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Digital Education: Innovative and Inspiring Teaching-Learning Process

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Abstract

Nowadays, teaching-learning process is being changed from traditional to some innovative ways by using digital technology. In previous time, teacher-centred method was used but learner-focused teaching is now being applied through critical reflection on professional practice. The University of Computer Studies, Yangon has developed in ICT, and digital teaching and learning programmes have been established. All students in UCSY use smart phones and teachers can give online quizzes and assignments that they can take home. This paper aims to encourage language teachers to develop some innovative digital technological methods which can provoke their teaching-learning situation more inspiring than before.

Key words: digital technology, teaching-learning process, digital technological methods

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In this information and digital age, teaching-learning process with digital devices, especially in language teaching, can promote the students' performance and motivation though traditional teaching cannot be neglected. Digital education and learning, therefore, needs to be informed and aware to the teachers as well as learners.

Since the use of Internet becomes increasingly popular, the use of new technology in the classroom has become the perfect complement to gaining command of language. It is no doubt that English language teaching with the aids of technical or digital devices are the most effective and attractive way to students who want to be successful in their learning.

Using technology in language learning not only makes students more motivated but also leads to innovation for language teachers who want to diverge from the traditional methods. However, the teachers need to be efficient in and familiar with the technology they use. In other words, they need to have the knowledge in IT.

At the present time, ICT in Myanmar has already developed and computers are used to perform a wide variety of activities with reliability, accuracy, and speed. The University of Computer Studies, Yangon is the IT leading university and teaching-learning process has been developing by digital devices by accessing LANs(wifi) and the Internet. In every classroom of the first year course, projectors are fixed and some lecture notes are taught by power point slides. The videos are downloaded from YouTube and shown to the students and make practice them for speaking and listening skills. Students in UCSY use smart phones and teachers can give them online quizzes and assignments that they can take home.

The aim of this paper is to encourage language teachers to develop some innovative methods using digital devices in their language teaching so that teaching-learning process can be more inspirational and arousal. Thus, in this paper, the background information of digital education and some ways based on digital technology, which are useful and practical for students pursuing in their higher education, are mentioned. Digital education with the latest technologies such as computers, the Internet, electronic dictionary, e-mail, and mobile phones help the teaching-

learning process more effective and teachers as well as students more motivated in their language learning.

CHAPTER 2

Digital Teaching-Learning Methods

It can be said that digital education is the innovative use of digital devices and technologies during teaching and learning. It is no doubt that by using digital tools in language teaching-learning process, it will have many productive results in educational environment in this information age.

2.1. What is digital learning and teaching?

Any type of learning that is followed by technology or by instructional practice with the use of effective technology is called **digital learning**. It is also involved blended and virtual learningclassroom technologies: e-textbooks. (Wikipedia)

Digital learning also makes students smarter and using tools and technology in learning enable students to improve effective self-directed learning skills, which can promote cooperation and teamwork in every aspect of life.

Digital teaching means the teacher uses technology or digital devices such as computer, projector, e-dictionary, etc. in their teaching practice.

2.1.1. Seven ways of digital education (teaching-learning process)

In order to transform the teaching method by digital education, there are seven ways to bring about this change.

(i) **Smart Class**

On these days, most teachers have shifted to making use of projectors, VCD, DVD players and **e-learning system** to show tutorial videos and short sessions online to help understand that learning can be fun. Many schools have been developing interactive classroom instead of teaching with whiteboard and chalk. This can make students pay more attention as we are now living in digital age and Google is our go-to place.

(ii) Being Digitally Updated

In this tech-savvy world, there is always something new happening. Students spend most of their time on their laptops phones, and iPads. It is necessary to know for the students which sources are available online and which websites offer the best information that is a great help to them. Moreover, students should be equipped with updated news and other subject-related topics.

(iii) Converting books to PDFs

Books are now available online and teachers can give notes, references, and other information in PDF formats and students can access on laptops, phones, and tablets. This is the better way to study.

