



Forum for Teachers of English Language and Literature

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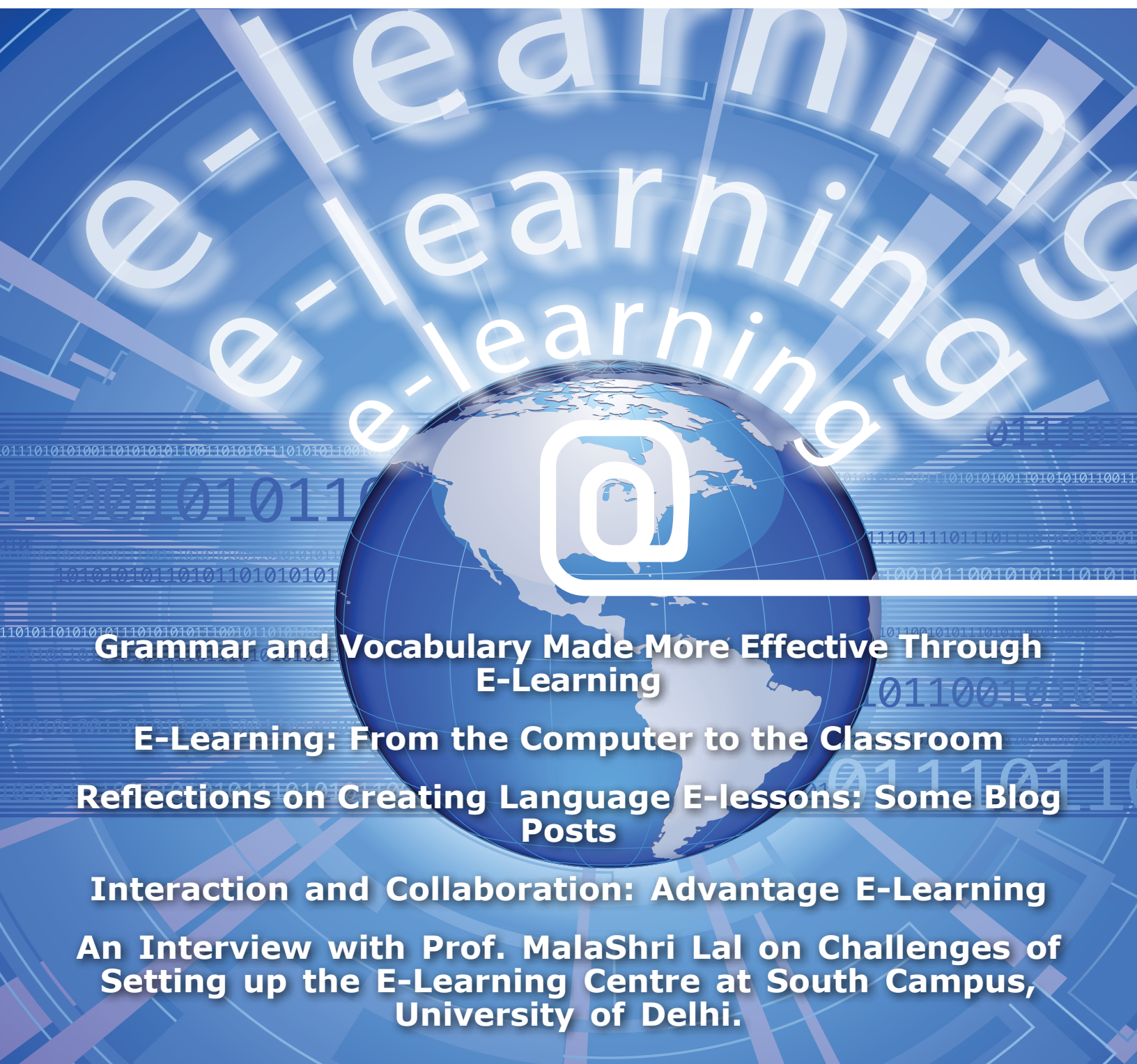

An associate of
International Association of
Teachers of English as a
Foreign Language, U.K.

A Journal of English Language and Literature

Issue no. 19

September 2010

Price: ₹30



**Grammar and Vocabulary Made More Effective Through
E-Learning**

E-Learning: From the Computer to the Classroom

**Reflections on Creating Language E-lessons: Some Blog
Posts**

Interaction and Collaboration: Advantage E-Learning

**An Interview with Prof. MalaShri Lal on Challenges of
Setting up the E-Learning Centre at South Campus,
University of Delhi.**

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FORTELL, September 2010 special issue on "E-Learning"

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Published by
Media Axis, New Delhi

Financial Support
Kohinoor Publications, New Delhi
Wordworth Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi

Printed at
Modest Graphics
Okhla Indl. Area, Phase 2, New Delhi

FORTELL is published three times a year (January, May and September) by the Forum of Teachers of English language and Literature (FORTELL).

For submission of articles and guidelines, read the following:

Soft copies of articles(not exceeding 1500 words), reports, language games/ activities, letters to the editors, book reviews etc along with the latest photograph and a brief write-up of the contributor should be submitted to Dr A.L.Khanna, the Coordinating Editor at the email ID:amrit.l.khanna@gmail.com. The authors should conform to the latest MLA Style in format, citations and referencing.

Deadline for submission for the January, 2011 issue: November 15, 2010

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'E-speak... from the e-desk

Celebrations are not yet over!

FORTELL completed two decades in September 2009.

This time, taking a big leap forward, FORTELL presents you a special issue with a focus on 'e-learning'. This has been made possible only because of the continuous support that FORTELL has received from its readers.

The veracity of the Chinese saying "Tell me: and I will forget; Show me: and I may remember; Involve me: and I will understand" is nowhere better illustrated than in practising e-learning because it is learner-centric. Also, e-learning is not merely technology-aided learning/teaching as is mostly understood but it goes a step further in the sense that the 'e' could also be seen as Enhancing; Enjoyable; and Easily-accessible learning. When 'e' gets attached to language learning, then audio-visuals, animations, forums, live chat rooms become significant pedagogical tools. Interestingly, heterogeneity amongst learners is positively addressed by this self learning mode because the learner can adjust the pace of his/her learning according to his/her ability and time at hand.

Practitioners would know that softwares like 'Moodle' aid the learning process because the learner can try and retry by the various options provided to them by this software. But, what happens to the evaluation in e-learning especially in subjects like literature and language where at some point the students have to be taught to argue subjectively? Currently, the Moodle cannot evaluate such answers.

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Why is it that after twelve or ten or at least six years of reading, writing and learning English, the student we encounter in the university classroom is without any significant proficiency in English? We, the school, college and university teachers of English and members of FORTELL, without

any prevarication, need to answer this question. Thus, novel pedagogical strategies are the new frontier that we need to confront.

These are some of the concerns treated seriously in the articles that we present before you in this issue. The Virtual Learning Environment is presented as a solid alternative learning environment in one, while the other in an interview, chats about the challenges faced in setting up such a learning environment in the University of Delhi. Practitioners in a blend of theory and praxis offer their experiences of transitions from distance learning to e-learning; from conventional class room to e-classroom; from creation of conventional teaching plans to e-teaching plans/lessons. We also present perspectives that talk of structures that can restrain this open learning environment.

Considered as a kind of panacea to counter the rampant inertia in the present day education system, is e-learning actually providing all the answers? Does this mean that in e-learning the 'e' also stands for extinct as far as the teachers are concerned? Will we, in the near future, also see the education system sans the teacher? Is e-learning going to be just one of the post-modern heterotopias? This issue is an attempt to nudge, scratch and create ripples in the learning environment of yester-years which has become ours too.

We are also looking for answers and many more questions.

Do write to us.

Prem and Ruchi



Prem Kumari Srivastava is Associate Professor of English at Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi



Ruchi Kaushik is Associate Professor of English at Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi

Dear Sir

Fortell is not only a journal but also a tool for the English language teachers. It is an excellent platform to exchange views on teaching English as English is the lingua franca of international community. The article "The efficacy of an oral communication task analysed at an ESL classroom from the perspective of task-based learning", will help English teachers to organize formative assessment activities for CCE. In the article "In-service English School Teachers' Education Programmes: Need For A Permanent Agency" by Dr Sood (May 2010 issue), I agree with Dr Sood that there ought to be specialized indigenous permanent agency with adequate resources to train teachers in communicative language teaching. Many teachers in various schools do not have the required level of training that is necessary to handle an interactive, inclusive teaching style.

Priyadarshini Sur

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January 2011 issue will focus on

Literature: Classroom Transactions

Guest Editors:

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Last date for submission of articles: **November 15, 2010.**

Send your contribution to Dr. A L Khanna, the Coordinating Editor at:

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Grammar and Vocabulary Made More Effective Through E-Learning

(A Practitioner's Viewpoint)

Gitanjali Chawla

In this paper, an attempt is made to demonstrate how the teaching-learning process can become more effective and viable with the use of new technologies. While creating e-content it is important to move away from the oft beaten path and address issues relating to grammar and vocabulary building through a methodology that will be innovative and effective. It is challenging to develop content that will engage a student who has the option of rejecting it by simply shutting down the computer. It has to be effective since there will be no teacher to help students understand the rules and applications of English grammar. Yet, at the same time, one has to ensure that fundamentals of grammar and vocabulary pedagogy as elucidated by experts like Rod Ellis and Penny Ur should be adhered in order to create a tenuous balance of practice and consciousness-raising (Ellis: 2002) which would lead to more effective learning. It is also important to veer away from mechanical practice towards a more contextualized and communicative methodology. E-content unlike traditional teaching is conducted in a process which is less controlled and the attention span of the learner is neither visible nor presumed. The learner has the freedom to learn at his/her own pace and decides the course and direction his learning process will take. It can neither be dictated by the content creator nor by experts on language teaching much as they are tempted to do so and is

solely at the will of the learner. The control of the mouse (direction and time) empowers them in a way that has hitherto been impossible. This may benefit those students who are misfits in a heterogeneous group of language learners wherein the levels of students may vary from basic to advanced. They can decide which activities to skip despite efforts by the content creator to control the progress in a methodical way.

