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Role and Importance of ICT in Teaching English

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Abstract

This paper highlights the factors related to successful implementation of ICT in teaching English. The technological change over the last decade has created a new global economy. The introduction of this new process has serious implications for the nature and purpose of educational institutions. The knowledge and skills thus acquired make learning possible continuously throughout the lifetime. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as well as newer digital technologies such as computers and internet are more powerful tools for educational change and reform. They can best be harnessed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education at all levels and in both formal and non-formal settings as it enables access to information exponentially. The use of ICT facilitates enable students to attain knowledge by practice and sharing. For teachers ICT fosters better teaching as it implements both practical and theoretical learning simultaneously.
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Introduction

We are living in the 21st century and it is the age of technological advancement .With the changing needs of the hour (time), technology is developing day-by-day. In the recent time the use of modern technological tools as English language teaching has been affected a lot with the availability of these tools. Language teaching in general and English Language Teaching (ELT) in particular has tremendously changed over the centuries. When English entered in the curriculum of the students as a compulsory subject, it was a challenge for the English language teachers to teach to the foreign learners but they taught English as Knowledge' subject not as a 'Skill' subject because their main aim was to teach them to pass the examinations only. So they adopted 'Grammar-Translation Method' in which the teacher used to explain every word to students in the native language to make them understand and learn English. Despite the fact that this method ignores the development of oral proficiency of the learners, it is still popular with majority teachers in the modified form. So many other methods were also used such as bilingual method, direct method, audio-lingual method, the structural approach and the situational teaching, communicative language teaching etc. but no method was said to be a perfect method. Since then ELT seems to be swinging like a pendulum between the extremes of method as language teachers have ever been in search of better and more effective method of teaching. Moreover, the ELT trends that were very popular in the past have vanished today and have been substituted by innovative ELT methods.

In the present era, the educational institutions cannot remain mere venues for the transmission of a prescribed set of information from teacher to student over a fixed period of time rather the educational institutions must promote "learning to learn" i.e. the acquisition of knowledge and skills that make possible continuous learning over the lifetime. So it becomes the responsibility of the teachers to shape up accordingly to meet the demands of the day. The need of the day is to equip student with proficiency in the English language and this is possible only with a proper blend of edification and e-learning tools (modern technologies).Traditional teaching and learning paradigms have been shaken by the impact of the integration of e-learning tools into educational practices. E-learning is a diverse range of technological tools and systems that can be utilized by capable and creative teachers to enhance teaching and learning situations. These are used to make learning more interesting, motivating, stimulating and meaningful to the students. These tools serves as potentially powerful for educational change and reform as they are making marked inroads into the combination of digital technologies and English language learning.

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Role of ICT in Teaching English

In the present days technology can be used in class rooms for effective teaching. For English language and literature teaching ,Teachers can use ICT more efficiently .Some of the important areas where ICT can be used for the teaching of language and literature in English are:

Internet

It is the world's largest network of computers. In vocabulary learning, ICT can play a very important role. There are online and offline dictionaries like Oxford English Dictionary, Webster's dictionary, Chamber's dictionary etc. of global value and authenticity. These are available on Internet or can be downloaded for reference. Standard authentic pronunciation in audio format can be accessed by students in these libraries. Dictionaries with the usage of words in sentences are easily available on Internet and words can be learnt by using them in sentences. Idioms and phrases can also be learnt this way. Internet is not merely a source of authentic material in English but also a source of information in the form of articles, courses, conferences and many more. One of the major advantages of internet is that the teacher can send assignments to the students through e-mails and can take online exams. Also the parents can view their children's work online at any time. Students do not miss their lessons as now they can see a saved version online and get their worksheets from electronic online whiteboards. Internet acts as knowledge bank for Schools for the preparation of projects and study material for students. Today every school has got its own website. Students can use free of cost many software that are available on Internet.

