A Study of The Application of Digital Technologies In Teaching And Learning English Language And Literature

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Abstract: Internet, ICT, VLE, digital media and software as such have heralded a new era in many aspects of our lives, to which education is no exception. As used in communication, internet communication tools began to de used in education especially in teaching English language and literature learning as the case study in this paper. As a result of the application of cyber technologies, both teaching and learning are facilitated. Students learn faster and easier than before because of the use of technology in schools. Learning English through the web and using new trends in education in schools make students willing to learn the literature too. The aim of this study is to review technology in English language and literature learning activities and internet communication tools in use. Moreover, technologies as internet have always been interesting to the students, thus based on this assumption it would be discussed how teachers can make English learning in the educational environments more enjoyable through enjoyment available in the study of literature too.

Keywords: E-learning; VLE; English language and literature; CMC and ICT.

INTRODUCTION

The use of technology in various fields has been so successful and beneficial for teachers to reach some particular goals especially in education and for those who are learning a foreign language and literature. In every step of our lives the significance of technology is seen and enjoyed in these days. Communication has never been so easily available and fun. "The barrier of location for people in different parts of the world has been removed by some of the latest technologies such as the web, internet, mobile devices such as Personal Digital Assistant (PDA's), iPhone etc". (Sarica & Cavus, 2008, p.21). Web- based technologies and powerful internet connections provide various new possibilities for the development of educational technology. English is the only language that has attracted many people around the world, for the most part due to the globalization. In addition to globalization, the interest in the global trade, scientific resources available in English and benefits as such together with the interest in literature are among the other reasons responsible for the worldwide appeal in learning English language and literature. So it can be said that English language and literature has become an ideal method for expression of feelings and using the technology. Students learn faster and easier than before because of the use of technology in educational institutions. It is quite clear that English has become a necessity today. "In 1996 participation in web-based higher education courses was estimated to be 1 million students and projected to be 3 million by 2000" (Edelson, 1998, p.31).

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education. It is widely accepted that advances in information technology and new developments in learning science provide "opportunities to create well-designed, learner-centered, interactive, affordable, efficient, flexible e-learning environments" (Khan, 2005, p.168). For this reason, it could be suggested that; going through internet is an alternative way to study English. Web based technologies and powerful internet connections provide various new possibilities and latest trends for teachers and learners. In fact as the electronic media as internet and the use of cyber space in education are the inseparable elements of education in the global atmosphere today, special attention must be paid on how to use the information communication technology (ICT) and virtual learning environments (VLE) to meet the demands of the era as information and communication technology has become a crucial part of the modern world. Now most of the countries emphasize learning and applying the information and communication technology as the base of their educational systems. The main idea this essay is concerned which is considering the practical applications of ICT and VLE in learning English language and literature, moreover it is tried to evaluate quality based on a systematic approach too .The rapid technological progress in the last years has heralded a new era in our understanding of promoting literacy and presented some of the advantages of using ICT and VLE in the classroom in the present era of information explosion in which many aspects of our lives have undergone dramatic changes. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996): " today we are drowned in the deluge of information"(p.298). Huge changes have occurred in the pedagogy of teaching English language and literature. In fact ICT, CMC and VLE have initiated new possibilities into the classrooms. The bridge between education and internet technology has made a deep impact on perspectives about teaching and learning. In fact, as a result of the application of ICT, CMC and VLE not only "the relationships between teachers and students have undergone a phenomenal change" (Barad, D. P. 2009, p.10), but also the role of the teachers, the nature and context of learning, as well as the function and relative importance of the contents of courses have all been challenged and redefined. In a broad sense IT includes the technology used to communicate information that

