presentation. They can create a Web site or use a hypermedia tool, such as Hyperstudio, to create a stand-alone presentation. Require students to cite their sources, as they would on any research project. It is also important to teach them the importance of gaining permission to use copyrighted material, such as images and music. If you have a class home page, connect Web presentations to your site so others can experience it.

**Connect to Books Online:** Historically, supplemental reading materials were limited to the holdings on the English bookroom shelf. Technology now provides access to thousands of books online. Teachers are limited only by the students' ability to access a computer. The Online Books Page offers more than 20,000 titles in its free digital library.

**Use WebQuests:** This popular Web activity is well-suited to language arts and literature exploration. A WebQuest is a detailed set of questions and tasks that lead students to the Internet to research topics. They then complete a task or set of tasks based on their research. The WebQuest can result in a product as simple as a one-page document or as complex as a multi-faceted project.

**Streaming Media for on Demand Viewing:** While Web-based streaming video is available for individuals through a number of sources, most educational institutions subscribe to a vendor that provides access to thousands of audio and visual resources. While it may be appropriate to occasionally show a film of literary merit in its entirety, day-to-day instruction is often enhanced using a short video clip. Streaming video provides quick and easy access to such clips. Teachers can bookmark or provide links to the clips, and even integrate them into online presentations. Additionally, in most cases, students can access the video clips when and where they want, and as often as they need.

**Grammar Instruction:** Individualized instruction is increasingly important. While written comments or one-on-one conferences provide effective venues for individualization, technology can provide another. In high school, the most effective grammar instruction is individualized. Some students may have mastered a concept, such as irregular verbs, while others are still trying to understand a founding concept, such as verb tense. One way to individualize instruction is by directing students to interactive Web sites.

**PowerPoint Presentations:** The presentation program can also be used to enhance instruction in the classroom. Consider the following tips:

- Create PowerPoint presentations for essential notes and provide students the slides using the "handout" option. This will prevent students from focusing on simply copying the notes from the board or overhead. Rather, they will listen to teacher comments and make meaningful notes in the spaces provided. Limit the amount of information on each slide to one or two important points.
- Encourage students to use PowerPoint presentations when they are required to present to the class. The design options encourage self-expression and creativity. Instruct students to limit the amount of information on each slide to one or two important points.

**Word Processing Software:** Writing projects that involve multiple drafts are well-suited to using word processing programs. Drafts are easily revised and formatted using these tools. Extend its power to aid instruction by using the "review" feature available in programs such as Word Perfect or Microsoft Word. The feature can be used for teachers or peers to interject annotations or comments, line by line, on student work. The teachers can also track changes to evaluate how students used peer review comments to improve or change their work.

## **6. PROBLEMS IN INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOMS**

### **6.1. Major Means Replaced by the Assisting One**

Application of technology is an assisting instrument to achieve the projected teaching effect. It is observed in practice that a lot of teachers are active in technology application but not proficient enough to handle it confidently. In class, they are standing by the computer and students are fixing their attention only on the screen, and therefore, there is no eye contact between teachers and students. The trend of modern information and technology teaching appears to the extremity regardless of the essence of the traditional teaching. And hence, the notion of Creative Education is to be fully comprehended that modern educational techniques serve as an assisting instrument rather than a target: and that should not dominate class. They are substitutes to effective teaching and learning.

### **6.2. Loss of Speaking Communication**

English language and English analysis by the teachers are effective in conveying knowledge to the students from English pronunciation to comprehension, improving students' English thought patterns and oral expression. Whereas, the introduction of multimedia technology featuring audio, visual, textual effect fully meets audio and visual requirements of the students and enhances their interest, but it also results in lack of communication between teachers and students, replacement of teachers' voice by computer sound, and teachers' analysis by visual image and students have few chances for speaking communication. With the favorable atmosphere by the mutual communication between teachers and students fading away, and sound and image of multimedia affecting students' initiative to think and speak, English class turns to courseware show and students are made viewers rather than the participants of class activities.

### **6.3. The Restriction of Students' Thinking Potential**

It is clear that language teaching is different from science subjects, for language teaching does not require demonstration by various steps, rather, the tense and orderly atmosphere is formed through questions and answer between teachers and students. Teachers raise impromptu and real-time questions and guide the students to think, cultivate their capacity to discover and solve problems, however, due to over demonstration and pre-arranged order, the courseware lacks real-time effect and cannot give feedback. It ignores emphasis and importance in teaching; it also neglects instruction in students' thinking, inspiring their paths of thinking, strengthening their capacity contemplating and solving problems. In this way, it should be noted that cultivation of students' thinking capacity should be the major objective in teaching and using of multimedia technology and it should not take up the students' time for thinking, analyzing and exploring questions.

