

Module -28**TEACHING WEB-ENHANCED AND BLENDED CLASSES****Topic No: 46**

Tips for Teaching Web-Enhanced Courses, Posting Lectures Online, A Revised Approach to Lecturing, How to Post Your Lectures Online, Using a Discussion Board, Enlisting Technology in Your Favor, Using Online Quiz making Tools, Providing Advice and Support, Counseling Students Online, Establishing Virtual Office Hours, Assigning Group Projects, Using the Web as a Student Presentation Medium, Team Teaching, Tips for Teaching Blended Courses, Preparing for the Blended Course, Teaching the Blended Course

This lesson focuses specifically on them as well as those in which online elements play a merely supplemental role to the face-to-face class. You may find that material that was discussed in the context of the chapters in which it occurred is here summarized or treated in greater depth.

Today, the use of the Web by instructors is broad and varied. Some universities maintain their own “channels” on YouTube to stream video versions of their best instructors’ on-campus lectures to the Web while others schedule just a few online discussions throughout the semester and post their lecture notes, while still others teach classes that regularly meet online one week and on campus the next. How can you best integrate the online and face-to-face elements of a class? What factors should you think about? Are there any pitfalls to avoid? To answer such questions, we’ll try to offer helpful tips for blended classes as well as for integrating online tools for a primarily face-to-face class.

Let’s look for a moment at those instructors who make minimal use of the Web. Perhaps they teach a traditional on-campus course but maintain a web site for the course. Typically, such web sites contain a course syllabus, a schedule of required readings and assignments, a listing of the course office hours, and some hyperlinks to relevant web sites in the instructor’s particular subject area. They may also include a link to a discussion board which may be entirely an optional area, with students deciding whether to use or not use the site. In these cases in which students seldom look at the web site, the situation suggests that the instructor isn’t using the web site to maximum advantage. If asked to provide a reason why their web sites are so lightly utilized, instructors might cite their students’ lack of reliable access to the Web from off campus (a typical complaint for developing countries), or even a lack of interest on the part of students who are having their

instructional and social needs met on campus. Instructors may also say that because of their own workloads, they don't want to spend more time creating material for the web site. They may even express the fear that if they use the Web more extensively, their students will no longer have a reason to come to class. In other words, instructors are asking why they should work more for the same pay, doing something that perhaps threatens their livelihood. The ultimate answers to this question are beyond the purview of this book. Academic senates and other faculty organizations, institutional administrators, and union representatives must work them out. But we don't believe that using the Web effectively requires you to labor twice as long for the same pay. We do think that it can improve the way you teach your traditional course. To that end, this chapter will also provide some practical suggestions for this skeptical audience.

The Sloan Consortium definitions of Web Facilitated (what we call "enhanced" here), Blended/Hybrid, and Online are based on the amount of content delivered online. They term "Web Facilitated" as those courses with 1–29 percent of content delivered online; "Blended" courses as those in which 30–79 percent of the content is delivered online but still require some face-to-face meetings; and true "Online" as containing 80 percent or more online content with few or no face-to-face meetings. But another way to approach this is to look at the types of instructional activities carried out online and whether or not they are required or the degree to which they replace face-to-face time. (Still persistently termed "seat time" by many, consider the following definitions:

- **Web-enhanced:** A broad category of courses with associated web sites or course management system classrooms that contain materials relevant to the course (perhaps a syllabus, a list of web-based resources, a course calendar, a reading list, lecture notes or video lectures, discussion board, and/or real-time online meeting functions and chat). Actual online activities may be required or optional.
- **Blended:** Courses in which both online and face-to-face instructional elements are required and complementary. A sizeable percentage of content is delivered online, there are required online student activities, and a significant portion of the student's grade is based on online activity.

Tips for Teaching Web-Enhanced Courses

While we want to focus first on those teaching web-enhanced courses, readers who are mainly interested in true blended courses may find that many of the following tips are also relevant to their needs.

Posting Lectures Online

The matter of online lectures is probably the biggest bugaboo teachers face when considering whether to use the Web. Why should students bother to come to class if they can simply read (or view video versions of) the lectures online?

Most lectures consist of a body of core material, factual or introductory in nature, followed by a discussion of more complex issues, proofs, or processes. The core material constitutes the main dish of the lecture. It's usually this material that students are expected to know. The other material serves as side dishes, which help differentiate the A students from the B and C students. If the core material were posted online, enriched by graphics and charts (perhaps with a few links to other relevant material available online), students would be relieved of the chore of reproducing this material word for word in their notes. That would allow them to concentrate on the finer points of the lecture. In other words, posting the lectures online frees the students to concentrate on what is being said.

S.Q Posting Lectures Online:

Yet that argument still raises the question: Why should most students bother to come to class?

The answer may have something to do with learning styles. **Some students learn better by listening and taking notes. Others do better by reading rather than by listening to lectures, and a third group seems to benefit by doing specific assignments based on the material covered.** In that sense, posting lecture notes online helps some, but not all, students.

But the answer goes deeper still. It involves the basic approach to lecturing. Perhaps you need to rethink how you use your face-to-face time with students.

A Revised Approach to Lecturing

Admittedly, an instructor who posts lecture notes and reads them aloud in class may be in danger of putting students to sleep. But if the lecturer alters what he or she does in class, relying on the fact that the material is freely available online, then the experience of attending class may have a different meaning.

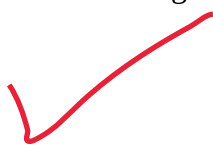
Say that the assignment for the week is to read the core notes posted online, along with whatever textual material supports it. In that case, instead of spending the first twenty minutes or so reviewing the core or introductory material, the instructor can concentrate on a particularly knotty issue or complex concept, examining it, elucidating it, debating it in class. Those students who have read the material beforehand will gain a deeper insight into the concept. (Of course, those who have not read the material will have considerable difficulty following what's going on. One hopes they will get the message and come to the next session better prepared.)

Online lectures offer other advantages as well. For the instructor, posting lectures can be an aid in re-evaluating older and possibly out-of-date course materials, improving organization, coherence,

and comprehension. For the students, having the core portion of the lecture online provides an opportunity to review the material in its original form (rather than using their scribbled notes) or to catch up on material they may have missed because of illness or absence.

Important! The point here is that using the Web to post lectures is neither a panacea nor a threat. It depends entirely on how effectively the web-based material is integrated into the class.

How to Post Your Lectures Online



Posting your lecture notes online does add to your initial workload, particularly if you've never prepared them this way before. But once you've done it, you'll find it comparatively easy to update your notes the next time you teach the course. There are more and more choices available to accomplish this, which were discussed in Chapters 6 and 9 in some detail. **You may post your lectures by uploading PowerPoint, by creating a PDF version of your word-processed documents, write directly into your course management system content area,** or use one of the free sites mentioned in earlier chapters to create course web pages. **You may also use one of the many Web 2.0 programs** already mentioned in this book to create narrated slides or an audio or video lecture. You may want to experiment with these diverse ways of offering lectures before deciding on one that is easiest for you to create and for your students to access.

Using a Discussion Board

Most classes, particularly smaller, seminar-style classes, involve discussions of some sort. Ordinarily, students prepare for the discussions through readings. In some graduate classes, students prepare "position" papers, which are then circulated to other students for their consideration before coming to class. Using the Web in conjunction with the work done in class can enhance any of these techniques. Take the case of the seminar. In order to present the topic properly, the instructor will generally introduce it with either a short lecture or an impromptu talk. The students will then offer initial reactions to the discussion topic, setting the stage for the eventual discussion. A half hour or so may have elapsed before the discussion is really joined.

An alternative approach is to have the students post their initial reactions to a discussion topic online and read the postings on each topic before coming to class. Although this would require more work from the students, it would not increase the instructor's workload except insofar as he or she had to read the work posted to the web site. What it would require of the students is perhaps a more carefully considered appreciation of the discussion topic and a greater awareness of where they stand in relation to other students in the seminar. Presumably this would make for a livelier and more informed discussion, and it would elicit remarks from all the members of the class rather than merely the most vocal.

A discussion board can be of use in large, lecture-style classes as well. For most students, “attending” such a class means finding a seat somewhere in an auditorium, staring at the back of someone’s head, and listening to the instructor intone the lecture from a stage. Discussion in such a setting is usually fairly haphazard. The instructor pauses to solicit input from the assembled students. The more intrepid dare to raise their hands, while the rest sit quietly.

The Web can humanize such a class and permit students far more interaction with their colleagues and instructors than might otherwise be possible. An instructor can divide up the class into groups of twenty or so, depending on the number of TAs or assistants available. The instructor with a large class and no assistance might even devise a system of rotating student moderators who take turns facilitating their groups. Students using the discussion board will thus have a work group composed of class members whom they might not ordinarily get to know, a considerable advantage in schools where a majority of students don’t live on campus, or in large universities where most students know only their dorm-mates.

Instructors and students can use these virtual study groups for a number of purposes. Students can post and discuss questions related to the material covered in class. Or, having delivered a lecture in class, an instructor might post a follow-up question, requiring the students to formulate an appropriate response as part of their grade. These responses might then become the basis of a future class discussion or lecture. They might also serve as an archived resource for students reviewing the material.

An instructor can monitor the comments posted in the discussion groups and use them as the basis of a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page containing general answers to the students’ more noteworthy queries and concerns. This will save the instructor the extra time of having to respond to the same question over and over again, either by email or in one-to-one advising sessions. Finally, if the instructor creates some relevant and focused initial discussion prompts, the discussion group postings can provide the instructor with valuable insight into how effectively the material in lectures has been conveyed.

Enlisting Technology in Your Favor

Much has been made of the ubiquity of laptops, netbooks (small, scaled-down laptops), and smart phones and the distraction these pose to students in the on-campus classroom, taking attention away from the lecture or other activity that the instructor has so carefully prepared. Rather than fight it, try to enlist technology in your favor. This goes beyond the “clicker” personal response systems many universities have introduced on campuses whereby instructors can poll students or ask them to contribute questions. Why not make something on the Web the object of your attention (for example, a photograph representing a current event or a video) and ask students to log in and take five minutes to post their quick responses in a chat. Then display the chat and its results and

discuss the issues. (For those students who may not bring an electronic device to class, you might provide the option of logging on after class to an asynchronous forum you have established to add their responses to those of their classmates.)

Similarly, there are ways to take advantage of the popularity of social networking sites like Facebook. However, be careful to allow students to preserve the boundaries between social interaction and “official” class participation. **You can create a special Facebook group to communicate with students, or ask students to create a limited class profile with appropriate privacy settings for participating in your class.** There are an increasing number of applications designed for Facebook that might enhance your face-to-face class, including the application previously mentioned, Blackboard Sync, for institutional customers that provides some integration with a Blackboard classroom. However, start by deliberating what you would like to accomplish and then try out these applications of interest to you within Facebook to judge for yourself whether it would be easier to use a course management system or one of the many collaborative sites like Ning rather than Facebook for your purposes. It may be that you decide to use Facebook primarily for community-building activities for the class or as a way to update students on the class activities.

Using Online Quiz making Tools

If your course is enhanced or blended, you presumably can conduct your high-stakes testing in a proctored on-campus environment. But online quizmaking tools can provide valuable

Figure 9.1 Miriam Sharpe prepares to create a group page on Facebook (www.facebook.com) in order to build community in her blended physics class. Reproduced by permission from Facebook.

The screenshot shows the Facebook 'Create a Group' interface. At the top is a navigation bar with 'facebook', 'Home', 'Profile', 'Friends', and 'Inbox'. Below this is a header for 'Create a Group' with a group icon. A sub-header 'Step 1: Group Info' is highlighted. The form contains several fields: 'Group Name: (required)' with the text 'Miriam Sharpe's Physics Class'; 'Description: (required)' with the text 'For students of my blended Introduction to Physics course.'; 'Group Type: (required)' with two dropdown menus, the first set to 'Student Groups' and the second to 'Classes & Departments'; 'Recent News:' with an empty list box; and location fields for 'Office:', 'Email:', 'Street:', and 'City/Town:'. At the bottom right are 'Create Group' and 'Cancel' buttons.

assistance by permitting you to construct self-grading quizzes online. Most course management systems contain this feature. They permit you to construct a quiz consisting of true/false statements, multiple-choice questions, one-word answers, multiple answers, matching answers, ordered answers, or short or long essay questions. Even if your institution offers no access to course management systems, you can make use of the numerous free quizmaker tools available online.

Students taking these tests can receive immediate feedback. This feedback can consist of a simple “correct” or “incorrect” message, or a statement explaining in detail why the student got the answer right or wrong. Questions can include embedded graphics. Depending on the software, they can even include sound or video files you’ve made, or links to such files that you found elsewhere on the Web. Another use of such online quizzes is to provide sample practice exams for student to use to prepare for midterm or final exams. Using one of the quiz generators, the instructor can provide answers as well as focused feedback, so that those taking the practice exams can learn from their mistakes. As with the preparation of lecture notes, creating quizzes can be time-consuming at first and then save you a great deal of trouble the second time around. One caveat, however: be sure to save the questions and answers in a word-processing file of your own. Sometimes institutions change their course management systems, and it isn’t always possible to import a set of questions in one software system into another.

Providing Advice and Support

Providing counseling, advice, mentoring, and support is part of the job of teaching. Instructors list their office hours in their syllabi and, once or twice a week, sit dutifully behind their desks waiting for someone to knock on their door. All too often, nobody comes, leaving the instructor to wonder about the utility of sitting in an office for two hours a week. For some, the meager trickle of students is an opportunity to catch up on paperwork. Some may see it as a testament to their pedagogical skills—a sign that students aren't having any difficulties. To others, however, the lack of office visitors is a warning signal that something may be wrong—either the allotted time isn't convenient or the students don't feel they are getting what they want from the course. Using two of the online tools readily available to most instructors—email and chat—can improve the flow of communication markedly.

Counseling Students Online

With email, text messaging, instant messaging and chat, instructors can respond to student inquiries at a time and place of their choosing, leaving them freer to structure their activities during the day. Students can submit their inquiries as the need arises—for example, in their dorm room late at night when they're studying.

But shifting the counseling load to the Web has its obvious downside as well: it can significantly increase the instructor's workload if it isn't kept in check. To control your workload, we suggest the following guidelines, some of which we've recommended in earlier chapters as part of establishing a protocol for communications.

- **Set strict parameters for responding to emails** and other online messages and make these clear to your students in both your syllabus and your class. For instance, make sure your students understand that although you will accept emails from them, you will not necessarily respond to each one immediately and that you may provide responses to a question in the classroom if you see it is one that has been repeatedly posed.
- **Specify which kinds of problems you will respond to:** for example, personal problems, requests, or issues; or difficulties comprehending the subject matter. Steer clear altogether of administrative issues, such as dates for upcoming tests or questions about homework. Such information is either available in the syllabus or more properly discussed in an online or on-the-ground discussion session.
- **Insist that you will not respond to any emails whose chief issue isn't clearly identified** in the subject line of the communication.

This will save you the trouble of having to read through the entire email to discover the problem at hand. It will also allow you to forward a student email to a TA or assistant when appropriate.

- **Respond to a problem you perceive as being potentially a question for all** by sending one email to your entire class, or by posting an announcement in the online classroom or by compiling a FAQ page with your answers and post it on your web site.

Establishing Virtual Office Hours

Online chat software can be used to conduct virtual office hours. It can, for instance, lighten your advisory load, or at least make it less onerous, if you use it in a focused way. Say, for example, that **you tell your students that you will be available for consultations for an hour or two on certain days. If you're in your office, or even your home, you can open a chat session, leaving the chat window visible on your screen.** As you wait for students to check in, you can do other work, glancing at the screen now and then to see if anyone has arrived.

Once a student has arrived, your conversation (depending on the chat software you're using) can usually be logged; that is, a record of your conversation is automatically saved to a text file. This permits you to edit the text file at some later date, extracting material for your FAQ page.

Some chat software tools now include a whiteboard function. The whiteboard, as you may recall, is a communal area where an instructor can draw or type. The students in the chat session can then discuss the instructor's display or present material of their own as part of the online give and take. Such software tools permit you to display in the whiteboard area any document on your hard disk (such as a PowerPoint presentation or an Excel spreadsheet) or any web page you have bookmarked; you can do this simultaneously while chatting with your students. More impressive still, the students can do the same thing. Thus you and your students can see the same documents, web pages, or applications at the same time that you are discussing them.

Many of the foregoing capabilities are now augmented by browser-based videoconferencing tools that permit one-to-one or even group video and audio communication without the need to even download software. (Some of these tools were described in earlier portions of this book, especially Chapter 9.) But as the pipelines carrying the information have improved, this form of communication has become more accessible and common. Today's instructor now has a broad array of communication tools with which to conduct advisory or small-seminar sessions with a class whether or not their institution provides such tools.

Assigning Group Projects

One feature commonly available in most course management software is the ability to divide large classes into small student groups, affording them a private area online in which to collaborate on the production and publication of group projects.

In these private areas the students have access to the full panoply of online tools—message boards, chat rooms, and whiteboards. They can create information, format it, and share these newly created items with each other, unseen by the rest of the class. This gives them a virtual workspace, permitting them to work together on a schedule convenient to them—a particular advantage to students with busy schedules or difficult commutes. It also permits you as the instructor to assign group collaborative projects with the assurance that they won't overwhelm the students' time or capabilities. Many institutions and course management systems also provide wiki software for such group collaboration purposes.

In a small private school, using a discussion board or other tools to promote online group work may seem superfluous. But in a large urban school, where students commute long distances, have jobs, or are raising families, the opportunity to work online overcomes a number of logistical obstacles while at the same time affording a level of intercommunication that wouldn't otherwise be possible. It also helps students learn how to collaborate with one another, a communication skill highly valued in the workplace.

Access to online group collaboration tools may permit you to assign more complex research projects than you might have before. By dividing the workload, students can tackle problems of much greater complexity than might have been possible if the assignment were for one student alone. With adequate preparation and planning, students from different institutions, cities, and even countries can connect via the Internet and may be able to work together collaboratively using the same set of group tools. Finally, the group projects can be released for viewing to the whole class and form the basis of a vigorous face-to-face or online discussion. To explore this subject further, see Chapters 6 and 7 for discussion of some of the specific options available for group activities.

Using the Web as a Student Presentation Medium

The Web is a powerful presentation medium, and it can be used in both web-enhanced and blended classes to display work created by students as course projects, either individually or in groups. Some instructors understandably prefer the more traditional means of expression, such as the research paper or the PowerPoint slide show delivered in front of the class. Frequently, however, an inordinate amount of classroom time is required to present such projects to the class. How much more efficient it can be to have students present their work online instead.

Using the Web to present such reports permits students to use a wider range of media to make their points. Students can create videos, narrated slides, blogs, and web pages replete with graphics, sounds, animations, and links. Even without such multimedia embellishments, web-based reports can be read and evaluated by all the students before or after they come to class, leaving more face-to-face class time for discussion, analyses, and critiques.

Assembling such projects should no longer be considered a hardship for students. In most cases, it is a skill they can master easily, and one they ought to learn. Using simple, menu-based Web 2.0 type tools described in earlier chapters, they should be able to assemble relatively sophisticated presentations with ease.

Web-Based Exercises

The Web is so rich in potential learning materials that traditional instructors would be depriving their students of valuable educational resources if they ignored it altogether. No matter what subject you teach, be it molecular biology or cultural anthropology, a multitude of sites can provide you and your students with information, simulations, or resources to consider, critique, analyze, or discuss.

Aside from visiting informational web sites, students can participate in global science experiments, perform experiments in online labs, collaborate and communicate with students from another school, state, or nation, analyze and critique articles published online and post reactions to them in a discussion board, and meet and discuss relevant issues with a “guest host” in a discussion board or chat room.

Here are some pointers for incorporating Web resources into your face-to-face on-site class:

- Identify each site you want your students to visit by its URL, both on your web site and in the syllabus. Revisit the site just before you begin teaching the class to make sure it’s still alive (sometimes sites are moved to different URLs or simply no longer work).
- Be very clear when defining what you want your students to see or do when visiting a site. Be respectful of the time they must spend online to accomplish the assigned task. Generally, you’ll want to avoid the treasure-hunt approach—that is, having your students hunt for information before they can critique it.
- Avoid wasting time displaying web sites in the on-site class unless it is for the purpose of discussing a specific assignment focused around that web page or it otherwise requires some explanation that can’t be duplicated online. If your Internet connection in the classroom is not stable, you may want to prepare screen shots of a web site being used for this purpose.

Team Teaching

Just as students can collaborate easily online, so can teachers. Team teaching a large, lecture-style course requires a great deal of advance planning and preparation. Traditionally, this is done in face-to-face meetings, but using the collaborative tools available on the Web can ameliorate the process, speeding up the production of course materials and easing the task of approving them once they are done.

Once a course is under way, using the Web has its advantages as well. Instructors can spell each other at certain tasks, with one instructor handling lectures in the classroom while the other publishes backup materials on the Web and replies to student inquiries on discussion boards.

In less common cases, instructors may be situated too far apart to commute easily to the physical class. Using the Web is an obvious alternative, permitting the use of “experts” to prepare online lectures, but leaving the discussions to the instructor in the on-site class.