While the structures of the e-lessons do not significantly veer away from the traditional grammar texts, they too follow the practice of isolating a specific grammatical function followed by explanation and repetition. The main difference though lies in the medium used. E-lessons are more interactive and the interface between the learner and instructor is minimal yet stronger. The feedback in e-lessons is immediate and the learner has access to explanations for every right/ wrong answer. This gives him more confidence and is therefore more eager to continue. E- Lessons are also more dynamic in nature as both audio and visual mediums are effectively used. For example, if basic conversational skills are taught through real life situations rather than in a controlled simulated atmosphere in classrooms, it is more effective.

If a student is being guided through vocabulary used in booking tickets for a movie/ railways/ airline etc., hyperlinks connect the learner to real time recordings where he can see and

listen to an actual conversation taking place. Activities can be formed wherein there are two or more speakers and the learner is one of them and can fill the gaps wherever necessary. He can check his own answers along with pronunciation by clicking the link provided. Furthermore, he can also find the meanings of words that he does not understand by merely clicking on the word which will link him to its meaning and alternative usage. His classroom is substituted by a virtual world that gives him the necessary input and yet gives him the space and freedom to dictate his own progress.

I

Following are some activities that have been often used in classrooms but acquire a more dynamic function through e-learning.

EXAMPLE 1

Task: Building an activity of creating words out of a single word.

Skill Focus: Vocabulary Building

Material: An interactive visual of the word 'ELEPHANTS'.

Methodology:

- The students will point the cursor on the visual and type all possible words that can be made out of the single input provided.
- Each time they make an accurate word, the visual of that word emerges along with its meaning and possible applications.
- For example, if they make the word 'peal' the meaning of the word along with audio inputs of pealing of church bells would help vocabulary building and retention of the word.
- Further on, if they make the word 'seal' the multiple meanings of the word open in a different

window with visual/ audio clues.

- This activity can be created at all levels of language learning i.e basic, intermediate and advanced. For an advanced level, the activity can be restricted to making words of a certain number of letters with use of a single/ double vowels etc.

EXAMPLE 2

Task: Learning words through family words

Skill Focus: Speaking, Vocabulary Building

Materials: Visual/ Audio Visual

Methodology:

- If the student is being taught words associated with time, i.e early, late, pre/postponed, delayed etc. an audio visual of the arrival/departure schedule at the airport along with the accompanying announcements will help them understand the usage and pronunciation.
- For advanced levels, expressions like 'being in a hurry' or 'blink of an eye' can be explained through visual clues which aid better and faster retention.



Fig:1

II

Though crossword puzzles and word games have been dismissed by many language experts as "profitless busyness", they have proven their worth as effective vocabulary building tools. Online crossword making websites facilitate in the creation of puzzles easily. Drag and Drop word games also enhance vocabulary at every level. In these activities, a box containing words is provided followed by their

meanings in random order. The student has to drag the word towards the appropriate meaning. When they click on the word, a visual appears which will enable them to make intelligent guesses. For an advanced level, the same activity can be structured around metaphors or idiomatic phrases.

The use of *WH* words in a vocabulary exercise can be explained through a clipping of a popular talk show. Exercises can be framed around the clippings by leaving the *WH* words blank in the transcript and the learners have to fill in the appropriate choice. These activities are more authentic and closest to real situations making the learning process most effective.

Word games like *Build your word power* can be created out of pyramid structures wherein a single letter is provided and students create words by adding letters to form meaningful words. For example, the letter 'c' is provided and students build words around it. With each successive level, the student may be restricted to using specific consonants or vowels. For example, make a word with 'c' using two vowels and three consonants. Each right attempt will provide a visual followed by application of the word in different contexts. If a student types the word 'cattle' in the above context,



Fig:2

a visual of cattle will appear with explanations of varied applications such as cattle breeding, cattle rearing and herding etc.

For advanced levels, a short AV can be followed by a list of proverbs from which they can choose the appropriate match. Clippings from *Panchatantra* tales makes this activity easier to formulate.

III

The impact of these modifications is even more visible in activities based on grammatical structures.

EXAMPLE 3

Task: Making sentences/ Understanding sentence structure

Skill Focus: Grammar

Materials: Tabular Representation

Methodology:

- Basic sentence structures can be taught by using a fixed table of pronouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives etc. Sample table given below.

Pronouns	Verbs	Adverbs
I	swim/ swims/ swam	regularly
He/She	love/loves/ loved	slowly
We	eat/eats/ ate	gradually
They	study/ studies	fast

- The student is asked a series of questions which they should reply by using a combination of words from the table.
- The students will click on the selected word from each column and drag it to form meaningful answers to questions such as:
 - ✓ How often do you swim?
 - ✓ Do you enjoy eating at McDonalds?
 - ✓ Does Rahul study at night?
- For advanced levels the number of columns can be increased to include conjunctions or conditionals.

EXAMPLE 4

Conventional exercises on prepositions can be replaced by



Fig:3

an AV of a police vehicle following a thief on a motorcycle.

Task: Describing a visual using prepositions

Skill Focus: Grammar

Materials: Audio Visuals

Methodology:

- The students can see the recording of a chase sequence which can easily be found in films and thereafter they should be asked to write the sequence of events using prepositions.
- For example: The thief was running *towards* his motorcycle when the policeman who was hiding *behind* a tree noticed him etc.
- Every wrong answer will be highlighted with explanations and the correct alternative.
- The new methodology makes it more fun and motivates learning.

EXAMPLE 5

Likewise teaching active/passive voice can be made more dynamic in the following way.



Fig:4

Task: Rewrite the instructions in the passive voice.

Skill Focus: Grammar

Materials: Audio Visual

Methodology:

- Show a clipping of a cookery show wherein instructions are provided in the active voice.
- For example, Boil the water and add rice and vegetables to it. Cook it for 10 minutes and then serve it hot etc.
- The students will then repeat the instructions in the passive form.

IV

An innovative approach and a creative mind can create challenging opportunities for learners. The content creator has a dynamic medium at his disposal and can freely use audio visuals, animation and other interactive devices. While these tools expedite the learning process, they must be used with caution. The AV clippings should ideally not exceed 3-5 minutes since the purpose is not to distract the students from the task at hand. They should be pertinent and indigenous and must not be

cumbersome or complex. Pedagogical methodologies and lexical tools must adapt themselves to the dynamic technological changes in society to prove their worth and efficacy. E-Learning is the future and though it cannot replace the traditional classroom structure, it can and must be used as a potent aid.

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E-Learning: From the Computer to the Classroom

Geetha Venkataraman

"I never teach my pupils;

I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn".

Albert Einstein's words quoted above posit a message for all educators. Many of us have grown up with the chalk and blackboard form of pedagogy and are most comfortable teaching, in the same way. But is this the best way to engage students or provide a learning environment

most suited to learners? There is no substitute, while teaching a subject like mathematics, to the old-fashioned chalk and board technique, but are there ways and means by which we can blend this with methods that use newer technologies in a meaningful way?

For instance, the chalk and board method fails when you have to explain curves and figures in 3-dimension to students. Unless one is a good artist, translating equations representing three-dimensional objects into visual pictures is next to impossible. This is however achievable with not too much difficulty using the aid of mathematical software and a computer. The returns for the student, as well as the teacher are truly rewarding.

Imagine discussing a piece of modern poetry in the class and being able to play an audio of the poet rendering

the poem. Better still a movie of an interview with her that explains the contexts and brings to light meanings hidden in verse. This could be followed by a classroom discussion of the poem. One step further, in a highly IT-enabledⁱ classroom, the poet could be available online to participate in the discussion. These exciting possibilities could be fact rather than fiction.

Most academics that collaborate with colleagues in different parts of the globe are well aware of the possibilities that have opened up due to the use of the internet. Instant accesses to electronic databases for papers, search engines that locate articles and references in seconds, e-books and material that are available freely, are but a few examples of the bounty that the net has brought the academic community. Where we have not yet made inroads in India is to harness the immense potential of the Net towards creating good e-learning systems. E-Learning is the term broadly used to describe learning methods that use electronic media, information and communication technology and the internet.

For universities it is important to think of e-learning within the context or realm of classroom teaching. This is called *blended learning*. While creating e-learning material at the University of Delhi to support some of the undergraduate courses, regular workshops were conducted with teachers to share with them the material that was being created. One worry that several teachers expressed was that if the material for a particular paper was freely available on the net, then students would stop attending classes.

Blended learning is the platform that both allays this fear as well as attracts students back to the classroom. The course on

'Mathematical Awareness' included biographical sketches of the mathematicians Emmy Noether and Srinivasa Ramanujan. Biographies tend to be regarded as a boring collection of facts that students feel impelled to memorise. Emmy Noether's biographical sketch began with a movie clip. The voice-over talked about an exhibition that took place in 1964 in New York City titled 'World's Fair' and a 13 feet long poster titled '*Men of Modern Mathematics*' in the mathematics hall. This poster was a mathematical timeline poster covering a period from 1000 CE to 1950 CE with historical and biographical vignettes and many pictures. The title '*Men of Modern Mathematics*' was particularly apt as the only woman entrant in the poster was Emmy Noether. Below are two photographs. The first picture below is a still from the movie clip; the inset in it is a photograph of Emmy Noetherⁱⁱ. In the second picture (below) we see Emmy with her brothers.