(iv) Encouraging online tests

By conducting online tests from time to time, a good learning environment can be created and motivation can be gained. Students can be given online quizzes and assessments that they can take from home. They cannot give excuses for general homework.

(v) Conducting online webinars

Traditional teaching or one-way communication with the teacher is less attentive and students can easily be disinterested in the topic. Conducting online seminars and webinars, all students are able to engage in commenting and participating in questionnaires and sometimes even the debate. It is important that students' engagement in seminars and the lectures involve two-way communication, and teachers who can make students keep interest can create a good teaching-learning process.

(vi) Supporting online research

Before going to the class, the teacher usually prepares the lectures. Likewise, students are to be encouraged to prepare or find something or a list of things online as online research. Giving them rewards or appreciating their online finds can encourage students to make the best use of the digital resources they have.

(vii) Creating communities

The relationship between a teacher and a student or students does not exist in the campus, but outside the class. An online community is the place where a group or a

team stay connected online, submitting projects, discussing topics or expressing ideas. Teachers can set a platform for students to communicate their ideas, suggestions and subject-related queries, and for them to solve any time. Being opening online activities, students come to realize the fact that the learning process can continue even after classes are done.

Therefore, universities should develop a good education environment by collaborating methodology with technology and make classroom sessions more lively and interesting.

2.1.2. Advantages of Using Technology in Language Teaching

The following are some benefits by using technology in language learning at the service of teachers and for students' learning.

- (i) The best complementary tool for teachers in the classroom

On these days, traditional education is not so efficient anymore and teachers need to motivate their students more than before. Textbooks are sometimes expensive and not available in time for the current academic year. By using e-books classes as well as teachers can be much richer in content and more participative than before.

- (ii) Technology in language learning is motivating and stimulating for students

The use of technology makes students feel much more motivated because they can have in the classroom and outside the classroom. They can practice the language through features such as voice recognition and interactive multimedia exercises, etc. For young students they would be more stimulating to learn smartphones or tablets and CD of practice exercises. They will change from passive recipients to active learners.

Students can study their English course using a variety of compressive apps which are able to synchronize even without the internet.

- (iii) Ease in managing and monitoring student progress

Thanks to online education platforms, teachers can manage the courses and evaluate the students with tests and exams and do many other administrative tasks. And students can obtain real time reports on the results of each course or lesson after taking their tests.

- (iv) Create a unique experience as much for the teacher as the student

The classroom with the aid of technology in English courses turns into a better environment where sharing, debating, creating and forming opinions is produced.

English classes cannot be boring anymore and bland with a teacher merely explaining something at a blackboard, become much more active. Moreover, online exercises and interactive multimedia content are motivating for students and they are a lot more involved.

(v) Promote interactivity and collaboration within learning

It can be said that using technology allows students to be much more creative and participative in the classroom. They prepare some background knowledge outside the classroom engaging with all the content in the course, and they can share their knowledge with other partners when they arrive to the classroom. The teacher can also demonstrate what they have learnt and reinforce it in a collaborative way. In addition, educational technology provides teachers with attractive resources to make their classes much more sociable because students of all level can participate and have the same opportunity.

2.2. Blended Teaching and its benefits

Blended Teaching means a combination of online educational materials and opportunities with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires both the presence of teacher and student. It also needs time, place, and path, or pace to control the students. Blended are also known as hybrid or mixed-mode courses. Traditional classes are replaced by web-based online learning. There are many benefits in blended learning and in this chapter, the writer has mentioned as follows:

- For universities, blended courses can be a part of a strategy to compensate for limited classroom space, and a way to think differently for collaboration of the teachers.
- For faculty, blended courses can be a method that provides new opportunities to established courses and make face-to-face and online instructions a transitional chance.
- For students, blended courses can give the online learning conveniently with the combination of social and instructional interactions that may not give in online teaching. (for example, lab sections or proctored assessments)

Hence, using digital technology in language teaching can promote students' interest and motivation in their learning while blended teaching can also offer a good opportunity for the

teachers who do not want to disregard the traditional method. In this digital and knowledge age, teaching-learning situation should be changed by incorporating technology and this is the only way to bring light to the lives of our students.