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encompasses telephones, fax machines, mobile phones and such. "In today's digitalized world, however, the terms ICT and VLE have become mutually interchangeable with computer technology"(Barad, D. P. 2009, p.13), and it is that aspect which are considered in this study. This essay attempts to discuss the extent to which ICT and VLE can contribute to the teaching of English language and literature, as well as introducing the most useful web based technologies available to make practical uses of. Moreover it must be clarified at this point that technology is not a teaching method or theory, rather a tool that aids educators by improving access to different types of media already in practice. Technology is used to simulate real-life situations and as O' Leary states: "helps learners to have control over the learning process" (1998, p.23). Therefore, according to Carol(1998) there must be "complementary relationship between source language research and computer assisted language learning (CALL) practice to create a successful literature learning" (p.24). Moreover as Krashen(2007) puts it: "using computers for free voluntary surfing will encourage students to wander through the internet and read what interests them" (p.27). In fact computer assisted language learning opens up vistas of expansion in the field through facilitating learners' engagement in active communication which in turn "facilitates the development of second language competence" (Peterson, 2005, p.35). In addition attention must be paid to the fact that "multimedia-assisted language learning and Internet-based instruction contribute to EFL students' cross cultural competence" (Kim, 2005, p.174) .According to what has been stated by Hoven (1999), computers enable learners to "pool their knowledge in effective ways and enhance peer correction and language repair work" (p.102) computers enable learners to work at their own pace. This research paper aims at sharing practical experiments with ICT and VLE in teaching English Literature in the light of the earlier discussed theories, though they are related to language learning in general, the tools would be used to teach literature instead. It would mainly deal with the pragmatic aspects of using CMC, ICT and VLE with the students of English Literature. It would be discussed how the extensive use of synchronous and real-time communications could be practiced in English literature classrooms as teaching tools. In line with the earlier discussed topics, this paper is to discuss the possible application of the latest trends in e-learning which are mobile learning (iPod, cell phones, iPhone) blogs, e-mails, instant messenger, and services as such.

WEB-BASED LEARNING
In recent years the terminology has been changed for web based learning; it was called as technology based or distance learning, online education, in the end it is now called e-learning and web based learning. A variety of basic language skills can be developed with the help of web-based language learning activities. It is known that; there are four basic skills in English which are listening, speaking, writing, and reading. These skills can be put on the web and made interactive in a variety of ways. One of these ways is internet communication tools such as m-learning, e-mail, blogs, chat. These tools provide integrated environment for teachers and students. Students generally feel positive about web-based learning tools, when they are:

• well-designed, easy to learn, user friendly

• when the tool is good as support, not as replacement of lectures

• when the use of diverse tool features, i.e. chat, bulletin board, is relevant and tied into the specific course structure and content (Storey et al., 2002)

Technology is developing and changing very fast, and if it is not used effectively and correctly some problems can be occurred. Technologies which can be used in education as follows:

E-MAIL
E-mail is a communication tool which is being used in language learning. E-mail was in use before the internet even existed and is probably the most commonly used Internet application. By getting a single e-mail account both foreign teachers and students can join e-mail assisted language activities. For learners of English e-mail is an excellent way to communicate with their instructors because of its usefulness and easiness. With a single e-mail account, "foreign teachers and students can integrate e-mail based activities into their curriculum" (LeLoup, 1997, p.37). For example, literature international key pal projects which enable students to correspond with native speakers of the target language are easily implement where participants have the necessary access, equipment, and foreign contacts. Web-based learning is another area in which e-mail is being used. Ramazani (1994) tells of an activity called The Weekly Essay. A few days before the class meets, his students sent e-mails to each other the contents of which were essays they had written about a particular literary work like the interpretations of a novel, poem, play and genres as such. In this way the students are better prepared for the class discussion. Ramazani (1994) uses another e-mail activity to prepare students for class ahead of time. He asks them to submit summaries of their understanding or appreciation of a literary work intended to be taught. Next he organizes these ideas on a handout; the ideas were later used in class for both brainstorming and stimulating class discussions. Similarly, the teacher can assign a debate topic and ask the students to begin to discuss it via e-mail. When the time comes to form debate teams in class, the students will already have a satisfactory understanding of both sides of the issue and will be able to make better and relevant decisions. English teachers can benefit from web sites which include e-mail accounts like Yahoo, Hotmail and G-mail to name a few. So teachers can create a discussion topic and send it to students via e-mail when receiving the e-mail students start to write compositions or essays in English and discuss a work and then send back to teacher. This helps them to improve writing skills and vocabulary as well as their ability to practice analyzing a literary work.

WEBLOGS
Blogging is investigated as a form of personal communication and expression, with a specific interesting

uncovering the range of motivations driving individuals to create and maintain blogs. Nardi et al. (2004) states: "Blogs are well suited to serve as on-line personal journals for students, particularly since they normally enable uploading and linking of files"(p.41). Language and literature learners could use a personal blog, linked to a course, as an electronic portfolio, to journals, authors' weblogs or websites and other open access sources providing students with both reading resources as well as helping them discover the hidden layers of meaning in a work of art. Moreover students can publish weblogs too which improves their writing abilities. By publishing the blog on the internet, the student has the possibility of writing for their classmates. Pinkman (2005) indicates that:

> Blogging becomes communicative and interactive when participants assume multiple roles in the writing process, as writers who write and post, as readers or reviewers who respond to other writers' posts, and as writer-readers who, returning to their own posts, react to criticism of their own posts. Readers in turn can comment on what they read, although blogs can be placed in secured environments as well. (p.185)

Self-publishing encourages ownership and responsibility on the part of students, who would be more thoughtful and careful both in content and structure if they know they are writing for a real audience. As an example a practical site to be introduced to the students to use it as a role model is: http://blog-assisted-language-learning.blogspot.com/   In which students discuss any topics to develop their writing and reading skills. But students should type only in English this is very important for their developments in terms of writing and vocabulary.

