

## Technology-dominated Curricula in Language Education

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**Abstract:** *The influence of technology on education, specifically language education, is increasing at different levels. Technology is turning to an integral part of language education all around the world. This turning point has made teachers and learners to apply digital technologies in language education in order to develop the required skills in language learning experience. The use of technology in language education has provided the chance for improved communication by using the language in practice. Kern, Ware and Warschauer (2008) believe that language learners cannot solely develop with the input they receive. Rather, an active engagement with other people and negotiation of meaning is required in order to enhance learning. Technology provides this chance, both for language teachers and learners, to practically use the language and enhance learning (Jean and Ponterio, 2003). This review provides a general overview of the use of technology in language education, its basic assumptions and operating principles, lesson types, and the application of technology for teaching language skills.*

**Key words:** *Technology, English Education, Language Skills.*

### Introduction

Nowadays, most colleges or universities are operating by the use of computer hardware and software to support instruction. The supporters of computer revolution make their best efforts to convince language teachers and learners to accept the fact that the computer is the solution to every problem and will even make better situations that are not problematic (Ramachandran, 2004). Most language teachers tend to use computers to enhance learning due to the fact that computers and technology can provide expanded chances for language learning.

In foreign language education, the goal of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is to provide students resources, tasks and activities that will provide instruction and practice in speaking, reading, writing, and listening in the target language. Moreover, using computers in language classes will provide cultural awareness necessary to a full understanding of the people

and the language they are studying. The incorporation of the computer into the foreign language classroom can be a promising evolution in language education (Battro, 2004). Technology can aid for teaching which can significantly help language teachers and learners. In addition, it offers a better access to resources such as online libraries or different databases. Besides, reviewing and commenting on students' work more will be performed more efficiently using computers and different software. Moreover, the use of technology can help language learners to demonstrate their learning better by using different applications such as presentations slots.

### **Basic Assumptions**

There are certain assumptions regarding language education and language instruction that can be effective on our decision to incorporate technology into language education. Firstly, in addition to structured drills, the students need to practice authentically in the target language. This is due to the fact that the students learn better when they put their learnt material into practice. In addition, using technology provides opportunities for authentic language use when using different websites. Other software useful for a language lesson can sometimes be integrated into language classes to provide a practical and authentic use of language (Facer et al., 2003). One more aspect that needs to be incorporated into language classes is culture. Culture is an essential part of learning a target language which seems to be easier to follow from real-life web pages than from written texts which usually lack authenticity.

On the other hand, technology provides us with many online materials which sometimes make it difficult for language practitioners to decide which one to use. One limitation would be that all students should have access to computers, either through public computer sites on campus or through personal computers. This also incorporates that the students should be computer-literate to be able to use it efficiently and effectively.

Designing and applying technological applications and programs also require language teachers and learners to be completely prepared and use online materials appropriately based on budget, time and labor. It should also be noted that not everything can be done better by computers and there will always be a need for textbooks, workbooks, and mentors. In addition, students and learners may show different degrees of enthusiasm and interest to the use of technology in a class. Although the application of technology in language education has a promising perspective, there is a need for further research to provide solid evidence showing the benefits of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in language classes.

### **Lesson Ideas**

The application of technology in a language class can be followed using different methods (Battro, 2004). However, the most frequent and learner-friendly lesson ideas which can be used practically are mentioned in this section:

- **Assign Digital Presentations**

Students can demonstrate their learning in a digital presentation. This requires students to cite their sources when conducting a research project. It is also important to teach them the importance of gaining permission to use copyrighted materials, 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, supplementary 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 Web Quests**

This popular Web activity is suitable to language arts and literature exploration (Whyte, 2011). A Web Quest is a detailed set of questions and tasks that lead students to the Internet when working on research topics. They then complete a task or set of tasks based on their research. The Web Quest can result in a product like a one-page document or a multi-faceted project. For example, teachers can use Web Quests that require students to explore themes presented in literature, to review and analyze newspaper writings, or write pieces of historical fiction. The form can be adapted easily to the purpose of class.