CHAPTER 3

Some Innovative Ways Using Technology

In language teaching-learning process, using technology can be a great asset and it can offer authentic writing activities and endless resources on grammar instruction, lesson plans and other important topics. Digital devices such as computers, tablets, and projectors are instrumental in learning English, which provide interactive and motivating activities for students of all levels.

3.1. Ten ways to use technology in English as a Second Language (ESL) Instruction

There are ten different ways that language teachers can use technology to teach English and that will make lessons more engaging and appealing.

(i) Film and Video

Teachers can show short and feature-length videos to students in order to work on skills like vocabulary and comprehension. Videos lead students to the use of natural English. For the university students, current events through news broadcasts and movies are suitable in their learning.

(ii) Apps

It can be said that learning English can be very difficult and frustrating at times. For teaching Grammar, apps like [GrammarUp](#) help students to test their knowledge on specific topics (verbs, prepositions, etc.). [Best Colleges Online](#) offers a list of apps ranging from basic letter instruction to pronunciation guides.

(iii) Digital Field Trips

Students can absorb a great deal of information through experiential learning, but field trips can have limited school budgets. There are many options on the Internet to learn about virtually any topic.

(iv) Podcasts

By listening to podcasts, students can improve their comprehension and practice their speaking skill. Teachers can download from [iTunes](#) and hundreds of free podcasts on

a range of topics. Teachers can also have students create podcasts to practise their speaking skill. By using a computer and a microphone, students can create reports and presentations.

(v) Pen Pals

This method can have a limited situation because teachers need to create an arrangement with an English-speaking class in another town or university or country and have students write to their pen pal on a regular basis. This is a good chance for the students to practice their writing and reading comprehension skills, while making friends in the process.

(vi) Web Quests

By using the Internet, Web quests are a great way to build English proficiency. Students are given a task and rely on their content knowledge and grasp of English language to complete it. Teachers can create their own Web Quests to access tutorials and databases.

(vii) Online Games

By playing games on the computer or mobile devices, they can develop spelling, grammar and other skills. Some games are educational. StarFall, Funbrain can be put up on interactive white boards to get full class participation.

(viii) Blogging

Class blogs give good forums for students to practice their writing skill. Live Journal, blogger allow students to create free. Students can appreciate blogs as it is an authentic writing experience.

(ix) Skype

For students, Skype is a great way to practice speaking and listening skills with other people from any location. Teaching Degree gives 50 suggestions on how to use Skype in the class. Students can enter question-and answer sessions with the authors, can attend video-conferences and virtual field trips, interview professionals, and connect with students from other cultures and countries.

(x) Other Resources

Students and teachers can have other resources that provide easy-to-understand explanations of different grammar concepts. Audio books can be used for reading supplement instruction and improve comprehension.

In order to follow these ways effectively and efficiently, students as well as teachers need 21st century skills to be successful in teaching –learning process.

3.2. Some methods using technology in language teaching at UCSY

The University of Computer Studies, Yangon is an IT leading university and the Internet access can be available in the campus and all students and staff can use internet and wifi.

In the University of Computer Studies, Yangon, almost every student has the e mail account, and if those who are not, they are encouraged to create the e mail account. Each class size has 40 students and they have been grouped in email and they can contact with their teacher and their peers. The teacher can give online quizzes and assignments by email when they are snowed under workload, and can check their performances online and can give them feedback.

In 2018-19 academic year, all the first year classrooms are fixed with overhead projectors and teachers give power point presentation for lecture notes. Language teachers use the following methods with the use of technology in their teaching.