Indeed, the rest of the presentation on Emmy was a biography through pictures taking the students through

various vignettes from her life.

The pictorial biography of Ramanujan began with a rock song whose lyrics presented a précis of his life. The presentation played the rock song (freely available for download on the net and licensed for remixing and reuse), with the lyrics showing on the screen. This sparked the interest of the students immediately and so much so that students who had missed the presentation requested for a repeat class.

Globally, many Universities use *Learning Management Systems* (LMS) of one type or the other to present their e-courses on dedicated websites. There are many LMS that are *open source*ⁱⁱⁱ and are freely available for installation. MOODLE^{iv} is one such system, which was developed by a doctoral student from Australia. Any LMS should be seen as a framework or the underpinning within which e-material is presented. The freely available LMS can be customized to suit the needs of a particular institution, in terms of both appearance and content.

To some extent, the LMS automatically brings in uniformity in terms of presentation. However, it is important to inform and familiarise e-content developers about the LMS that will be used. With this knowledge, content developers can visualise and adapt the written material, pictures, videos, audios, animations and quizzes to easily fit the LMS framework. The templates provided by the LMS just need to be filled in with the content.

The image of the LMS should be one of a cupboard with designated shelves and spaces, into which the course content is placed. If the developer has no knowledge of the templates then it will require a large amount of post writing production work and long timelines before the material is available to the learner.

Many universities have customised templates and frameworks that academics can easily fill themselves with course material. In others like the Open University, UK, there are dedicated teams that take care of various steps. This is done with coordination at every step. The mode that a University chooses depends on its needs and costs. At the University of Delhi, yet another path has been chosen, that of out-sourcing the task of creating the on-line content: written material and audio-visual material, to its own teachers.

While sourcing material, a content developer needs to be aware of copyright issues. The copyright information for material sourced from the web is usually given on the webpage itself. For example, if it says that the photograph or image is in the public domain then it can be used freely. Generally 'copyleft' licensing like Creative Commons Licensing or GNU Licensing allows one to use and change or customize the material provided there is acknowledgement of source and author. In other cases it would say with whom the copyright vests, permission must then be sought from the individual or institution.

While publishing books, great attention is paid to references, acknowledgement of sources for photos and copyright, but there is often a laxity displayed for e-versions. Part of the problem has to do with the fact that almost anyone can 'publish e-material'. For institutions, such carelessness can prove to be a grave mistake and can lead to long drawn out legal wrangles. The need for meticulous referencing, acknowledgement of sources should be made clear to content developers before they begin.

There are some inherent advantages that e-learning platforms provide. It is very easy to update and change

material depending on the needs of a particular course or class. The e-medium lends itself very easily to creating learner-centric methods of pedagogy. For example, it is very easy to create several levels within the same topic, and attach quizzes at each level. A student can then pace her learning. She moves to the next higher level only after scoring satisfactorily in the attached quiz. Quizzes themselves can carry difficulty tags or tags that tell a student about the kind of learning that is being tested. This may range from simple reproduction of material learnt, or an application based on the material or a higher order thinking question. The most important aspect is that the student can decide his or her own pace.

In India, there is still a wide gap between the reality and possibility as far as e-learning is concerned. At both institutional and individual levels, speed and stability of internet connections leave a lot to be desired. This can create a problem for any centralised dispensation of e-content. However, until these problems are surmounted technology does exist to create local hubs for disseminating e-content.

From being a novice with just the ability to send e-mails, any time spent creating e-content leaves one unafraid to embrace new technology. Once one gets beyond the initial fear there is much satisfaction to be derived in blending technology with the never-to-be-replaced chalk and board teaching. The versatility and abundance of available technology is chiefly responsible for the innovative practices that e-learning brings with it. Transforming sound classroom teaching to an experience that stimulates the brain in manifold ways is not just a necessity in the years to come but is also rewarding in myriad ways.

Notes

- ⁱ Here IT-enabled means a classroom with a laptop connected to the internet with a projection facility that would allow the entire class to access the media shown on the laptop. Highly IT-enabled would mean each student having access to an internet enabled computer with audio and video software that would permit online group discussions.
- ⁱⁱ The inset photograph of Emmy Noether and the photograph of Emmy with her brothers are courtesy the archives of the Mathematisches Forschungsinstitut Oberwolfach.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Open source* is a term that is broadly used to describe software whose source code is made public for others to use and modify as long as the modified version is again freely available. This usually creates a large community of users that upgrade and fix the problems in the software and distribute it freely.
- ^{iv} MOODLE is the acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. The Open University UK uses a customised MOODLE for its VLE. Many Universities world-wide use versions of MOODLE.

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Reflections on Creating Language E-lessons: Some Blog Posts

Ruchi Kaushik

(A blog is a kind of website usually maintained by individuals who post regular entries on topics of their interest along with other materials such as videos, paintings, illustrations etc. Blogs are commonly displayed in the reverse- chronological order. My article uses the blog format to discuss e-learning materials development).

Of goose-pimples, butterflies and more...

3 December, 2009

As my e-lessons are being reviewed and given final touches before they get uploaded on the e-portal of University of Delhi, I am getting the jitters. Will my lessons enable students to change their current learning processes and provide a more individualized and self-paced learning experience?

Years back, I read somewhere that you may teach as many lessons as you like to a student; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, confidence and conviction, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives. My e-lessons are based on these pedagogical principles.

If all along I have focussed on active learning in my lessons, I will now emphasize on active participation. The lessons will be up there in a short while but unless they are read and commented upon, there will be no way of modifying them and making them more meaningful. Please go through the

‘open’ material with an ‘open’ mind. If e-learning is about interaction and collaboration, then let us all get together in making learning and teaching more effective and efficient.

Looking forward to your responses,
Ruchi

Posted by Ruchi Kaushik at 3.30 PM

Nothing ventured, nothing gained

27 August, 2009

I apologize to all of you for a long absence. Last month has been hectic and I have been laying out a map for the e-lessons and filling it up with signposts as it were. Let me share the details through the following grid. But before that, here are some necessary details:

Text being worked on: Contemporary English: An Anthology for Undergraduates-I prescribed for Compulsory English Credit Language Qualifying Course (higher) for students of B.A. (Honours) other than English (Honours)

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- Nothing ventured, nothing gained
- You look wonderful tonight!
- If teachers believed in Action research
- Punitive papers and Pre-discussion chits
- Welcome Shakespeare as a Communication teacher!

An Outline of the E-Material Being Designed

Skill Focus	Prescribed Text (comprising stories, poems, plays, prose pieces)	E-Lessons		
	Activities provided	Learning Objectives	Text Type	Activities devised
Reading	Comprehension exercises based on reference to context, analogic exercises and questions for discussion	Identify own strength/ weakness as a reader, interpret varied reading material, distinguish between functional and intelligent reading	Illustrations, pictures, advertisement, interview, prose pieces and poem`	‘Assess yourself as a reader’ quiz, interpreting advertisement, images, picture, prose and poem etc.

Skill Focus	Prescribed Text	E-Lessons		
	Activities provided	Learning Objectives	Text Type	Activities devised
Writing	Questions inviting discussion on the writing strategies of the authors, analogic exercises	Review own writing abilities, practise process of writing, write formally and informally, editing	Picture, diagram, dialogue, cartoon strip, prose passages and poem	Writing the learner's journal, editing a sample, writing differently on the same topic, writing others' views
Speaking	--	Speak in formal/informal situations, cite diff. bet. oral and written communication, overcome speech barriers to effective communication.	Visual clip ,Audio file, graphic, picture, cartoon strip	Listening to a poem and speaking it aloud, rehearsing a speech, role playing, speaking in a group, analyzing other's speech by filling in speech monitor chart, interpreting mime
Listening	--	Listen effectively in diff. situations, identify qualities of a good listener, use diff. listening techniques to infer, interpret, critique tec.	Audio files, animation	Listening to case study and posting responses, assessing listeners in the recorded file, listening & analyzing
Grammar & Vocabulary	Verbal and written exercises on vocab. building and use of grammar	Learn appropriate use of grammar through practice, spell and punctuate correctly, build vocabulary	Word games & puzzles, grammar organizer grid, visuals, quotation	Drafting a secret code game, treasure hunt, word search, changing speech using clips etc.

As the grid explains, I began the e-materials development work by analyzing the prescribed text in detail. Which language skills were emphasized in the anthology and what kind of activities were built to enhance them? I also simultaneously spelt out my learning objectives in each skill area. Some of the goals that guided my approach to authoring these lessons were: providing opportunities for purposeful participation and interaction, giving real world examples and activities, focussing on easy and intuitive user interface and lastly, using technology to aid content delivery. My particular concern was with listening and speaking skills and here I would like to discuss some examples at length.

