Technology in Teaching English - What, Why and How?

V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.

==

Abstract

Technology has always been a game changer in all areas of human endeavor including the spread of education and knowledge. Right from the millenniums old invention - the woodblock printing , the half a millennia old invention of the Gutenberg press, and the new generation ICT which leverages the usage of computers and relative tech, each discovery has brought about a revolution in the dissemination of ideas , knowledge and language including English. ICT aided methods of teaching have developed rapidly over the past few decades that have improved the standards of English training. ICT has made learning interesting, motivating and more interactive to the students and it expands the knowledge available to them. It has "democratized" English language by providing the latest techniques to teachers and students across all institutions. It has also provided a flexible way of learning to persons who are unable to have a regular education. ICT has brought in online courses under new concepts such as self paced learning, virtual lectures, vlogs and blogs. Each of these concepts provides a unique way of teaching students and has a role to play in the improvement of teaching methods.

This paper discusses the "**What, Why and How**" of a few of the methods that have made their impact in the field of English education and training. These include Audio-visual recordings, CBTs, and online training methodologies like Webinars, Workshops and Seminars. The paper shall also help teachers in analyzing what method suits in reaching out to their students' best.

Keywords: Technology, ICT, Online learning, CBTs, Webinars, Seminars

==
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 17:11 November 2017**
Dr. S. Jayanthi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Teaching of English Language and Literature*
V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.
Technology in Teaching English - What, Why and How?   76

Use of the Internet

Many of the main technologies that have influenced the ways of training are based on the internet. One of the major components of the internet - the World Wide Web gives access to knowledge from across the world. This helps students gain knowledge from a huge source of material that has been built to cater to requirements right from the basics to the highly advanced mission specific training material. It also helps gain access to the guidance of native English speakers and helps develop proper pronunciation and accent. Also globally benchmarked courses developed to cater to the needs of the students improve the standard of communication and written skills to match the different and specialized requirements of employment market across the globe. Some courses are useful for testing and distance education, and some for teaching business English, spoken English for marketing, writing skills for specific tasks.

Flexi Timings

Another huge advantage provided by online technologies is the application of "*Flexi timings*" concept in education. Online tools enable the student to study at his/her own pace and timings. The learner is not locked into rigid learning timetables and schedules but has the flexibility to pace the rate of learning to suit his/her abilities and needs. On the other hand, fast learners and people with special requirements have even the option of utilizing the skills of professional trainers online for a customized one on one training schedule. Thus technology provides access to both personalized attention courses, as well as courses which are based on "*Drill and Practice*" software. Depending on one's requirement the student/trainer can choose his own path for learning/teaching. We shall see the "**What, Why and How**" of some of the many techniques which are applicable in different degree to language learning situation.

A Few Technology Aided Teaching Tools

The What

- Wiki, blog, vlogs and any published materials like any reading material like ppt, pdf files
- CBTs and WBT's
- Webinars and online workshops

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 17:11 November 2017**
Dr. S. Jayanthi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Teaching of English Language and Literature*
V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.
Technology in Teaching English - What, Why and How?   77

- Customized lessons.
- Complete online courses and training packages

The What, the Why, the How and Where

Published Materials

The content published online provides a vast source of training materials for those who have the self drive and commitment to learn English. Wikis and blogs are sources of free training courses which help improve one's vocabulary and reading skills. Vlogs provide the learner with audio-visual recordings and are highly useful in improving listening and speaking skills. The student listener is trained in proper pronunciations and in getting the right accents.

CBTs and WBTs

Electronic courses (E-Courses) made available to the learners in the form of a CD are called computer-based training (CBT), which can be run on the learner's system. E-courses can also be made available through Web-based training (WBT), which utilizes the internet as a platform like a Learning Management System. The courses are self-paced, and the learner has no interaction with an instructor or fellow learners. This works very well for those adult learners who are motivated to learn, in order to learn new skills, update their resumes and attain professional excellence.

Online Broadcasts like Webinars/Workshops/Seminars

These are online courses delivered by a live instructor. They have interactive sessions at the end of the training broadcasts. They also provide support for the participants to interact with each other in real time. Each Webinar session usually lasts for 2-3 hours and is meant to be a fast track update or a discussion on a specific topic, while Workshops and Seminars are far more extended periods. They usually comprise of multiple sessions held over a few days and focus on skills development with emphasis on relevant examples. They also delve deeper into the subject being taught.

==
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 17:11 November 2017**
Dr. S. Jayanthi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Teaching of English Language and Literature*
V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.
Technology in Teaching English - What, Why and How?   78

Customized One on One Lessons

These are tailor-made lessons matched to meet individual goals. The student gets more individual time with the mentor/trainer and can even customize his/her learning by focusing on areas he really needs to improve upon. Conversation is the key to effective learning of languages and the one on one lesson with a personal trainer helps achieve goals faster. The student also has greater flexibility in scheduling the learning times. These lessons really work well for people who need to learn or master specific aspects of English language like pronunciation and accents.