(i) E-mailing

Teachers create the group with their students and make them online exercises or assignments, and make records of the students in their laptop. Some information that needs to inform the students can give immediately by sending e-mails.

(ii) Showing video clips

Video clips from **You tube** are downloaded and showed them to the students in the language lab. This leads to the students more interesting and motivating, and listening and speaking skills can be promoted as the authentic materials are used.

(iii) Using power point projector

Power point projectors are used to make presentations. Students can practise their speaking skill with the use of power point presentations.

(iv) Using mobile phones for online dictionary

For reading practice, students use online dictionary when they find unfamiliar words in reading passage and they do not necessarily rely on teachers. This means that the student-centred learning can be established easily and effectively.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Findings

In University of Computer Studies, Yangon, teaching method has been transformed from traditional method to digital teaching by accessing the Internet. Most of the students in our university have smart phones and they have e-mail address. Language teachers can give online exercises and the exam results are announced by sending e-mail to each student.

In every classroom of the first year session, projectors are fixed and some lecture notes are taught by power point slides. The videos are downloaded from Youtube and shown to the students and make practice them for speaking and listening skills. Students in UCSY use smart phones and teachers can give them online quizzes and assignments that they can take home. This means that teachers can manage the problem of large class and motivate the language learning as a fruitful result.

3.1. The Outcomes of Using Digital Devices in Class

English language courses accompanied by technological support are the most effective and attractive to students as well as teachers who want to be successful in their teaching-learning process.

In the University of Computer Studies, Yangon, the fresher (First Year)are developed by using e-mails and they have to present at least any one topic they like in the class. Online quizzes are given twice per week after teaching lessons. Teachers establish a platform and make grouping for their students.

By doing so, students can be more participative than before. They are much more active and involved in the classroom. Questionnaires on using technology in language learning are also done to the first year students (seventy-three out of one hundred students)and they answered that they are more interested in language learning and it is much more stimulating to learn with a tablet or smart phone than with a traditional textbook. The percent of students' attitudes are mentioned in the following table.

	Question	Total	disagree totally (%)	disagree (%)	not strong opinion (%)	agree (%)	agree totally (%)	Total
1.	I enjoy using technology.	73	0%	3%	7%	53%	37%	100%

2.	I avoid using technology when I can.	73	18%	36%	34%	11%	1%	100%
3.	I think using technology in class takes up too much time.	73	22%	33%	26%	12%	7%	100%
4.	I know that technology can help me to learn many new things.	73	1%	0%	3%	38%	58%	100%
5.	Technology intimidates and threatens me.	73	11%	49%	27%	11%	1%	100%
6.	Students should know how to use technology.	73	5%	0%	3%	48%	44%	100%
7.	I would be a better learner if I knew how to use technology properly.	73	3%	0%	11%	36%	51%	100%
8.	I'm very confident when it comes to working with technology at home/ at university.	73	0%	8%	29%	45%	18%	100%
9.	I want to learn more about using technology at home/ at university.	73	0%	1%	8%	37%	53%	100%
10.	I believe that I can improve my language skills.	73	1%	1%	11%	55%	32%	100%
11.	Using technology in learning languages is not necessary.	73	30%	47%	15%	7%	1%	100%
12.	Technology breaks down too often to be of very much use.	73	4%	5%	29%	41%	21%	100%

Table 3.1. Questionnaire to students and its percentage

From the table mentioned above, it can be said that ninety (90%) per cent of students are enjoyable in using technology. The forty-four (44%) per cent of the students cannot accept the fact that they avoid using technology while thirty-four (34%) per cent is neutral. And ninety-six (96%) per cent of students realize that technology can help them many new things but sixty-two (62%) per cent accept that technology can break down frequently during their use. In addition, seventy-seven (77%) percent of the students disagree the fact that using technology in language learning is not necessary though eight (8%) percent agrees this point.