A Final Thought on Web Enhancement

In this discussion of ways the Internet can be integrated in an on-the-ground class, one key thought underlies our comments. Important! Making the use of the Internet optional rather than incorporating it into the curriculum dooms it to failure.

When you make the Web an integral part of the course work, you automatically make it more relevant and valuable to your students and yourself alike. Treating the web site merely as a repository for chance comments or random postings reduces it to the level of a technological appendage and squanders its considerable potential to enrich what you are doing on the ground.

Tips for Teaching Blended Courses

While many institutions new to online education have surmised that the road to online teaching is made easier by first exposing instructors to blended teaching, there is little or no research that bears this out. In fact, many people who are experienced online teachers might tell you that blended courses can actually be more difficult to teach than fully online ones. Why is this? It is chiefly due to the challenge of integrating the two modalities of teaching in a way that makes both equally meaningful and effective.

Two of the biggest errors made by those attempting blended courses are:

- Overloading students with a great deal more work than they would have in either a completely face-to-face or fully online course;
- Not giving clear directions about what will be accomplished in each mode and how to coordinate the two.

The first issue has been termed the “course and one-half syndrome.” The second is best handled along the same lines as fully online courses—with a comprehensive syllabus and schedule that clarifies how the class will operate.

The tips offered here in some cases reiterate principles already stated in this book and previously illustrated by examples, while in other cases, tips supply some additional information specially tailored for the blended format.

Preparing for the Blended Course

- Take advantage of any training or training resource materials offered on campus (or off- or online) if you are new to online teaching and blended learning. Look for training that not only focuses on how to use online software from the technical point of view, but also offers some insights into approaches to teaching and learning and design for a blended course.
- Review the face-to-face version of the course if that’s what you have been teaching. Consider what is best reserved for face-to-face delivery and be able to explain your rationale. Find the weakest points in the teaching experience as you see them and consider how these may be changed with the addition of online activities and resources.
- Review the schedule for your blended class. Are the face-to-face meeting dates already determined or can you determine the pattern yourself? The first class should ideally meet face-to-face so that students can be fully prepared for the blended format. On many campuses, students are accustomed to thinking about the first class day as provisional, a waste of time, or not a “real” class meeting. For this reason, it is a good idea to email your students ahead of time to stress the importance of not missing this first class date. If this would seem to be a losing battle on your campus, strongly consider making both the first and second class meetings face-to-face.
- Generally speaking, in putting together your syllabus schedule, it’s a good idea to plan discussions of the most complex materials for a face-to-face meeting. This doesn’t mean that complex issues cannot be handled just as well in a fully online class, only that you may find that it will be relatively quicker for you to clear up misunderstandings if you have the opportunity for a face-to-face session. Many instructors have found that scheduling the first small-group meeting for a face-to-face meeting week greatly facilitates the rate at which groups form and establish cooperation. Some instructors also recommend that groups be scheduled to meet face to face at

other critical moments in a group project. Again, this doesn't mean that the same objective cannot be reached purely online, but if you have the opportunity to convene groups face to face, you may find that it simply accelerates the process of forming groups or reaching consensus on key aspects of the project.

- **Be prepared to offer an orientation to students on your course management system or other software if this is not supplied to students elsewhere.**
- **Define how your blended class operates in the introductory area of your syllabus** and what expectations are for students in regard to participation in online and face-to-face activities. Explain how the weeks will work in tandem as a fully integrated course. Make sure your syllabus schedule clearly delineates in a graphic manner (through use of bold font or other means) those weeks in which the class meets face-to-face and what online activities, if any, are expected for those same weeks.

Design Issues for the Blended Course

- Pay careful attention to the transition between face-to-face and online activities. Ideally these two modes are not completely separate—therefore, always have some online activity, no matter how minor or brief, within the week in which the class meets face to face. For example, you might ask students to go online to the discussion board within forty-eight hours after a face-to-face meeting to continue to reflect on the topics broached at that meeting. This gives students who may be reticent about speaking in the on-campus class a chance to weigh in and it also provides an interval for all students to reflect on the preceding face-to-face discussion. It also signals to the students that what happens in these two modalities is not disconnected, but interrelated. The online work following directly upon the face-to-face meeting helps bridge the topics and activities of the two successive weeks, and can serve as preparation for the entirely online week. The opposite is also true—a carefully planned activity in the online-only week may be designed to provide essential back- ground for the upcoming face-to-face meeting.
- Consider the pacing and time needed to complete each week's activities, both online and face to face—calculate the total time expected for students to be on task—whether that means reading, researching, discussing, or completing other “homework.” The total time should be comparable to that expected for a purely face-to-face class. This avoids the problem of “a class and one-half.”
- In devising a participation grade, be sure to define what participation means in the context of a face-to-face class meeting and an online discussion. Keep in mind that there generally isn't time for every student to participate in a 1–3- hour face-to-face classroom meeting. You may want to give students an opportunity within a face-to-face meeting week for participating in either format. In other words, if you give ten points for participation, you can stipulate that the ten points can be distributed over both the face-to-face and online meetings or confined to just the online. Or

you can set up separate criteria or a rubric for each modality. Perhaps there are a certain number of points for participating in three of the fifteen face-to-face discussions with another total number of points for online participation in a face-to-face meeting week and yet another collection of points for those weeks in which the class is only online.

- Carefully incorporate Web resources into your course content and instructional activities to provide more diverse pathways to learning and supply guidelines to help students devise a more critical approach to reviewing information.
- Avoid scheduling all your face-to-face meeting time for lecturing! The on-campus meeting affords valuable time to explore ideas and gauge understanding by engaging students in active discussion and debate, case studies, or other active learning strategies.

Teaching the Blended Course

- **Post your syllabus online** but depending on your student audience and expectations for the on-campus meeting, you may want to bring hard-copy printouts to the first class meeting (if that is indeed face-to-face) as well. At some campuses, students can be emailed in advance and instructed to read and bring the syllabus to the first class (on their laptops or in hard copy).
- At the first and perhaps second class meeting, you will want to **review the syllabus for the course**. Additionally, here is when you may need to lead that orientation to the course management software for students. At the very least, you will want to clarify how and when and where to carry out online activities, as well as to point to your syllabus schedule to emphasize the face-to-face meeting dates and the required online activities.
- **Provide weekly announcements in the online classroom every week** to highlight the week's activities ahead and guide the "handoff" from the face-to-face meeting week to the purely online ones and vice versa.
- **Send weekly emails to students** to remind students of continuing online activities during weeks in which the class does not meet face-to-face. Sometimes students in a blended class tend to think of the weeks in which they do not meet on campus as "weeks off."
- **Send a personal email to provide a friendly reminder to students** who at any time are not participating in the online portion of the class or the opposite—to encourage students to come to face-to-face meetings.
- **Use an online gradebook to allow students to follow their progress in the class**. By grading students on their online activities on a weekly or biweekly basis, it is easier for you to keep track of student learning and for the students themselves to be reminded of an ongoing class in which they may seldom meet face-to-face.

■ **Strive to interact with students online every week in some manner.** This may range from active facilitation of online discussion to announcements or posted commentary that help illuminate the readings and assignments underway. Let students know that you will be monitoring their online activity.

■ In addition to any student course evaluations your institution may administer at the end of a course, consider asking students some of your own questions tailored to the blended course design you devised. For example, you may ask students questions such as, “Which assignments provided the best learning experience for you this term and why?” “Was it clear to you what needed to be done in weeks in which the class did not meet face-to-face?” or “Rate the following Web-based activities from our class . . .”

Finally, after teaching your first blended class, carefully review it and don’t be shy about enlisting the extra pair of eyes that a trusted colleague can provide. It’s difficult to get the blended course “recipe” exactly right the very first time, but your effectiveness will improve with feedback from students and colleagues along with reflection and practice.

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Lecture- 11

CALL- Reading Skills

Module -29

CALL AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF READING SKILLS

Topic No: 47**What are Reading Skills? Theories and Approaches to Reading Skills; Reading Types and Strategies; Advantages of CALL and the Significance of Reading skills****What are Reading Skills?**

Reading skill refers to the ability to understand written text. When students comprehend or understand written text, and combine their understanding with prior knowledge, they are able to perform the following three reading-comprehension skills.

1. Identify simple facts presented in written text (literal comprehension)
2. Make judgments about the written text's content (evaluative comprehension)
3. Connect the text to other written passages and situations (inferential comprehension)

The development of these reading skills is vital to learner's development, and a sheer volume of studies has demonstrated a link between competency in reading and overall attainment in school (literacy attainment and other outcomes).

Theories and Approaches to Reading Skills

The division of language skills into speaking, listening, reading and writing has been known for centuries. What has been changing throughout centuries, however, was the emphasis on particular language skill in a particular period. During the Middle Ages, for example, speaking was of paramount importance, as monks needed to have a good command of spoken language, Latin at that time, to conduct masses. After the classical period, Renaissance, the main focus of foreign language learning was on grammar. With the development of printing in the middle of the 15th century and the dissemination of books on which both teachers and students had to rely, the need to develop reading and writing skills came to light. Though throughout the centuries a lot of emphasis was put on the development of reading skills in schools, nowadays it is unfortunately neglected, which leads to hindering the development of other language skills, writing particularly. H.E. Palmer was probably the first person to distinguish, in 1964, between the two types of reading: Reading may be intensive or extensive. Until the beginning of the twentieth century not many teachers applied, or even heard of, silent reading. Learners used to read aloud to the teacher and the reading behaviour the teacher could observe might be helpful in improving strategies for teaching L2 reading (Wallace, 1987:165). A similar division is also suggested by David Harding who writes that "The natural order in which language activities should be taught is;

- (i) Aural comprehension

- (ii) Oral expression
- (iii) Reading comprehension
- (iv) Expression in writing

Traditional theories approach reading as a process of comprehending words, then comprehending the relations between the words in a sentence, and finally uttering them or realizing them in silent speech. Methods like 'look-say', 'whole word' or phonic method are based on the presented view. Such techniques are very often equated with meaning-emphasis approaches. Words which are supposed to be new for the reader are displayed on flash cards before embarking on reading. Such a process is considered to facilitate text comprehension. But at the same time it is also heavily criticised, as the words on flash cards are devoid of context, which is the key to proper understanding and then using the words.

S.Q Reading in Information theorists:

For information theorists, on the other hand, the reader's task is not merely to utter a text, but rather to think or predict what a text may unfold to him. Only then does the reader use his language skills to reduce their uncertainty about the text. As the reader's knowledge conditions his success with a text, it seems reasonable to predict that the greater the reader's knowledge of the world, the more proficient a reader he will be. Thus, the learner should be taught to make use of his background knowledge and of all the cues contained in a text, such as audiovisual support.

Readers should take into consideration the context in which words or sentences appear, as disregard for the contextual aspect may lead to misanalysis of the meaning. Marcelle Kellermann gives a nice example of such a sentence: *The police were ordered to stop drinking after midnight.* The appropriate meaning of such sentences can be recovered only from the context. The significant influence of background knowledge can be easily observed in situations when the reader can define all the words in a sentence, nevertheless he is not able to interpret the sentence itself. This phenomenon can be explained by what might be called *cultural competence*, which is a mixture of our beliefs, knowledge, feelings, attitudes and behaviour. As far as reading goes, cultural competence helps readers predict, recognise and interpret content of a text (Kellermann, 1981:33). Two currently distinguished approaches to the development of reading comprehension skills are **Reading Component Approach** and Metaphoric Approach.

The first perspective subdivides reading into six "component skills and knowledge areas" and pinpoints the cognitive processes involved in reading as having an influence on comprehension.

The six suggested skills and areas are:

- (a) Automatic recognition skills;
- (b) Vocabulary and structural knowledge;
- (c) Formal discourse structure knowledge;
- (d) content/world background knowledge;
- (e) Synthesis and evaluation skills/strategies;
- (f) Metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring (Chun & Plass, 1997).

There are also models which incorporate both two models mentioned above. Their advocates suggest that linguistic knowledge of orthography, lexicology, syntax and semantics, interacts in the reading process. As the interaction involves all the mentioned sources of linguistic knowledge

Metaphoric Approach:

at the same time, poor knowledge of one of them may be compensated by greater reliance on one of the remaining three. **The third metaphor, the interactive processing, can be interpreted as either the general interaction between the reader and a text or the interaction of many component skills that work together simultaneously in the process of reading.** In the former interpretation, the reader makes use of his background knowledge to reconstruct the information conveyed by the text. The latter interpretation of the interactive model takes into account the influence of both lower-level (decoding) and higher-level processing (comprehension and interpretation of the text). “Simply stated, reading involves an array of lower-level rapid, automatic identification skills and an array of higher-level comprehension/interpretation skills” as Grabe puts it (Chun & Plass, 1997:62)

Reading Strategies.

As far as the reader is concerned, his reading skills are vital, as well as his interest in the topic. Such factors as sleepiness or hunger play a significant role as well. All these factors influence the success in reading. Also the type of the text has an impact on the reading process, as there is a certain degree of difference in difficulty between various types, e.g. between a novel and a scientific text. The most important factor, however, are reading strategies, as they affect reading in the most significant fashion. Unsuccessful language learners can either use too few reading strategies, or they can apply them in a chaotic way, which obviously impairs reading effectiveness. Also the reader’s purpose for reading is vital, as various purposes condition the use of particular strategies. If the reader only needs to gather general information, he will employ strategies appropriate for this goal, e.g. skimming. If, for example, he looks for more specific information, the best strategy to apply would be scanning.

There are many different reading strategies, but they are all based on the same basic assumptions. **First, before reading, the reader should think about the purpose for which he is going to digest the text. Second, the reader should look at the title, headings, pictures, or any other visual cues accompanying the text. Third, the reader is advised to read the introduction and conclusion, or to read the first line in every paragraph, and only then the whole text. Fourth, the entire reading should be scanned to look for the most important parts to focus on during detailed reading. Fifth, the reader should take notes as he reads. Sixth, when the reader has problems with understanding a passage, he should stop and reread it once more. Seventh, long texts ought to be divided, as the longer the reader works with the text, the less he can focus on it entirely. Finally, the reader ought to retell difficult material in his own words, and possibly answer the questions concerning the contents of the text.**

Skimming and Scanning

If the task of the reader is merely to get an overall idea of the passage, he is most likely to use the strategy called skimming. This strategy enables the reader to say what kind of text it is and what kind of information it contains. Thus, the learner expect what the passage is about and, consequently, he can activate appropriate schemata. Skimming is also helpful in deciding whether

Skimming techniques include reading the introduction, the headlines, or the first phrase of the paragraph.

Scanning means looking over the whole text quickly in search of specific information.

a text is relevant for particular reader's purposes, as the reader can quickly estimate the relevance of the text by skimming it. Since this technique provides the reader with the main ideas of the text, it affords a logical framework for details to be fitted into it during more intensive reading. What is significant to add, during skimming the reader does not pay attention to details and can skip new words providing the text can still be understood.

If the reader's task, however, is to quickly look for specific facts or key words and phrases, scanning should be applied. During scanning the reader runs his eyes down the page in search for particular information. If unfamiliar words are encountered, the reader should look them up in a dictionary, as they can be key words in the text. Scanning is also very helpful if the reader needs to search out statements, definitions etc. To sum up, the use of both skimming and scanning improves retention of important details contained in a reading passage, as well as the speed of completing a reading task.

The Advantages of CALL and the Significance of Reading Skills

The significance of the incorporation of CALL into language learning and teaching was noticed in 1983, during one of the annual TESOL conferences held in Toronto where more than ten percent of presentations concerned CALL and also some software was demonstrated. Unquestionably, the idea of the application of a computer in foreign language learning and teaching was brought about by the rapid advent of overwhelming computerization. Though the use of computers was, until recently, restricted only to specialists, nowadays it is more and more common and accessible for ordinary people, and more and more often incorporated into language instruction curricula.

The computer focuses on its user's progress, his mistakes and problems and guides the student through the learning process adapting its pace to the student's abilities and learning results he has achieved. The advantage of the computer is, moreover, visible in the way in which the text is presented. The computer offers combination of a large range of multimedia aids like sound, graphics, photographs, animation and moving video, direct links and references to dictionaries, and glossary.

Advantages of CALL and its Benefits for the Learners Developing Reading Skills

One of the most significant advantages of using CALL in the development of reading comprehension skills, often mentioned by many CALL specialists and teachers like Dangerfield,

1. Kenning, Kitao, and Warschauer, is individualized instruction offered by the computer. It is widely known that learners learning styles, pace of learning can vary significantly even if the students are assigned to the same language learning group. Learners can also vary as far as the level to which they can develop particular language skills is concerned. Thus, in one class, there can be students good at speaking, but having problems with reading comprehension and students having their reading skill well developed, but being unable to speak fluently.
2. Computers can present the text in a variety of ways apart from a plain printed one. The text can be accompanied by animation and sound which make both the text and reading more interesting. It

can also be accompanied by direct references to a dictionary. By clicking a word with a mouse, the student receives the definition of the word, or its native language equivalent. In the case of so called glosses, which are also very often applied in reading comprehension tests, it is enough to point with a mouse at a word to receive its translation. With such help, student save much time they would normally spend on tedious skimming through a dictionary in the search of each word they do not understand. Glosses may, thus, encourage many students who are too lazy to browse through a dictionary to do reading comprehension exercises.

3. **Computers always provide answers to the questions concerning the text in a task**, which is often not the case as far as printed tests are concerned. Not all textbooks have a key with answers, and students very often come across copies of tests without a key. When learners cannot check if the answers they have given are correct, they see no point in completing the task, so they put it aside. Even if a textbook has a key, it is often very inconvenient to turn the pages innumerable times to the last pages to check each answer. Learners could, besides, cheat and look at the answers before completing the task. All those problems are solved by a computer which provides the answers by a click of a mouse, and makes it impossible to see them until all of the exercise is done. When the learner is in doubt about an answer, a hint can be provided by the computer by clicking on the help button. Some computer programs provide, moreover, an evaluation of the results after the task is completed, for example presenting the percentage of correct answers and giving a note or a comment like “I’m afraid you should try a little harder.” When the learner wants to finish the work with a program, it often sums up the results of all the exercises done on that day, giving an overall evaluation of the results. Thus, the learner can see the progress he has done.

The Role of the Internet in the Development of Reading Comprehension Skills

Almost everyone nowadays knows the Internet and its extremely useful application in all fields of life. As the Internet is based on written language, it requires well developed reading skills to be “surfing through”. Obviously, people usually turn to search machines in their native language, but as it is known, people sometimes try other search machines, not necessarily in their mother language, when they are dissatisfied with the results of the previous ones, or want to find more information. It is also known that many people from all over the world publish their articles or other writings on the Internet but they hardly ever translate them. Thus, to use the World Wide Web effectively, not only L1 reading skills should be well developed, but also L2 ones.

When the readers digest a text on the Internet, they mainly make use of reading comprehension skills. But before they decide which text to choose, they come across many papers which they have to skim to get the main idea, and then apply critical reading skills to discard some of the texts. The initial process during which the reader looks for the information he needs, involves the application of lower level reading processes. Thus, to know which link to click, the reader activates his L2 vocabulary and syntactic knowledge. Generally, **reading on The Web involves extensive reading, as the reader has to deal with a significant amount and number of texts.**

As far as the benefits of the Internet for the language classroom are concerned, it offers an abundance of reading materials for both teachers and learners to choose. Also individual readers can benefit from this unlimited source of texts and increase their reading proficiency. The readers can choose Web sites with on-line newspapers offering up-to-date and interesting information, or other Web sites providing various articles on particular topics. Some of these Web sites are glossed, which encourages learners and makes reading easier, more fluent, and less time consuming. Another advantage of on-line texts is their authenticity, they are not artificially designed for the purposes of teaching, but their authors focus on the topic rather than on the form.

L.Q Reading Strategies:

1. Metacognitive

Reminding oneself about purpose of text

- ☒ Deciding whether text relevant to one's purpose
- ☒ Evaluating text quality
- ☒ Assessing comprehension

2. Cognitive

- ☒ Reading slowly and quickly
- ☒ Re-reading
- ☒ Reading aloud
- ☒ Asking questions

3. Social

These are the set of approaches you can use to get students to become active participants in class through interaction with others and sharing of knowledge they have. In other words, social learning strategies get students to learn from others and with others.

