

MERGING TECHNOLOGY WITH LANGUAGE-ENHANCEMENT IN LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

The chief purpose of this paper is to provide a broad overview of the usage of information technology in language learning for global context. The arena of language and Information Technology has become so wide and broad that many new avenues and options of learning have opened up. This paper will discuss the positive outcome of the amalgamation of these two components.

Various methods which will be involved in discussion will be: (1) Use of Video in Language Learning, (2) Internet, (3) Animation, (4) 3D Images, (5) Video Conferencing, (6) Power point, (7) Edu Comp.

This form sows the seeds for the futuristic 21st genre of learning and teaching. It will provide a hybrid of education and entertainment. It will also help to determine how to choose from different options, the implications of these options and the requirement of the desired technology to execute its working. A rich ambience of learning environment is provided. This creative process will enhance a deeper study of the role of communication and information technology.

Technology has a significant role to play in enhancing the English language teaching. The avenues of learning have increased considerably through it. A necessity has been created to keep pace with international standards and increase the impact of multidisciplinary studies. This has provided the basis for the revolution in the conventional field of teaching and learning respectively. The implicit knowledge has become explicit and the process of understanding, analyzing, describing has become more astute and sharp.

KEYWORDS: Information Technology & English Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most important aspect in the life of human beings. This forms the core of communication for all. According to Ormrod (1995) language is a learned behavior which involves a stimulus and a response. The basis for the exchange of beliefs, opinions, wishes, thoughts is Language. Primarily, the purpose of communication is the preservation, growth and development of the species. (Smith and Miller 1968:265). English has come to occupy a king's position amongst all languages. This is not only a universal language but also the world's second largest official language. English forms 40 percent of world's total GNP. This language which came into force in 20th century out of force to promote economic, political and military aspects as USA was the dominating country, has today assumed an unchallengeable position.

The main reason for its popularity is because it is simple, pure and natural and this makes it easy to learn, understand and speak.

A constant debate has given a final conclusion that:

- Japanese have a very regular verb and a complicated script.
- Chinese have a complicated script and tone.
- German has more inflections than English.
- French, Spanish and Portuguese have a complicated verb conjunction.

This makes English the undisputed reigning and linking language of the universe.

There has been a tremendous globally based commercial transaction of this language. Today Indian Diaspora writers have carved a niche at an international level as English has been recognized the means for the increasing essential communication and has strengthened the cultural identities in the world. To keep pace with this fast growing universal language, technology is playing a very pivotal role in its development and accessibility to the masses. Today's technology has a lot to offer and a lot to choose from. The dynamics of interaction has changed drastically over last two decades now. Eventually, with new explorations, the teaching models have also evolved.

Technology which is nothing but e-learning redefined, has not only given a new dimension to this language but has also been closely associated with the fast developing trends of education. The whole structure of Synchronous learning and teaching has been replaced by Asynchronous learning and teaching which has greatly enhanced the learning potentials of the students. Distance learning has also become possible because of e-learning. This is the first full scale multimedia service implemented in the field of education. It has become a harbinger of the future style of education into the next millennium. There is a temporal and spatial flexibility in this form of education and learning and involvement of various groups, classes and strata.

Thus, e- learning is playing a key role in developing:

- Cognitive Skills which involves the involvement of knowledge and comprehension.
- Interpersonal Skills which is listening and presenting.
- Psychomotor Skills which is a physical perception.

Thus, this powerful technology has paved way to educate, entertain, stimulate and inform students and take them away from monotonous learning to picture, sound and video based learning. This has made learning new skills and concepts more easy; in discovering new facts and findings on CD Rom's and discovering new way of communicating on the internet. The whole phenomenon is called Edutainment which is hybrid of education and entertainment.

METHODOLOGIES

E-learning which has brought a new revolution in the field of education technologies has made implicit knowledge explicit, and by acquiring terminology, the means of identifying, describing, discussing, analyzing and evaluating visual language has gained a better understanding of visual language texts. Just as close reading of written texts promotes understanding in depth, so close study of visual texts provides important insights and develops interest and curiosity to finish the work.

Various methodologies involved in e-learning are:

- Multimedia
- Video
- Internet
- Animation
- 3D Images
- PowerPoint Presentation

Multimedia

Multimedia has the potential to enhance the end user interface and to increase productivity. This has come to form the basis of a new civilization. The products are based on technology which combines text, picture, sound, full motion video and interactivity into interesting, informative and often entertaining productions. Multimedia and its applications have touched upon every aspect of lives.

This technology and its application is an amalgamation of not only a single subject or an idea but a combination of many technologies and ideas. It is as old as communication and as new as the latest microprocessor. The multimedia products are used to market new products, provide research information for a high school student and simultaneously entertain and educate a young child.

Uses

The educational uses are becoming immense with the rapid use of multimedia. It has the power to present information in ways not previously possible and the integration of a rich learning environment has been created by its extensive usage. Other significant uses are:

- By the integration of media and hypermedia, we are able to create user controlled, information on- demand learning environment.
- With the user friendly approach, a growing acceptance of it is clearly visible in the educational setting.