- **Battle Plagiarism with the Internet**

English teachers emphasize fighting with plagiarism continuously. For years, the Internet made it easier for students to access prepared research papers. This has made it more difficult for teachers to determine plagiarized work from the original material. Teachers can now ask their students to submit their work electronically. The teachers can also submit all student work to a Web-based service that will compare the paper to thousands of existing resources. The service returns a report to the teacher or school indicating whether the work contained plagiarized materials, and if so, it will show the exact phrases and origin of those that were copied.

- **Grammar Instruction**

Individualized instruction is extremely important in any language instruction. While written comments can offer effective means for individualization, technology can provide better means. 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 language classroom. It provides the chance to store daily objectives in a PowerPoint presentation and begin each class session by sharing the materials. PowerPoint presentations can be made for essential notes. 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. It should be noted that the amount of information on each slide should be restricted to one or two important points. Moreover, the design options encourage self-expression and creativity. The students should be taught to limit the amount of information on each slide to one or two important points.

- **Word Processing Software**

Writing projects can be done using word processing programs. This is a user-friendly tool which helps language learners to easily revise and format written materials. Using an option named "review" can improve the quality of written texts. The feature can be used for teachers or peers to leave comments on student work. In addition, changes can also be tracked to evaluate how students used peer review comments to improve or change their work.

### **Technology and Language Skills**

Dudeney and Hockly (2012) maintain that technology can be applied in teaching different language skills. For listening and speaking skills, the technology allows us to store and access audio files. Before the advent of computers, the language laboratory was used to teach pronunciation and dialogues, and to show films. The content of this material has not changed, but it is more accessible to students and teachers. Further, such files can be found on the Internet and used to teach units such as pronunciation and dialogues. Such files can also be easily created by teachers for teaching and by students for projects. Movies are a little more difficult; they can be recorded on digital cameras, loaded on a computer and edited using special software (this is an in-built feature in the Mac Book). Students can collaborate on mini-projects to create 2-minute audio or video clips, such as short conversations or interviews. The advantage of it is that students practice using language in an interesting project. Moreover, Software such as Skype and hardware

such as a webcam can connect computers at distant locations, allowing participants to have communication and interactions together.

For reading skill, textbooks were created to provide teachers and students with texts and exercises for teaching and learning. With the arrival of the Internet, students and teachers have access to many resources. The Internet provides new opportunities for the students if some constraints like plagiarism are solved. The Internet creates an interesting challenge with traditional textbooks. The texts that are available on the Internet are not reviewed for factual accuracy. Therefore, the quality of the information is not level. This provides an opportunity to teach students to evaluate information from different texts. Asking students to find the answer to a simple question will encounter the students with multiple answers. This will make the students proficient in determining how to evaluate sources, how not to depend on secondary sources, and how to go to the primary sources. This teaches the skills of critical reading.

The Internet also offers an opportunity for extensive reading. Instead of the limited universe in the textbook, students can look up additional information by following their interests or explore alternative views. This feeds into a research culture that is not limited to a set of facts in a textbook.

Word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word, have altered the way we write. It is easier to press keys than to form letters by hand; we can delete, insert and move text allowing us to reorganize information; when programs are bundled with linguistic tools, spelling and grammar are automatically checked; and the final output is neat and legible.

Computers also allow teachers to show students how to compose and edit their essays. To do this, the teacher's computer has to be connected to an overhead projector so that the entire class can see the computer screen. While students write their essays, the teacher usually composes an essay on the same topic, so that students can see the writing process. To help them with editing, the teacher can display one student's essay and ask the class how to improve it. The suggested changes can be typed in and students can see the effects of the changes immediately instead of having to visualize them.

Some teachers feel that students should write everything by hand and mark them for neatness and accuracy. However, these are merely the mechanics of writing that the computer can perform flawlessly. If the purpose is to present an argument, the computer cannot do that and so teachers raise the bar for students' essays.

## Conclusion

The increasing growth of the computer industry and of personal access to the Internet and the World Wide Web in particular has obligated most educators to reconsider the ways in which they can make use of this exciting new technology in their classrooms (Salaberry, 2001). This paper examined the use of technology in the language class. In the class that teachers wish to design, learners should be equipped with the tools for their own learning, while the teacher guides and provides support. Nowadays, technology is accessible to majority of people. Today, students are comfortable using technology and, if they are not, they are expected to become computer-literate for their future profession. Such changes have led language teachers and educators to move towards technology in language classroom in order to be more effective in their teaching career.

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