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Web-Assisted Task Based Language Learning: An Overview

Ms. S. Bhanu

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Siddharth Institute of Engineering & Technology, Puttur, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Abstract

The present paper emphasizes a novel method of teaching English language assisted by internet resources. Usage of Internet in learning English language through worksheets, vocabulary exercises, word processing tools, spell-check, EFL activities, linguistic exercises etc., are illustrated in this paper. This paper provides an overview of task based language learning and the resources that are to be used in language classroom.

Keywords

Web-Assisted Language Learning (WALL); Task Based Language Learning; Internet Resources.



Introduction

English as a second language for the students whose primary language is other than English needs additional resources to enhance their LSRW skills.

Effective and efficient Lab oriented activities are necessary for the development. The teachers should act as mentors in order to facilitate learning in classrooms. For this a teacher should be aware of the latest technologies, explore new ideas and have a certain amount of specialization in the subject. Students can overcome their inhibitions and exhibit their proficiency with unlimited enthusiasm, when they convert weakness into strengths. The teachers have to gather a set of websites which functions in the form of software. As the objective of the present research is to enhance the language learning process of engineering college students, the entire focus is on LSRW skills. The importance of virtual classroom and its resources are also focused. A teacher can use the classroom teaching by employing task based learning to inspire the students. Fig. 1 shows a worksheet, which can be used as a model to prepare a functional activity of task based learning.

A task based language learning classroom is a place where teachers are facilitators and students are active learners - a place where students are comfortable and safe and still challenged to learn. Virtual learning uses computer software, the Internet or both to deliver tasks to students. It minimizes or eliminates the need for teachers and students to share a classroom. The teacher sees what a student sees, but the teacher has additional user rights to create or modify curriculum content and track students' performance.

Types of Virtual Learning:

Computer-Based: Instruction is not provided by a teacher; instead, instruction is provided by software installed on a local computer or server. This software can frequently customize the material to satisfy the specific needs of each student.

Internet-Based: This is similar to computer-based instruction, but in this case, the software that provides the instruction is delivered through the Web and stored on a remote server.

Remote Teacher Online: Instruction is provided by a teacher, but that teacher is not physically present with the students in the classroom. Instead, the teacher

interacts with the student via the Internet, through such media as online video, online forums, e-mail and instant messaging.

Blended Learning: This combines traditional face-to-face instruction, directed by a teacher, with computer-based, Internet-based or remote teacher online instruction. In effect, instruction comes from two sources: a traditional classroom teacher and at least one of the forms of virtual learning described above.

Facilitated Virtual Learning: This is computer-based, Internet-based or remote teacher online instruction that is supplemented by a human “facilitator.” This facilitator does not direct the students, but rather assists the student’s learning process by providing tutoring or additional supervision. The facilitator may be present with the learner or communicating remotely via the Web or other forms of electronic communication.

English Language Learning In Virtual Classroom

Following are the requirements to set-up a virtual language learning classroom/lab per student.

- Broadband Internet Access
- Operating System: Windows XP or newer
- Browser: Internet Explorer 6.x or newer
- CPU: P350 MHz, recommended P500+ MHz
- Memory: 320 GB, recommended 512+ MB RAM
- Free Disk Space: 40 MB, recommended 200+ MB for content and recordings
- Monitor: 16 bit colors (high color)
- Headset with microphone

The list does not include the software which contains exercises.

Dialogue Journals are the popular means to improve the writing fluency and reading comprehension of the students. Since the focus is on communication, the students can choose their own topic. Teachers will find it convenient as these lessons are already written for them to teach. The quizzes,

homework, and final tests are all computer-graded, which lessens the extra time for the teachers to grade the students' work. Of course, teachers may assign extra writing practice and writing assignments for students. The lessons are designed to teach one to ten students for 100 minutes in 50 minute periods. A teacher does not need to prepare for more than one class once he/she get to know the teaching system. After teaching a few times, a teacher will find that it will give them confidence when they handle each class because most of the time, the teaching style is usually the same from lesson to lesson, except for oral test classes, final test classes, or speech classes. The activities are designed in such a way that teachers will discuss on that activity as a warm up before starting it on the computer with their students. Students can practice the activities over and over again after the lessons. The quizzes and homework can also be practiced more than once.

Each level of the activity has specific goals for the students to reach. After completion of the beginner or basic level, students will grasp some reading comprehension, know the sounds of letters and letter combinations, and understand how to use grammar in certain situations. They will be able to converse with the tutor or fellow students during the lessons and be able to give short speeches by themselves. They will be able to use new vocabulary while speaking.

After the completion of the intermediate level, students will be able to: acquire more vocabulary to make their own stories by either typing or writing; enhance their reading comprehension; read a short article using the phonics they have learnt in the previous level for words they have never read before; and give longer speeches. They will also be able to use complex sentences. After the completion of the advanced level, students will be able to converse in English for longer time with the tutor, and they will be able to interpret graphs, charts, advertisements, menus, and images. They will also learn some English idioms, homophones, and synonyms. At the end of this level, students will be able to use and understand some complex grammatical structures in the English language.