The current uses of multimedia in education include:

- CBT (Computer Based Training)
- References Systems
- Simulations
- Virtual Environments.

Applications in the Field of English Learning Have Given Following Results

- Students' communication abilities have been promoted.
- Student-teacher interaction has increased.

Video

According to David Bunnell “Full motion video changes everything. It is like turning a ten speed bicycle into a Harley Davidson.” Video is the element of multimedia which firmly holds a student’s interest in a learning project. It has been able to bring the user closer to the real world. With the video elements, the messages are effectively delivered and the stories are reinforced. The viewers tend to retain more of what they see.

The era of “chalk and talk” indeed is witnessing an expansion in the classroom teaching. The ability of multimedia lies in its ability to electrify the thought and action centre of peoples mind into sensual elements of dazzling pictures, engaging sounds and compelling video alongside textual material. No doubt, of all the multimedia elements, video places the highest performances.

Uses

- A video footage always depicts a high level of observation and retention. A student remembers 80 % more when visually taught and only 25% when taught through chalk and talk.
- A repetition of a video footage not only helps in retention but also in emphasizing a making a point emphatically. This makes teaching more authentic and leaning more concrete.
- It promotes stimulating thinking which is concrete, interactive and discussive. The discussion generated makes learning enormous. There is an effective impact on vital psychomotor and cognitive skills which enhances the retention of the content better.
- The teaching and learning is no longer dormant. It has indeed face lifted the conventional mode of learning and teaching. This in turn has transformed the society.
- The thinking process has become more astute because of extensive cognitive thinking. The interpretation of new information and assimilation of new information has become active. This has lead to a change in the outlook and the attitude of the students. This in turn has helped in bringing about a change in the set up of the society.
- The innovative and the creative abilities of the students get a strong foothold through this form of learning. Even the minutest element can be zoomed which makes the presentations more appealing and learning active.
- The students can pick up the intricacies of the grammar fast and better. This method not only stimulates the language efficiencies but the core material can also be practically taught and learnt through this method.
- David A. Ludwig has correctly stated “use traditional text and graphics where appropriate; add animation when “still life” won’t get your message across; add audio when further explanation is required; resort to video only when all other methods pale by comparison.

Animation

Animation is the process of assigning time varying geometry and behavior to a modeled object. In other words, the objects are brought to life in animation. It covers all changes that have a visual effect. It thus includes position, shape, colour, structure and texture of an object. Advent of computers and its influence on the field of animation can be seen widely. It is being applied in education and entertainment industry respectively.

A survey conducted has proved that children develop skill and competence in storytelling, visual communication, and cognition, emotional, ethical and aesthetic aspects, observations and sensitive aspects , concentration , problem solving and innovative aspects.

Because of its accessibility, one can create one's own animation according to one's ability and creativity. This has made teaching more informative, explicit, explanatory and clearer. A student's attention is captured easily and also their creative abilities are explored fully.



Figure 1: Animated Flowers

Uses

- Skill and ability improvement is clearly visible through it. A student may take hours to assimilate information through the book but only half an hour or even less to absorb through animation learning.
- Since there is a constant movement in animation, the psychomotor is always alert. This results in better engagement of the students in classroom learning.
- There is always a curiosity to explore more and learn more. This leads to higher level of motivation amongst the students and increases their engagement with the subject.
- The feedback can be gathered immediately. This leaves with greater space to improve upon the quality of teaching and learning.
- The entertainment quotient is very high amongst young learners

The basis of developing animation is largely dependent upon:

- Shape
- Colour
- Texture
- Illusion of the movement
- Perception of the motion
- Trajectories
- Emphasizing movements for a livelier effect

3D Images

Images are needed in wide variety of applications and computer supports it as per the needs of the users. An image is a spatial representation of an object which can be two dimensional or three dimensional. It can be real or virtual. In computer vision, it is a recorded image as a video image. In computer graphics, it is a digital image. Creative use of digital imaging technology has the potential to change the nature of teaching and research.



Figure 2: A 3D Image

This form helps to see the surrounding objects from two different perspectives which is processed in the brain and generates a sense of depth for a 3D visual experience.

Uses

- It helps to bring out unprecedented depth of learning.
- The process of learning and teaching becomes more captivating through it.
- By tapping the advantages of this form of learning, the lessons of the classroom have become more alive.
- It is one of the most valuable modes of presentation techniques which the teachers have been potentially able to use to engage generation X in a radically different way.
- The subjects like Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Science and Mathematics have seen a spurt in classroom attendance.
- An outcome of the studies showed that with the use of three dimensional techniques of teaching and learning, every science student passed the examination which was unheard before. The lessons which otherwise took three to four lectures to be completed could be covered in one lecture with high retention capacity
- The students can walk with the lesson; can step inside a diagram and many more. This helps to replay it mentally while taking their tests. This made even the most complicated learning easy and interesting.
- Since an instructor can create or download their material, the usage of this form of teaching is improving significantly.