4. Affective strategies

Affective strategies deal with emotions, attitudes, motivation and values that have an impact on learners and language learning in an important way, including lowering anxiety, encouraging, taking emotional temperature

Module -30

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS USED FOR DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

Topic No: 48

Defining E-Reading Technology; Research on E-reading Technology as a Tool; Tools for Supporting Strategic Readers; Tools for Building Knowledge and Supporting Reading to Learn; Practical Challenges to E-reading Technology Use; 5 Technology Tools Used for Developing Reading Skills

Defining E-Reading Technology

In both popular media and research, terms such as e-book, e-reader, e-text, and tablet are not always clearly and consistently differentiated and are often used interchangeably. The lack of clarity in part reflects the rapid advance of technology, with newly released options almost immediately being modified or merged together with other options. Such change contributes to confusion as distinguishing features become vague or obsolete. This slippery terminology can be perplexing for educators, parents, and policy makers who need to make well-informed decisions about these technologies. Although we focus on the digital text, we note, as Goldman indicates in her article in this volume, that it is often augmented by other digital media and so is increasingly difficult to isolate from other media. In this article, we use e-reading technology to refer to the hardware and software used to display and interface with digital text. Hardware includes devices, such as e-readers and tablets, as well as smartphones, laptops, and even desktop computers that display digital text. Software includes a range of applications and programs that allow readers to interact with the text, either locally on the device or over a network; it may or may not include instructional features. Although many forms of e-reading technology may be used for more than reading, we focus on the technology's role in literacy instruction. And although many other technologies, including audio players, video players, interactive whiteboards, and clickers, may be used for literacy instruction, they cannot store and display digital text.¹⁸ We confine the term e-reading technology to those that can. Nascent research on these other technologies, although promising, is thus beyond the scope of this article.¹⁹ Using such a broad term makes it hard to draw generalized conclusions from research, because each device and application has specific features and limitations. Thus, claims made about one form of e-reading technology with specific features may not apply to another form. For example, when researchers conduct an efficacy study using tablets with a specific instructional application, it may not be possible to generalize their findings to smartphones or laptops, even with the same application, not least because of the vast differences in screen size.

Research on E-reading Technology as a Tool

Today educators are in the precarious position of having to respond to the many new e-reading options for curriculum and teaching practices with virtually no empirical guidance on how to do so in a way that supports learning. Most research as yet is small-scale in nature, focusing on feasibility and efficacy in tightly controlled contexts rather than on wide-scale use. We review a variety of small scale research studies on e-reading technology as a tool for improving literacy outcomes, and then look at two large-scale studies and offer a final cautionary note about the overall lack of a consistent or large-scale body of evidence on e-reading technology. Tools for Compensation and Instruction in Basic Skills E-reading technology has shown promise in developing early reading skills and in giving readers with visual impairments or language based disabilities access to texts. One of its most widely used features is text-to-speech, in which either a human or computer generated voice reads digital text aloud for users. Sometimes synchronized highlighting of the text draws readers' attention to the word or words being read aloud. The research is relatively robust on the benefits of text-to-speech for readers with impairments that might otherwise preclude equal access to text and for young readers still acquiring basic skills like phonological awareness or decoding. Also promising are recent innovations in text-to-speech involving the translation of visual information other than text, such as pictures or tables. Ofra Korat has been conducting experimental studies with e-reading tools that can build both procedural skills (such as phonological awareness and word reading) and conceptual skills and knowledge (such as vocabulary) that foster learning to read. She has found that presenting children's books as digital text with dictionaries or activities can lead to improvements in phonological awareness, word reading skills, and vocabulary knowledge for kindergarten and first-grade readers. Other studies with younger children indicate that presenting high-quality children's books on computers with multimedia supports, such as the text being read aloud expressively with simultaneous highlighting of the words being read, helps to improve children's focus on and subsequent recognition of words from the text, as well as their vocabulary. Others have investigated the use of similar e-reading technology tools to provide practice opportunities and individualized feedback for struggling and impaired readers and found promising results. Richard Olson and his colleagues provide further evidence that struggling readers in grades two to five can benefit from programs that provide individualized e-reading practice opportunities in story reading, comprehension strategies, and phonological analysis. Another strand of research, which has focused on embedding multimedia practice opportunities into e-reading technology that can be sent home with students, finds that the technology increases children's, especially at-risk children's, practice at home. One small-scale study found that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds benefited more from such opportunities than did more-advantaged children and that they made greater gains in both word-recognition skills and vocabulary knowledge, thus suggesting that e-reading technology could be useful for closing both procedural and conceptual skill gaps in literacy. Research with somewhat older readers has also found positive results of e-reading technology for a range of reading skills, including fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Jack Mostow and his colleagues at Carnegie Mellon University have developed a computer-guided reading tutor that builds readers' fluency and comprehension using speech-recognition to give spoken and graphical feedback as students read instructional texts aloud. They have also found that second-language readers show improvements in fluency and spelling skills comparable to or greater than those obtained with English as a Second Language instruction alone. A similar program called Scientific Learning Reading Assistant has also generated evidence that speech-recognition applications within e-

reading programs can improve oral reading fluency skills in second- through fifth-grade readers. Finally, a synthesis of the research on e-books, defined as digital texts that mimicked print texts (for example, having pages that turn), has found small positive effects for prekindergarten to fifth-grade students' comprehension-related outcomes.

Tools for Supporting Strategic Readers

Innovative technology applications also show promise for supporting the development of advanced reading skills that students need to master discipline-specific knowledge areas and that may be particularly challenging for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and non-English-speaking homes. Self-paced tutorials have led to gains in self-questioning, error detection, inference, summarization, and concept-mapping skills and strategies to enhance readers' use of reading strategies and comprehension of texts. Two online interventions, Computer Assisted Strategy Teaching and Learning Environment and Improving Comprehension Online, have both shown positive effects in these skill areas in quasi-experimental studies. Sixth graders using Computer Assisted Strategy Teaching and Learning Environment outperform controls in application of the targeted strategies. Benefits can depend on genre, with treatment students outperforming on expository versus narrative texts or vice versa depending on the strategy under consideration. Monolingual and bilingual fifth-graders using Improving Comprehension Online have shown improvement relative to control students on norm referenced and research-developed measures of vocabulary. Students in grades six through twelve have largely endorsed online tutors and self-paced tutorials as desirable features of e-books. Experimental evaluation of instructional agents—generally, animated avatars that respond to student input in digital text or human or computerized voices—has demonstrated particular benefit for boosting vocabulary, identifying inferences, developing metacognitive awareness regarding understanding, and learning appropriate strategies. The instructional agents respond with clear, immediate, and individual corrective feedback that mimics teachers but on a scale that individual teachers cannot hope to replicate, thus improving a teacher's ability to provide just-in-time individualized support to an entire class of diverse students. Moreover, these agents have become increasingly sophisticated over the past decade, and some can now respond to spoken natural language. Digital delivery of graphic organizers that provide readers with a structure for strategically interacting with the text has also been shown to improve comprehension.

Tools for Building Knowledge and Supporting Reading to Learn

Digital text gives educators access to tools that allow more flexibility regarding content selection and layout of the text, as well as the means to modify content based on the particular needs of students and local communities. The use of ancillary materials such as original source documents and alternative multimedia presentations of information has helped compensate for struggling readers' limitations in background knowledge and has enriched learning opportunities for all readers. For example, teachers can use online multimedia resources from respected sources, such as PBS and National Geographic, to augment their presentation of new content to all students and as a tool to build background knowledge for students who lack it. Manipulable embedded graphics have been associated with improved outcomes in science learning and have also been shown to

support iterative conceptual development, allowing students, for example, to interact with a graphic or even an animated representation of repeated random sampling to understand the Central Limit Theorem, a foundational but difficult-to-grasp concept in statistics. Online learning communities can also support individualized pursuit of learning interests beyond the classroom. Innovative work using chat functions allows students to collaborate and interact to solve online problems. Connections to digital repositories enable students to access authentic source materials such as scanned original letters exchanged between writers of the Declaration of Independence or recorded speeches by public figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. Positive outcomes for improving background knowledge, strategic use of technology, and innovative applications of technology have also been shown in evaluations of Community Technology Centers, community-based services located in independent facilities or embedded in public libraries and after-school programs such as Boys and Girls Clubs. These centers provide students access to a variety of up-to-date equipment and high speed Internet access that, coupled with workshops and mentoring from staff, allow the youth to learn to use technology for a variety of purposes.

Practical Challenges to E-reading Technology Use

- ☐ Professional development for teachers
- ☐ Systems for upgrading and maintaining technology
- ☐ Efficient and secure data systems

Maximizing the potential benefits of e-reading technology also poses practical challenges. To realize fully the technology's promise, schools will need to buttress infrastructural supports, including professional development for teachers, systems for upgrading and maintaining technology, and efficient and secure data systems.

Professional Development

Technology has made its way so quickly into so many facets of modern life because of its utility. Being able to pay bills, order clothing, send a message to a friend, and read a newspaper article within less than an hour and without leaving home is appealing to many people. The technological advances that have made their way into education have done so for the same reason. The overhead projector enabled teachers to share information more efficiently with their classes while interacting with students more directly. The scientific calculator allowed students to learn more advanced math and science concepts by using more efficient methods of calculation. Teachers and parents now routinely communicate by e-mail. For e-reading technology to realize its promise fully, it must be genuinely useful to both the teacher and the student. All too often, integrating technology into education has meant simply adding it to the existing curriculum and pedagogy, thereby limiting its usefulness for teaching and learning. Rarely is technology an organic part of a lesson plan, especially as more and more requirements to administer in-class accountability tests absorb already-limited class time. According to Project Tomorrow 2010, the educators who see technology as being important to a district's core purpose are those who are farthest from daily engagement with students. Some 60 percent of district administrators and 55 percent of school principals endorsed the idea of technology's importance, but only 38 percent of teachers and future teachers did so. In fact, educators often view technology skills not so much as a means for advancing learning and supporting instruction, but as just one more item on the list of things that students must learn, that teachers must make time to teach, and that administrators must squeeze into an already overly restrictive budget. Not surprisingly, when researchers surveyed schools that

had high access to, but low use of, technology, they found that teachers had limited time to find and evaluate software; that computer and software training was inconveniently timed or was too generic and not specific to the needs of teachers; and that most teachers were using the technology without fundamentally changing their instructional strategies to take full advantage of it. In addition, the most recent federal survey of teachers' use of technology found that although many use it for record-keeping, relatively few use it for instruction. Generally speaking, teachers in schools serving large numbers of low-income students use technology less for instruction than do teachers in schools serving fewer such students, except to teach or provide practice in basic skills. Most important, two-thirds of teachers reported little to no technology-related professional development in the preceding year. For teachers to see e-reading technology as useful, they need help adjusting to and capitalizing on the changing technological landscape. They need not only to see the potential benefits for themselves and their students, but also to be able to build the knowledge and skills to realize these benefits and to have opportunities to collaborate and innovate with colleagues to develop and integrate best practices. The extent to which an individual teacher uses technology depends on how long it takes to learn to use it, how convenient it is to interact with it, and how well the technology interacts with other devices. If technology is to be used in the schools, it must offer user-friendly and intuitive interfaces, portability of content between devices, and timely, skilled response to technical challenges both by developers and by schools. Ongoing professional development, including training and testing of new technology as it becomes available, helps accelerate the learning curve for teachers, so that they can focus on using these tools to improve instruction. Evidence on the best approaches to and efficacy of professional development in support of e-reading technology use, however, is in short supply. Teachers most commonly report that what prepared them to make effective use of technology for instruction was not training, but independent learning. Indeed, some have argued for a coaching or mentoring approach to professional development in using educational technology effectively, with development focused on problems of practice.⁶⁶ But, again, evidence about how effective coaching models are in professional development of that sort is minimal, although some research does suggest that coaching models in literacy instruction more broadly improve literacy outcomes for students.

5 Technology Tools Used for Developing Reading Skills

Technology is helping teachers do more and more every day, including building a love of reading in their students. With more distractions for students than ever before, these tech tools not only engage students, but also offer a variety of interesting texts and exciting reading options that keep their attention.

Use these websites and tech tools to engage students and help them develop a love of reading.

Wonderopolis encompasses facility to discover the books learners love

Kids are curious about everything, and Wonderopolis harnesses this innate characteristic with a kid-friendly, non-fiction reading website. Each article is created to answer a question and students can choose from a variety of categories, including technology, science and arts and culture.

Students can also take quizzes to test their knowledge after reading, and refer to a vocabulary list when they come across a word they don't know.

Dogo encompasses website for kids library of digital books and movies [text here](#)

Dogo is a news website for kids, and provides them with a library of digital books and movies as well. Students can read stories from a number of kid-friendly categories, including social studies, amazing, sports, 'did you know' and more. Many students don't know what they like to read yet, and this website allows them to explore all topics and figure that out.

While Dogo is fun for students, allowing them to read kid-friendly versions of current event news stories, it's an ever better tool for teachers. When signed up, they can create assignments, add media (books, news stories and movies) to the assignment, and keep students engaged with a social learning dashboard.

Kahoot! encompasses creating and playing book-based games

Your tech tools don't have to be reading-focused to help students learn to love reading. With Kahoot!, you can make reading fun by creating and playing book-based games that help students engage with the content in a whole new way.

Some fun examples include:

- Create an interactive quiz to test students' knowledge of characters, plotline and themes.
- Run a real-time survey of what students think of various aspects of the reading they recently completed. Use that to spin-off into a class discussion.
- Have students create their own interactive character quizzes to give to peers. For example, each question is a clue to what character the student likes most.

Whooo's Reading encompasses facility for learners to select audio to go with their text

Sometimes students don't want to read because they don't know what topics, authors or genres they enjoy. With Whooo's Reading, students are extrinsically motivated to read, which pushes them to read more and discover the books they love, ultimately building a life-long love of reading. Unlike other reading tools, students aren't required to read specific books, and instead are empowered to choose for themselves. After logging reading, answering standards-aligned questions, and interacting with peers in their private class-wide newsfeed, students earn Wisdom Coins that can be "spent" on virtual accessories in the Owl Store.

What's more, teachers can use their Data Dashboard to track what and how much students are reading, in addition to Lexile Levels, reading scores and more.

Booktrack encompasses articles and quizzes

This one-of-a-kind tool makes reading more interactive and engaging by allowing students to select audio to go with their text. Students can use their "soundtrack" while reading alone, or work together to create a soundtrack as a class for group or teacher reading.

Students can also choose to read from Booktrack's library of classic stories that are already paired with soundtracks—making "older" stories more exciting.

Technology makes it easier to engage and excite all readers in your classroom, helping them develop a life-long love of reading.

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Lecture- 12

CALL- Writing Skills

Module -31

TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES USED FOR DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS**Topic No: 49**

What are Writing Skills? Computer tools and writing skills; Word processor and Writing; Revising and Editing; Emails and Writing Skills

What are Writing Skills?

Good writing skills are essential for effective communication. The better you write, the more easily readers will understand you. Learning to write well takes time and practice.

It has been agreed that writing is a means of communication made possible through graphics symbols, arranged according to certain conventions to form words which in turn are arranged to form sentences. The sentences are logically and grammatically connected to form a piece of writing.

Writing like listening involves a writer (producer) and a reader (receiver). Writing involves interaction between the writer (encoder) and the reader (decoder). **Communicative writing means the use of orthography in order to construct grammatically correct sentences which communicate a meaning to the reader**

Orthography + lexis + grammar + meaning = communicative writing

Computer Tools and Writing Skills

Computers have a profound effect on all aspects of language learning and teaching and can be used in developing writing skills. In this unit we discuss the use of computer to develop writing skills. The unit consists of three sections, and in each section there are three sub-sections. The first section deals with the basics/ fundamentals of a computer such as main components, multimedia devices

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(hardware) and Internet, web-resources (software). In the second section you have to deal with word processor and its various uses for developing writing skills such as composing,/drafting, writing, revising, editing, spelling check. The third unit deals with email communication and how it helps in developing communicative skills especially writing skills. Since this unit is mostly practical oriented, it will be useful if you have access to a computer with word processor.

Word Processor and Writing

Word processor is a common kind of software and Microsoft word is a word processing application designed to help you create professional-looking documents such as newsletters, reports, brochures and letters. Most computers are now sold with some version of word processing already installed and such programmes are widely used in the composition process. Before using any type of word-processing software, there are certain terminology that one needs to become familiar with in order to create documents. In Microsoft Word, some terminologies are used to articulate certain features of the software programme, its function/navigation methods, and common word-processing terms. Arrow keys, close, save, save as, border, click, double click and many more. Regarding writing skills editing is all important. By editing – deleting, moving, or adding characters, changing font styles, inserting bulleted items, and altering the color of text, can modify a document.

English writing is one of the most important forms of communication today, it is necessary to maintain it correct and professional. The students have to develop communicative skills especially writing skills effectively for those who wish to begin professional life and also for higher studies. As Riemer (2002) says, “Communication skills are essential for an engineer who aspires to carry out his/her professional practice in the global arena. Engineering communication skills basically constitute several core elements such as the fluency in the English language and the fundamentals of visual communication.”

MS Word offers some handy tools under its Tools menu which can be used for developing / improving writing skills. For example:

- **Spelling and Grammar** is one of the standard tools. A window appears after you click on this option showing the word or sentence in question on the top, and a list of possible suggestions at the bottom. If the suggestion is something you like, click Change. If not, click Ignore.
- You can use **Thesaurus**. If you do not know anything about a word in the text, then this feature can help you in finding out the right word/ words to use.

To use the Thesaurus, click on a word in your document and select the Language function option under Tools in the menu bar. A window will appear with alternative words (if Word has any to offer). Locate the word you want to use, highlight it, and then click Replace. So while using computer you need not go for a dictionary to find out the meaning or appropriate words. You can frequently correct spellings with computer-based spelling checkers. That can also help you in improving vocabulary powers as you have to come across many related words in the screen.

- **Dictionaries** are also made available for the student to use ‘interactively’. You can type in a word and computer responds with its meaning. Dictionary is used in language learning as a resource and you can use this resource for developing language skills especially writing skills.
- You can also learn **synonyms and antonyms** while using a computer. “ Supplying synonyms and antonyms can be dealt with very neatly by requiring learners to match items from lists of words”, says Ahmed et al (1985:108).

Revising and Editing

In words processor, you can save your document by giving a file name and you can open the same file, can revise the earlier text and edit the text in various ways. While editing the text, you have the opportunity to proofread, to add further explanation, to develop ideas, and to restructure the text. Also you can understand the weaknesses and the provision to overcome the difficulties and to apply knowledge of language. Thus a computer gives enough flexibility to utilizing the resources in learning and developing writing skills.

Emails and Writing

Electronic mail (E-mail) is being used to send and receive messages. You can send e-mail practically to any one with an email address, anywhere in the world.

What is E-mail?

In its simplest form, e-mail is an electronic message sent from one computer to another. Now a days, one can or receive personal and business-related messages with attachments like pictures or other documents. In this type of communication, one can communicate quickly and easily with millions of people around the world anytime 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Email is the most used tool in the Internet; 'it's easy to use, it's cheap, fast and reliable' (Dudeney:2000: 10). Learners especially distant learners can use E-mail and share files and thus they can collaborate together among themselves and their facilitators. As Belisle (1996) says: "Networking electronically can help learners create, analyze, and produce information and ideas more easily and effectively".

You can also communicate, send messages to native speakers and in the way of exchanging messages you can increase their social awareness and confidence. You will be familiar with a communication tool which is vital for your survival in the 21st century.

In short, Email helps you to:

- i. Communicate with other distant learners;
- ii. Communicate with tutors/ facilitators in your discipline;
- iii. Post a question to a bulletin board or mailing list;
- iv. Develop a collaborative project with another distant learners;
- v. Connect with keypals

As Brenda (2002) says: Because of its dynamic, interactive and ephemeral, it is like conversation: we can receive instant feedback to our message, and many messages can be exchanged in rapid-fire fashion, even in asynchronous email, if the parties both happened to be logged on.

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Email and Writing Skills

Most of the email messages are simple text documents which can be sent over the Net. But it is difficult to remember the Email addresses and it is suggested that whenever you receive an email save the address by clicking the 'address' option/ button in the screen. It is also suggested to ignore the conventional norms of written language while sending email messages. Barbhuiya (2008) conducted a survey among the technical students (Polytechnic) and found that 93% students think that Email helps people to learn from each other and an equal number of students expressed positive attitude that communication by Email is a good way to improve their English. You can frequently communicate with other distant learners and with your facilitator by making dialogues what it calls 'dialoguing' through email. There are different kinds of dialoguing , for example, student to teacher, teacher to student and student to students. In distance education, there is no face-to-face interaction with the tutor/facilitator. But any distant learner can communicate with the facilitator or with other distant learners through email from any where any time independently. This will give you the opportunity of using language of your choice which can help you in exposing your writing skills. You can communicate with a native speaker, can send instant messages and in exchanging the dialogues, you can improve your language skills. Besides, you can your assignments, can get the feedback through email, that too within a short time. Mark Warschauer summarizes the main reasons for using e-mail: "First, e-mail provides students with an excellent opportunity for real, natural communication...Second, e-mail empowers students for independent learning...Finally, the use of e-mail enriches our experiences as teachers...[and allows us to share] new ideas, resources, and materials", (1995:2).

Regular and avid users usually enjoy writing in email. Even some users prefer writing and sending email as a way to express themselves. They take delight in words, sentence structure, message formatting, and the opportunity to craft exactly how they wish to express their thoughts and moods.

Communication skills are of vital importance in the world today. With an increasingly reliance on technology, teachers sometimes fear that students are losing the art of face-to-face and formal written communication. But instead of fearing technology's impact on student communication,

why can't teachers leverage technology to help students hone their written communication skills? Whether students are still struggling with basic to complex grammatical concepts, or they need help elaborating their thoughts in thoughtful, sensible written pieces, teachers can rest assured: there's an app for that! As a matter of fact, there are several apps for that.