List of Important Websites

- <http://www.learnenglish.de/vocabpage.htm> - To improve pronunciation and vocabulary.
- <http://a4esl.org/q/h/al-h-lb.html> - To improve vocabulary.
- <http://www.learnenglish.de/englishtestspage.html> - To test English grammar and spelling.
- http://www.edufind.com/english/grammar/grammar_topics.php - To test English grammar.
- <http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/subjectVerb.asp> - To review English grammar.
- <http://www.britishcouncil.org/colombia-ingles-apoyo-a-la-ensenanza-del-ingles-ideas-para-tu-clase-recursos-de-pronunciacion.htm> - Pronunciation exercises
- <http://www.eslteachersboard.com/cgi-bin/lessons/index.pl?read=5552> - ESL Resources
- http://www.englishtag.com/tests/level_test.asp - To test English.
- <http://www.manythings.org/jq/q001.html> - A website for Quizzes
- <http://www.tefl.net/esl-lesson-plans/esl-activities.htm> - Lesson plan

Fig. 2 is taken from a website listed above to help the readers understand the usage of prepositions. It is an easy way to remember which preposition to use with hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades and ages. Imagine a pyramid divided horizontally into 3 groups. At the top of the pyramid you have “AT” and this is used for the smallest in time: hour.

- I'll meet you AT 7 p.m.

In the middle of the pyramid you have “ON” and this is used for bigger time: day.

- See you ON Saturday.

At the bottom you have “IN” and this is used for everything else that is bigger than hours or days.

- I was born IN 1964.
- He takes holidays IN January.

- They played great music IN the 80's

Conclusion

The teachers must identify a learner's need and suggest an activity. A teacher should support and encourage the learners. Learners can easily be discouraged if the goal is unrealistic and by making repeated mistakes. A learner should be made aware that making mistakes is an important part of learning process. Helping a learner to tackle his difficulties, create his own strategies and to attain his goals, are the most satisfying aspects of being a teacher.

www.onestopenglish.com

www.onestopenglish.com/community/lesson-share/pdf-content/speaking/making-arrangements-lesson-plan/552432.article

Activity 1

It's Friday afternoon. Two English teachers are in the staff room. They have finished lessons for the week.

Ann Hi Jane. How's it going?
Jane Good, cheers. You?
Ann Not bad.
Jane You sound a bit down. What's up?
Ann Nothing. I'm just a bit tired.
Jane What are you up to this weekend?
Ann Not a lot. You?
Jane Not much. Do you fancy going for a drink?
Ann Yeah, that sounds good. When?
Jane How about Saturday evening?
Ann Good idea. Shall we meet at 7pm?
Jane Excellent.
Ann Let's meet at Leicester Square outside the tube station.
Jane Great. See you there!

Activity 2

Complete the table with the meanings of the phrases.

phrase	meaning
1. How's it going?	
2. Cheers	
3. What's up?	
4. What are you up to ...?	
5. Do you fancy ...?	

Activity 3

a. Underline the phrases in the conversation (Activity 1) used to make suggestions.
 b. Put the phrases in the correct column.

followed by an infinitive	followed by <i>-ing</i> form or a noun

Lesson Share WORKSHEET

start www.onestopengl... 6:52 PM

Fig. 1
Worksheet

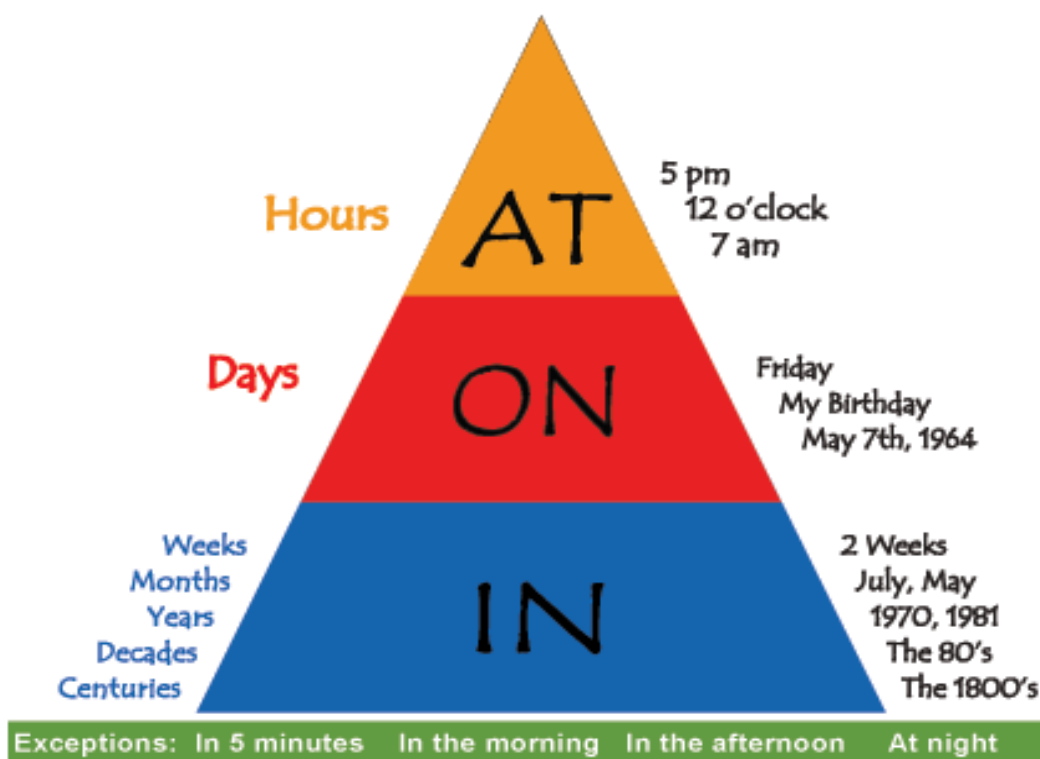


Fig. 2

Preposition of Time

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