While creating listening exercises,

I chose excerpts of text passages and also moved beyond the text to design audio files based on real life situations. So there is a case study on an extremely promising sales manager working in a multinational company whose promotion is withheld due to poor communication skills. The students are asked to listen to this case study and then post their responses on the decision of the company to the forum. Similarly, there is an audio file comprising descriptions of listeners in different situations and the students are asked to assess whether they have acted as effective listeners. As far as excerpts from the prescribed text are concerned, instead of opting for a poem or a dialogue from a play (which lend themselves easily

to exercises based on listening but may not necessarily be the most interesting), I modified a first person account of an average college -going student who ends up accomplishing an almost impossible task ('How I designed an A-bomb in My Junior Year at Princeton') into a listening script interspersed with narration and dialogue. A funny video on the atomic bomb from the 50's was added to encourage students to compare different media, formats, styles and tones to discuss the same theme. Since it is an interesting story which students identify with, they responded better to the tasks designed around it (MCQ's, Critiquing and Contrasting) than when it was traditionally read out in the class. Similarly, instead of

simply having the poem being read out, the audio file created includes three alternative conclusions to the poem ('O What is that Sound'), each possible if supported by correct clues from the poem. The students are required to listen to the poem (and the three endings) and then asked to do two activities that would help them learn sequencing, predicting and comprehending multiple perspectives.

For developing speaking skills, apart from tasks requiring students to role play and speak in different formal and informal situations, I introduced two new activities. For the first one, I selected a sad story (a third person narrative) from the text about a naive village girl ('Stench of Kerosene') who sets herself on fire when her husband remarries only because she is unable to produce a child. An audio file was created which actually has the village girl narrating her sad experience using language primarily to share her grief and discuss the injustice done on her. The task built around it requires students to fill in a Speech Monitor Chart for this girl and assess her as a speaker after analyzing aspects like clarity, comprehensibility, grammatical errors, pronunciation etc. Another lesson that was chosen to design speaking tasks on was 'I Learn about the World'. It is a story about class discrimination recounted by a small child Marie who belongs to an extremely poor family. To begin with, the students are asked to watch a video clip comprising a mime act that raises some of the issues brought to the fore in the story such as good vs. evil, innocence vs. experience etc. The students are then encouraged to speak on the speechless act that tries to convey meaning through body language. This is followed by a brief summary of the story and then the students are motivated to speak about their own personal experiences

of having faced discrimination in life. They are asked to record it in an audio file and send it back to the forum.

Still working on some other reading and writing activities. Do send your feedback on this post.

Regards

R

Posted by Ruchi Kaushik at 4 PM

Comments

1. Hi Ruchi,

I am a first year Economics Hons. student and this text is prescribed for my English paper. Some activities sound different and interesting. I would certainly like to take a look at them. Waiting eagerly,

Regards

Gunjan

2. Hello,

As an e-content creator, I would like to share something with all my fellow bloggers. There is a very thin line between devising edutaining (educating as well as entertaining) activities and creating entertaining tasks. The latter is, of course, an easier option and mostly chosen by materials developers (unintentionally though) when the focus shifts from communicating content and motivating students to showing off latest technologies. I appreciate that you have attempted to discuss what parameters should guide the choices that a content creator makes when it comes to using technological tools.

Will write more when I browse through your lessons,

Aakriti Mehra

Posted on 29 August, 2009 at 6.30 PM

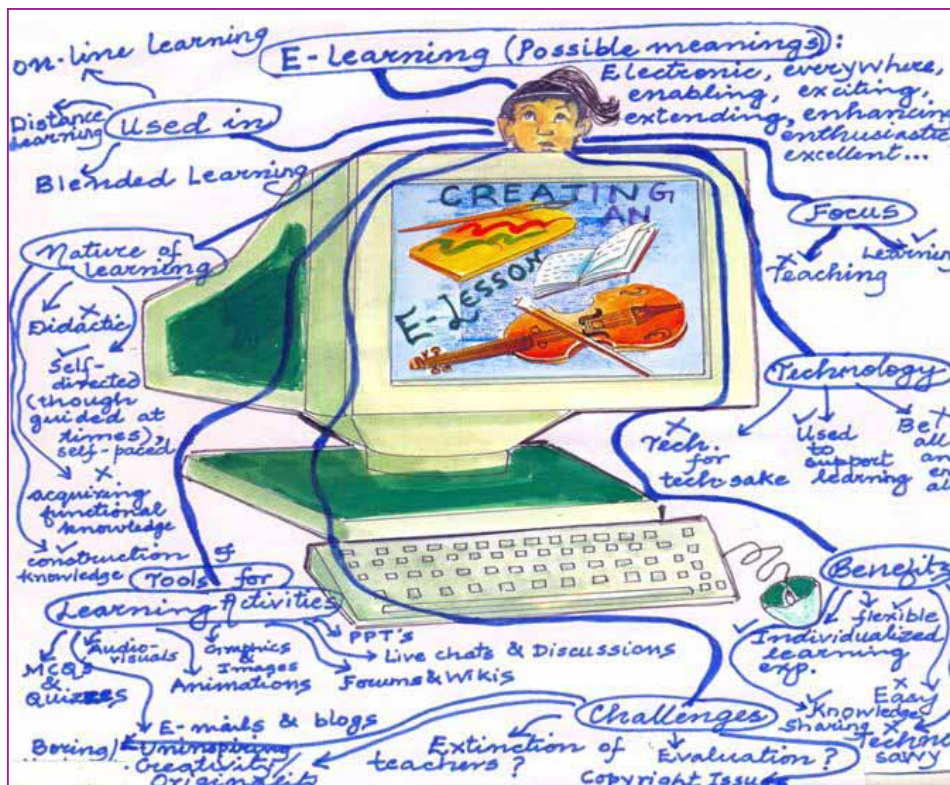
You look wonderful tonight!!!

31 July, 2009

This line from Eric Clapton's song 'Wonderful Tonight' kept reverberating in my mind as I looked intensely at my companion of ten years that evening. It is surprising how a few silent moments can unleash a deluge of emotions. I realized that the shrivelled face I had looked at every day of my life still looked fresh, young and beautiful. There were myriad spots of resplendence that I could see shimmering from behind the wrinkles. We had to thank a friend of ours for giving us yet another opportunity to have an intimate rendezvous... After all, it was she who suggested that I look at my favourite text again and design some language e-lessons on it for students of Delhi University. Though I had always found my engagement with this text quite stimulating yet reading and interpreting it from the point of designing e-lessons was an opportunity I was honestly not anticipating. The task at hand seemed daunting in the beginning. I was apprehensive (after all, I am not a technology expert) and my mind was bombarded with several questions (some of which I tried answering) related to this comparatively new field of learning called e-learning. Hey! Why don't I share my chaotic state of mind with you? Take a look at the Mind Map given on the next page.

Some of my primary considerations before designing the lessons were:

1. What would be my objective, approach and development steps while authoring these lessons?
2. Compared to traditional language materials, would my e-lessons be challenging enough to



motivate students and enhance their language proficiency/performance?

- How would I choose and subsequently use available technological tools (animations, podcasts, video clips, wikis etc.) to devise innovative as well as useful learning activities?

That night I slept with a heavy mind but a happy heart. I wanted to leave the safe shores and taste the briny.

Posted by Ruchi Kaushik at 09:35 AM

Comments

- Dear Ruchi,
I wondered if you had overlooked one of the major challenges that technology poses and that is of plagiarism. It has become so easy to 'copy' and 'paste' that we often don't realize that we are lifting website materials and conveniently using them as our own. Where do we draw the line when it comes to

incorporating/adapting 'public' material?

Regards

Ashwini Mathur

Posted on 1 August, 2009 at 11 AM

- Hi,
Interesting- as an e-learning practitioner/materials developer, I could actually identify with your concerns and preoccupations. One observation that arises out of your post is that several teachers who are not really into technology fear that e-learning will eventually replace face-to-face teaching and make teachers absolutely redundant. I disagree because having developed e-material and practised blended learning for a couple of years, I know that if integrated meaningfully, technological aids can really supplement classroom teaching. I think a lot of us have been into creating e-lessons but very few of us have thought of taking concrete measures to change the anti-technology mindset. What would be your take on this issue?

Best wishes

Koel Bhargava

Posted on 4 August, 2009 at 2PM



ruchi_ykaushik@yahoo.co.in

Ruchi Kaushik is Associate Professor at Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi

Virtual Learning Environment

Issues and Challenges in Higher Education Domain

Sanjeev Singh

In the last decade, Information and Communication Technologies' (ICT) approach for teaching and learning has gathered increasing

interests, both in formal and non-formal higher education system. Some of ICT solutions in different application domains have achieved

huge success in their respective area of concern. Academic interests in this collaborative, community driven development has also grown considerably, arising from various backgrounds. New developments in higher education – from virtual universities and e-learning to open education initiatives – speak of the importance of providing open, accessible and superior higher education content for a global community of teachers, scholars

and lifelong learners. The power of education should be realized without the constraints of time or geography, to combat economic, social and cultural obstacles. The expectations from ICT to contribute significantly to academic community in terms of growth, employment, competitiveness and quality of education are high. As expectations grow, so do some risks, such as increasing disparities between regions within and across national boundaries. The term “digital divide” captures this concern. Discourse on digital divide often centers on a restrictive techno-centric agenda of equitable access to ICT infrastructure, leaving out important issue beyond this unexplored. This paper is the outcome of real time implementation of technology led teaching and learning in blended mode.

Indian Context

In India, the higher education system is governed mainly by two regulatory bodies viz. UGC (University Grants Commission) for University system and AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) for higher technical education. It is worth noticing that UGC or state government funds formal higher education under University system; and very few (in terms of percentage) institutions are financially supported by the government in higher technical education, the rest are self sustaining (self financing). Surprisingly, there are no policies or standard procedures available for these institutions to adopt appropriate technology solutions and by and large these institutions fall in the trap of non-uniform, unmanageable, unreliable and expensive short-term solutions.