Grammar & Spelling Skills

Building students' grammar and spelling skills is foundational for strong written communication.

The following apps are great tools for helping students master grammar and spelling.

Sentence Builder

Winner of the 2010 IEAR Language Arts App of the Year, Sentence Builder is an app geared toward elementary students. It uses a game-like interface to teach students to form grammatically correct simple, compound, and complex sentences. The app offers audio reinforcement, progress monitoring, and a "teen" module for older or struggling ELA students.

American Wordspeller

Spelling is a cornerstone of strong writing. But how can students locate a new word in the dictionary if they don't already know how to spell it? American Wordspeller is an app that can solve this problem by helping students to "find a word by the way it sounds!" Students can type the first two to three letters that they think the word starts with, and American Wordspeller will use a predictive function based on the letters' sounds to generate a list of suggested words and help the student identify the word he or she is looking for! This app builds agency and confidence in proper spelling.

The Interactive Grammar of English

Written by a team of linguists from the University College of London, the grammar in this app is based on the most current research and reflects real situations and real sentences, not just the repetition of archaic rules. The app is progressive, spanning concepts from basic level understanding to complex, collegiate-level pieces of writing.

No Red Ink

Technically, No Red Ink is an interactive website, but it is so functional and easy to navigate, that it has earned its place on a list alongside self-contained apps! No Red Ink is a personalized

approach to drilling grammar skills. The site uses the students' self-reported interests to build sentences that pretest, practice, and evaluate students' grammar knowledge and acquired learning. Teachers can set the topic for a class, monitor student progress, and peruse the data provided by the site reflecting students' achievement. It's an easy and effective grammar skill tool.

Writing Challenge App

The Writing Challenge App allows students to enjoy writing in the guide of a fun, interactive game. The app provides a prompt to get student writing started...then, every minute, the app supplies another prompt to add new ideas, words, characters, sentences, places or actions to the plot. Students who have a hard time getting started with creative writing assignments will enjoy the fast-paced, game-like setup of this app. And in the end, they'll have been inspired to write an entire story!

Writing Prompts

This app generates fiction, and nonfiction writing prompts, helping students master the skill of the short write. The app uses current events, scene elements, words, pictures, colors, and even random tidbits from fiction works to inspire students to write both short and long pieces. The 600 creative writing prompts are available both on- and offline to encourage student writing wherever they may be.

Story Builder

Story Builder is an app from the same company that produces Sentence Builder. Story Builder was Huffington Post's 2011 winner of Best Reading App. The app is designed to help students improve paragraph formation, integration of idea, inference, and abstract thinking and expression. The app's use of audio clips promotes access to writing skills, even for students with special needs. The app offers a talk-to-text function, which allows students to narrate their thoughts and see them transformed into paragraphs; this is an essential scaffold for struggling writers.

Write About This

Write About This is an app that addresses all genres of writing throughout elementary school, engaging students and making them feel excited about writing! Educators report that even struggling writers are engaged and motivated by the game-like feel of this writing app; by the end of its integration, many couldn't get their students to turn it off! This app is worth investigating for teachers of reluctant writers.

Storyrobe

Storyrobe allows writers to write, share their work, and receive feedback from others. This is a great way to integrate student editing and revision as well as teaching how to incorporate positive feedback to writers. With this app, you can easily save and upload your story to social media platforms as well!

Google Docs

For traditional essay writing in classrooms, there is no better app than Google Docs! Google Docs has all the traditional functionality of Microsoft Word but allows for collaboration between students and for easy-to-give and easy-to-receive feedback from teachers through the commenting and suggesting functions. When paired with Google Classroom, Google Docs makes the assigning, collecting, and grading of essays a breeze for teachers and students.

It's time to harness technology's strengths, instead of dwelling on their weaknesses. While written communication can, at times, be undercut by social media, teachers can also use it to motivate students to write more and write better. By tapping into these writing apps, teachers can get their students invested in improving their writing skills!

Module -32

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS USED FOR DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS**Topic No: 50****13 Edtech Tools Every Teacher and Student Should Know About; 7 Ways To Use Technology To Improve Your Writing Skill****13 Edtech Tools Every Teacher and Student Should Know About**

Today the importance of educational technology goes beyond the use of instructional aids because of the ubiquity and usefulness of technology in everyday life. Now more than ever, there is a need for learners to be proficient at using technology in order to adapt to this rapidly digitizing world.

Students have to learn how to properly use technology at an early age for it to be eloquent in its language. Educators and the school are in prime position to teach young learners this. Teachers must also learn to fully integrate technology in their pedagogy and use it not just as visual aids but also as tools to engage learners.

From interactive whiteboards to educational applications, here are 13 edtech tools that every teacher and student to aid and enhance teaching and learning.

1. Interactive Whiteboard

The interactive whiteboard (IWB) was invented by Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) around 1990 as a tool to be used in the office for round-table discussions and small group meetings. Now the IWB has found its way in many modern classrooms as a powerful tool for enriching lessons and engaging learners.

More than just a glorified projector, IWBs work as standalone computers or as large connectable touch pads to control other computers. They can be used to display images, play multimedia files, make interactive presentations, and manipulate elements on the screen.

Using an IWB, teachers can involve students in the teaching-learning process. For example, in a lesson on how to tell time, an IWB can be used as a clock that students can adjust and manipulate to gain an experienced-based understanding of how time is measured. Students then cease to be passive receptors of knowledge and instead become active collaborators who take charge of their own learning.

2. Smart Typewriter

The smart typewriter was developed as a tool for authors, writers, journalists, and other professionals to increase their daily productivity and word count. With its straightforward design and focused functionality, the tool eliminates some distractions that may hamper your writing progress, especially those offered by the internet.

Nonprofessionals, particularly students, can benefit from the use of smart typewriters. More than any age group, the young demographic is more vulnerable to the distractions provided by the internet because many aspects of their lives—entertainment and social life—are centered on it. Students tend to lose focus easily and procrastinate when working school activities because other, more entertaining things are just a few clicks away.

Using a portable smart typewriter can address this problem. The tool was made for one function, and that's writing. It can connect to the internet, but there's no browser, and the screen is grayscale.

This typewriter only connects to Wi-Fi to save files in a cloud drive. Files are saved to the smart typewriter's internal memory when there's no Wi-Fi and automatically backed up in a cloud drive when it connects again.

Students can take the device wherever they go and write their homework outdoors since the smart typewriter is equipped with a long battery life and electronic paper screen.

3. AutoDraw

Create customized illustrations, icons, and visuals with a few drags of your mouse with AutoDraw. This application uses artificial intelligence to guess what you're trying to draw and complete your illustration for you. You can save and download your work as a PNG file.

Teachers can use the app to create visual representations and guides to illustrate concepts, engage learners, and aid learning. Students can also use this tool to practice their creativity and imagination and create visuals to enhance presentations.

4. Book Creator

Use Book Creator to make, publish, and share your own book, complete with texts, images, audios, and videos. With this application, teachers and students can create interactive stories, instructional manuals, research journals, and multimedia-assisted reports.

5. Creaza

Here's a tool that teachers and students can use to create presentations that actively engage learners. Creaza allows users to make mind maps, diagrams, and cartoons, as well as add images, audios, and videos in their presentation.

6. Edmodo

Edmodo has “the largest global teacher network.” It's a place akin to a digital classroom, where teachers, students, and even parents get to be involved in education. In Edmodo, users can find thousands of teacher resources—from articles to videos vetted by other teachers—and share their own with rest of the world.

Teachers can set up groups with students and their parents and share valuable educational resources, assign homework, schedule quizzes, and report learning progress. Edmodo is an amazing tool to involve all important parties in a child's learning and education.

7. FlipGrid

This tool is platform where teachers, students, and users discuss different topics through a short video. You create a “Grid” (a group or classroom) where you pose topics and questions and start the dialogue.

FlipGrid videos can be created using many devices, including iPhones, Android phones, tablets, laptops, and computers. It also has different filters and layouts that users can use to make creative videos. FlipGrid connects teachers and learners and changes how they teach, learn, and interact.

8. Formative

Formative is a great tool for individualized and real-time feedback between teacher and student. Teachers can create “formatives” (e.g., lessons, exercises, and assessments) and share them with students.

They can add questions and activities to engage students and assess their learning. Teachers can jump in and provide real-time help when a student is having a hard time answering a question or doing an activity.

Formative also provides a visual tool to track student progress, so it's easy for teachers to see those who are struggling and doing well and facilitate immediate feedback.

9. Illuminations

Created by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), Illuminations is a place where teachers can find lesson plans, classroom activities, and other resources that will enhance the teaching-learning process, all in line with common core standards.

Teachers can find brain teasers, games, interactive exercises, and mobile-friendly downloads to make learning math easier and more enjoyable.

10. Newseumed

Newseumed makes available numerous learning tools, including articles, videos, and activities, to broaden their knowledge about history, current events, and relevant issues. And they're all free.

Teachers, especially those teaching history and social studies, will find many valuable lesson plans, activities, topics, tips, and hacks to enrich their teaching practice and student learning.

11. ProWritingAid

Writing reports, book reviews, and projects are common place in school. ProWritingAid is a tool that helps students upgrade the quality of their writing assignments. The app is a “grammar guru, style editor, and writing mentor in one package.”

ProWritingAid is also useful for all professionals to improve their drafts and overall writing skills.

12. Quizalize

Quizalize offers a fun and collaborative way to assess learning. This app allows teachers to create quizzes for students to test their subject knowledge. Teachers can also add images and equations to make more varied questions, put explanations, categorize questions under subtopics, and set a time limit for quizzes.

Quizalize also has a tool for teachers to keep track of students' results so they can provide immediate feedback.

Students can answer the quizzes individually or form teams and compete against one another. The app has over 20,000 premade quizzes that users can answer for practice or for fun.

13 Write About

Write About offers ways for learners to practice their writing skills by providing prompts and activities. Students can write about given topics, practice free and creative writing, start a journal, and make write-ups.

Teachers can assign customized writing assignments, with model answers and recorded audio instructions. Write About allows teachers to check and edit their students' write-ups and provide individualized feedback to improve their students' writing.

7 Ways To Use Technology To Improve Your Writing Skill

Writing in the 21st Century is much more improved than it has been in the past. As the world develops, the old ways of doing things are abandoned whilst new methods are adopted. There are too many technological innovations happening which continue to make tackling complex issues easier. The world of technology has transformed the writing profession. Various technological methods are incorporated into the writing process as described below.

1. Feedback Mechanism Via Automated Systems

Too many students are being admitted into various learning institutions globally. As the number skyrockets, tutors find it hard to grade the students individually, awarding marks and giving comments. This process is made easier by the use of high-tech products which assist the students by providing the required help. The programs fix errors and give suggestions on the right way of solving the existing problems. These programs are still evolving and will go an extra mile in relieving the workload of the learning fraternity.

2. Technological Collaboration

New technological practices make it easier for a group of people to collaborate on various writing projects. For instance, Google Drive enables a group of researchers to share materials and assist one another in solving a pertinent challenge. Moreover, tutors across the globe participate in existing writing projects since the programs provide an avenue to do so. Other programs are in existence which offer an opportunity for collaboration through web-based services.

3. Blog Writing

Blog writing is always geared towards a wider cross-section of the society. This is an achievement as far as the learning process in various institutions is concerned. The lecturers can assign the students an activity of coming up with a blog that addresses a particular issue or problem within

the society. The students can in turn perform a more collaborative writing process that yields Web-ready writing. Technological tools used in the writing process are bound to assist younger generations in the future as the world transforms itself towards a digital era.

4. Writing Via Tablets

Schools around the globe are using tablets as a standard tool. This is directly affecting the writing process, and these gadgets are offering an easy time for the students in terms of writing and sharing of materials. The gadgets contain sophisticated programs that assist the students in advancing their grammar, translate the writing process into more practical use, and develop technical sharing processes. Furthermore, these tools are assisting the students in harnessing their research skills. The students that are more proficient in using tablets are more likely to pass their research tests than those who aren't.

5. Publishing And Training

As the world becomes more transformational, paperwork gets eliminated. There is a proliferation of writers who are cropping up to address various issues in the world. The writing process in this case is performed via blogs, academic writing, article writing, ebooks, and transcription. All of this work is being patented and published online via the use of technological tools. Moreover, a lot of training regarding academic articles, e-books, and transcribing is being conducted online through diverse programs developed globally.

6. Supplementary Materials

The world is connected via the Internet. Programs such as Google, Yahoo, and more are being used everywhere to supplement lessons offered through seminars, workshops and classrooms. The persons offering these services get additional materials easily by visiting a search engine which yields extra materials to advance the writing process.

7. Meeting Threshold

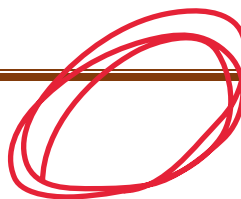
There are various ways to approach a particular writing process. For instance, how an academician approaches his or her work is quite different from how a blogger, academic writer, or a journalist does their work. Their processes require exercising professional traits and tricks in order to meet the threshold required in their specific writing process. These writers often do more research via technological tools to obtain information on the various aspects of writing. Some of the tactics incorporated into writing include referencing, quotes, paraphrasing, and citations.

SOURCES:

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Lecture- 13

CALL- Listening Skills

**Module -33****TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES USED FOR DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS**

Types of Listening: ✓

Topic No: 51

- ☒ One-way listening—typically associated with the transfer of information (transactional listening).
- ☒ Two-way listening—typically associated with maintaining social relations (interactional listening).

The Listening Process and Listening Comprehension; Types of Listening and the Role of the Listener; Advantages of CALL for Listening

From the very beginning of the language learning experience, students should be taught to listen as they do in their native language, with the purpose of understanding the meaning of an oral message. Authentic, natural language in an audio or video format, presented with appropriate techniques, can effectively teach listening and prepare students for natural, authentic communication in the target language. Moreover, modern computer and Internet technology are the ideal means to accomplish this goal.

Students learn components of speech—words, expressions, and structures—practice them, and then hear how they are produced in natural speech patterns and how they express meaning. Provided the teacher, textbook, or class activity furnishes the key linguistic elements and the essential schemata, students develop the capacity to listen without translation or word-for-word processing. Based on identification of language they have already acquired or are in the process of acquiring, they learn to recognize information and to infer in order to interpret aural input.

It is probably no longer necessary to convince foreign language (FL) teachers that listening should be taught. Recently, this aspect of language competency seems to have assumed its rightful place as an equal partner with speaking in the act of communication. This change in attitude can be seen in the difference between the references to ‘understanding’ in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (1986) and in the Standards for Foreign Languages (1996). In the ACTFL guidelines, comprehension² is implied in the descriptions of speaking whereas, in the Standards, established in the late 1990s, ‘understanding’ is specifically addressed. Coinciding with the realization that listening should be taught and with progress in understanding the listening process (based on research in both SLA and neuroscience), technology has given us the means and materials to teach listening effectively. Computers and the Internet have made it possible to improve listening activities with regard to both technique and content, as will be explained below. Before discussing CALL, however, it is useful first to present the listening process and types of listening in order to

show the ways in which technology can overcome the obstacles to effective teaching of aural comprehension.

The Listening Process and Listening Comprehension

Considered a “passive” skill until fairly recently, listening is now seen as a process in which the listener participates actively. According to Coakley and Wolvin, ‘[in general,] listening is a process of “receiving, attending to, and assigning meaning to aural stimuli”’ (1986:18). While these three sub-processes are essential to listening in any language, the way they are executed differs in L2, especially for young adults learning their first foreign language.⁴ Although L1 and L2 listening processes may be similar, the role of listening comprehension in a second language is more complex than in the native language (Wilczynska: 1993:105).

In L1, we listen faster than the rate of speech, so our minds wander while waiting for additional input (c.f. Coakley & Wolvin: 1986; Witkin: 1993; Johnson: 1993). This is probably not true for learners of an L2, who must listen for sound perceptions well as for comprehension and need all the time they can get to ‘assign meaning’ to the sounds they hear (Ur: 1984:11). The initial challenge in teaching listening is to have learners understand the sound properties of the language they are learning, often quite different from the sounds of their L1. Along with sounds, learners need a familiarity with the prosody of the language, including intonation, rhythm and stress, and exposure to these is one of the principal reasons for using authentic materials regularly.⁵ Although students may understand the audio or videotapes prepared for their textbooks, they may not comprehend the same utterances in authentic, natural speech in which sounds are often elided or omitted altogether.

In addition to sound perception, listeners have to recognize the underlying patterns of a language, that is, they should understand the usual order of a sentence, the possible combinations of words in idiomatic expressions, and the types of words that can be used together. With such knowledge, the listener can anticipate what comes next without actually having to hear it.⁶ According to Witkin (1993), typically listeners do not decode a message, and rather they identify the pattern and then listen for the information that will make this message different from the generic message of a particular pattern. For example, in French, as in English, there are many expressions using the preposition *comme* (“as” or “like”), such as *maigre comme un clou* (in English: “thin as a nail”),⁷ which follow the pattern adjective + *comme* + indefinite article + noun. Once learners have become familiar with such expressions, they will automatically anticipate a noun after the structure “adjective plus *comme*.”

According to Coakley and Wolvin (1986) another factor affecting understanding is concentration, which they consider an essential element of effective listening comprehension. In fact, paying attention is the *sine qua non* of listening: ‘Attention is the factor responsible for determining whether or not the visual or auditory signal is processed and proceeds into short-term memory’ (Witkin: 1993:34). Without retention in short-term memory, i.e., without attention, interpretation

and formulation of meaning cannot take place. Witkin adds three ideas that are relevant to listening in the context of teaching of foreign languages to adults, that is, those who have mastered concept formation, including college students as well as those in their final years of high school. First, she cites a study showing that visual stimuli are stronger than auditory stimuli in attracting attention and inspiring a response, suggesting the importance of video in teaching listening. Secondly, she says that the more a stimulus corresponds to our interests and familiarity, the more likely we are to notice and pay attention to it, indicating the importance of using material for which students have background knowledge (c.f. Herron: 1995, 1998; Ur: 1984). Thirdly, she mentions research stressing the importance of pre-attentive processes for homing in on what we pay attention to while listening or viewing, underlining the necessity of providing students with prelistening or pre-viewing activities (Dunkel: 1986).

Even when learners pay attention and can identify sounds as words or morphemes, however, they still may not be able to assign meaning to them. In order to understand the aural input the listener has to be able to match the new information, i.e. the message, with his or her own storehouse of knowledge and prior experience, Witkin's second point (Witkin: 1993:29; Wilczynska: 1993). If we accept Roberts' and Maccoby's assertion that '[m]eanings reside not in messages but in people' (Roberts & Maccoby, quoted in Witkin: 1993:26), a message is meaningless without adequate knowledge possessed by the listener. Thus the role of background knowledge in comprehension cannot be overemphasized. In a broad sense it encompasses everything from knowledge related to the topic under discussion—facts, events, associations—to awareness of aspects of the topic that will be emphasized and the direction the discussion will take. According to Johnson (quoted in Coakley & Wolvin:1986:181), '[t]he more...shared meanings we have with the speakers, the easier the process of listening,' that is, the more we already know about what is being said, the more we understand. In the case of audio or video material used in FL courses for listening comprehension, students, especially beginners, need to have all materials contextualized in order to appreciate their cultural, historical, sociological, or linguistic richness (Dunkel: 1986; Rost: 1990). For example, to a student of first-year French image which he or she may find attractive or unappealing; to a French teacher, on the other hand, the photo has multiple connotations—the first time he or she visited the

Tour Eiffel, dining in one of the restaurants there, the historical significance, the scandal it caused when it was built, just to name a few. Depending on the teacher's familiarity with the target culture, any visual or aural document about the culture he or shies teaching will have layers of significance unknown to students. Teachers must beware of the discrepancy between their background knowledge and that of the students, as the listeners' interests and familiarity with the context of listening material will affect their predisposition to be attentive to it and therefore to perceive it. them ore background knowledge students have, the more they will be able to cope with and appreciate more difficult material (Mendelsohn: 1994:13).

Another aspect of the listening process relevant to the teaching of listening comprehension is the way in which aural information is stored in memory. In Richard's analysis of listening, the sixth and last step is '[r]etaining the meaning and acting upon it, without necessarily remembering the

actual form in which it was encoded by the speaker' (quoted in Lee & Van Patten: 1995:61). As nearly all researchers and psycholinguists agree, this implies that the listener neither hears nor remembers all the words in the message: 'What is extracted in listening as perceived meaning is not recorded for storage in its original syntactic form. It is stored in memory in a simpler form that preserves the gist' (Rivers: 1993:79). This suggests that listening comprehension activities should be distinct from those which promote speaking, such as "listen and repeat" audio exercises, and that listening tasks expecting total recall are both unrealistic and unproductive.