Moreover, teachers of the Department of English are also asked to know their attitudes towards using technology in their language teaching as a teacher technology survey. In this survey, fifty (50%) per cent of the teachers said that when they use technology in their class, they need more time to develop technology-based lessons. The ninety (90%) per cent of them like to incorporate with digital device in the class if the students can access a laptop (one to one ratio) every day. In addition, when the teachers are asked whether they started the lesson with purpose and pedagogy instead of technology, eighty (80%) per cent of them taught occasionally while twenty (20%) per cent always did as they are language teachers. And sixty (60%) per cent of the teachers convince that digital devices in language teaching will help all students think and learn more deeply. Other thirty (30%) per cent agree on this point to somewhat and ten (10%) per cent are not sure.

More than half of the teachers did not think that using digital devices in the class will lead to non-productive struggle. Concerning with the Blended learning, only one (1%) per cent is not familiar while others are used to. However, almost anyone believes that technology will change fast and need to be updated.

Therefore, it is no doubt that using technology in language class replenishes students as well as teachers in the teaching-learning situation. Teachers can create blended teaching by means of the combination of face –to-face teaching and online teaching.

CHAPTER 4

Discussions

Although digital teaching-learning process provides a better opportunity for language teaching, there are some aspects that are necessary to be a good digital education.

Moreover, making and keeping lists of groups of students, teachers can manage and evaluate the students (especially for large class size) with many functions: activating student accounts, creating groups, sending out communications and automatic notifications, etc.

The use of technology allows students to be much more creative and participative in the classroom. This means that students can prepare a basis of knowledge outside the classroom engaging with the content in the course. And when they arrive to the classroom, they can share

this knowledge with their partners and can ask the teacher to explain what they have learnt and reinforce it in a coordinated way.

In addition, the new technology provides teachers with attractive resources to make their classes more lively and sociable, where students can have the opportunity to take part in the activities regardless of their level. However, teachers need to have the technical knowledge such as browsing the webs, sending emails and using technical equipment like computers and projectors properly. Most of the teachers of the Department of English in UCSY are quite efficient in computer skill and accessing the Internet.

Nevertheless, there are some reasons limiting the use of IT in class. The first one is the fact that they (the teachers) frequently encountered with two issues: (i) time, and (ii) effort that are to integrate technology in the classroom environment. As the teaching period they get is limited (50 minutes or 1 hours), they cannot spend much time on their lectures, because of fixing technical devices. In this issue, time allocation is important and the two-period- lecture time should be needed continuously.

Another reason mentioned by the teachers is that some devices are old, that is IT hardware is slow and less reliable, as the time goes. It needs to have maintenance occasionally. And software licenses are very expensive and time-limited. It would be better to work with open-source software, which is as good and reliable as commercial.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

According to the aforementioned facts, it can be assured that digital education can provoke the teaching- learning process. In this digital and information age, since young generations are grown up with technology, all disciplines of tertiary level or university level should be taught with the aid of technology. In this context, teacher training is the key factor in order to get the technical knowledge and teachers need to have the good attitude to the teaching with digital devices.

Although the digital education can be more efficient in teaching-learning process, it has some disadvantages as every coin has both sides. Using digital technology in class is not just about

digital devices in class. It relates to anything that facilitates an interaction between the teacher and the students. During the lecture time, the teacher can sometimes face competing against countless diversions from phones, tablets and laptops.

According to David Goodrum, director of academic technology and information services, Oregon State University- "Digital education is generating new learning opportunities as students engage in online, digital environments and as faculty change educational practices through the use of hybrid courses, personalised instruction models and a wide array of innovative, engaging learning strategies."

Therefore, it can be suggested that before changing into digital teaching totally, implementing the blended (hybrid) teaching or learning method can be a great success in the classroom, which leads to benefit not only for the teachers but for the students. Teachers should also have the awareness of using technology in the language learning and should adapt to the changes and challenges of the 21st century teaching-learning process. Consequently, the education environment of Myanmar and its system will not leave behind when compared to that of the other countries.

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