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Harnessing technology in ELT

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Abstract

Technology can be used to make language teaching more interesting and efficacious. In teaching English as a second language, the teachers can use different kinds of advanced technologies like Interactive boards, Computers, Digital storytelling and social networks available in the Internet. Language teachers in our country must be made aware of to use the advanced technologies in teaching second language in their classrooms. World is harnessing alternates in everything and in every field; to prove the effectiveness and result in (ELT) English language teaching in India, the advanced technologies will help the language teachers to get best result. This study aims to discuss about the conceivable and innovative technologies can be used in multi-lingual Indian language classrooms.

Keywords: Digital classrooms, hands-on methods, technology in ELT, ICT

Introduction

Interactive whiteboards are entirely different from a traditional blackboard and there are lot of benefits compared to the latter. In this board a larger interactive screen is used with the mouse as a pen. This is one of the best ways to engross the students in language classes and lot of information can be taught efficaciously. The students can be asked to work on the interactive boards and every student's file can be saved for future classes. Present activity of the student can be compared with the older one and the improvement of the students' activity can be noted immediately. We can use pictures, videos, audio and organizers in this board very easily. The teacher can correct the text by editing, moving sentences, deleting or inserting, paragraph alignments, spelling check and all the modes of corrections can be done easily. Vocabulary will be built easily by this method.

Computers and ELT

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is getting popularisation among language teachers in India. Language learning is a complex process and there is no uniform strategy for all the learners in the world, because according to the first language and culture, the teaching of second language approach has to be different. According to the learning challenges the methods of teaching will change, this is only considered as an effective teaching strategy and not sticking to the old patterns unnecessarily brings barriers in teaching language. In this age of computers, the language teachers also have to adopt computers for their profession as other professionals did, it will help them to show great results. At the present time, the computers have become basic requirement and essential in ELT classroom. Computers grew its ground in dictionary usage; computers only made the task of referring dictionary as an easy task and everybody knows that searching meaning from the dictionary was tough and time-consuming task and nowadays, we can have every possible meaning by a single click of mouse within a fraction of second. Microsoft office helps in model and arranges their writings in an expressive way. We can save and correct the result without delay. Dedicated language teacher knows that how the computers can be used in language classroom and lab in a positive way.

Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling at its most basic core is the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories.

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There is a wealth of other terms used to describe this practice, such as digital documentaries, computer-based narratives, digital essays, electronic memoirs, interactive storytelling, etc.; but in general, they all revolve around the idea of combining the art of telling stories with a variety of multimedia, including graphics, audio, video, and Web publishing.

As with traditional storytelling, most digital stories focus on a specific topic and contain a particular point of view. However, as the name implies, digital stories usually contain some mixture of computer-based images, text, recorded audio narration, video clips, and/or music. Digital stories can vary in length, but most of the stories used in education typically last between 2 and 10 minutes. The topics used in digital storytelling range from personal tales to the recounting of historical events, from exploring life in one's own community to the search for life in other corners of the universe, and literally, everything in between.

Social Media

Technology dominates in the present world in every field, so as our English Language Teaching. And in this technology, the social media are playing a major role in ICT. All other communication methods are washed away or improved by these social media. The students of this age have a great interest over these social networking sites and they are spending most of their time on these sites. The sites which have gained the heart of the student community are, Face Book, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and others. If the learner has some hesitation and anxiety in dyadic communication, then the teacher can encourage the learner to use these kinds of platforms to improve their communication skills in a stress-free method. One more important tool in ICT is Blogs; blogs are helpful in communication and discussion in a particular matter very broadly without any limitation, this will be useful for the learner to learn writing skills. And YouTube needs no introduction because of its familiarity among the people, and it is bringing every special and distant teacher to our home and classroom easily. Student can learn vocabulary, accent, pronunciation and everything related to ELT on YouTube, this will create a better platform for second language teaching and the teacher can introduce so many advanced techniques by media. Twitter is also a communication site where the students can post their views individually at the same time with social responsibility, this can be taught by the language classroom by the language teacher effectively and it will be helpful for the students to improve their communication skills. The teachers and students can discuss their subject in these sites and the teacher can answer the questions of the learner through this site, it gives new experience to the learner and makes the learning a pleasant experience.

Digital Language Lab

We are in the age of ICT and the information is ready with the click of a mouse. Technology in teaching learning process increased effectiveness; it will keep engage all type of learners in classroom and can make learning language more interesting. It is teachers' obligation to give the students an exposure to various advanced techniques in education and make the classroom learning informative, motivating and the same time enjoyable. Most of the web-based technologies can be used in language teaching in a

positive way and it can assist the language teacher and enrich the knowledge of the student according to the fast-growing scientific world. In the second language pedagogy, the teacher can use different kinds of advanced technologies to make their task effective at the same time to reduce the time of learning. We can better understand the technology of teaching by the introduction of new technology automatically brings certain results.

Language laboratory is an audio-visual installation used in modern teaching methods to learn the foreign languages. Perhaps the first lab was at the University of Grenoble. In the 1950s up until the 1990s, they were tape based systems using reel to reel or (latterly) cassette. But the current installations are generally multimedia computers. The language lab is a technological break for imparting skills in English. The language lab offers an exclusive result oriented and efficient to enrich the English language learning process. The multimedia based language lab helps to learn and enhance the language proficiency by sharing the course materials with in a second where the teacher and the students involved effortlessly. The language lab is developed on the methodology of LSRW skills. With the most advance computer hardware performance and multimedia technology, pure software solution will become more and more common. Most of the software companies with the experience in teaching software, providing pure software based language lab solution. It contains the following advantages: Using "Function Oriented" design concept, divided teaching method, with the user-friendly interface, user can use it easily. By using professional sound technology with video broadcasting function, the language lab provides a rich environment to learn the language. Break through the traditional teaching method with the rich teaching material contents, the digital language lab motivates student's learning attitude, providing an interactive learning environment.

Conclusion

English language teachers in India should be well-versed with the modern equipment and technology for ELT. Teachers should be given proper training in handling these tools and use them in the language classrooms effectively. There is no use of learning these advanced technologies without any equipment in the class. The technology in language learning gives confidence to the learner, as it gives effective result to the teacher. Edmodo is one of the free social networking site where the discussion between the teacher and students are limitless and the full command will be given to the teacher, this site provides an intuitive way for teachers and students to stay connected in a safe and secure learning environment. Teaching methodology also changed by time, but the teacher cannot be replaced by any technology. Technology can be used as additional aids to the teacher but not a substitute because nothing in the world can replace the place of a teacher. Every language teacher has to realise their responsibility and importance in building our next generation. World is searching and accepting alternates in everything and in every field, so, it is not that we are in the education field only going for alternatives, to prove the effectiveness and result in English language teaching in India, the advanced technologies will help the language teacher to get best result. Digital language lab could be used very effectively in enhancing students' language skills.

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