Types of Listening and the Role of the Listener

Just as there is more than one type of speaking, as evidenced by the concept of speech acts and the various roles of the speaker, such as narrator or conversant, there is more than one type of listening. Thinking about the type of listening we want our students to learn to do is important because it will determine the type of tasks that we have them do in listening activities. In a chapter entitled "A Listening Taxonomy," Coakley and Wolvin 'address... the need for a classification system of listening purposes'

(1986:15). With regard to L1 listening they mention:

- **discriminative listening**, or 'distinguishing the auditory and/or visual stimuli' (determining whether one is hearing a "t" or a "d," for example), which is the **basis for all other listening as the units of meaning must be identified before meaning can be assigned;**
- **listening for comprehension to obtain information;**
- **Therapeutic or empathetic listening**, in which **the listener expresses empathy toward the speaker allowing him or her to 'talk through a problem;'**
- **Critical listening**, involving **an evaluation of what is heard and leading to a judgment**
- **Appreciative listening**, or **listening for enjoyment to music or television**, for example.

(1986:19–21)

Writing about L1 listeners, Coakley and Wolvin state that 'much of the educational process is based on comprehensive listening' with 'students ...asked ...to understand and retain vast amounts of information' (1986:11). This is all the more true of L2 listening, as is borne out by Ur (1984) who, focusing on L2 learners, divides her 'suggestions for classroom activities' into 'listening for perception,' which is like

Wolvin's and Coakley's discriminative listening, and 'listening for comprehension,' with the bulk devoted to the latter (about 115 pages for listening for comprehension compared to only nine pages for listening for perception) (Ur: 1984). With this approach, the purpose of listening activities is exclusively to find out if students understand the contents of the listening documents, so that listening remains an academic exercise for them, never becoming a meaningful cognitive

experience. The typical listening comprehension activity consists of questions about “what happened” presented in chronological order. For example, a narration of the mishaps occurring during Marie-Odile’s trip from Paris to New York is accompanied by questions such as whether it was a direct flight, whether the plane left on time, where her checked suitcase went, and where the plane landed. Listening to the same narration would be a more natural, meaningful experience if students were asked to note down what they consider the most significant aspects of the trip.

According to Rost (1990), listening can be described as interactional or transactional, depending on the relationship between the listener and the speaker. In interactional listening, in which two or more people engage in a conversation, the listeners can play more than one role. They can answer questions, challenge the speaker by asking questions, contribute new information, change the course of the conversation, use words or expressions that keep the conversation going (using back-channeling signals indicating to the speaker that one is listening or prompts to encourage the speaker to continue [100]), react with any one of a number of attitudes, or use appropriate phatic speech or paralinguistic expressions. They can also follow the accepted script (series of schemata) for a specific situation, or not follow it because of lack of experience or background knowledge (96). An example of not following the script would be an American in a formal restaurant in France who attempts to “get to know” the waiter by asking personal questions, something not done in that context. In interactional listening, the listener has to understand speaker behaviors inherent in interaction (depending on the language), such as repeating and using pause words. Also, the listener has to recognize his or her role in identifying misunderstandings, executing repairs and making queries (112). As most non-native speaker (NNS) learners in a classroom situation can engage in interactional situations only with their teacher, who usually communicates through “teacher-talk,” or with their fellow students who are also NNSs, it is assumed that misunderstandings will occur. For this reason, literature on L2 interactional listening often concentrates more on interaction and negotiation of meaning than on listening skills themselves.

Students in university and secondary school FL courses are more likely to experience transactional rather than interactional listening in which the listener is ostensibly not obliged to respond. Transactional listening is used for television, film, radio or other audiovisual input, as well as for lectures or theater, situations that do not require an oral response. It is not exactly true, however, that transactional listening requires no response at all. For example, the audiovisual materials which students listen to or view for a course are usually accompanied by an assignment including a written product and/or preparation for class discussion. Likewise, although students do not have to interact with the lecturer in a class with over one hundred students, a fairly common situation in large universities, they often respond in writing by taking notes, or non-verbally by giving a nod of the head or some other sign demonstrating understanding. In addition, not all lecture situations demand the same approach to listening.

For example, understanding an art history lecture based on slides can be differentiated from a lecture about a literary text. In the first case, the listener has to tolerate what is said to what is seen on the screen; in the other, the listener has to remember a text—from having read it before the

lecture, or by having heard it during the lecture—or to understand the speaker without having any knowledge of the text.

Students have to respond, also, to what has been called interactional-transactional situations, a hybrid type of listening that occurs in a FL learning environment. That is, listening situations that are interactional, such as conversations, are presented transactionally, usually in audiovisual materials, to expose learners to language as it is used by L2 speakers in real-life communication. The interactional-transactional situations similar to participation in a conversation in L1 involving more than two people in which those who are not speaking need transactional listening skills to follow what is being said.

Advantages of CALL for Listening

Regardless of the type of listening students are doing, the advantages of technology for fostering improvement of foreign language listening comprehension can be divided into two categories, those inherent in the computer and software themselves and those resulting from the contribution of the Internet and the World Wide Web.

Although there is overlap between these two areas and although the web would have no advantages without the basic computer technology, it is the accessibility, interactivity, and ease of use of the web that have greatly improved the teaching of listening and have made it possible to involve students in real-life communication in a classroom setting.

Basic Advantages of the Computer Advantages of CALL/Computer for Listening:

Compared to previous technology—tape recorders and VCRs—computer technology offers a number of advantages that make it easier to understand and to improve one's understanding of oral language and audiovisual materials. **With CALL listening, students are engaged continuously in an interactive experience, can control delivery, can verify their comprehension, can view multiple types of input, and can access more than one input simultaneously.**

Interactivity

Because concentration is a key factor in successful aural comprehension, anything that will increase students' attention span will also help them to improve their listening skills. **In contrast to a tape recorder or VCR, which will continue playing an audio or videotape until the end or until the user pushes a button, a computer can be programmed so that listening/viewing is interactive.** The technological capacity to manipulate digitized audio and video files means that listening/viewing can be presented in such a way that students have to be continuously involved. They must react to the computer if the listening activity is to continue. The result, with well-programmed software, is that they are always alert to what is happening on the screen, avoiding the hypnotic state induced by watching TV or a VCR.

Control

Most people would say that live interaction is better than computer interaction. While this is true as far as spontaneity of language is concerned, in some cases, especially transactional listening, the computer may actually be better, as it gives students control that is not possible in a live situation. Rather than hearing the aural input only once as occurs in live interaction, thus increasing anxiety, which leads in turn to decreased attention, the learner can listen as many times as desired to computer-delivered audio or video, replaying parts that cause difficulty and identifying the problem points. Assuming that the software allows students to use the materials individually and to listen as many times as desired, the processing load of listening is decreased.

Even if the listening material is not presented in short segments or “chunks,” the learner can “chunk” listening input if the software includes a control bar. Perhaps the single most significant contribution of the computer to student control of input, **the control bar allows individual users (at the discretion of the program, of course) to locate particular points in a listening or viewing passage in order to listen more than once.**⁸ While it is possible to rewind an audio or video tape player, from a pragmatic point of view it is difficult, with either one, to find the exact place one is looking for (for a discussion of online help for students, see Godwin-Jones & Murphy-Judy, this volume).

Self-assessment

When engaged in a conversation, the attentive interlocutor will either recognize instances of miscomprehension or have them pointed out. In contrast, learners, challenged by an audio or videotape, accompanied by any one of a variety of activities, may not know when they have misinterpreted or just simply missed important information.

The previously mentioned advantages of the computer, interactivity and control, make it possible for learners to assess their listening experience, verifying comprehension as they go along. The self-assessment can be programmed so that verification takes place after a short chunk of listening, with students prevented from continuing until they have found or been given the correct answers. Another option is global verification of an un-chunked document, with incorrect answers or other evidence of miscomprehension resulting in directing listeners to the source of miscomprehension.

Multiplicity

Before the advent of the computer, students had access to text and images in their textbooks or in the print media. When listening or viewing, they accessed audio via a tape recorder and saw films projected on a screen or in videotape format on a VCR.

Text accompanying audiovisual documents was a separate component, so students had to deal with different inputs at the same time, not an impossible task but cumbersome enough to annoy students and distract them from their primary purpose. **In contrast, in CALL multiple materials in multiple formats can all be put on a single computer and can be viewed on the same monitor.** For example, a text introduction or images can set the stage for the listening activity. With regard to language, difficult expressions can be presented in text format with explanations, or an object or situation mentioned in the document can be illustrated by an image. Teachers can also provide an online

transcript, accessible to students freely or only after they have watched or listened to the audio selection a specific number of times (usually once or twice).

Another option is to provide students with more than one version of input, an extremely useful tool when working with authentic materials. Students can have access to an audio file replicating the content of a natural, authentic document, clearly articulated at a normal but slower speed with standard pronunciation. Teachers can also make an authentic document less difficult by offering it as a series of shorter segments, allowing students to listen to the series of short segments before listening to the entire document.

Simultaneity

The “linking” feature of computer software means that the computer interface of a listening activity can give students simultaneous access to the multiple types of information mentioned above, limited only by the speed and capacity of the hardware.

Thus, it is not only that a film and transcript can be accessed on the same computer but, much more impressive, that there are clickable buttons giving student’s access to all of the available features from the same screen. They can click on the video controls to see the transcript of the scene they are watching, on the transcript to see the scene from the video, or on a dictionary to see definitions of key words (for a brief history of technology use in foreign-language instruction, see Burst on, this volume).

Listening Processes:

1. Bottom up processing - perceiving and parsing the speech stream at increasingly larger levels beginning with auditory-phonetic, phonemic, syllabic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, propositional, pragmatic
2. Top-down Processes - Top-down processes involve the listener in going from the whole—their prior knowledge and their content and rhetorical schemata—to the parts.

Module -34**TOOLS USED FOR DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS****Topic No: 52**

Advantages of the Internet and the Web for Developing Listening Skills; How using Technology can Help Develop Listening Skills? Speaking & Listening Web 2.0 Tools; Other Speaking & Listening Technology Tools

Advantages of the Internet and the Web for Developing Listening Skills

The web expands the basic advantages of the computer dramatically, making it possible to give students the exposure to authentic language which is essential for the acquisition of native-like listening ability, either through access to materials or electronic contact with actual native speakers (NSs). Moreover, the multimedia capabilities of the web facilitate the creation and implementation of listening comprehension activities.

Access

The ability to digitize sound files and the new mode of streaming audio and video have made audiovisual documents readily distributable from and accessible to anyplace in the world. Radio stations and TV channels in major languages have accessible websites and some (BBC, RFI, and TV5) even have special pedagogical pages.

Free downloadable software (Real One Player and Windows Media Player) allows the audio or video files to be played on any appropriately equipped computer.

Contact Offering students a true NNS-NS interactive listening situation in the classroom environment, as if they were in the C2 country or engaging in an actual conversation with NS, was previously difficult, if not impossible, to arrange. This type of communications now possible, however, using the audio input feature of computers and, for video, webcam technology (See below under Listening Materials and Listening

Activities.).

Ease of use

The great advantage of the web for any purpose, but especially for listening comprehension, is the ease of use which comes from the ability to have everything on the same page, without having to install complicated software (even if certain programs must be on the local hard disk). As was true when progress resulted in automobile drivers no longer having to crank up the engine, shift, or know anything about the engine, with regard to computers now all the user has to do is click. The

fact that the web allows for communication using a low cost hardware item, such as a webcam, and connecting through a local server and, therefore, does not entail the costs associated with long distance phone calls or complicated distance learning technology, can also be placed in the category of ease of use.

Teaching Listening Comprehension

Whether in a more traditional context or using CALL, teaching listening involves giving students sufficient exposure to appropriate audiovisual input consisting as much as possible of authentic, natural language, accompanied by pedagogical materials focusing on the various aspects of the listening process and the various types of listening, as mentioned above. Specific techniques and materials, different from those used in teaching speaking, are needed for students to master L2 listening. The present section concentrates on principles for the effective teaching of listening comprehension; the following one describes materials which allow an instructor to realize this effectiveness.

An essential element in the teaching of listening is the integration of language learning into the curriculum from the outset. From the very first day of a language course, students should be exposed to natural, authentic language other than that spoken by the teacher (assuming that the teacher is a NS or possesses near-native fluency and, therefore, can provide authentic language, which is not always the case). In addition to practice in speaking and writing, students should do listening activities at all levels of language learning. Additionally, the materials used should be based on audiovisual materials intended for NSs or in some way should involve interaction with NSs other than the classroom teacher. The early introduction and continued implementation of such materials solves the problem described by Goh: '[if there is] difficulty with a message at the level of perception or word recognition, there will be little cognitive capacity left for high-level processing' (Goh: 2002:188). Early, consistent training in understanding of prosody and perception of morphemic and phonemic features of the language studied will increase the efficiency of the students' language processing skills, leaving them more time for processing meaning. Exposure to authentic, natural language, presented in the context of activities that focus on key information or general themes will make students realize that there is more than one type of listening and that it is not only unnecessary but counterproductive to try to understand every word.

A curriculum with substantive content and a focus on language lays the foundation for good listening comprehension. That is, in addition to the techniques which teachers use for specific listening activities, their general pedagogical approach should incorporate development of skills and acquisition of knowledge that, while providing a solid basis in the language, also lead to better listening comprehension.

General approach to listening comprehension:

Such a general approach includes, among others, the following five points:

- Giving students essential linguistic knowledge about identifying phonemes, morphemes and word boundaries, and understanding and recognizing various types of expressions (phatic, temporal, those that indicate whether an utterance is intellectual, practical, or affective) as well as stock phrases, especially those used in everyday communication, presenting them as lexical expressions rather than analyzing them according to their structure (Nattinger & DeCarrico: 1992);
- Helping students to use natural pauses, stress, and intonation to help them to understand meaning;
- Making students aware of how discourse operates above the sentence level, based on principles of coherence and cohesion (Scarcella & Oxford: 1992:141–149);
- Teaching background knowledge related to the culture, geography, history, and current events of the C2 so that students will recognize and understand the sociocultural significance of names, dates, and places mentioned in audiovisual documents; and
- Training students in skills such as recognizing NS prosody, identifying specific information or making inferences, regardless of whether the focus is on grammar, reading, culture, or any other area of language study. Inferring, or deducing the meanings of novel or unfamiliar words based on contextual and pragmatic cues is especially important for both reading and listening comprehension (Lee & Van

Patten: 1995:62). As is true of essentially all aspects of language pedagogy, the best approach to the teaching of listening comprehension consists of three steps: preparation for new material, interaction with the new material, and recycling/reuse of new material. For aural comprehension, these steps are a pre-listening/viewing activity, the listening or viewing activity itself, and a post-listening/viewing activity.

Pre-listening/viewing

The pre-listening activity should familiarize students with the language and content they will hear in the listening activity. This can be done through in-class or homework activities based on an introductory text, visuals, or oral/aural tasks that activate general world knowledge, schemas and previously learned vocabulary. Focusing student attention on advance organizers, such as titles or related images, appears to improve comprehension and retention (Herron: 1994; and Herron et al.: 1995). Another approach is to have students listen to and then produce sentences, phrases, or words before listening to a video segment that uses them. Students should be made aware of the redundancy of much oral input and have practice listening to audio/visual documents to identify information they hear more than once. According to Mendelsohn

(1994:12), the pre-listening phase should include activities involving all elements of listening and allowing students to predict and guess. If the listening task requires students to form inferences, the clues should be included in the pre-listening activities.

Pre-listening/viewing activities should also foster the development of metacognitive skills. Along with information about content and practice in language, students should be given hints about how to structure the information so that it informs their listening and makes it more efficient. During

the pre-listening phase, letting students know or helping them to guess the genre of the audiovisual document they will listen to or view will help them to anticipate what they should be listening for. If they will be listening to a narrative, then they will know there will be a story with a beginning, a middle and an end, as well as recurring characters. If the document is in the form of a current news broadcast, they will think about the news they are aware of in their own language and will listen for specific facts and information (Friedman in Wolvin

& Coakley: 1993; Weissenrieder: 1993).

Part of metacognition, according to Lundsteen (1993), is to know what you don't understand and to ask for clarification. In order for L2 learners to do that, they have to learn how to determine the information necessary to make sense of what they are hearing. This means that the final step in the "pre-" phase is a thorough explanation of the tasks to be performed while listening, so students know that they have to identify only those words that are necessary for comprehension of the message, not every word they hear. It cannot be overemphasized that clear directions are part of the prelistening stage and should always be presented in class if the listening activity is to be done outside of class as a homework assignment. In fact, especially with beginning and intermediate learners, an initial portion of the listening/viewing document can be shown in class and the first part of the listening activity done by the class as a whole. Alternatively, a short activity similar in nature to the listening activity and based on a short, but similar document can be done in class.

Although all listening activities should always be introduced in class, it is not only unnecessary but probably impractical for all of the pre-listening activities to take place in the classroom. Much of the preparation for listening, such as acquiring background knowledge or listening to and repeating expressions used that the students will hear in the listening activity, can be done through CALL activities on a standalone computer or online.

How using Technology can Help Develop Listening Skills?

Radio

One of the most accessible ways a learner has of developing listening skills is Low-tech and radio broadcasts are continuous. **Listening to the radio is not an activity that is often used in class time.** **Radio listening can only be done only in real time and the scheduling of language classes to catch particular radio program is difficult.** The difficulties of obtaining copyright often prevent teachers from recording from the radio for classroom use.

Audio tapes

Audiocassette players are the simplest and cheapest way to provide listening practice opportunities for students in a classroom. Because nearly all general course books these days have accompanying audiocassettes, a cassette player has become an essential tool in the language classroom.

Extensive listening practice: Students can practice their extensive listening in a variety of ways. That is, they listen to extended stretches of discourse in a directed fashion, as opposed to out-of-

class extensive listening, usually for fun (e.g., movies). o Many of the situations in which students need to use extensive listening skills require them to listen to unfamiliar speakers or to a variety of speakers. o Without the aid of audiotapes, teachers can only do so much to create listening contexts for students to have extensive listening practice. o With the help of tapes, teachers are able to create some of the following situations so that students can acquire overall comprehension skills: o Handout :2

Intensive listening practice: Replaying a tape several times allows students the opportunity to focus on discrete points of the language and to develop intensive listening skills. If this is the purpose of the activity, then the teacher should state this at the onset and then be prepared to play the tape more than once. However, teachers need to be aware that some students can become dependent on repetitive listening to tapes before they are satisfied with their ability to comprehend any of the information, at either the specific or general level. We might call this the “play it again Sam” syndrome.

Language Laboratory

23. o With the advent of tape recorders in the 1950s and the rise of the audio-lingual method of teaching , language laboratories became popular facilities in many schools. The theory behind the audio-lingual method was that we are able to condition students to learn language. o The best way to do this was thought to be by way of mechanical drills. Theoretically, if students heard and repeated language structures often enough, they would learn the language better. Typical drills performed in the language laboratory took the form of repetition drills or substitution drills.

Video

The use of video to help develop listening skills has received much attention since it began to appear regularly in language classes in the mid-1970s. o The obvious contextualization of language provided by video made it a popular medium in non-English-speaking countries. Video often promotes the motivation to listen; it provides a rich context for authenticity of language use; o the paralinguistic features of spoken text become available to the learners (compared with radio, that is); and it aids learners’ understanding of the cultural contexts in which the language is used.

Speaking & Listening Web 2.0 Tools

1. Go! Animate (<http://goanimate.com/>)

Students can use this tool to create animated videos, using their own voice by recording an MP3 or MP4 and then importing into Go! Animate. It can also be accessed as a listening tool when you share a prepared video (either with your own voice or a computer-generated one such as that which can be found in the “Discussing Math Methods over Dinner” example shared below). Be sure that when using as a listening tool that you give specific things students are to listen for.

Example: http://goanimate.com/videos/05MBuwCSYfPE?utm_source=linkshare&uid=0P6sABNF8DKI

2. VoiceThread + iPad

VoiceThread is one of those tools that allows you to meet all of the literacy strands (reading, writing, speaking, listening, & viewing), but especially the speaking and listening strand. Available online ((<http://voicethread.com/>) and through a free app purchase (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/voicethread/id465159110?mt=8>), teachers can create VoiceThreads, having learners to view and respond through video, voice, or text. For a truly interactive experience, students can comment on each other's responses. See the Social Studies World Event VoiceThread example below:

Example: <https://voicethread.com/myvoice/#u1394575.b3480752.i18241953>

3. Voki

Voki, found online at <http://www.voki.com/>, is a fun way to engage students through talking avatars. Students can create their own avatars, designing them to resemble a historical character or a caricature of their own self. Using their own voice, they can enhance language skills, work on vocabulary, answer questions, the possibilities are endless! Likewise, teachers can create homework assignments, as in the example below, reinforcing listening skills by holding students accountable for completion of a specific task. The Voki website has close to 200 different lesson plans that apply the use of this tool across the curriculum.

Example: <http://www.voki.com/pickup.php?scid=8874500&height=267&width=200>

4. AudioPal

Another tool that meets both the speaking and listening strands is AudioPal (<http://www.audiopal.com/>). AudioPal allows you to record your voice through a mic or by calling in your message to a toll free number. There is no registration required, instead AudioPal sends you a link to your message. From there, you can embed your free audio player online.