ICT is increasingly playing an important role in making productive interventions more and more effective and useful. There is a constant search going on for new and innovative

technologies and their application in educational interventions to more effectively address issues of access, quality and equity. Technological innovations have preoccupied the mind of industry for its varied and effective application for development in general and education and training in particular. Educational institutes are also grappling with the issue of how exactly to harness and exploit the potentials of innovations in programme development and delivery, and improvements in the organization of education systems which include quality assurance, benchmarking, technological interventions, research and training. While all these developments are taking place, very little exchange of experience has taken place among the developers and users of new innovative technologies in the educational sector.

Rationale

ICT led teaching and learning does not merely provide a different medium for traditional classroom interactions, but creates an environment for students to take part in much richer and effective educational activities. By incorporating a technology enhanced learning activity into the course curriculum, students may be presented with new and greater challenges that extend beyond their traditional, and often passive, learning of theories and content. Perhaps more important, however, is providing students with the opportunity to participate in an authentic exchange releases them from the well-known academic vacuum in which they typically build knowledge and understanding from readings and in-class discussions (Dron et al, 2000). Technology integration has already changed the image of the classroom. These virtual academic networks even stretch

across international borders to form cross-cultural learning environments where teachers and students of diverse cultures can learn with and from each other (Sanjeev Singh et al, 2000). With its capability of bringing innovative views to the classroom instantaneously, this model presents students with unique opportunities to develop cultural awareness and build shared knowledge.

In traditional university system, lecture based education plays an important role in providing mentoring and guidance. However, study material may not be enough in the present digital era. Moreover, students need to develop new style of learning to learn more effectively. In case of University of Delhi, where the annual student enrolment is more than 300,000, the only way is that the student must learn to use these new virtual learning environments. With the present experiment, it is hoped that virtual learning environment can become a valuable and effective source of mentoring during the study cycle and beyond.

The Case Study

The present work is aimed at using a pedagogical model of a conventional university, backed up by an open source driven web-based learning environment. The objective of this implementation was to make graduate students aware of the potential and efficiency of ICT based learning. Other key dimensions of the present study are:

- Ease of use.
- Reliability and confidence building.
- Possibility to modify and add variety of learning content (text, voice, video)
- Customising the system to cater to accept individual requirements/preferences.

- Feedback and motivation to study.

Other advantages of the present model are that, regardless of subject area, it introduces new opportunities for collaborative learning, facilitates individualized feedback as well as contact with peers and faculty, promotes reflective and critical thinking due to its asynchronous mode, and permits students to work at a time and pace that is convenient to them. In consideration of these benefits that web mediation can bring to a learning environment, this virtual learning application of the present approach have the potential of being extremely useful and relevant to students' learning.

Methodology

A prime concern was that students be motivated to use this new learning environment system so that any anxieties or apprehensions about using the technology are overcome by the time the web mediated learning activity begins. This entails building sufficient practice time into the course curriculum. The aim was to set up an environment that functions as a teacher by giving adequate information on the identified courses. Moreover, it should also support the learning process by functioning as a nodal point for a particular learning material. It was also envisioned that learning environment should be integrated with traditional media as well as digital media.

Interestingly all the dimensions defined were achieved through an open source application 'Moodle' (Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment), which has been the most admired application by the learning communities worldwide. It is quite flexible and by default caters to most of the requirements one can think of in higher education

institutions. A prototype web site has been launched on one of the servers of the University of Delhi South Campus (<http://vle.south.du.ac.in>, 2008). This resource is built by and for students of the Universities of Delhi. Its purpose is to provide a shared resource on the subject of Informatics. A discussion group has also been created and students are strongly encouraged to interact with their peers and comment on the resources. Various learning content and tutorials, open courseware were chosen to cover the course curriculum of the University and uploaded in a classified manner to help students in learning. Online quizzes were also created for self-assessment. The students were asked to share their knowledge and queries using the framework presented.

An online internship programme was also executed using the same framework in the form of a discussion forum. It was pleasant to learn that the existing students were able to set up their own 'knowledge network' by involving their alumni. This process of collaborative learning helped students to acquire skills, which are required by the real world and difficult to achieve in the traditional university framework.

This initiative of providing virtual learning environment is in active and heavy use. The platform is robust, reliable and scalable. However, the environment is not considered as complete, since it is evolving. The framework was demonstrated to other faculties by conducting multiple hands on workshops and surprisingly this environment is now being used actively by various other subject teachers.

Results and Discussion: Pragmatic and Technical issues

Introducing VLE to the students was not too difficult, as the students

group belongs to the author of this work. The start was slow as students in India are generally trained to follow a direct path to learn specially in higher education domain. The main issue was how to motivate students and engage them in mutually beneficial interaction. The first step was to integrate a simple discussion mechanism and relied on students' curiosity to kickstart it. The VLE helped in establishing new ways of learning, and integrated learning resources affordably and efficiently to make content delivery more meaningful.

The initial VLE set up to provide a basis for discussion was to make available various activity modules (discussion forum, blogs, MCQ etc.) available as part of moodle's framework. Moodle seemed the logical choice for easily deployable on existing infrastructure due to its flexible and open architecture.

Overall, the VLE is considered very robust and reliable. The freedom to learn without time and place restrictions is considered as a positive and more productive feature both among students and teachers. The feedback and messaging mechanism of the environment provides opportunity to contact the teacher instantly. The environment helps both students and teachers to better manage the learning progress.

Conclusions

We have achieved a workable model for collaborative learning environment. In this study, it is demonstrated that ICT based learning environment can be more productive and support the learning curves. This new learning environment functions as a teacher who is always available virtually. It integrates all known types of media and provided an effective route for feedback and sharing knowledge. It helped students

to orientate as the courses proceed. The present work was carried out with 80 postgraduate students, the results were quite encouraging, the same framework later extended to all interested and teachers were trained to deliver their learning content more effectively.

Results indicate that the new learning environment helps in establishing innovative learning methods, and integrates well with available learning resources to provide seamless access to learning material in one place, which can be easily modified by the course teacher. The new online assessment tools have brought in new positive changes in the learning style of the students as VLE provides a private space to each and every individual learner with the availability on demand. The results

are promising, but it is also observed that in person mentoring remains important. The role of a VLE in higher education space is significant as it supports virtually real mentoring that may not always be available in the existing system. It was also observed that VLE could improve learning by involving student in management of the learning process.

As on date more than 700 teachers of different disciplines have been trained and around 2000 students of the university are benefitted by this work. Author is also engaged in developing a strategy to extend it to cater to the needs of 300000 students of this university. In the light of the present applied work, virtual learning environment approach seems a promising framework for setting up effective learning environments in

the present era of more demanding learning.

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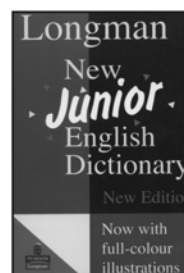
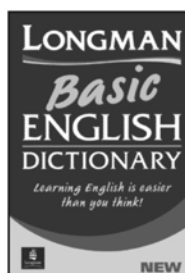
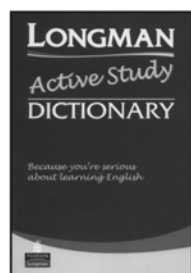
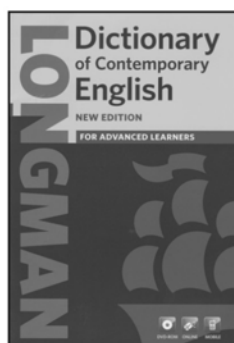
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Locating M-Learning in India

Sapna Miranda and Roseliz Francis

"The portability of the device [Mobile Phone] makes it the most revolutionary of the latest technologies to have changed our lives"

-Milrad, 2003

It is true that the escalating use of mobile phones has even overtaken the growth rate of internet access among the people of India. According to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data, India had 635.51 million mobile phone users at the end of June 2010, projecting a phenomenal growth in tele-density. Today, India is the second-largest wireless market in the world after China. Kurup and Tripathy (2010) predict that India's mobile subscriber base will grow to 993 million by 2014. Many feel that the mobile is a potent enabler for those who do not have access to any form of education particularly in the rural areas of the country. It can be used for supplementing and complementing learning. Learning at one's convenience and pace is made possible through devices like cellular phones enabling learners to collaborate, create, and evaluate their own learning processes.

M-Education or M-Learning

M-Education & learning involves the use of mobile technologies and services for empowering education apparatus; transforming schools, universities and other educational institutions through interactive, personalized and distributed learning resources; providing educational services and education management systems for the rural based educational institutions. (Manzar,2010: 56) The potential of mobile value-added services (VAS) such as SMS and MMS, and wireless

data services based on technologies such as WLAN, GPRS and PTT, still remain to be unleashed, especially in India. (http://www.mobilein.com/mobile_VAS.htm). A report by IMAI & Technology group in 2006 (Mobile Value Added Services in India) describes how various telecom operators shifted focus on marketing and tie-ups with VAS providers to innovate their VAS offerings particularly for m-education. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has been carried out in many parts of the world since 2000. MALL is available through various modes like the mobile phones, i-pods, tablet PCs, mp3 players etc. Kukluska-Hulme (2005) states that m-learning makes the whole experience of learning "engaging" efficient and effective and combines the pedagogy of e-learning and distance learning. It frees the student from the confines of the classroom and the pressures associated with face-to-face learning. The constraints of time and space do not affect learning through this very personal yet very accessible device.