There are many other problems also like lack of professional development for technology use is one of the most serious obstacles to fully integrating technology into the curriculum. Many teachers do not have the technical knowledge or skills to recognize the potential for technology in teaching and learning. Just knowing how to use a computer is not enough. Instead, teachers must

become knowledgeable about technology and self-confident enough to integrate it effectively in the classroom. Most teachers want to learn to use educational technology effectively, but they lack the time, access, and support necessary to do so. In many schools, technology is not easily accessible by teachers. Computers may be located in labs instead of in each teacher's classroom, and Internet connections may be limited to certain designated computers. To promote teachers' use of technology, school administrators should ensure that adequate numbers of computers with Internet connections are available to teachers and that access times are not limited

### 6.4. Integrating Technology in Teacher Development

The teacher must see the need. Without a sense of responsibility for providing students with rich experiences using technology to learn, a teacher will not move forward with his or her own development and learning to integrate technology into their curriculum. Teachers must believe that students need to use technology in the learning process. Also, teachers who lack confidence in learning new technologies must be adequately supported. This delicate situation must be handled carefully, always showing great respect for others and the challenges they face learning something so difficult for them.

Educational technology is not, and never will be, transformative on its own—it requires teachers who can integrate technology into the curriculum and use it to improve student learning. In other words, computers cannot replace teachers—teachers are the key to whether technology is used appropriately and effectively. Teachers remain the gatekeepers for students' access to educational opportunities afforded by technology: they cannot and should not be ignored.

Once teachers have mastered the basics of ICTs—operating systems, word processing, and e-mail and Internet navigation— they can use the technology to access professional development opportunities. This enables anytime, anywhere learning and overcomes the conventional limitations of face-to-face training workshops (cost, travel, accommodations, and low numbers of participants).

E-learning is a way for teachers to learn new knowledge and skills using computer network technologies. The technologies provide not just text, but also sound, video, simulations, and collaboration with other learners who may be scattered around the country or the world. Currently, most e-learning is delivered using the World Wide Web; however, future e-learning could include delivery via mobile handheld devices, cell phones, and digital video devices.

## 7. NINE SITES THAT EVERY ENGLISH TEACHER SHOULD KNOW

- 1) Read-Write-Think ([www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org))
- 2) Britannica Online School Edition (via AVL: [www.avl.lib.al.us](http://www.avl.lib.al.us))
- 3) LitFinder (via AVL: [www.avl.lib.al.us](http://www.avl.lib.al.us))
- 4) Outta Ray's Head ([www.rayser.ca](http://www.rayser.ca))
- 5) MarcoPolo: Internet Content for the Classroom ([www.marcopolo-education.org](http://www.marcopolo-education.org))
- 6) Ebooks in Education ([drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/index.htm](http://drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/index.htm))
- 7) Web English Teacher ([www.webenglishteacher.com](http://www.webenglishteacher.com))
- 8) Purdue Online Writing Lab ([owl.english.purdue.edu](http://owl.english.purdue.edu))
- 9) In Search of Shakespeare ([www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/index.html))

## 8. CONCLUSION

Technology, when used appropriately, can help make the English and Language Arts classroom a site of active learning and critical thinking and further student connections with language and literature. Teachers can use technology to enable students to communicate in multiple modalities, do authentic research, problem-solve, and much more. Teachers must become knowledgeable about technology and self-confident enough to integrate it effectively in the classroom. Teachers, in other words, must become "fearless in their use of technology" and empowered by the many opportunities it offers. Most schools are becoming connected to the Internet and have "computers in every classroom;" the key now is to use those computers effectively. It is time for teachers and

students to move beyond looking at computers and their programs as games to play and to begin seeing them as instruments of learning. The teaching principle should be to appreciate new technologies in the areas and functions where they provide something decisively new useful and never let machines takeover the role of the teacher or limit functions where more traditional ways are superior. There are various reasons why all language learners and teachers must know how to make use of the new technology. Here we also need to emphasize that the new technologies develop and disseminate so quickly that we cannot avoid their attraction and influence in any form. Whatever the means chosen by the teacher, the use of technology in the classroom is a modern and effective means of encouraging learning and further exploration by students.

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