Example: http://www.audiopal.com/grab_your_widget.html?mId=42081713.2

Speaking & Listening iPad Apps

Educreations + web version (<http://www.educreations.com/>). Educreations on the app store at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/educreations-interactive-whiteboard/id478617061?mt=8> is a great tool to use in the flipped classroom concept. It allows you to upload presentations via multiple platforms (PowerPoint, Keynote, PDFs, etc.) and narrate them.

Example (listening): <http://www.educreations.com/lesson/view/the-hunger-games-excerpt/8897145/?ref=link>

Other Speaking & Listening Technology Tools

Other iPad apps that can be used in the Speaking/Listening strands are numbered below:

1. Toontastic, an app that allows you to animate while recording your voice. (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/toontastic/id404693282?mt=8>). One example? Toontastic Video Culture – <https://toontube.launchpadtoys.com/293893>
2. ShowMe, an app that lets you turn your iPad into an interactive whiteboard (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/showme-interactive-whiteboard/id445066279>)
3. Audioboo, an app that lets you record up to 10 minutes of audio (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/audioboo/id305204540?mt=8>)
4. Sock Puppets, an app that lets you create lip-synched videos. (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/sock-puppets/id394504903?mt=8>)
5. Fotobabble, an app that lets you upload your photos and, well, babble about them. (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fotobabble/id353078443?mt=8>)

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Lecture- 14

CALL- Speaking Skills

Module -35

TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES USED FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS**Topic No: 53**

Improve speaking Skills by Using Computer; Shy of Speaking? Online Tools; Students Smart Phones; Recordings and Transcripts; Native Speakers; Skype and/or Face time; Book Track Classroom

Improve Speaking Skills by Using Computer

Computer is a suitable tool to be used to improve students' speaking skills. We use the computer technology to create an environment that encourages communication and provides increased and more varied communicative opportunities for students to utilize their oral skills.

The computer can be used as tutor in improving speaking skills. MyET is like a personal tutor that can help you learn English through speaking practice. MyET's unique and award-winning technology, "Automatic Speech Analysis System" (ASAS©), can analyze students' English speech on pronunciation, pitch, timing and emphasis, and even pinpoint problems to individual sounds. After they speak, they will receive a score and specific feedback on how to improve. Whether the student is a beginner or advanced learner, MyET is like a one-on-one tutor who can make speaking English a comfortable experience.

This software like a personal tutor, gives students one-on-one feedback on their speech. MyET is unique because it tells you exactly which word and even which sound (phoneme) that students are having trouble with, and how to correct the problem. MyET gives students the one-on-one feedback they need to improve, just like a live tutor.

This software will also provide an online community, so that students will not study alone. MyET has online English learning communities so students are connected to other learners. Through the Internet, not only can compare scores with others, but also find a community of learners at similar levels of English skills. MyET will also ensure students learn the correct accent. Since there is no

one “correct” accent in English, MyET lets students choose their own tutor, to learn the accent that they like, whether it’s Californian, New York, Canadian or even British. Students can learn an accent of their own choosing.

Besides, the computer can be used as an instructional tool in improving speaking skills. Instruction tool means there are human-to-human interaction via the computer in the classroom.

Everyday English in Conversation is a useful website that helps ESL/EFL learners develop conversational English skills. In this section, they will focus on learning idiomatic and everyday expressions to help students deal with daily conversational situations. As each dialogue is accompanied with carefully designed exercises, follow the recommended steps and practice at your own pace.

Lastly, the computer can be used as a communication medium that is a human-to-human interaction via the computer outside the classroom. Students can improve their speaking skills by using MOOs (Multi-user domains, Object Oriented) and chat rooms for “live” real-time communication.

Shy of Speaking? Online Tools

Speaking is one of the most challenging English language skills for many TOEIC test takers to master. Even native speakers are often terrified when they first have to give a formal presentation to an audience: the fear of public speaking is in fact our most common phobia, with many saying that this fear is worse for them than even fear of death.

If you are preparing for TOEIC, however, giving a public speech is not what you have to master. You will be speaking privately and simply into the “ears” of a computer and being scored by expert raters who score international English anonymously and objectively, with no judgments based on accent or knowledge of who you are.

Speaking “to a computer” of course can generate its own fears (though in today’s VOIP- and DVC-connected business world you may be doing it every day). Fortunately there are many learner-friendly forums that will develop your skills and your confidence.

Students Smart Phones

Undoubtedly, your classroom is full of technology even if there is not a computer or projector in sight. Often the most advanced technology is right in your students' pockets in the form of their phones. Having a smart phone is like walking around with an entire computer in your pocket, and the best ESL teachers will take advantage of this tool that doesn't cost them a dime. Have your students use their phones to record themselves during a speaking activity. You might have one person record another in a group discussion. Or you might have one student record himself while reading a dialogue or answering questions orally. After students record themselves, have them go back and watch their videos. If possible, give them a rubric or checklist of the skills you want them to measure in their video. Since students will view and assess their own videos, they can be brutally honest, and you should encourage them to be so. And if you want them to be even more honest, assure them that you won't take their own assessment into consideration if and when you grade them on the speaking project.

Recordings and Transcripts

How well does your students' pronunciation approach that of a native speaker?

They may find out for themselves when you have recordings and transcripts available them to practice with. Many websites for ESL students have videos and corresponding transcripts free for classroom use. Try making the materials available in your own classroom for your students during independent work time. Have students listen to a line of the video and then repeat it, reading off the transcript. As students work their way through the video and the transcript, they will find their speaking skills approaching that of the speaker on the recording.

Native Speakers

Of course your students listen to you all of the time (though like any good ESL teacher you try and limit your talk time and increase your students' talk time).

But are you using one of the best resources for pronunciation improvement at your disposal – other native speakers? If your school allows, invite other people into your classroom to come and talk to your students. Ask around or send out a general invitation on social media. You might be surprised just how many friends and acquaintances are willing to come spend an hour with your students and give them a little sample of their spoken English. Have your visitors come and talk about a topic you will be teaching in class, about their job, about their family, or just sit and chat with your students. Listening to other voices and accents will benefit your students as they seek to have good English pronunciation (not to mention increase their listening comprehension skills).

Skype and/or Facetime

You don't have to invite other people to your classroom to give your students the benefits of talking to native speakers, and if you teach overseas you might not have the resources to do it, either.

Instead, team up with some volunteers or a class of English speakers overseas and set up some time for video chatting through Skype, Facetime, or another program. This way, your students can have conversation partners without anyone having to move away from their desks. Both classes will benefit, and your students' pronunciation will improve by simply hearing and speaking with native speakers. And this is another opportunity when your students' smart phones will be a great resource in class.

BookTrack Classroom

BookTrack is an awesome, free tool that enhances both reading and writing by incorporating music. Students can create soundtracks for plays, poems, stories, or even their own creative writing, and share their creations with the world. Text and music both have the powerful ability to elicit an emotional reaction from the audience. With BookTrack, students can merge the two and bring a new dimension to the written word.

As English teacher Kate Baker explains, "BookTrack is the only tool that I've found that really helps students connect with author's purpose and tone in writing." Enhancing the text with music calls for students to think deeply and critically about the written word, and encourages them to

create an experience for the reader. Children have to consider the audience; mood and tone of both the text and music; author's purpose; and employ digital editing and revising skills to create the soundtrack.

We're all familiar with the writing process, but do we ever stop to consider how that process is mirrored when children create and edit video and audio? We ask students to revise, edit, and publish in classroom tasks which imply these skills are the end goal, rather than a means to an end. We rarely give the process, as a whole, meaningful context. Composing with BookTrack provides an avenue for children to progress through to a final product in the creation process.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

I think nobody can deny that computers are in the center of our everyday life. Is your answer no? Then, just think again: Computers can divide/multiply or add numbers for us, we can draw money from computer- managed ATMs anytime we like, they work in our digital watches, in ABS & ESP systems in our cars, in almost all of the control mechanisms of an aeroplane, in digital cameras, in cellular phones, in cd players, in remote controllers, in photocopiers, in satellite systems, so on and on.... Do they sound familiar? If you use any of them, it means that you unconsciously “managed” by a computer system in your everyday life, because all the things I mentioned here have the same basic controlling system: computer. However, we also use computers – I mean Personal Computers- consciously and directly in banks, offices, schools, homes, and everywhere they are needed... We use computers in any cases, anyway, so this is the awful truth: We are totally surrounded by computers. Believe it or not, this is the reality.

As regards education, -in our case it is foreign language education-, do you still believe that foreign language teaching & learning process keeps unaffected by this ‘silent computer revolution’ and is trying to accomplish its aim through so-called “traditional” methods? I am giving the answer for you: Definitely not! Now, foreign language teaching methods are rapidly shifting from the traditional methods to the methods using computer applications and multimedia environments. These applications and environments are used extensively and successfully in reading, writing, listening and speaking practices by ESL teachers and students throughout the world. What’s more, the tools I mentioned here are truly helpful in practising the four skills of a language (reading, writing, listening and speaking) since these tools give language practisers almost exactly what they need; however, the main focus of interest in this article is developing listening & speaking skills via internet & multimedia tools. “The internet is suitable place to practise languages as it offers the possibility, with the right software, of using images and audio resources at the same time,

combining sounds and images as in communicative situations in the real world. It also provides users with a highly appealing and innovative format” (Labayen et. al., 2005, p.9). From now on, I will try to show you what computers, internet and multimedia environments offer and how using these tools can help ESL students practising listening & speaking throughout this text.

Originally, media environments’ high, fast and easy accessibility is what makes them an almost perfectly tailored solution to L2 effective and easy-to-reach learning & practising resources. Using media environments is convenient in itself, indeed, because it gives us the possibility to choose what is appropriate for us at a certain period of time. Hoven (1999) asserts that computers allow L2 learners to determine the way and the pace that suits them and their needs. For example, when an ESL practiser is in class, s/he can have access to the internet, TV/video to watch movies or educative programmes in the target language, or study on a listening/speaking application using a computer on his/her own. Ehsani et. al. (1998) emphasize that by combining sound, vision, text, video and animation, this self-paced interactive learning environments create much more educative and creative classroom environments. What’s more, besides individual work, two or more people can work together in a group activity which makes the process more interactive. Hoven (1999) believes that computers allow learners to add up what they know altogether more effectively and support peer correction. What’s more, Ellis et. al. (2005) suggest that technology has shaped the collaborative relationships between students and the way they interact with each other which eventually shape the learning opportunities in a classroom.

Frith (2005) indicates that even though some L2 students are often required to speak in English in their social settings, they mostly enjoy listening especially when they are watching television or films. This observation emphasizes the use of multimedia environments in L2 classrooms. What’s more, Frith (2005) believes that video lessons can be very stimulating. This is what is needed to actualize real development. Besides, this is also an enjoyable part of listening development, because for many students, learning is associated with dull and boring classroom activities. Unfortunately, in this case this generalization does not work, because L2 learners “do it” on their own in a convenient and different way. Verdugo et. al. (2007) assert that children actively take part in understanding the story because of the interactivity of internet based stories and this makes learning easy. This make the development of listening ability more effective and entertaining, but less effort-required. Consequently, this is what leads to real development and learning.

The use of the internet in classroom environment is relatively a new phenomenon. However, seeing that it offers almost unlimited resources and choices, it has become widespread all around the world. At this point, the important thing is how to use it effectively in classrooms. Labayen et. al. (2005) emphasize that only when the sources are properly selected can the internet be useful in a learning environment. Then, another problem arises: How to select appropriate web sites to make

use of them in a classroom to improve listening and speaking skills of students? Labayen et. al. (2005) show that the best way to find good web sites is to listen to a colleague's suggestions who actually searched the site on his/her own or find a "serious" web site which may actually help.

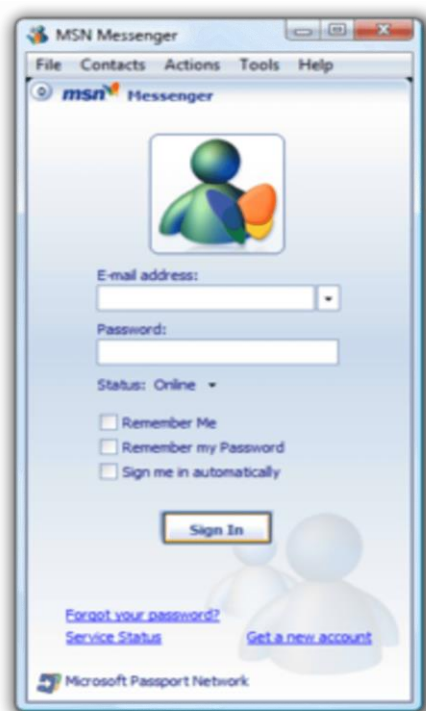
When it comes to speaking practice via the internet, there are cheap, useful and wise solutions available. For example, Skype, MSN Messenger, GoogleTalk and similar VoIP applications can be used to connect a native speaker on the internet and realize a real-time conversation for free. Volle (2005) notes in her research that using MSN Messenger to conduct her online lessons, she observed the development in oral proficiency of her students. Even though VoIP conversations cannot make up for some features of a real & face-to-face conversation, it is a precious opportunity for an L2 learner to use VoIP applications considering the hardships of finding a native speaker in the place where the learner lives. Labayen et. al. (2005) indicate that face to face communication has many advantages, so video-audio devices in CALL and on the internet are essential to teach oral skills.

The use of computer and the internet in classrooms is essential to actualize development in listening comprehension and oral skills, because computer environment allows fast developmental assessment and fast update. Kruse (2004) indicates that the web content can be updated easily and the information can be in use immediately. So, this allows the lesson contents to be much more updated which may eventually cause high levels of awareness and success. Another point Kruse (2004) makes clear is that the cost of using computer systems and internet can be relatively low. Since many video/audio resources and VoIP applications are available on the internet and the maintenance costs are relatively low, this makes it a wise and effective solution to development of listening and speaking skills of L2 learners.

As regards the interaction support of multimedia environments, people of the world are just one click away from each other as is conventionally said and this convenience makes the exploitation of such systems in language education vital as well. LeLoup & Ponterio (2007) argue that preventing an L2 learner from being isolated, technology is the ultimate solution to those who lack the speech generated by a native speaker. To illustrate, videoconferencing technology is an example of technologic solutions to this isolation. It has many useful and effective uses in learning environments. In the figure below (see Fig. 1) you can see the use of the application in a classroom environment.

Cabaroglu & Roberts (2006) argue that the use of VoIP applications in the classroom environment boosts the students' communication skills and intercultural awareness besides enhancing motivation and classroom performance. For example, Skype application is increasingly used as a

part of listening and speaking development process throughout the world today. Skype is an internet-based application that enables Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) calls (Jenks, n.d.). It has a useful user-interface that enables the users easy and effective use (see Fig.2). What's more, there are similar online applications such as MSN Messenger and GoogleTalk and the likes. MSN Messenger also has millions of users worldwide and is used to improve speaking and listening skills by L2 students. Hampel et. al. (n.d.) assert that Skype and MSN Messenger increasingly create newer possibilities for the users. These softwares can also transmit video at the same time when the users speak to each other. So, this feature raises the level of interaction between practisers. Such level of interaction is also effective because of the highly useful features and user-interfaces of the applications. For the user-interface of MSN Messenger see Fig.



As an alternative, internet TVs and radios can be used to develop listening comprehension skills of an L2 student in an entertaining atmosphere; however, there is a relatively new emerging phenomenon: YouTube.com! This is a video upload-watch-download site and is increasing its popularity day by day. To have an idea how the site looks like see Fig. 4. According to statistics, the site has more than six million videos and the total time necessary to watch all these videos is 9.305 years! This huge video pool offers priceless opportunities to practice listening in an entertaining and convenient environment. LeLoup & Ponterio (2006) allege that television/radio shows, news, documentaries, music videos and any videos beyond the imagination of people are just one click away. All you need is an internet connection. The rest is almost totally free; however, LeLoup & Ponterio (2006) also suggest that videos should be carefully selected and prepared by

the instructor to maximize comprehension and minimize frustration of learners and they hope that improvement in search tools for videos will allow the teachers to find the right video clip for supporting language class.

Figure . YouTube.com is broadcasting many listening comprehension improving videos.



As BBC has always been seen as a genuine source of “right” form of English, it cannot be disregarded for English Language Teaching. Being aware of its educative role, BBC has been publishing books, audio/video materials and so on. With the rise of the internet, BBC has prepared an English Learning Page which is one of the best of its kind. LeLoup & Ponterio (2006) assert that the site gives ideas to the learner about material development and how to work efficiently with the aural input. Maintaining the publication at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/> , BBC provides the visitors with quizzes, videos, podcasts and games as well as radio archives and voice recordings. As regards listening activities, there are many activities based on listening comprehension.

Figure . A demonstration of BBC Learning English web site listening practice section



Throughout the lesson, the entertaining aspect of using multimedia environments is constantly emphasized. So why is it so necessary? Because it makes learning easier and the most important of all it makes learning permanent. For example, cartoons may be a good means of teaching children foreign language and improve their comprehension and the things beyond it. “Although we usually associate cartoons with entertainment, in fact they can have many more serious applications. Children love cartoons – as we all know from the fondness they have for the cartoon networks – so why not make this attractive medium work for teaching and learning?” (Hobson, 2005, p.1) When it comes to adults, the use of movies have a great positive influence on their motivation and performance. Frith (2005) suggests that although some L2 students are often required to speak in English in their social environments, they predominantly enjoy listening especially when they are watching television or films. Apart from that, songs can be highly useful for developmental process of listening skills of an L2 student. Lynch (2007) suggests that because music is everywhere in human life to change or boost the emotions and feelings, we can include music and songs in language learning as well. Besides, karaoke is also beneficial in that it requires a recitation which eventually leads to improvement in speaking skill. Lastly, computer aided games can also have striking effects on an L2 student’s listening comprehension and sentence utterance. Keislar et. al. (1970) suggest that games , especially for children, are proved to be useful during their language education process. When games’ attractiveness unites with convenience and flexibility of computers systems, it may cause positive results as well.

The aim of this article is to discuss some prominent benefits of using computer and multimedia environments to develop L2 students' listening & speaking skills and how the L2 students are affected from it. Jenks (n.d.) suggests that the internet and internet-based applications have great influence on us; however, since enough research hasn't been made over the issue, we are not certain 100 % about the outcomes of its use. Of course, we know that there are some limitations in its use as well; however, keeping it in our minds, ELT community should eliminate the limitations as much as they can and try to exploit its usefulness in every aspect of language teaching. To do this, much more research and experiments are required in the area. Hampel et. al. (n.d.) assert that finding an effective way to practise speaking is one of the biggest problems in both distant education and also online education. By determining the weak points of the method and fixing them, work force can be used more efficiently, more energy and material can be saved and more reliable and permanent development can be achieved. To achieve the better, we all should work very hard and do the best we can for it. As we are going to be totally in cyber age in the near future, at least we are obliged to do it.

Module -36

TOOLS USED FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS**Topic No: 54****Modern Technologies In Developing Speaking Skill; Literacy in the Digital Age: Nine Great Speaking and Listening Tools;****Modern Technologies In Developing Speaking Skill**

Technology can stimulate the playfulness of learners and immerse them in a variety of scenarios. Technology gives learners a chance to engage in self-directed actions, opportunities for self-paced interactions, privacy, and a safe environment in which errors get corrected and specific feedback is given. Feedback by a machine offers additional value by its ability to track mistakes and link the student immediately to exercises that focus on specific errors. Studies are emerging that show the importance of qualitative feedback in softwares. When links are provided to locate explanations, additional help, and reference, the value of technology is further augmented. **Modern technologies available in education today are:**

1. Communication lab
2. Speech recognition software
3. Internet
4. TELL (Technology Enhanced Language Learning)
5. Pod casting
6. Quick Link Pen
7. Quicktionary

**1. How To Use These Technologies: Communication Labs**

Software's are available to develop speaking skills. By incorporating suitable software through computers the students will play it again and again with their own interest and try to improve their speaking skills, which are most essential in this modernized IT world. The usage of headphones in the lab makes the students to have interest over the subject and induces them to repeat again and again instead of feeling boredom.

2. Speech Recognition Software

Speech recognition software also helps improving the students speaking, this can convert spoken words to machine-readable input. The device recognizes the accuracy of what was read and then provides a positive reinforcement like “You sound great!” or gives the user an opportunity to try again, in this way the learner can figure if he is reading well or not. As the user’s skill improves, the technology reads less material so that the learner reads more. This software also evaluates and provides scores of grammar, pronunciation, comprehension and provided with the correct forms, for examples if a student mispronounces a word, the learning tool can immediately spot it and help correct it. This device can be a very useful device for distance learners because they don’t have a teacher who corrects their speech and this device can help improving their speaking skills.

3. Internet

Internet is a commonly acknowledged term and widely used by people throughout the world. Students now use Internet in the class to learn English. Online teaching inside the classroom seems to be interesting and makes the students to find out the suitable materials for them. Students are instructed to do the grammar exercises which are available online. Through Internet we can collect data from various sources for any instruction to improve speaking, students can use Skype, MSM Messenger, Google talk (used to have conferences on line) and other applications where students can connect with friends, other students, teacher and even native speakers, these ways of learning have been observed to improve oral proficiency in students and make up for the lack of native speakers in the areas where students live and what is more, on line conferences also enhance intercultural awareness, motivation and raise the level of interaction. Over the internet, students can find a lot of learning materials, for instance, audio, video, radio and TV shows, games, voice recordings, quizzes, podcasts and so on , in this way, students get exposed to a great amount of target language and this help them develop their speaking skills.