Complete Online Courses and Training Packages

Online courses provide the power of the classroom with the convenience of online and the flexibility in study timings of a CBT or a blog. Online courses provide a well rounded development to the students as they get the chance to interact with fellow learners from around the world. The number of courses available is also huge and the student is not restricted by geographic location in choosing his/her course of choice. They are also highly useful for working professionals who want to upgrade their profile and cannot afford to quit their jobs to obtain an extra qualification. The learner also has access to cheaper online resources and study materials prescribed in the course .Discussion forums provided by online courses also ensure that doubts of students are cleared promptly and the answers available to everyone in the course.

A comparison table of the technology aided teaching tools discussed above.

What	How	Why and where to use it
Published materials Blogs and wikis	Online/Offline	Used in aiding students who are self driven and in improving their reading skills and vocabulary proficiency. It also helps trainers in providing extra practice and reading material to students.
Published materials Vlogs and audio recordings	Online/Offline	Useful to aid students for self study and improving their listening and spoken skills. It helps trainers

==
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 17:11 November 2017**
Dr. S. Jayanthi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Teaching of English Language and Literature*
V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.
Technology in Teaching English - What, Why and How?   79

		provide the students training in listening and speaking.
E- courses CBTs	Offline.	Highly useful to trainers for providing interactive and repetitive training to students. It also provides standardization of training to a large number of students. Trainers can use it for evaluating students and to provide customized training to individual students via the same CBT. Very useful to improve specific categories of knowledge like grammar and vocabulary.
E- courses WBTs	Online	WBT has the advantages of CBT along with a few more. Courseware can be updated regularly when the contents are stored online. Students are also not bound to single locations when accessing the material as web based content can be accessed from anywhere. Very useful to improve specific categories of knowledge like grammar and vocabulary.
Online broadcasts like Webinars, Seminars	Online	Give access to good learning materials to students. Trainers can use it when reaching out to large class spread across various locations. Cost effective when utilized to give short term training and knowledge updates. Useful in gaining in depth knowledge on a narrow or specific category of language like Business communications.
Customized one on one lessons	Online	Give access to good learning materials to students. Students gain individual attention from native language trainers. A student strength and weakness can be analyzed more effectively by the trainer and the training can be more focused on the student's needs. Helps gain confidence in speaking skills with the more personal attention provided. These are generally

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 17:11 November 2017**
Dr. S. Jayanthi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Teaching of English Language and Literature*
V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.
Technology in Teaching English - What, Why and How?   80

		costlier than regular course.
Online courses	Online	Highly useful for time constrained students who desire to upgrade their resume with a new course. They are also mostly cheaper to the students. The negative side being that one needs to be highly motivated and self driven to complete a full course online

Conclusion

The tools and technologies discussed above provide new and exciting methodologies to both the trainer and the learner in the dissemination and acquiring of knowledge. Though highly effective, these technologies are but still tools and depend upon the trainer to make the student excel. It's the trainer who has to provide guidance in most of the cases, either directly in form of taking online classes or from the background in the form of preparing course ware and training material in CBTs. Trainers can use digital resources in a variety of ways to support teaching and learning. Technology can also increase educational productivity by accelerating the rate of learning; reducing costs associated with instructional materials or program delivery, providing real-time feedback on student performance and thereby better utilizing teaching time.

Technology has democratized the learning process for students by making the availability of knowledge building global resources cheap and in many cases even free. One of the big changes caused by tech is the demographic shift in language learners. In India learning English has long been associated with the elite, but now people from less privileged backgrounds are finding affordable ways to learn. Also technology has removed the barriers in learning English to many who are restricted by time or location. The widespread growth in the usage of smart phones has made net accessibility easier and cheaper to even students residing in far flung villages. This has led to decreasing access costs and increased access to the latest training videos and online courses. Overall technology has revolutionized English teaching and provides excellent tools for imparting knowledge to trainers. In today's competitive world, taking online courses and online materials help the students to cope with their work environment as well as the needs of the society.

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 17:11 November 2017**
Dr. S. Jayanthi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Teaching of English Language and Literature*
V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.
Technology in Teaching English - What, Why and How?   81

===

References

http://sspublications.co.in/jarh/v3/i1/JARH1.pdf

https://corelanguages.com/3-benefits-online-language-learning/

https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/the-benefits-new-technology-language-learning

https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/21/can-i-learn-a-language-online

https://www.ed.gov/oii-news/use-technology-teaching-and-learning

===

V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Kamaraj College of Engineering and Technology
Virudhunagar 626001
Tamilnadu
India
kokilaenglish@kamarajengg.edu.in

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 17:11 November 2017**
Dr. S. Jayanthi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Teaching of English Language and Literature*
V. Kokila, M.A., M.Phil.
Technology in Teaching English - What, Why and How?   82