The advent of m-learning has a lot to do with the paradigm shift from a teacher-centered education to a learner-centered education. Learning theories of the 2000s emphasize the growth of an autonomous learner. It incorporates Informal Learning, Contextual Learning, and Ambient Learning. According to Sharple (<http://slideshare.net>), m-learning leverages on the 3 C's of Effective Learning namely Construction, Conversation, and

Control. However it is imperative to educate and commission teachers into m-learning pedagogy and construct theories which would further help in the development of m-learning. (Laurillard,2007)

M-Learning in India

In India the use of mobiles in education is still in its nascent stage. Even though several telecoms have tied up with VAS providers, the potential of the technology is yet to be optimally tapped. According to Alluri (Manzar,2010: 22), India's telecom penetration growing at a rapid rate of 15 million subscribers a month, more than half of India's population possesses a mobile phone rather than a television set as it does not require continuous power supply. All the telecom operators and VAS providers realize that their future is within the heart of India where 70 % of it population lives. The rural population, with limited discretionary spending at their disposal, are looking at critical information about weather, markets, government policies and schemes, health care and education

English Language through M-Learning

Mobile phone manufacturers along with VAS providers are manufacturing devices that support language learning through m-learning.

'Learn English' program, an innovative voice-based (IVR) English mobile learning program is currently live on BSNL in nine regional languages. The user-friendly and self-paced program teaches spoken English through simple stories and daily-life situations. Daily SMSs and practice tests are a part of the learning package. A consumer feedback conducted by BSNL found that 80% respondents gained significantly from the words and phrases taught in the conversations

section. 'English Seekho' by Tata DoCoMo uses audio clips. They are short lessons followed by interactive lessons which enable users to practice what they have learnt through the mobile's keys or through speech recognition.

IGNOU – Nokia Collaboration

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and Nokia plan to come together for the first of its kind tie-up between a telecom giant and educational institution in India to promote English language learning. The Nokia Life Tools launched in 2009 will be adapted for the same. The Education services will facilitate language learning using the bilingual method. English words of varying difficulty would be sent via periodic SMS's to the students enrolled with IGNOU with an option of viewing the explanation in his/her mother tongue. Progress would be assessed by means of periodic quizzes. IGNOU plans to provide Nokia Life Tools (NLT) enabled phones as part of the course materials. If the students already have a Nokia phone they can subscribe to NLT application by paying a nominal fee. Nokia on the other hand plans to offer its customers an opportunity to enroll with IGNOU if they buy a phone that is NLT enabled.

M-Learning is here to stay

A technological innovation known as the Panini Keypad could enhance m-learning in a big way for ESL learners. Manzar (48) describes it as "a patented multi-lingual keypad on the mobile which enables a user to type in all the regional languages of India. Features include single-press typing, a fast input system and touch screen compatibility. Easy to learn and operate even for the aged." With the 3G wireless service which combines a mobile phone, laptop PC and TV, m-learning is

sure to revolutionize education by making it interactive, innovative and economical. IGNOU has already begun exploring the advantages of the 3G mobile services in delivering education especially to the remote area learners.

Indeed, M-Learning asks for a shift in pedagogy which in turn would help in fostering learner autonomy by motivating the learner to perform on his/her own.

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Professor Malashri Lal, Joint Director, University of Delhi-South Campus, and Coordinator (English Courses) Institute of Lifelong Learning in a candid interview to Prem Kumari Srivastava, shares her experiences and challenges of setting up the E-Learning Centre at South Campus. In her words, 'immense reciprocity between language and literature' and 'interdisciplinarity and sharing of knowledge bases' is the hall mark of this centre.



PKS: Why do you think in the past few years, a need was felt to focus on e-learning in education in general and with special reference to the University of Delhi in particular?

ML: E-Learning in education is extremely important as it is the only method through which we can reach out to a large number of students. In the present day education system in India, one is not able to provide a good student-teacher ratio. The student population is enormous and often teachers are not able to cope with their varied needs. In such a situation, e-learning and e-lessons are the only way to link effectively with this majority. Also, there is a flexibility of access to the e-lectures/lessons. In face-to-face learning, a student can never really 'go back' to the classroom; at best s/he can indulge in a discussion with friends or rely on peer notes. The greatest contribution of e-learning is the possibility of 'knowledge retrieval'. The student can read, listen or see the lecture again and again.

PKS: When the University of Delhi,

South Campus decided to start the e-learning Centre, what was your vision and what did you wish to accomplish?

ML: The Vice Chancellor and others that he consulted had already put in careful thought and planning. At the South Campus, the Director UDSC and I did not wish to duplicate the pedagogy of the classroom or repeat the work undertaken at ILLL north campus. Keeping in view the requirements of a majority of DU students, our focus turned on the BA Programme. Teaching material for such students was limited and we also realized they needed bi-lingual instruction.

PKS: As Coordinator for English Courses, you set out to focus on English Language courses. You were also looking at a different module, one that would cater to students at the basic as well as intermediate level. Thus, you supported a course which was based on the University of Delhi texts but also independent of them as it focused on language skills (reading, writing, speaking and

listening), grammar and vocabulary rather than pure literary content. Please comment.

ML: What you are saying is exceedingly important. Yes, there is a text that is a fixed entity on the printed page. In the e-learning way of teaching language, this text can be made to function in numerous ways. Adaptability of the lesson is much higher. As you and others in your team have done, you have created language-learning lessons in an interactive mode. At places you have even used the language in a linguistically 'erroneous' manner: the way it figures in hoardings, at traffic junctions or behind buses and trucks, to teach the correct use of English. This has brought the language-learning experience closer to a student's everyday life.

PKS: Can you comment on the challenges that you faced in conceptualizing this e-learning centre at South Campus?

ML: The biggest challenge was and has been the technology. The faculty who accepted the responsibility of creating e-lessons at the South Campus, including you and me, were teachers and educational professionals who did not have advanced training in technology. Yes, workshops and training sessions on MOODLE and other platforms were organized but most of my colleagues learned the basics and improved their skills by the trial and error method. ILLL requires technical experts, full time professionals who will transfer the academic lessons to the desired technical platform. We are still trying to build in such technical support.

PKS: What relationship do you envisage between face-to-face learning and e-learning?

ML: A unique synchronicity exists between the two. In fact, there is a vital connection; the e-lessons are a complement and not a substitute to face-to-face learning. Let me

elaborate this a little further. The same teachers who address the students in colleges are invited to ILLI to write the lessons. This improves the quality of the lessons manifold because of the transmissions from class activity to the value addition on the computer screen. There is a cycle of learning generated which I see as one of the greatest contributions of the University of Delhi.

PKS: How is e-learning different from what is traditionally called distance learning?

ML: The approach to education keeps changing. If IGNOU started Distance Learning, the University of Delhi had its School for Correspondence, and now the Campus of Open Learning. At one time people saw a sharp divide between distance learning and e-learning. In distance learning the idea of 'distance' actually weighs on your mind and 'learning' is associated with impersonal instruction; it is primarily postal learning. I remember heaps and heaps of lessons/booklets being mailed out from distance learning centres. In e-learning, the teacher and the taught come together in a technology supported, virtual learning environment.

PKS: You are absolutely right, but there is an apprehension among teachers that e-learning, which is primarily self learning, will eventually replace teachers, probably the way robots and machines are replacing man. Do you think that this fear is well-founded?

ML: Absolutely not. This will never happen. If we look at the history of e-learning, there is immense exchange and reciprocity. It has the capability of self enhancement. It is a complementary method. Through a single e-mail query to the teacher, the student is connected. In e-learning, the student and the teacher are in a different kind of a communication with each other. In fact there can

be better interchange between the teacher and learner than in a crowded classroom. I wouldn't use the word 'self learning' for the e-mode because the teacher is always 'present' even if this is through technology.

PKS: That's true Professor Lal. I guess, in the wake of this, the e-learning pundits propounded the theory that e-lessons can supplement and complement teaching and help teachers with their pedagogy. But the detractors say that this was a conciliatory strategy to placate the teaching community. Is it true?

This is the language of politics, not education. Let us accept that in India, we must take education to as many students as possible. It is important that these students are given 'standardized education', in the sense that benchmarks of quality are equally upheld in diverse areas in India. It is an 'accident of destiny' that some students are sitting in university classrooms listening to teachers, while there are many more sitting elsewhere who are equally capable of receiving this education. We are a central university and offer an opportunity to all who apply for a place. We admit a pre-determined number. It is only through e-learning that is upgradable all the time, that the larger system can hope to fulfil the GOI, goals of granting 'access, equity and justice' in education.

PKS: This brings me to the issue of student feedback in India which is most unstructured and non-evaluative of the teacher's pedagogy as also content. In the e-learning mode, student feedback is a very important component which eventually becomes the tool to augment the content too. Has the e-material that has been created at ILLI been able to achieve this objective?

ML: There is no 'official' feedback from students though space has been provided for volunteering comments. To your question, my response will be somewhat individual. I have

observed that, culturally, students/young people in India hesitate to give a 'feedback.' This is not simply in educational environments but in the general 'body politic' of India. We are brought up to respect older people and seniors, and 'feedback' is understood as unwarranted criticism. However, through informal student discussions in canteens, blogs, social networking sites such as ORKUT and Facebook, academic evaluation of teachers and courses happen. Currently e-lessons on the university website seldom receive official feedback. But in the 'work-in-progress workshops' held at ILLI South Campus, participating students recorded their feedback in the forms provided. It helped that 'anonymous feedback' was taken. The lack of academic feedback and user data worries me. There is a kind of enigmatic silence.

PKS: What are the innovative methods of evaluation used in e-learning?

ML: Due to the large student population, systematic evaluation methods are taking time to evolve. Individual lessons often have quizzes and multiple choice questions which can help evaluation processes. But we are yet to position a comprehensive evaluation package. As a beginning, I would like to suggest a pilot project of the kind used by social scientists. Target a few students at a time. Evolve a scientifically designed, data enabled, computer generated analysis and evaluation system, and ground-test the results. The use of technology comes in here.