4. TELL

TELL is the use of computer technology including hardware, software and the internet to enhance teaching and learning of languages. It allows the students to get access with all the technologies available for the enhancement of English learning. Students are allowed to use online dictionaries, chat, and to view the various happenings around the world.

5. Pod Casting

Podcasts can be uploaded or downloaded, this audio help the learner familiarize with the target language and teachers can use them as useful audio material that can be used in class for

activities like discussions, besides, in the web, there are even particular podcasts that are for ESL learners and these can include pronunciation for particular needs of students. Podcast undoubtedly help learners in speaking. Pod casting is the integration of audio files where we can feed our own materials and ply it inside and outside of the classroom. Students use i-pods to hear their favorite music files. In the same way they have their education in the form of entertainment. Podcasting allows students to use their tech-based entertainment systems for educational purposes. With it we are able to move away from the traditional face-to-face training without losing the student-to-trainer relationship that is so effective in any learning process. Podcasts enables students and teachers to share information with anyone at any time. An absent student can download the podcast of recorded lesson and is able to access the missed lectures. They could also access lectures of experts which may not otherwise be available because of geographical distance and other reasons.

6. Quick Link Pen

Quick Link Pen allows learners to copy and store printed text, Internet links. It helps to transfer the data to computers and enables the reader to get the meaning of the word from a built in dictionary. Accessing this type of machine seems to be a more convenient method. Recent developments in machine translations presents translation engines like GO Translator and Bablefish.

7. Quicktionary

It is a pen-like device. It allows the reader to easily scan the word and get its definition and translation on its own LCD screen. Technology such as Enounce and Sound-Editor enable learners to adjust the speech rate of listening materials to assist their comprehension, and present spectrum of speech waves and visual depictions of mouth and tongue movement to ease the learning and refine pronunciation.

Literacy in the Digital Age: Nine Great Speaking and Listening Tools

The majority of the tools mentioned in this post and the four earlier posts in our series, transform the student experience from passive consumers of information to active creators of content, employing multiple English Language Arts standards and skills along the way.

We firmly believe this ought to be the new norm in the modern classroom. Kids have access to information; we must teach them how to navigate a world constantly evolving where content is at their fingertips. The traditional application of ELA isn't enough for future-ready learners. We would argue our students read and write more now than they ever have before -- between texting, social media, gaming, and everything else they do in their digitally fueled, online lives. Our vision

must evolve to incorporate a new approach to literacy instruction, one in which technology becomes an accelerator to personalize and create meaningful learning contexts.

In this digital age, storytelling, comprehension, and the writing process are evolving before our eyes. Schools, then, must recognize and value the fact that a narrative doesn't always have to be told with pencil and paper, or that the steps of the writing process aren't bound by tradition.

In this final installment of our series, we focus on speaking and listening. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) stress the importance of communication, and challenge students to engage in conversation by using evidence to support an argument, while evaluating and listening to others' perspectives. The nine tools below create opportunities for students to employ their speaking and listening skills as creators and producers, and as called for by the CCSS.

BookTrack Classroom

BookTrack is an awesome, free tool that enhances both reading and writing by incorporating music. Students can create soundtracks for plays, poems, stories, or even their own creative writing, and share their creations with the world. Text and music both have the powerful ability to elicit an emotional reaction from the audience. With BookTrack, students can merge the two and bring a new dimension to the written word.

As English teacher Kate Baker explains, "BookTrack is the only tool that I've found that really helps students connect with author's purpose and tone in writing." Enhancing the text with music calls for students to think deeply and critically about the written word, and encourages them to create an experience for the reader. Children have to consider the audience; mood and tone of both the text and music; author's purpose; and employ digital editing and revising skills to create the soundtrack.

We're all familiar with the writing process, but do we ever stop to consider how that process is mirrored when children create and edit video and audio? We ask students to revise, edit, and publish in classroom tasks which imply these skills are the end goal, rather than a means to an end. We rarely give the process, as a whole, meaningful context. Composing with BookTrack provides an avenue for children to progress through to a final product in the creation process.

VideoNot.es

VideoNot.es is a platform that allows students to take notes synchronized with video. In other words, students can be viewing a video on half their screen while simultaneously taking notes on the other half.

This is an innovative way to help students engage deeply with a text, as called for by the Standards. The most amazing aspect to VideoNot.es is that each note is automatically synchronized with the video (think time-stamped). When students go back to review the notes they took, all they have to do is click on a line they typed and the video jumps to that specific point. VideoNot.es isn't simply limited to YouTube either (though it does work seamlessly there); Khan, Vimeo, and several MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) platforms work as well. Additionally, the tool connects with a person's Google Drive account, so it's perfect for Google Apps For Education districts around the world.

Several uses exist for the tool, but teachers may find great value with VideoNot.es as part of a flipped learning model. Teachers can assign a video and ask students to take notes on its content. Additionally, teachers may ask students to jot down questions, connections, wonderings, wow/a-ha moments, etc. Students can then either share their notes with the teacher as a vehicle for personalized feedback, or with peers as part of structured opportunities for collaboration and dialogue. The tool encourages students to not simply listen to the content, but also to employ visual and oral comprehension strategies, along with writing processes.

PlayPosit & Edpuzzle

PlayPosit and Edpuzzle are two of our favorite tools that allow teachers to create interactive videos.

Teachers can record a screencast or leverage existing videos, and embed questions at strategic points in a video to monitor comprehension and/or push a student's thinking. Teachers can differentiate content and questioning and promote self-paced learning. Additionally, by embedding formative assessment checks throughout the video and analyzing real time data based on student response, teachers can provide precise intervention or enrichment along with timely and specific feedback.

Teachers can use this tool as part of a flipped or blended learning model to provide self-paced learning opportunities. Videos can be taken from YouTube or teachers can utilize their own creations. Don't think of it as just a teacher tool; encourage students to create their own flipped videos with questions.

Podcasting

Speaking and Listening Standards can be supported by the creation of podcasts in the classroom.

Students can practice fluency, produce book reviews, record a solo on their instrument, or reflect on assignments, to name a few possible podcasting activities. How often do students have the

opportunity to listen to their own speech? Or process content and then be able to articulate the material in a way that is meaningful to them?

There are many ways educators can begin to implement podcasting, or digital voice recording, as part of their classroom practice. Teachers and students could begin using Google Voice to leave voicemail messages for one another. We've found this strategy to be very effective in helping students develop all six dimensions of fluency when acquiring a new language.

Additionally, web-based platforms such as Vocaroo afford similar opportunities to record audio. With this tool, students can download their recording, link to a QR code, or share via email and social networks. Students can also use programs like Spreaker or Audacity to add music and sound effects. The spectrum of podcast creations can be as basic or as "fancified" as a student would like it to be.

As we mentioned in an earlier post in this series, empower student voice by providing an audience. Student podcasts can be catalogued and utilized by fellow classmates to reinforce concepts. Beyond that, the CCSS and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) bring uniformity and consistency in terms of grade-level expectations. Consider posting podcasts on websites, blogs, or social media so students can share their work with others around the world!

ThingLink

ThingLink is a phenomenal tool that takes storytelling to a whole new level: an image or video becomes the canvas for students to create interactive media. Students start with an image as the foundation and add links to videos, content, audio, maps, and additional images to construct a multimodal story. ThingLink contains interactive hotspots for viewers to click to explore more around a given topic.

Asking students to create using ThingLink provides them an opportunity to employ comprehension, writing, and listening skills in a virtual context. Students must strategically select and embed elements that help facilitate their story. Perhaps it's a map that becomes interactive with content related to a series of battles, or the area's history of colonization, coupled with music and art of a particular era. Maybe students researching an author are able to embed tidbits of information about that author's life and writing. Teachers can even use this tool as a way to organize resources for units by providing an interactive experience through an image or video.

SOURCE:

- <https://calltask3.wordpress.com/speaking-skills/improve-speaking-skills-by-using-computer/>
- <https://www.amideast.org/blogs/english4success/june-27-2011-0818/shy-speaking-online-tools>
- <https://busyteacher.org/23820-improve-spoken-english-5-must-have-tools.html>
- <https://www.teachingchannel.org/blog/2015/09/02/literacy-in-the-digital-age-speaking-and-listening-sap>
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315790125_TECHNOLOGY_IN_TEACHING_SPEAKING_SKILL
- <http://www.freeonlineresearchpapers.com/using-technology-improve-communication-skills>
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315790125_TECHNOLOGY_IN_TEACHING_SPEAKING_SKILL
- <https://www.teachingchannel.org/blog/2015/09/02/literacy-in-the-digital-age-speaking-and-listening-sap>

Lecture- 15

Research in CALL

Module -37**RESEARCH IN CALL****Topic No: 55**

A New Field: Reporting CALL Research; Current Research Interests; Approaches to Research in CALL; The Computer as a Research Tool; The Role of Commercial Publishers

Current Research Interests

This lesson begins with an examination of some current research interests in CALL. As is common in other fields, research interests in CALL have tended to follow trends; for example, the foci of many early studies were on quantitative and qualitative justifications of CALL. In these studies, the computer was usually pitted against the classroom teacher and measured, usually unflatteringly, for effectiveness in teaching a discrete set of knowledge; for example, a researcher might measure student learning of grammar at a computer with a teacher-led class serving as a control group. Such studies are still undertaken, with a focus on particular hardware or software, but they are not as frequent, or perhaps not even as necessary since CALL is now perceived as something that is inherently different and /or complementary to classroom teaching.

To assist in an examination of the current research interests, this section reviews and categorizes 102 publications in the field to try to define current areas of interest. Brief summaries of several of the articles are given to illustrate the current concerns and a range of issues is highlighted.

15.1 A new field: Reporting CALL Research

The discipline of CALL is relatively new and differs from other fields of study within applied linguistics for the basic reason that the rate of change of the technological aspects deeply influences theory, practice and research (See Figure 1). For this reason, 30-year-old research providing findings critical of text-only modes of representation is largely irrelevant

and obsolete, other than from a historical perspective. And one may assume that this trend of perpetual obsolescence will continue as computers and their interfaces become more powerful, more transparent



Figure : Progression in computer presentation technology

and easier for learner interactions and teacher programming. At the same time, CALL has been steadily migrating to other platforms as they themselves have become more powerful, so that computer games, mobile telephones and even music players have become plausible learning plat-forms for CALL.

Many of the original CALL programs are not even able to run on current computer platforms, let alone appeal to learners with their austere presentation and limited range of functions. This is especially true as, a few decades ago, the personal computer did not exist, yet is now becoming as common as other household appliances and completely familiar to the current generation of learners in those schools where computers are used. Such students commonly view computers not as scientific and educational tools, but primarily as tools for

communication and sources of entertainment; the need to meet such expectations has given rise to a field of courseware known as edutainment.

15.2 Approaches to Research in CALL

The pace of change in computer technology, and the usual delay in conducting, reporting, publishing and disseminating research, also serves to differentiate CALL from other areas in applied linguistics. This delay means that, even in the case of reporting research through a non-paper medium such as on the WWW or by email, a great deal of research may be out of date before it reaches its intended audience. The nature of this delay has led not just to an extensive duplication of effort, but also to a lack of recognition of leadership in CALL research as the usual incremental debates and advances are labelled irrelevant if the software on which they are based has been superseded by newer versions which address some or all of the earlier shortcomings.

Duplication of effort is also common because of the distributed nature of personal computers. The early years of research in computing required access to mainframe facilities at key universities but, with the advent of small, inexpensive and powerful computers, research need not take place in universities and trickle down to the language classroom. Instead, it has become increasingly common for trained teachers to conduct and report research based on data gathered in their own classrooms and from student experiences on computer platforms away from the classroom.

15.3 The Computer as a Research Tool

The computer is not only a subject of research; it is now a universally important tool in conducting research. On the simplest level, computers are used to save time previously spent compiling and presenting statistical data. On more advanced levels, the computer is used to collect data. For example, computers can collect information about the users' actions at the keyboard, such as by recording each single keystroke in real time. These actions can be played back by the researcher to see, for example, successive drafts in the writing process and use (and abuse) of tools such as spelling and grammar checkers and templates. Computers also provide fuller feedback on the details of language issues. Heift and Rimrott (2008) used corpus linguistics to compile and evaluate the frequency of 1,268 spelling errors and then went on to examine the role that error correction tools had in helping address them in student writing. In another study, Knutsson et al. (2007) looked at how and when students decided to accept proffered grammar corrections.

Data mined from online text and chat, as well as that stored on a user's hard drive can provide a rich source of data for corpora, especially from letters, memos, emails, student assignments and other documents. The computer also makes it far easier to manipulate, examine and present such corpora. Another computer revolution has been the creation of templates that allow surveys to be easily created, conducted, distributed and tabulated. Programs such as Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) are designed to allow novices to construct professional-looking surveys and distribute notice of them by email at a minimal cost. Websites can be set up to include surveys that can collect data worldwide.

15.4 The Role of Commercial Publishers

A further difference between CALL and other areas of applied linguistics is that the commercial software industry, not university academics, is the major instigator/creator of the most commonly used learning materials. Although it can be argued that the same is true for traditional publishing, the relationship between educators and print publishers is more of a symbiotic nature, particularly as governments, schools and universities tend to have syllabi to which publishers' materials must conform. The same is less true for CALL materials for the simple reason that there are not enough CALL materials to choose from and the market is not yet as competitive or adaptable to local needs, especially considering the high costs of producing an innovative and high-quality CD-ROM or DVD, a process more akin to producing a film than publishing a textbook.

On the other hand, publishers are increasingly offering interactive CD-ROMs or simply companion websites to textbooks – a trend taking over from including CD-ROMs in the back of a student's book – although these are seldom more sophisticated than collections of audio files, listening transcripts and simple multiple choice tests. Still, there are interesting possibilities, such as the use of MP4 podcast files which can be downloaded onto a personal audio player. As the learner listens to the podcast, the corresponding text scrolls in sync along with what the learner is hearing (see <http://www.sounds-good-online.com/go-online>). This is an example of how, overall, changes in CALL tend to be governed more by the above-mentioned advances in technology than by pedagogical insights.

Module -38**REVIEWING CURRENT STUDIES IN CALL****Topic No: 56****Reviewing current studies: a survey; Blackboard Vista**

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15.5 Reviewing current studies: a survey

As mentioned earlier, the areas of research emphasized in CALL are in a constant state of change. More than in most other fields, such changes are influenced by key questions being answered by empirical research or by concerns being made redundant by the introduction of new technology. For example, a principal concern in CALL during the mid-1980s to early 1990s was disorientation as a learner navigates hypertext and hypermedia links within an information space (see Conklin, 1987; Liu, 1992; Marchionini, 1988). However, concerns about hypertext and hyper-media were subsequently largely replaced by concerns about multimedia. Although navigation and disorientation are still concerns, a combination of better and standardized interface designs (e.g. see Howlett, 1996), as well as increased computer literacy among both teachers and learners, have made many related issues irrelevant. Emphasis today is largely shifting to blended learning, online applications, social networking sites and other tools that facilitate communication and, as a peripheral benefit, are used or can be used to improve and document language acquisition.

In this section, an attempt is made to give a rough overview of current research interests in CALL. Defining the parameters of such an overview presents several challenges, although it is easy to imagine what the perfect solution might be: one would survey everyone doing every kind of research in CALL in all languages in every country worldwide. However, even identifying all the members of such a group would be an impossible task as would be the job of soliciting and assessing their contributions.

Levy (1997) created one methodology when he narrowed the task and contacted what he labels key practitioners in 24 countries. This was done through a process of first identifying prominent contributors to CALL literature and asking each key practitioner to recommend one or two others.

In this way, 213 individuals were identified and sent detailed questionnaires with 104 individuals from 18 countries eventually returning usable questionnaires.

Problems with this approach include those inherent in questionnaire design, such as possible author bias on, and wording of, the questions asked and areas of research that might be covered. This method is also time-consuming and reliant upon the goodwill of the participants although, in the case of Levy's study, the response rate – almost 49 per cent (all percentages have been rounded off) – was excellent. But a further problem is that those who are established in the field of CALL may have established their reputations and research focus on technologies that are no longer on the cutting edge. For example, for a question on what CALL encompasses, traditional text gap-filling tasks rank second highest in importance among Levy's respondents, yet in the review undertaken in the first edition of this book in 2001, it was reported in only 1 of 145 studies (Coniam, 1997) and, even then, only as a drawback of traditional CALL software; in the review done for the years 2006 through 2008, there are none. One reason for this shift might be the very reason for writing the first edition of this book; the topics emphasized in CALL research have changed since Levy's survey which, while not published until 1997, was actually completed in March 1991. Still, as a methodology, it is a useful tool that should be used more often as it has an additional benefit of informally networking those working in the field.

A slightly less daunting task would be to survey for a short period all publications likely to contain articles related to CALL, including journals, conference proceedings, dissertation abstracts (at both the M.A. and Ph.D. levels) and recent books. And although this methodology would be marginally more workable, it would also present problems. For example, issues tangential to CALL research often appear in a broad range of journals (e.g. software engineering) that may have little or no other focus on computers and language learning; simply identifying the journals to examine would be problematical, let alone the task of obtaining, examining and assessing them.

As for the thousands of conferences held each year, a single important presentation on CALL might be lost among other topics. Reviewing current dissertation abstracts is also problematical as such abstracts may represent research begun as long as 10 years earlier and, in keeping with the nature of higher-level academic research, are more likely to focus on sometimes esoteric topics. A similar problem faces attempts to review all pertinent books; although published research in the quickly changing field of CALL is likely to yield useful principles, some information may be quickly dated. Books also tend to focus on a broader range of concerns and are less easily classifiable.

Based on these concerns, an expedient method of obtaining an over-view is to review a large database of recent journal articles. Journal articles generally present a broader and more representative range of issues than books or dissertations and have the advantage of a relatively shorter lag-time between research and publication. Also, authors of books and dissertations often put their principal concerns into journal articles, so the ideas important in their main publications are still likely to be represented.

In reviewing journals, the most convenient method was to conduct a search of a journal abstract database. Several databases were searched for the keywords Computer-Assisted language learning. These keywords may seem a bit narrow in focus, excluding as they do a range of related acronyms such as CAI, CAL and CMC, but, even in studies on CAI, CAL and CMC that do not mention CALL, keyword summaries and digital document tagging often include the phrase Computer-Assisted language learning.

Of the various databases reviewed in 2009 for the keywords Computer-Assisted language learning for the years 2006 to 2008, Educational Research International Clearinghouse (ERIC) www.eric.ed.gov/ ERICWebPortal / Home.portal provided the most responses: 102. These are examined below.

15.5.1 Languages

To a certain extent, the languages found in the survey reflect the English language and American biases of ERIC, an American government service. Despite the fact that ERIC invites submissions worldwide, none of the articles was written in another language. This probably reflects that fact that local databases from different countries are increasingly able to serve publications in different languages emphasizing, for example, Japanese in Japan. However, 7 other languages are mentioned, sometimes in combination, in many of the 102 articles. This is considerably fewer than the 51 articles mentioned in the 2001 study, but may reflect the growth of opportunities for local publishing on first-language issues.

Articles with non-English foci include three for German, two each for Chinese, Japanese and Spanish and Portuguese, and one each for Latin and Italian. In addition, one article (Tozcu, 2008), discusses the teaching of the non-Latin orthographies of Hindi, Pashto, Dari, Persian (Farsi) and Hebrew using an interactive whiteboard.

15.5.2 Skills

The emphasis of the four key skills in language learning reflects to some extent the relative ease (and difficulty) that computers have with dealing with learner input and output: reading: 6 articles out of 102; writing: 12 articles; speaking: 4 articles; and listening: 5 articles. Writing is usually the most popular focus of CALL studies as it is the easiest way for a learner to input ideas and information on a computer. It is currently far easier than speaking which requires the use of special software (e.g. Dragon Systems Naturally Speaking) and extensive ‘training’ of the computer for each user of the system. This training, however, is restricted to mature adult voices; many speech recognition software programs are not able to deal with young voices.

In many CALL software programs a subroutine asks learners to repeat keywords and sentences and digitally measures the sound waves against model pronunciation in a graphic way visible to the learner. However, these models can be both inaccurate, depending on the quality of the microphone and background noise, and difficult for students to understand to the point where they can meaningfully modify their own speech.

Although it is easy to input writing to a computer and it is also becoming easier to input speech, it is extremely difficult for a computer to evaluate meaning in writing and speech. In terms of reading and listening, it is easy for computers to present stimulating input for the learner and to provide layers of help and testing that measure comprehension.

Another way in which computers promote interaction, through at least some of the four skills, is by providing a platform for collaboration and cooperation. Collaboration and cooperation have become such a norm that it is no longer a principal focus of many studies, except when there is something distinctive about the mode(s) of collaboration or cooperation. Hauck and Youngs (2008) use of multiple modes of communication among English and French speakers shows the extent to which collaboration has been enabled by improved technology. Students in the study not only shared text and chat capabilities, but also audio channels and shared graphical interfaces.

