Innovation in Technology: A silver bullet for language learning

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Abstract

Innovation in technology has brought a rapid change in the modern scenario of language learning where advanced technology serves as silver bullet in creating conducive environment for language learners. Once learning was confined to four walled classroom and technology meant only a weekly trip to a computer lab but now we can change the view of learning concept as we have a number of different tools and technologies that seems like perfect way to enhance learning. In this paper we have defined some of these tools and technologies .These are Blogs, audio-visual materials, iPods and discussion forum.

Keywords: Blogs, audio visual materials ,iPods and discussion forum.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly changing world we face problems of preparing our youth for a world that we cannot yet see as it is shifting far faster than our lesson plans may anticipate. Modern tools of technology are just like a blessing for the countries like India as they have a potential for catering needs for all levels of learners irrespective of time and place. Anecdotaly implementing new technology in learning seems like extending classroom boundaries ,making learning process more flexible .Use of Socal media language learning[SMLL] Twitter,e mail, discussion forum,video ,iPods, Skype and other tools can provide authentic communication opportunities that are too lacking in our language class. Tools and technologies can evolved in large number of people in learning; moreover it makes classes interactive and saves time and effort for learning. The method has universal application in terms of its efficiency, effectiveness and economics. The educator and learner were taking the advantage of this facility. As we know that the tradition teaching requires huge infrastructure and massive expenditure which is generally missing, moreover the availability of a quality teacher in comparison to the large population which is a roadblock in education. The first section of this paper defines the Social media language learning system and how it is beneficial to the educators and learners in Indian schools.

1] The iPod: The iPod with the iTune and iLife can be used as a powerful tool for language learning. For knowing more about how the use of iPods can be implemented for Indian learners we have to go in depth how this innovation is being used and what are the results. As used in K12 school of US ,it has been found that the use of this gadged with its features of portability, ease of use, file storage capacity along with its capacity to deliver audio as well as text images is a great success in learning language both in and out of school. Teaching language as second language or foreign a is a challenging task for teachers. This can be achieved successfully if

- Rate of speech can be slowed down according to the need of students.
- A great quality of language, comprehensive to students can be delivered in an efficient and convenient manner.
- Appropriate vocabulary is exposed before them.
- Background knowledge is provided .
- Environment of learning is comfortable.
- Facility to listen native speaker is provided.
- Learning process is topic based not grammar based.

All the above said basics can be achieved if students are exposed to the use of iPods in their learning process because when the rate of speech can be regulated ,this gives them extra time to understand a language ,as they find it difficult because of their unfamiliarity of new words ,but if the facility of slowing down the rate is provided ,it becomes easy. A large quantity of comprehensible language promotes higher level of language proficiency and an iPod can provide hundred hours audio-only language input apart from this its recording capacity can be used for instructions and assessments.

Images displayed on iPods can be used for providing extra-linguistic support.

When students are exposed to discussion they listen the same topic with different words and enrich themselves with a wide range of vocabulary as they hear it repeatedly.

By providing basic knowledge, confusions get cleared and this can be done effectively with the help of iPods.
iPods can be used to access text as well as audio and video through a program known as Podcast that can be subscribed to online and automatically downloaded through iTunes which has created a vast listening library for language teachers and so if anybody interested in anything can get some material on his desired topic .Apart from so many different ways iPods can be best used as teachers can also create materials to supplement the textbooks.

2] Blogs; A Blog is a site or online journal published on the World Wide Web[WWW]for discussion or information purposes in a reverse chronological order.'[Blood,2000;Dyredetal.2005;Kzder&Bul,2004].It is one of many forms of social media.Through Blogs people can leave their comments and messages and thus can interact with others. As these are web based journals so can easily be linked and cross linked in online communities .By writing their own blog people can create social relationships with their readers irrespective of time and place and they are free to give their feedback.

Blogs can be specific to focus specific areas, like art blogs for art, photo blogs for photographs, video blogs or Vblogs for videos,MP3 blogs for music, podcasts for audio and for featuring very short posts microblogs can be used. Edublogs are the blogs which refer either to instructional resources or are used for educational purposes. The use of blog as a constructive approach mainly for English as a foreign language (EFL) promotes learners interaction, constructive environment, social interaction and active social learning. Blogging helps a lot to their users. While constructing their knowledge they utilize their past experiences and develop their ideas collaboratively (Jones and Breader Araje 2002) so blogs for EFL learning are very useful as learners can use their language, share knowledge with their peer group and thus a social learning environment that facilitates collaborative learning can be created. The use of blogs in language learning can contribute in following ways:

- It helps bloggers in gaining cultural knowledge and thus opens the way to increase cultural awareness.
- It promotes self expression, interaction, self evaluation and language progress.
- Use of blogs contributes in promoting writing skills.

- It helps in developing rhetorical strategies, improving grammar, designing paragraph and essays, revising written works, giving and receiving feedback and participation in peer reviews.
- Blogs used in composition classes increase learners motivation to engage in academic writing.
  In EFL learning it is found that college blogs promote autonomous learning as these are the medium that reflects individualized self-expression.

Blogs now a days is not something with which people are not aware, but using blogs as a language learning tool is still a question of debate. Though it is a medium when used properly can benefit us a lot. It is online platform that people can use to express their different view points on different issues. When someone writes in a blog ,it is done to express feelings and one wants to be creative but in doing so language learning is achieved and so indirectly helps in language learning .In-spite of its side effects it has its advantages too so now it is the responsibility of teachers to face the challenge and motivate the students to make constructive use of this effective and valuable technology for language learning.

3] Video: Another major development in language technology has been the use of video. According to stannard , the potential of video is incredible , it could be instructions , presenting learning materials or students producing videos themselves. They could pretend they are telling the news in the foreign language . They could act out a job interview situation or put videos online for students in Europe about their local town. We could even prepare for oral exams by working in group filming it and then watching it back.

4]Audio video materials- This is again a bliss of technology for language learners through which learning is getting easier as we can pause, repeat or play these slowly or quickly as desired. We can also analyse a learner's speech and various types of scaffoldings can be provided.

5]Discussion forum- In this teachers ask questions to guide. Students comment and direction of the discussion takes place .When probing questions using contradictions and counter example challenge students. They apply their learning to moral situations , practical scenario and prior learning. When teachers quote , students comment ,this gives confidence and satisfaction to students and spurs more frequent posting. When

students facilitate a discussion , they feel an increased sense of ownership over their own learning and learning of their fellow students . They are more invested in the learning process , at the same time it encourages our students , especially those who do not normally speak out in the class.

2. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have discussed that technology and language are a natural fit and there is a strong link between the affordance of technology and the type of things we are trying to do in our classrooms.In India there is almost absence of atmosphere for the natural and progressive flourish of English .We cannot conceive of a situation where learners get enough scope for picking up English from society or schools and colleges unless they are facilitated with the use of new innovations .At present only a few schools have launched these new ways of learning in their curriculum .In some of the schools in Mumbai ,students are allowed to use iPods for studies. A big crowd is still away from these techniques .here we need to follow the Redressal of Grievance, A theory which says if we see the misuse of anything then we should not ban it but try to put our best efforts to correct it through motivation .Technology does support language learning but teachers will see its benefits if it goes hand in hand with a change of pedagogy. Still there is a big gulf between desired goal and the present practice in Indian classrooms. Only a creative mind free from all pre assumptions can change the situation gradually for a better tomorrow

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