PKS: Globally, Open University, UK, MIT (USA) and several other recognized centres of distance education and open learning have successfully used the interactive e-learning mode to serve the cause of education. How about plans to set up collaborations or consultative projects with such centres?

ML: The University of Delhi has already been interacting through its UKEIRI programme with the Open University, UK. Some lessons in English language were also made in the collaborative mode. However, one should keep in mind that our target audience and prime learners are our own students in India and, for now, specifically those at DU. About 3 lakh students are enrolled, out of which about half do not come to regular classes as they are in the “open” categories. Let us reach them first.

PKS: In what ways are the e-learning courses in English prepared at the ILL, UDSC likely to help the student community significantly?

ML: In the traditional learning environment, departments and disciplines remain in watertight confines. At ILL, interdisciplinarity happens effortlessly. The knowledge content and pedagogy in English lessons reflect examples from several walks of life such as film, media, commerce, travel, simple science. Animations and visuals add attractive dimensions. English therefore becomes functional, lively and relational. Students say they gain confidence in using the language—that is a huge compliment, don't you think?

PKS: That's true. Could you suggest what more needs to be done in the e-learning courses to make teaching/learning of literature in English more enjoyable and meaningful?

ML: While the e-lessons often melt the barrier between language and literature teaching, I think literary texts are usefully illustrated in the e-mode. Lesson writers have regularly introduced photos of authors and their times to enhance the understanding of historical references for example. Interviews with authors such as Salman Rushdie are hyperlinked to create the excitement of hearing his words and voice. Poems are read out, bringing emotions to the fore and explaining complex issues such as rhyme and metre. We can do even more with the enormous tools of technology-aided learning.

PKS: What is the ‘way forward’ now?

ML: ILL has completed its initial three years. Like a healthy child, it is walking steadily, but will take some time to be “up and running.” At the South Campus, effective and innovative lessons have been created in English, Commerce and Maths so far. You were part of that process and we continue to expand our base in English. We are now moving into new subjects: Science, Computers,

Hindi, Political Science. The BA/BSc courses in which material is scarce, remain our priority. Our important new initiative is to have the lessons translated into Hindi. Moreover, video lectures and interviews have been recorded in courses such as ‘Social Enquiry’ and ‘Film Studies’. You will be happy to know that eminent persons such as Gulzar, Alice Walker and Jayanta Mahapatra have been recorded in conversation with the ILL faculty. This is valuable and original teaching material in the e-mode. The ‘way forward’ is to give publicity to the material and have lessons uploaded on the ILL website for easy access by all students and teachers of the University of Delhi.

PKS: Professor Lal, this discussion has been extremely informative and relevant in the current context when both the government and academia are focused on imparting quality education to the masses in which e-learning stands at the center. Your observations are fully in sync with the thematic thrust on ‘E-Learning’ of this issue of FORTELL. It has indeed been a pleasure talking to you.



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Exploring Alternative Modes of Teaching-Learning

A Case for E-learning

Anju Sahgal Gupta

The vast strides made in technology; the globalization of world economies and the acceptance of English as a world lingua franca necessitated the training of diverse and large populations in various countries

of the world. In India, such heterogeneous populations, requiring different skills could not evidently ‘fit’ into the traditional classrooms. There was a dire need for alternative paradigms for delivering education.

Open and distance education (albeit with some resistance in the beginning) methodologies are now an acceptable alternative for delivery of education at all levels.

Hand in hand with this, there have been significant developments in ELT pedagogical theory which has impacted our professional thinking. Rejecting the behaviourist model which was teacher-centered, the communicative – interactive and the constructivist models have firmly placed the learner at the centre of the

learning process, although teachers and teaching managers have not been able to harness the full power of the learners' drive (Roe and Richards, 1994). This fortunately fitted in well with the Distance and Open Learning methodology where the learner necessarily is the driving force requiring a "managed learning" situation with the least disruption to his/her life or work while at the same time keeping costs to the minimum. Here the teacher apparently has no overt role but nevertheless has to concentrate on encouraging learning to take place.

In the changing situation, the demand for listening and speaking skills (so far entirely neglected areas in ELT) made it imperative for their inclusion in the curriculum in a meaningful way. The more recent English language programmes of IGNOU such as Functional English, Communication Skills for computer students, Communication Skills for the BPO sector and so on have an audio component which includes the listening and speaking skills as an integral part of the course material sent to each student in the form of a CD which they can listen to at their own pace. More recently, the Functional English Programme is being converted into an e-learning programme which is totally ICT enabled. The same programme is also going to be disseminated through mobile technology. Along with these technologies, the University strengthens the students' support system through tele-conferencing, video-conferencing and radio counselling where the students interact with the teachers in real time.

One of the most easily accessible technologies is the telephone/mobile phone. As George (1994) says 'the

telephone is often the only medium by which any tutor – student contact can take place". Besides individual tutor advice which helps build rapport with a distance learner, motivates him/her and resolves immediate problems, it can also be used for larger groups. In the Open University of Scotland for instance, over 200 hours a year was in audio-conferencing. In this mode students could listen to a lecture, discuss with each other and their teacher, ask questions and clarify doubts. In the last decade, Open Universities abroad and mobile companies had tied up with each other to bring English language skills to ESL learners. In India, mobile companies are now providing value added services in the form of communication skills to their customers. What is interesting to note in the role of technology is, what counts as almost standard practice in one country can be prohibitively expensive in another country (Roe and Richards, 1994). This suggests that each country has to make its own decision in the use of appropriate technology. In fact each university and each department must take their own call in offering multimedia support to their students depending on the course needs, student affordability and teacher initiative.

Even in the face-to-face mode, there is an increasing effort to integrate multimedia technology in classroom instruction and this is where the two modes (face-to-face and Distance) are beginning to converge. Distance education has always been like a hunter in quest for new delivery modes. But face-to-face instruction which has almost entirely depended on the teacher to deliver learning is now beginning to see the value of alternative strategies as a support

for better learning and increased student motivation. In fact, we are now seeing a convergence of these modes because of the introduction of technology in language learning.

It is well documented that multimedia technology can help solve some difficulties associated with the EFL/ESL situation, such as large class sizes and mixed-ability classrooms. And where multimedia technology has been used for EFL/ESL instruction, better results have been achieved with training students to be autonomous learners. This explains the growing number of schools/colleges/universities with facilities for students to access computers and audio-video equipment. Research has shown the several advantages that multimedia offers both in the classroom and in the ODL system (see Mayora, 2006):

- Multimedia technology allows students to work individually at their own pace and according to their own needs. This is especially helpful with mixed ability classrooms where help can be given to the weaker students without slowing the pace of the class.
- It increases students' motivation due to novelty of the medium as well as the interactive nature of the activities. It has been reported that new technologies can develop students' interests in learning activities and lead them to devote more time and attention to these activities than in regular classes.
- Multimedia increases the students' confidence in their abilities as it trains them to self monitor and self assess their progress, which promote autonomous learning.

- It caters to the multiple intelligence of students in introducing a variety of print, audio and visual material that match different students' learning style and preferences.
- It helps the teacher make the presentation of content more dynamic and attractive for students. The teacher can also prepare support material to supplement and guide the students. This acts as a scaffold to make the learner self-independent.
- The computer with its multimedia technology offers opportunities for successful collaborative learning and teamwork in small groups.
- It can provide virtual learning settings such as classroom and laboratories which allow real time interaction between the students and teachers at different places. For example: A student in Delhi University in a particular college can listen to a lecture in another college through this mode in real time.

The teachers with a little bit of creativity and imagination can use ICT not only for listening and speaking but also for reading and writing and that too without much technological support. Some of the ideas suggested below could be used by any English teacher:

- When teaching writing to learners, the teacher could involve another institution (school or college). Learners could send each other emails, first draft of essays or stories which are reviewed by other learners with suggestions on how to improve their writing.

This would provide the learners an opportunity to look at and critique writing by other learners.

- Email writing could be another activity to teach both formal and informal letters. Here again teachers can be set up contact with different groups of learners in other institutions, thus making the whole process more authentic and enjoyable.
- Making posters and brochures which are common activities in schools/colleges could be an entirely web based, collaborative activity.
- Learners should also use the website of national newspapers to read a variety of reports. They could compare the opening sentences of articles on the same topic. They could compare the reports of the various newspapers on the same subject and categorize what is the fact and what is an opinion. They could then perhaps write their own articles / reports.

However, teachers should not and do not think of technology as a panacea to solve all the problems associated with language teaching both through the distance and open mode and the classroom mode. The use of technology should be based upon well thought pedagogical considerations. For example, it cannot be denied that there is a teacher resistance to technology because of lack of interest or knowledge or because of uncertainty regarding its effectiveness (Mayora, 2006). The use of technology may sometimes lead to passive learning, after the novelty has worn out. Since the pedagogically sound teacher is often not a capable technologist,

the activities created are often unimaginative and uninspiring for the learner. Moreover, the cost of maintaining and upgrading the multimedia equipment with its rapid pace of development can be prohibitive. Not all schools or colleges have the resources or space to maintain a good multimedia centre.

To conclude, it certainly is a challenge for a language teacher to discover alternative ways to improve the language skills of the students, especially in the Indian context. But there are plenty of ways for teachers to begin to install at least the beginnings of a multimedia lab in their institutions. Technology is prevalent all around us and it is the teacher's role to think about how to acquire it and integrate it within the teaching-learning situation. However, the use of the technology in the classroom or through the distance mode should be based on sound theoretical and pedagogical principles where the students, teachers and technology are part of an interrelated system where optimal learning takes place in meaningful situations.