Beyond email and chat lines is text-based virtual reality. Ranalli (2008) bemoans the lack of second-language games and wonders whether existing virtual-reality games might be used for second-language instruction. He answers his own question with a study on the use of The SIMS, a game based on the lives and habits of on-screen people. Sykes et al. (2008) review other games

in much the same way, citing Second Life and there, as well as massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) such as World of Warcraft. Peterson (2006) also talks about learner relationships in such environments and games, focusing on avatars, the online representations that players create. Although outside the 2006 – 08 frame of this survey, this last point is expanded upon by Ho and Ong (2009) in their study of critical thinking in Second Life as students use a variety of linguistic gambits to construct comfortable realities for themselves and others.

As with any new technology, there are concerns about the cognitive overhead required to learn about the technology balanced against the learning benefits. Specifically, one questions whether participating in a virtual community compares favourably with participating in a real community with the accompanying richness of facial expressions and body language, as well as more sophisticated social interactions. There is also a concern about the safety of such environments, sometimes frequented by sexual predators.

Other basic skills besides reading, writing, speaking and listening, include translation, which comprises 3 of 102 entries, vocabulary with 11 entries and grammar with 3 entries.

Grammar is sometimes a focus of CALL programs because its rule-driven nature is easily mapped to computer programs, as noted by Lafford et al. (2007). Grammar is also often mentioned in CALL in connection with grammar checkers. Early studies focused on the workability of such programs. They generally concluded that such programs are either inadequate because of the nonsensical suggestions that they are likely to make (e.g. blanket rejection of the passive voice and long sentences) or that they simply need to be used like any other tool in the classroom, with thoughtful supervision, and through adjusting the parameters and lexical items which might be considered by the grammar program. Heift (2006) discuss the utility of grammar checkers as special features of help programs in relation to the teaching of German.

German is also the focus of an article about an innovative and witty online grammar program, Grimm (<http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/gg>), which uses 36 updated Grimm's fairytale characters to illustrate grammatical points (see Karlström et al. (2007). One can easily imagine an interactive virtual iteration, perhaps in a commercialized form.

Vocabulary is similarly dealt with in terms of evaluating and creating such programs, but there is also a focus on second-language acquisition, as measured through vocabulary. For example, Christensen et al. (2007) compare the impact of a computer-based diglot reader (i.e. side-by-side bilingual reader) with that of a computer-based drill and practice program on second-language acquisition.

Translation in CALL often features computer-based or so-called machine translation (MT) programs but only one of the articles (Nino, 2008) deals with the topic in a review of some MT program and post-editing issues.

The problem with current translation programs is that they are often inadequate to the task of dealing with natural languages and their translations, particularly when faced with eloquent or imperfect first-language input, are often poor.

15.5.3 Processes

The processes involved in many of the articles give an idea of the general interests of researchers and, considering the last edition of this book when a similar study was undertaken, highlight shifts in emphasis. Developing or creating learning materials was a major focus featuring in 63 of 145 articles, or 42 percent, but make up just 20 per cent of the 102 articles from 2006 to 2008. This is followed by evaluating (14). The term research is mentioned in many of the studies but a careful review suggests that most studies labelled research are simply literature reviews with little or no actual research being conducted. This is a concern as such reviews purporting to be research may refer to studies of older technologies and techniques rather than investigating newer technologies and techniques in the field. The term reviewing mentioned in several of the studies would be more accurate.

Missing from the list is the term predicting. There are no entries for predicting the future of CALL; many now shy away from committing themselves (see Concept 2.6) to the future of CALL as it has been so difficult to predict in the past.

15.5.4 Technologies

New technical possibilities always offer opportunities for new ways of offering CALL and video, a technology which is becoming increasingly accessible as Internet connection speeds improve, is mentioned in 20 of the 102 studies. These papers usually deal with video in an interactive context; that is, the video in the software reacts to the learner's progress through the CALL program. In 1997, Wright (1997) predicted the obsolescence of CD-ROMs through their replacement with DVDs, but both CD-ROMs and DVDs are only mentioned once each in 102 articles; in this age of online files and powerful USB flash drives, storage media are no longer an issue of importance.

Although they are not primarily thought of as a storage medium, servers accessed through the Internet often serve as such. Through linked pages, storage is virtually limitless. The Internet features in nine of the studies, often in terms of access to authentic or other learning materials. For example, Abraham (2008) discusses the usefulness of computer-mediated glosses, Hauck and Youngs' (2008) talk about the richness of the resources available on the WWW. Distance education is no longer as important a consideration as it is being increasingly replaced with blended learning in which some combination of textbook, online learning and traditional classroom interaction are all used.

Autonomy and independent learning were the focus of two articles. Fischer (2007) talks about the need for training in order to make distance education a success. Stracke (2007) examines why three students dropped out of a blended-learning course, identifying the perceived lack of support, particularly in terms of the lack of face-to-face support, a lack of print learning materials and a general rejection of the computer as a medium of language learning.

Creating online courses is often a challenge, but there is little emphasis on authoring programs. Cushion (2006) offers one perspective, although on a custom-developed program. In his article, he notes that computer science is dominated by a business model, while CALL is more of a public service or what he calls a process model. The different approaches can lead to conflicts between what is pedagogically appropriate and economically advantageous.

Regardless, many teachers now find that there are authoring packages that take care of the presentation of content, leaving the teachers simply to supply the content. One example is Blackboard Vista, a particularly flexible tool with an easy-to-use interface offering many types of activities, such as email, bulletin boards, chat rooms and quizzes, as well as places for tutorial and lecture notes.

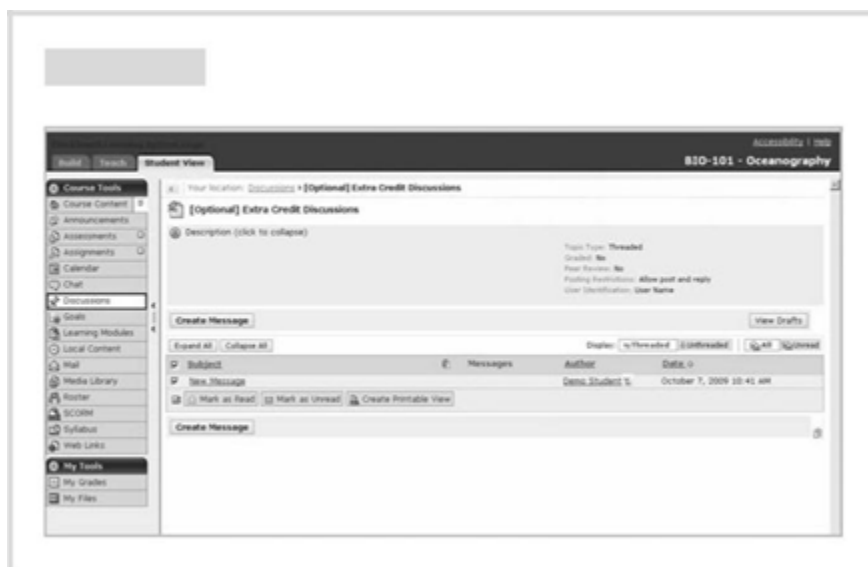
Blackboard Vista

Blackboard Vista is an integrated set of educational tools for developing and delivering courses or course components over the WWW and is now used at universities and colleges all over the world. There are many advantages, the greatest being standardization. Students who learn Blackboard Vista in one course can transfer that learning to another course. The teacher can track students' progress through and participation in the online material – including the number of minutes spent using the course materials. Online quizzes can be timed for release at a specific time for a specific duration then graded for quick student feedback.

The program also has several features for managing class activities, such as a calendar, email and bulletin boards. Learners can also use features to create their own web pages within Blackboard Vista. Unlike the use of the

WWW in general, Blackboard Vista provides password protection so that only the students enrolled on a course at the time of the course have access to the materials and each other's writing. Such an arrangement also means that once a learner is immersed in the Blackboard Vista environment, she / he is more likely to focus on communication with classmates and the teacher, as opposed to the world at large. A general – if wistful – disadvantage of Blackboard Vista is that it is inaccessible to those outside the course. Course content that was once fully and freely available to anyone with an internet connection is now hidden.

Example: Blackboard Vista



But most of the articles take authoring for granted and consider it simply as a mode of presentation (see Example 8.2). A signal of the widespread shift of focus on large authoring projects to user-friendlier online utilities found in specific programs to online learner interactions of new kinds is the proliferation of web logs, or blogs. Ducate and Lomicka (2008) discuss a year-long project in which students developed their reading and writing skills by creating and maintaining their own blogs. Hsu et al. (2008) discuss the use of audio-blogs (recorded through the use of cell phones) to promote the use of speaking and listening skills.

Several varieties of CALL have already been outlined (see Concept 1.2). In this survey, Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning (ICALL) features in three articles but none features a completed software project that is ready for evaluation.

Educational technology was a feature of 30 of the 102 articles (21 per cent) the last time the study was done, but it is the keyword focus of only 1 article; language labs also show a declining focus, in part because of the ability of the web and a standard laptop computer to allow for any-where anytime learning. Missing from these articles is a systematic way to evaluate software. This may be the case because it has been done before. For example, Gaer (1998) provides a useful type of article, a question and answer (Q&A) session, in which she asks and answers the following questions related to conducting software evaluations:

1. What types of software are available?
2. What kind of software is appropriate for adult ESL classrooms?
3. How do I select software for the classroom?
4. What kind of technical expertise do I need?
5. What do the students need to know about computers?
6. How do I coordinate the software with the curriculum?
7. How can I integrate the software into instruction?
8. How can I follow up the software with activities?
9. How do I prepare my students to use the specific software?

Such articles are perhaps more typical of CALL than other fields in applied linguistics as the ever-changing nature of software and hardware means teachers need to learn new technologies quickly. Such articles also have the function of gently addressing computer phobias.

In early writings on computers from the 1950s through the 1970s, there was often emphasis on hardware, the computers that ran the software programs. In the 1980s and 1990s in particular, there were debates over the superiority of Apple or Windows interfaces. Because these debates tended to devolve to levels of personal attack, online CALL forums often exclude such postings. However, with the rise of cross-platform software (software which works on both Macintosh and Windows-based computers) these arguments are no longer voiced. Windows is mentioned in only one article, with reference to a chat feature.

An example of research investigating the potential for speech recognition is reference to a chat feature by Neri et al. (2008) who look at a CALL program with speech recognition that helps students' pronunciation development. Speech recognition deserves more attention if for no other reason that it is the one factor that is likely to lead to the end of the keyboard and, in doing so, will free computers to be as small as, or smaller than, pocket calculators a generation ago.

15.5.5 Concerns

The 102 papers in this survey voice a number of concerns to do with CALL; for example, promoting various aspects of CALL such as three papers that mention learning strategies. Studies of attitudes towards CALL are generally to do with learner and teacher impressions of working with CALL, such as a study by Figura and Jarvis (2007) of students enrolled on a summer course at a British higher education institution using a self-access centre. They found that, while students were both positive and used appropriate cognitive strategies, there was not a strong correlation in the development of social strategies.

In helping to shape the role of CALL, principles are a concern of three articles. Colpaert (2006), for example, describes how a focus on content and concepts can shift the focus from a particular technology delivering CALL. Similarly, models are part of nine of the articles. For example, Farmer and Gruba (2006) construct a model to explain end-user development (EUD). They

propose this as a way in which end users can have some control over the creation of the teaching and learning materials they use.

Among the most important paradigm shift (see Quote 9.1) in CALL is the move to individualized learning but an article by Kim (2008) suggests that trainee teachers who favour CALL in the classroom, in part through their involvement in a teacher education program and an Advanced Certificate of Educational Technology program, still see CALL as a supplemental activity and continue to embrace a teacher-centred paradigm. The study deserves widespread replication and explanation. For example, do school administrators oppose non-teacher centred paradigms? Regardless, the study cannot be extrapolated across the fragmented educational marketplace with countless new avenues for language learners to learn independently. Eventually, one would think that the classroom has the opportunity to become truly learner-centred as learners explore those resources in which they are most interested and of which they are in most in need.

A. Collins on shifts in computer-based learning:

Although written in 1991, Collins' points on the shift from traditional to computer-based learning still hold true:

- a shift from whole class to small-group instruction
- a shift from lecture and recitation to coaching
- a shift from working with better students to working with weaker ones
- a shift toward more engaged students
- a shift from assessment based on test performance to assessment based on products, progress, and effort
- a shift from a competitive to a co-operative work structure
- a shift from all students learning the same things to different students learning different things
- a shift from the primacy of verbal thinking to the integration of visual and verbal thinking

Collins (1991: 28)

Nine articles discuss different types of methods. In one, AbuSeileek (2007) examines four approaches to listening and speaking and finds a computer-mediated cooperative technique is the most successful. None of the articles features computer-adaptive testing (CAT), the process of presenting a learner with increasingly difficult questions based on his or her ability to answer each preceding question successfully. Nor is special needs a focus, despite the suitability of computers for catering to the teaching and learning needs of individuals and small groups.

15.5.6 Subjects

The subjects of the articles included in this survey tend to be at the secondary school or university level with only 4 of the 102 studies specifically mentioning children. There are perhaps several reasons for this disparity. More research is done at the university level and university students are more accustomed to being used as experimental subjects. University lecturers may also have a better understanding of and access to academic publishing and are more likely to share their results in published forums than are teachers of young children for the simple reason that university researchers are compelled to do research as part of their academic work.

Action Research stages:

1. Planning
2. Acting
3. Reflecting

Module -39

CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN CALL FIELD**Topic No: 57****Conducting Research; Action Research; Research Journals Related to CALL****15.6 Conducting Research**

Research is concerned with looking at problems, asking questions and finding answers or solutions. There are many ways of looking at the research process and Brown (1988), for example, divides it into primary, where the researcher relies on first-hand data, and secondary where the researcher examines second-hand data, such as by summarizing studies by other researchers. Primary research is further divided into case study approaches and statistical approaches. Case-study approaches, often ethno-graphic in nature, are dealt with separately below. Statistical approaches are divided into survey approaches and experimental approaches.

Quote 9.2 C. Crook challenges computer versus traditional teaching:

If we do wish to conduct evaluations of what is learned in computer-based contexts, we must go beyond the input–output designs that characterize much research in the area . . . Computers are unlikely to function as magic bullets – effortlessly releasing their therapeutic effects at points identified by teachers. The unfamiliarity and wizardry that surrounds them may cultivate such notions, but the real impact of learning through this technology may need to be measured with attention to how it is assimilated into the surrounding frame of educational activity.

Crook (1994: 9)

Traditionally, much research on CALL has focused on whether or not students learn better with a computer. But, as mentioned earlier, the question is no longer *whether* or not computers should be used in the classroom. Questions now include *how* computers should be used and *for what purpose*. One of the ways for classroom teachers and other researchers to approach these questions is through Action Research, an approach ideally suited to the increasing involvement of teachers as researchers.

15.7 Action Research

Action Research asks the question Is there a better way? and usually includes three stages: planning, acting and reflecting. In planning, the classroom researcher tries to imagine a teaching/learning problem and think of ways in which intervention might solve it. Consultation is encouraged, both with teaching colleagues and the learners or subjects of the action. Although planning a timeline is encouraged, Action Researchers should also be open to adapting their plans and actions, depending on the feed-back and results they receive along the way.

The acting stage involves putting some kind of change into place. During this stage, the researcher should look for measurements of change and the success of those changes. These measurements can take the form of questionnaire results, learner logs, notes from informal discussions with colleagues and so on. In this stage, they should be shared in discussions with colleagues, posting or publishing results and meeting with concerned parties.

The reflecting stage involves assessing not just how an intervention has solved the problem set out in the planning stage, but also how the researcher's own biases and priorities may have influenced the interpretation of the results. A certain openness to unexpected results is also encouraged in Action Research.

A key feature of Action Research is that it encourages the researcher constantly to revisit each stage in what is usually termed and/or diagrammed as a spiral fashion. Also, Benson (2010) contrasts Action Research to experimental research, suggesting that it: 'does not necessarily require the "subjects" of the research to be kept in the dark about the researchers' purposes' (p. 183).

An Action Learning model (after McLean, 1995) features the following: **conceptualization, implementation and interpretation, which can be defined as is detailed below.**

1. **Conceptualization**
2. **Delineate teaching/ learning process**
3. **Identify inputs**
4. **Identify outcomes**
5. **Implementation**
6. **Measure outcomes**

7. Identify comparison
8. Analyse comparison
9. Interpretation
10. Judge effectiveness
11. Judge cost benefit
12. Determine action

In a typical CALL Action Research project, a teacher/researcher might go through the above stages in this way:

1. Conceptualization

Delineate teaching/learning process: the teacher defines a specific problem concerning the effectiveness of CALL then presents it to a group of learners, for example, a class of 14-year-old students from several language groups learning English, using an online messaging system. After discussion with colleagues and the learners themselves the teacher concludes that a solution might be peer-teaching approach, pairing the more able and less able students and having them share a task.

Identify inputs: the teacher defines the inputs as the assignment of pairs based on individual work and the identification and matching of more-able and less-able students. Other factors that might also influence teaching and learning also need to be identified and accounted for.

Identify outcomes: The teacher expects to see a speedier move along the CALL learning curve and increased participation particularly among the less able students. As the students' common language is English, the teacher also hopes to see a much greater use of English.

2. Implementation

Measure outcomes: the teacher collects data by informally asking learners how they like the new arrangement and what problems they might be having. With appropriate permissions, unobtrusive video might be taken and data collected from the computer of tasks, records of emails and chatline

discussions and even keystroke records (see Fischer (2007) for an overview of computer tracking software, particularly his notes on the dangers of relying on students self-reporting what they do at the computer) on some assignments. Some adjustments are made, based on the data.

Identify comparison: as hoped, computer use and use of English both increase. As an unexpected outcome, learners now access the online mess-aging system outside of class hours. However, not all the pairings are successful and some learners want to pair with peers from their first-language group, which the teacher fears may simply lead to the students using their first language and ignoring English.

Analyse comparison: the teacher analyses the benefits and drawbacks of the changes. The experiment is changed to allow learners to choose their own partners, but the teacher introduces an English-only policy in online discussions. Other teachers are invited to review the collected data and comment. At the end of the semester, students write their reflections on the changes and preferred working styles. The teacher notices that the partners who were selected as the more able learners had a lower degree of satisfaction than the less able learners.

3. Interpretation

Judge effectiveness: at the end of the semester, the teacher finds that many students publicly state that they prefer to work on their own, but this seems contradicted by their eagerness in their pair-work participation. She/He has also noticed that overall participation beyond the time required to complete class assignments has improved.

Judge cost benefit: the teacher tries to assess the extra time involved in managing the change and finds that it is inconsequential compared to the improved language use and participation.

Determine action: for the next semester, the teacher decides to repeat the experiment, but allow learners a choice of selecting their own partners or working alone. She also decides to improve the 'marketing' of the ideas and advantages behind peer work, emphasizing that the more able learner is likely to improve as he /she is forced to think about how to explain new concepts. Before then, the teacher writes up his / her findings with one of his / her colleagues and presents them at a local conference.

C. Crook (1994) on the evaluation of outcomes:

It may not be enough to expose a pupil to some software and, some time later, do an outcome test of understanding. The reason this is inadequate is because any such computer experience is more

or less situated in some broader framework of teaching activity. In short, there is a risk of casting this educational technology in terms that suggest a medical model of how it works.

Crook (1994: 9)

The distinction between the classroom teacher and the researcher is disappearing. Also, learners are becoming more involved in the research process, contributing perspectives and commenting on findings. This chapter has presented several different kinds of research as well as a general methodology, Action Research, that the teacher can make use of in the classroom.

Research Journals Related to CALL

1. Computer Assisted Language Learning

Journal information

Print ISSN: 0958-8221 Online ISSN: 1744-3210

8 issues per year

Computer Assisted Language Learning is included in the following abstracting, citation and information retrieval systems: Arts & Humanities Citation Index®; British Education Index (BEI); Contents Pages in Education; Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE); Educational Technology Abstracts; Education Resources Information Center (ERIC); ERIH (European Reference Index for the Humanities, Pedagogical and Educational Research); INSPEC; Language Teaching; Linguistics Abstracts Online; Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts; MLA International Bibliography; Psychological Abstracts; PsycINFO; PsychLIT; SCOPUS® and the Social Sciences Citation Index®.

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2. International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (IJCALLT)

Journal information

Indexed In: Web of Science Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), SCOPUS, INSPEC and 14 more indices

Published: Quarterly | Established: 2011

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The International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (IJCALLT) serves as a forum for researchers, teachers, practitioners, and education professionals to discuss and share their ideas, experience, and knowledge in combining computer technology with language teaching and learning. Due to the fast pace of technological change, innovative teaching approaches and strategies should be developed to successfully integrate new technologies into language teaching. This journal provides opportunities to evaluate, improve, and apply such strategies in the fields of CALL and foreign/second language learning.

Reference Source:

1. **‘Teaching Online: A Practical Guide’ by Susan Ko. & Steve Rossen**
Third Edition, published by Routledge Tylor and Francis Group London- New York