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ICT Based Teaching in Teaching-Learning Process with special reference to English Language Teaching

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Abstract

Today's technology oriented environment has led to the emergence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The appropriate utilization of ICT helps in providing access to education, to strengthen the relevance of education to the increasingly digital workplace, and to raise educational quality. India has faced drastic changes and challenges in higher education in 21st century. One of the most important challenges is the use of ICT in teaching English language as well as English literature. Though ICT has opened windows to the vast virtual world, the students and teachers are in a fix to use the exhaustive techniques provided by ICT. Thus the main focus of this paper will be the use of ICT in teaching-learning process in colleges, with special reference to teach English language, literature, grammar and composition. The introduction of computer has facilitated in the promotion of better education. It is observed that Indian higher education has been facing tough challenges like

the need for better institutes, trained faculty, more research intensive institutes and employability even in the presence of ICT. There are various reasons behind such environment and one of the key challenges is to utilise the technology. The teachers need to be aware of the use of various multimedia technologies, internet and also the mobile usage. Pursuing Refreshers' courses is not sufficient. The teachers need to have practical knowledge of using new methodologies while teaching. The modern young students are armed with new technologies. They need to be guided on the usage and benefits of those technologies and digital devices, otherwise either they would not use it or they would simply misuse the powerful vast world of ICT. It has been observed that knowledge which is not applicable is as useless as the bath of an elephant, which soon after showering itself with good water proceeds to shower itself with mud and sand.

Keywords

ICT; English Language Teaching; Internet; Mobile; English Grammar.



Introduction

ICT, in present world has become the most popular mode to reach people, to establish contact with other nations and to get immediate and the best information possible at one click. Even in the field of education the various Information and Communication Technologies are used extensively. It has been considered an innovative and effective mode of teaching especially when it comes to teach a foreign language like English. In India, traditional chalk and talk method of teaching has always been popular among teachers. In most of the colleges, universities and other educational institutes the senior faculty members are the ones who are either incapable of using new technologies or adamant to use the same old methods like; Lecture and Dictation Method. Some even provide readymade material to the students which they had either

received from their teachers or have prepared their own notes with a few amendments in the old material. As far as teaching of English Language is concerned the teaching method do need a change. The students of present era have entered 21st century and are making extensive use of ICT to widen their horizon. They must know how to make use of this new technology. But the problem is that nobody is trying to dive deep into the ocean of this vast knowledge. The teachers are reluctant to use new methodologies due to which the students misuse the same and get lost in the labyrinth.

In India learning English has always been a challenging task for the students but with the help of Internet and its various websites they are able to cross these hurdles. The educational institutes have installed Computers to facilitate students and teacher in teaching learning process. English is official language and also the language of instructions in the curriculum. As it is a foreign language to the learners the teachers should try to make it interesting with the help of computer which will make it easy for the learners to understand the new language. There is a difference between teaching/studying from a book and a computer. Computer provides visual effects along with the audio presentation. The audio-visual technique is successful while teaching a foreign language. While reading a text book the students feel lost in the black words imprinted whereas when an audio-visual presentation followed by a discussion at the end of the presentation helps the learners to understand better and learn the chapters easily. Using PPT presentations to enhance the communication skills in the learner has replaced the traditional methods of teaching English. Class activities such as Group Discussion, Subject Discussion, Debate, etc. are common methods to be followed by the innovative teachers.

The purpose of this study is to throw light on the use of ICT in English language teaching, the advantages and disadvantages of the same, to portray the hindrances and obstacles encountered by the teacher as well as the

learners while using ICT and multimedia. The various tools of ICT and Multimedia which can be used for the teaching of English Language and English Literature are; Computer, Internet and its tools-browsers, websites, search engines, etc., YouTube, Skype, Smart-Board, Mobile-Phone, Blog, CDs/DVDs, Digital Libraries, E-Books, Electronic Publications, Digital techniques- Word Processing, Spread-sheet Programming, Data base etc. By using these tools teacher can make the lecture interesting, can motivate the learner to browse internet for further expansion of a particular answer which will give stimulus to his/her mind, and will also encourage and cultivate critical thinking in learner.

Nowadays the stereotyped traditional methods of teaching a foreign language have been replaced by multimedia and modern technologies. In India, English Language Teaching has been a challenge to the teachers. But with the help of Internet, Multimedia, Computer, Smart-phone, etc. it became convenient to teach English language as a 'skill' subject rather than as a 'knowledge' subject. The educational institutions must teach the learners 'how to be a learner and remain a learner' throughout his/her life rather than being the venues of transforming set of prescribed information to him/her. In the Preamble of UGC Model Curriculum for English (2001) Honours and MA students it is clearly stated that the students should have a serious interest in the discipline and be able to employ the advanced language skills, critical understanding and human values derived from it in the future lives and careers. But as per this research neither the admissions are done by keeping the Preamble of UGC Model Curriculum for English (2001) in mind nor do the teachers try to inculcate a critical thinking in the learners.