INSTANT MESSENGER
ICQ was the first general messenger service in the early 1996 (www.worldstart.com/tips/tips.php/1498). During the years a variety of messenger services such as MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, etc. began to serve to people.   Newly more services are added to such technologies. Among the most important new ones, one can name:

www.oovoo.com

www.qq.com

Students writing, listening and speaking could be improved if the above websites are used. Moreover they can make use of them in their literature classes by asking their e-friends' ideas and interpretations about a literary work. Moreover, students of English can have better interaction with teachers in these virtual environments; they can communicate with not only teachers but also peers and share information. The most important aspect is live interaction between teachers and students. For example when it is talked about MSN Messenger, it provides several features beyond text, audio and video, and file transfer. Messenger is used with a Webcam and allows users to see each other in a small video window while talking. So students can talk with their peers or teachers in English in

order to develop their listening and at the same time speaking skills.

SKYPE
Nowadays almost all messenger services have audio functions and technological equipments such as laptop computers, also have cameras on them. So students can talk with their instructors and peers far away. "Skype is a relatively newly emerging technology and the potential application of it to language and literature learning and teaching needs to be further explored" (Wu, 2005, p.13). And students can speak with native speakers of language and compare their pronunciation for example with a native speaker. In addition to improving their literary knowledge by discussing intended literary works with native or native-like speakers of English, especially university professors, students can improve their speaking too. Speaking skills can be developed by using this application.

MOBILE DEVICES
Today's world has been changed over the years and besides technology has been changed in other words it has been developed. Mobile learning is one of those technologies which have been used for a few years. Before going further into details it must be specified that mobile learning means that people are learning whenever and wherever they want with their mobile phones, PDA's and other technological devices. Mobile learning is also defined as "any service or facility that supplies learner with general electronic information and educational content that aids in acquisition of knowledge regardless of location and time" (Lehner & Nosekabel, 2002, p. 15). Vavoula and Sharples (2002) suggest three ways in which learning can be considered mobile as "learning is mobile in terms of space, it is mobile in different areas of life, and it is mobile with respect to time"(p.12). As it can be understood from these definitions that, mobile learning system is available for delivering education to learners anytime and anywhere they need it. Mobile phones are the most popular devices among people. The following mobile devices could be used in teaching both Language and literature:

IPODS
IPods are one of the mobile media devices which enable users to produce, organize, deliver, and use media also users can share texts, images, audio or video with their peers and teachers. The technology and pedagogy of using podcasting and iPod could be in improving listening skills in case of language learning, but the use of podcasts in literature is really important. There are many universities like the Stanford University from which podcasts on literature called "Entitled Opinions" on different aspects of literature including literary schools, criticism and literary theories as well as history of literature could be downloaded. In addition to that the following websites include podcasts too:

www.freeclassicaudiobooks.com

www.librivox.org

www.classicpoetryaload.com

The activity examples included in the above websites are not only aimed at improving students' English, but also to enhance vocabulary building, learning grammar and publishing students' work. "An advanced feature of iPod, "Pod Text", allows even more possibilities for language learning" (Shinagawa & Schneider, 2007, p.17). All skills of English can be provided with the use of iPods for example teachers can send text messages and students can read the message and answer it. Also by recording their voices they can do listening and speaking exercises at the same time. Moreover, students can listen and read authentic materials such as news in English, songs, poems, or vocabulary and translations. The activity examples are to enhance not only listening, but also vocabulary building, learning grammar and publishing students' work. IPods provides a variety of possibilities for language learners. Another useful website is: https://segue.middlebury.edu/view/html/site/ipodls/node/853364

CONCLUSION

Language and literature learning does not only occur in the classroom and should not stop after the learners leave the classroom. So, technological devices should be always used by students and teachers. In order to provide an interaction between language learners and teachers or peer to peers internet connections and mobile devices are of the most popular and useful ways in language and literature learning. The development of Web-based language teaching and learning activities continue to be an exciting and growing field. While computer programmers, instructional designers, and computational linguists steadily push the extremes of the field, language and literature instructors can use the basic tools of internet. It can be said that, researchers have enough research on web based language learning, from now on, they should begin interactive language and literature lessons and encourage teachers to create their own web based activities. In other words, the researchers are recommended that more researches are needed in which students can enjoy and learn language effectively.

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