Smart-boards

Traditional whiteboards or flipcharts can be replaced by Interactive whiteboards as they provide ways to show students everything which can be presented on a computer's desktop. With the help of Smart- boards teachers can able to use student-centered approach to teach language arts. Language teachers can also use Smart- boards to improve reading and comprehension, and teach grammar and writing. Teachers can combine audio, video, web browsing and word processing to teach students interactively by using Smart-boards.

To enhance student's language skills, teacher can use smart board in play way method. For e.g. 'Pictogram' (Draw a picture and guess the word) can be played. Among younger learners spelling races are very popular. Word games are superb way of settling classes and revising vocabulary. One can use anagrams or jumbled sentences for the learners and also ask the antonyms or synonyms the lexis or collocation words. For writing teacher can use different colours. For example in case of grammar the teacher can use the yellow colour for the verbs, the blue colour pen for the nouns , the red colour for the adjectives and the green colour adverbs. The teacher can also display paragraphs with errors and ask the students to edit the paragraphs or proofread them. To improve the writing skills of students the teacher can also use a story starter and ask the students to write a class story or chain story or peer story. Teacher can also write sentences which are based on photographs as it will teach them the usage and functions of the language and further use photographs of persons (i.e. persons from history, characters from book) and can ask the students to write in "bubble" about their thoughts.

Blog

Blogging has become increasingly popular, especially in the realm of education as they are a great way to share information and generate discussion. Instead of text books and traditional methods, many educators prefer using these new techniques to help teach students and gain experience with various forms of social media. Setting up a course blog doesn't have to be complicated. Educators can use a free platform such as Blogspot, Wordpress, or Tumblr to host the blog. Nowadays, blogs can also display photos and some people are using them with audio and even video.The teacher should encourage the students to visit blog frequently. She/he should respond to student posts quickly, writing a short comment related to the content She/he should also ask questions about what the learner writes to create stimulus for writing. Writing to the blog could be required, and it may form part of the class assessment. Students should be encouraged to post their writing homework on the blog instead of only giving it to the teacher.

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Twitter

Twitter is a social networking application that could help in improving student's English to a larger extent. As education technology tool, twitter's affect on engaging students in learning concepts is limitless. To develop a better understanding of concepts the teacher can use a several activities for using an online education technology tool to engage students in classroom activities. To begin the activity with a story opener the teacher can select any genre for the story which is tweeted to the students for contribution to the story line. The teacher can analyze work of participants after all twitter network contributed to the development of the story line. This consists of editing, story structure, creative writing, and proper use of grammar. The teacher can ask the students to select a word of the year and tweet it around the network requesting synonyms and antonyms of the word. When all responses are received, the teacher can analyze them for accuracy and develop a link of the complex words for strengthening the vocabulary of the students. Online debates through Twitter can be conducted by the teacher with the students of the same classroom or the students of the different classrooms on the class twitter network.

Youtube

Youtube videos can be used for teaching English in very effective way to enhance vocabulary, accents, and pronunciations. It can be use to show students real time examples. The teacher can use it as a tool for improving their Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing skills. The teacher can select a part of the movie appropriate to the level of the students and show those movie clippings to the students. For the first time, teacher can mute the volume and ask the students to watch the movie attentively. Later teacher can ask the students to watch the movie once again and this time teacher can ask the students to frame the dialogues of the movie clippings simultaneously. This will improve their speaking skills. Another activity to enhance their speaking skills can be: the teacher can show a selected part of the movie to the students and further ask them to narrate the rest of the story of the movie or the climax of the movie.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this paper is to show the importance of ICT in teaching English language.

Conclusion

Uses of ICT in the teaching of Language and Literature make the process easier and more effective. Teachers can use technologies like computer and internet in the teaching of global language like English. Visual aids, online resources like e-books, e- journals and videos also help a lot makes language teaching more effective .Assignments and projects can be submitted online. It also helps students to become more imaginative. Power point presentations also help in teaching and learning of English language and literature. Websites provides learning material in abundance. Wikipedia, Google, Answer.com provide a lot of information and knowledge. Online and offline dictionaries help in learning vocabulary. We can use ICT even in teaching of grammar. Language laboratories can help in this matter. Thus, ICT is highly helpful in teaching English language.

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