In India, study of English Literature is considered the part of the Curriculum of Arts Faculty only which means that other streams do not read Novel, Drama and Poetry. The studies have proved that the students who opt for English Literature are either financially weak or are mediocre in intelligence

and their main aim is to strengthen spoken and writing skills. The reason behind this kind of attitude may be their school teachers and the teaching methods they followed to teach this subject. But even at college level teachers hardly bother to follow new and innovative methodologies to make this subject interesting. Thus the students run after readymade materials easily available in market in the form of guide, cheap notes, etc. Even the teachers dictate them answers in the classroom which again kills the charm of reading the text books and preparing the assignments painstakingly. Once the students get to know that they will be given all the notes without their being doing anything, they stop attending the lectures which proves to be a complete wastage of infrastructure of the institution. The main emphasis of the teachers is completing the syllabus in time. No doubt it has to be completed in time but how it should be completed also matters. Completing the syllabus should not be the only target because syllabus is considered complete when the students have understood almost each and everything accurately and are also able to make use of it in their day to day life.

Experiments Conducted and Outcome of the Experiments

Classroom experiments were conducted in the classes of different levels to see the most effective teaching methods and the quality of study material provided and for this the classes chosen were- BA I, II, III, and MA I. The span of experiment was one year and three months in which the duration of each lecture was forty five minutes and five lectures were delivered in single day.

Experiment 1

Previous year students of Master of English have to study different genres of English Literature including English Grammar. They had four novels in their syllabus out of which three novels are such on which movies have already been made. They were asked to watch the movie by downloading it from YouTube and discuss its summary the next day. Then they were asked to prepare a PPT presentation after two weeks. Just a few students turned up in

the class that day. The use of new methodology while teaching English Literature failed drastically.

The students' feedback is as follows:

1. There is shortage of well-equipped Smart Classrooms.
2. They had been provided readymade material for quite some time thus they found it difficult to prepare a presentation.
3. They did not know how to browse Internet to get correct information on a particular topic.
4. The teaching methods followed during graduation were the traditional ones- Lecture method and Dictation method.
5. They were reluctant to accept the change as rest of the teachers were following the old methods of teaching.

Experiment 2

Students of BA first year are new to the college environment, teaching methods and their syllabi as well. All of them belong to a different background and have studied in different schools. Thus keeping all this in mind, they were initially taught by using traditional chalk and talk method for a month and were introduced to the phonemic transcription of the English vowels and consonants. Then they were asked to download an online dictionary in their mobile phones to listen to the correct pronunciation of English words. A few students were reluctant to use this method but gradually the class followed this technique and started making use of their mobile phones to learn phonetics. After a week a written and oral test was conducted in which maximum students scored well. They adopted the new methodology a bit easily. The same method was used to teach the students of BA second year. Though they were hesitant initially but they found it interesting and tried to adopt the new technology to study. Their performance was found better after this experiment.

Experiment 3

Students of BA third year had Common Errors, Clauses, Précis and Letter/Application writing. It was easy to make use of television, radio and newspaper to learn the structure of a sentence. Thus they were asked to listen to the news, read newspaper and were also told to keep on marking the various Parts of Speech while reading the newspaper. But they were least interested in learning through this method. Thus the traditional method was followed to complete the syllabus.

Use of Multimedia and ICT

Through these experiments it was proved that problem does not lie with the students only, they understand the language in which they were taught during their schooling. The problem lies with the whole education system of India. If a student tries to think beyond the syllabus, he/she is dragged back and is discouraged to do so. At times the teacher tries to use innovative method and the response of the students and other faculty members is too rude that the teacher has to face disappointment. Just a handful of educational institutes are there in India where the classes are well-equipped with all the essentials of using ICT in classrooms. Also the teachers know how to use these technologies. They are sent to pursue various courses to update themselves on the use of the same. The institutes where these high-tech multimedia resources are not available there are a lot of other methods and resources which are waiting impatiently to be used by the students and the best example is Mobile phone. Nowadays the mobile has become too smart that it can be used in an innovatively to study. Around 80% of the students possess a Smart phone in which they get almost all the features required to learn English Grammar and the most important among all is Internet.

The students who possess mobile smart-phones and can afford to get Internet pack activated they should download the different apps available to learn English language like Grammar is easy, Offline Dictionary, Rules of English Grammar, etc. Merriam & Webster Dictionary is also an app through

which the students can learn correct pronunciation of difficult words. They can use YouTube to download the poems referred in their syllabus of English Literature and can listen to them carefully. It will help them learn how to recite a poem. Even full length movies which are based on Novels and Plays prescribed in the syllabus can be downloaded and watched in free time. The teachers can create their own Blogs and ask the students to read those and can also post exercises related to the chapters done in the class to be solved by the students. The teachers can also email the questionnaire to the students and can get the feedback about changing teaching methodologies.

Conclusion

The prime motive of all the educational institutes is to make the students a better person, to hone their skills and also to make them a better citizen by providing them quality education. As far as the higher education system in India is concerned one has to use both the methodologies while teaching i.e. traditional as well as modern ICT. English language will always remain in the curriculum as compulsory subject. The ICT and multimedia technologies will keep on developing in future as well. The teaching will become more student-centred than teacher-centred. The communication skills will also be enhanced and the students will be motivated to learn English language by using modern technologies. To conclude it can be said that using Multimedia and ICT will prove handy (with a few limitations of its usage) to teach the students English language and English literature in an interesting and innovative manner.

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