Internet

Internet is often a commonplace and very important in students' lives outside the classroom. This out-of-school experience is a valuable resource for the school classroom visual language programme. Since this process of e-learning has eliminated the fear of failing; it has, thus become an open system which has an exposure to unfathomable amount of

information. This form of easy learning saves one from the embarrassment on the stage of civilized education. Internet enables the information to be shared around the world. Today it is shared by 50% of the world's population as it is the easiest form to acquire unlimited knowledge. The fast and low cost access to the window of learning has proved a boon to the students and teachers alike.

Uses

- It allows modification and updation of the information as and when desired. This helps in staying in link with the happenings around.
- E-mail helps to maintain a constant link between student, teacher and parent's. This infuses a better understanding and coordination amongst them. The curiosity of the parents to explore new knowledge avenues has brought them closer to their children thus bridging the generation gap. A healthy family bonding has been on the rise when new ventures are explored together on a PC. Parents' involvement has become more with their wards schooling and class activities. Healthy discussion and interaction is on the rise as the exposure to e-learning has increased.
- Students are in a better position to complete their projects as internet is a vast ocean of information. What may not be available in the book may be readily available in abundance on the net.
- Online learning is another phenomenon attached with it. This has made the information, knowledge etc reach to the remotest part of the world. This has made accessibility to the acquiring of the knowledge easy and convenient.
- Internet has dissolved all the boundaries of age when it comes to learning. This mode has provided a fair chance to all the age group to study according to their schedule and convenience.

Power Point Presentation

This is another form of advancement in technology which has gained entry into classroom teaching. Since the presentation is conveyed through this medium, the interaction and the discussion on the topic become immense. This makes teaching and learning more interesting and enjoyable. This also enhances overall comprehension of the students with the better and dynamic presentation of the content.

Uses

- This is one of the easiest and effective ways of presentation.
- It offers many other provisions to be inducted in the presentation like sound, animation, images and many more.
- This form of presentation has been able to develop public speaking abilities as the interaction is optimum along with the visuals.
- This also offers for multiple learning styles.
- The focus of the audiences is quite large.

PowerPoint is thus, the most powerful and flexible evolution of the technology which provide a transparent presentation and avoids the pitfalls of passive transmission of the information and knowledge. It facilitates the quality of interactive sessions.

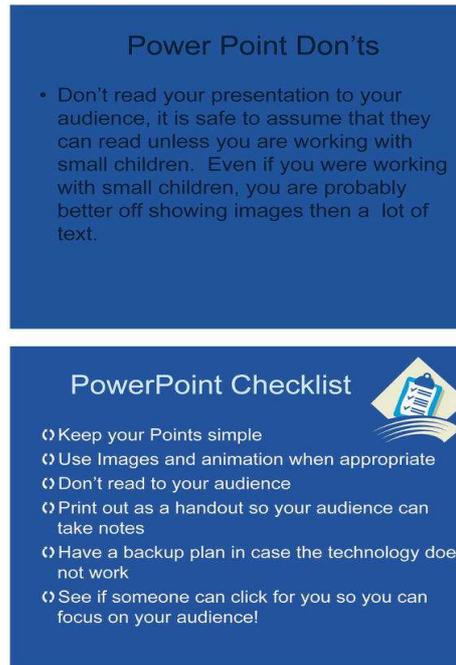


Figure 3: PowerPoint Presentation

DISCUSSIONS

The contribution of e- learning has thus proved to be enormous. It has become means for achieving formal and informal learning goals. It is indeed a representation of all educational models based upon the use of electronic media and devices. Two ways process of learning and understanding is enhanced through it. It is the result of various disciplines merging. This has introduced a new concept altogether in the field of education and a wide array of technical solutions has come to be associated with it, which in turn has made learning not only effective but also focused.

Many technologies go into its making. Since it is significantly flexible and independent, a learner can cater to his needs accordingly whether it is a module or anywhere anytime learning, it is tailor made to suit the requirements of the learner. The teacher taught concept has got a new dimensional approach which has become quite significant in modern times. A new approach has transcended into conventional mode of teaching and eventually the viewpoint towards imparting and imbibing knowledge has undergone a drastic change.

CONCLUSIONS

E-Learning has indeed emerged as a tool; an application with limitless fields to explore and learn from. It has become an important subject area with unlimited advantages.

This is the greatest boon of 21st century. The new mode of learning and teaching has changed the paradigms of education. This comprehensive mode has been able to identify various fields like business, economics, entertainment etc to establish its unchallenged authority and supremacy. With various advantages to its credit, this form has become a sign of high competence and value added system.

This paper has tried to explain the essential features of e- learning which may encourage exploring further into this field and developing guidelines for designing such programmes which will accommodate many other diverse cultures with diverse educational needs.

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