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Interaction and Collaboration: Advantage E-Learning

Vandana Lunyal

Technology is regarded as an all-encompassing phenomenon that has a tremendous impact on our working, cultural and private lives. E-Literacy has become very important for success in academic and professional milieu. Sensing this need, a lot of educational institutes across the globe have started offering online-courses followed by instant online assessment. E-Literacy is slowly making its presence felt in education, various government offices and business agencies and we see a continual change around us. However, this change needs to be extended to the educational fields. As Lankshear et al. observe, it is vital that technology for pedagogical purposes should also fall within the change agenda (Lankshear, Snyder, and Green 2000; Luke 2000; Millard 2003; Ramsey 2000). It is therefore imperative that educational institutes provide easily accessible e-learning experiences to learners that suit their needs and learning styles.

Advantage E-Learning

E-courses have become very popular as ICT enables an array of communication channels that help in developing dynamic texts that are neither place nor time dependent. They also offer a unique non-threatening learning environment to the learner that not only promotes learning but also motivates learners. Learners from diverse backgrounds can participate freely in online programmes without feeling inadequate in any way. Besides professional and academic enrichment, students doing such courses go through the experience of autonomous learning as they take

on the responsibility of learning themselves. Such courses may also encourage them to develop an independent thinking which can help them later in their lives in comprehending complex business situations and taking independent decisions. In addition to this, online learning promotes collaboration with other learners as well as with their online tutors which becomes an excellent opportunity for learners to communicate for a 'real' task in 'real' time.

Learning through Web 2.0

Any discussion on the use of the Internet for education makes it mandatory to discuss Web 2.0 and how it is different from Web 1.0. According to Wikipedia, Web 2.0 is generally 'associated with web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web.' To put it simply, Web 2.0 may be understood as a many-way participative environment rather than just one way non-participative electronic environment controlled by the author. The difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 can also be better understood with examples of Britannica Online (Web 1.0) and Wikipedia (Web 2.0). Both are online encyclopedias but one is non-editable compiled by experts while the other is within the editing reach of people.

Some Web 2.0 sites comprise social networking sites such as Orkut, Twitter, Facebook, Skype where the users share audios, videos, pictures, texts etc. Friends on such sites are free to blog or edit the pages created by each other. It gives them

a chance to interact through online threaded forums and also to create, in contrast to websites where users are restricted only to passive viewing of material created by others. Using such popular sites as these brings a motivated excitement to the class as the distance that many a time separates the teacher and the taught gets reduced. Together they can 'domesticate' the computer (Bigum, 2002) and create a learning community that may focus on collaborative and reflective practices.

Web 2.0 and Language Teaching

Language teachers seem very enthusiastic to take on the opportunities introduced by the Internet for collaborative teaching and learning. They are now pretty familiar with tools such as e-mail, discussion forums, blogs, and chats and are using them as per their own comprehension but most teachers are not yet familiar with some of the recent tools such as wikis, RSS feeds and second life. Here I would like to illustrate the use of technology to teach / learn language through various technological tools. However, to use these tools one needs to register on these sites. After registering, one can click on RSS feeds icon to get latest feeds in one's mail. As a teacher of English, one can use those RSS feeds as reading material and ask students to comment on a particularly interesting one. This can happen online or in class where learners can have a discussion (a real speaking task) on what they have read. Another tool is using forums in the class where all students get a chance to express themselves. For example the teacher could post a thread on homophones explaining what a homophone is and then give them a task of showing comprehension of the term by writing a humorous conversation where people get confused about

what is happening because of the homophones. Online game forum can also be used to play language games with learners. For example a game such 'Truth- Untruth' can be very interesting. The teacher could write three pieces of information about him/herself, one of which may be incorrect. The students are then required to guess which piece of information is not correct and give reasons for their answers/comments. This kind of activity not only works as an ice-breaker but also generates lot of language.

Appel (1995) advocates keeping a learning journal or a diary which promotes an active form of reflection, introspection and self-evaluation. Keeping on-line journals (Towndrow, 2004) that includes notes, descriptions, reflection and evaluation would allow conditions for interaction and collaboration. In accordance with this it may be fair to say that keeping a student blog or a class blog would also serve a similar purpose. Teachers can take any burning issue such as 'environment', 'honour killing' etc. and post it on the classroom blog and give student a time frame to complete the assignment. Teachers may also decide to give such tasks in groups. The participants in groups may be given different roles to complete the task- readers, thinkers, compilers and writers. This will compel them to think, read and then write. Together they can present an online essay to the teacher who can comment on the essays received. One good blogging site for this is <https://www.blogger.com/start>. Using Adobe Dreamweaver, teachers can also create their own blogging website on which they can have links to some famous blogs. These websites function as classroom blogs that can also be used to promote creativity in students. They can be encouraged to write poems, stories,

jokes, one act plays on the blog that can have hyperlinked buttons leading to different topics. I would also like to discuss how emailing is being used as a potent communication tool for establishing 'key pal' forum for international collaboration between teachers and students. Key pal projects encourage development of writing skills in learners wherein they send mail to their key pals and get to know about them, their culture, and their country and in the process improve their reading and writing skills know about them, their culture, and their country and in the process improve their reading and writing skills. Besides language skills, this kind of multi-user environment encourages learner autonomy and promotes collaborative experiences, language negotiation and critical thinking skills in the learners. Nagelhout (1999) suggests that students should look at the Internet as a valued resource for potential learning material and they should feel comfortable multi-tasking with other users.

Conclusion

To sum up, I would like to maintain that using web resources in the classroom is very exciting and useful. At the hands of an imaginative, motivated teacher, technology can do wonders and can bring a positive change in the attitude and classroom behaviour of learners. However, teachers whether they are using read only sources or Web 2.0 sources, need to be watchful about the sites they are using. They need to evaluate the site themselves before recommending it to the learners. Moreover they should be vigilant about how the internet resources are being used by the learners and take steps to ensure their safety from the cyber stalkers. Learners should be given a complete orientation in the net etiquettes and in using these resources to their advantage.

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ELT Events

October 2010

- 2. (North America) Virginia TESOL (VATESOL), "Re-Kindling Our Joy for Language Teaching," University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA. E-mail jkuchno@gmail.com. Web site <http://www.vatesol.cloverpad.org>.
- 9-10. AZ-TESOL, "Building Our Community, Enhancing Our Profession," Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Phoenix, Arizona, USA. E-mail rjbailey@phxhs.k12.az.us.

November 2010

- 1-3. TEFLIN, "Revitalizing Professionalism in ELT as a Response to the Globalized World," Bandung, Jawa Barat,

Indonesia. E-mail dsukyadi@upi.edu. Web site <http://www.balaibahasa.upi.edu/teflin>.

- 12-13. Colorado TESOL (COTESOL), "Imagining the Possible," Red Lion Hotel Denver South Denver Southeast, Denver, Colorado, USA. E-mail larry.fisher@colorado.edu. Web site <http://www.colorado.edu/iec.cotesol>.
- 12-14. English Teachers' Association-Republic of China, "Methodology in ESL/EFL Research and Instruction," Accommodation, Book Exhibition, Food, Conference Rooms, Taipei, Taiwan. E-mail etaroc2002@yahoo.com.tw. Web site <http://www.eta.org.tw>.

- 19-22. Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT), "Creativity: Think Outside the Box," Aichi Industry and Labor Center, Nagoya, Japan. Web site <http://www.jalt.org>.

March 2011

17-19 TESOL Convention and Exhibit. in the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center & the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana in the United States. Web site <http://www.tesol.org>

April 2011

15-19 IATEFL Annual International Conference and Exhibition will be in Brighton in the Brighton Centre, Brighton, UK. Web Site <http://www.iatefl.org/>

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Musings: From an e-diary

Sukrita Paul Kumar

The teacher and the student come together in the classroom to *make* knowledge through dialogue (not monologue), sharing (talking *to* and *not* talking *down*) and also, occasional combating (questioning established notions)! It's the actual experience of the very process of "knowing", that brings excitement in the room, and not a boring accumulation of 'information' that quickly becomes a burden for the mind. Holding the student's attention beyond the first few minutes in the classroom becomes a matter of constant challenge if the teacher is not able to assure an active participation of the student in the process of making knowledge, an experience. Field trips, projects, hands-on workshops, experiments etc have always been perceived as welcome pedagogic devices. In addition to these, as proven by many institutions of learning all over the world now, another tool that can be effectively brought to active use is that of technology. As long as its use is like that of a tool, not something as an end in itself!

I would not have upheld the role of technology so ardently, but for my experience of more than two years in the area of e-learning at the University of Delhi. Traditionally e-learning for students works best when e-lessons are created on a given topic.. Let me give a few examples of why and how I feel these lessons can contribute significantly towards making "learning" an engaging and enjoyable exercise towards understanding different issues of language, culture

and literature.

As I worked towards creating an e-lesson, for instance, on Esther Morgan's poem "The Lost Word" prescribed for the University of Delhi B.A. Programme I year (English A course), I asked myself some questions regarding how I could bring the sound, rhythm and content of the poem alive in the lesson. Explorations into cyberspace brought in a number of interesting results: (a) I was able to contact the poet herself who sent me the poem in her own voice; (b) I found some paintings through which I could demonstrate "ambiguity" in art and poetry; (c) I located some relevant cartoons to raise issues of identity reflected in the poem; (d) I could bring into discussion the possibility of multiple meanings of the poem with the use of different colours and visuals; (e) I interviewed the poet and put in her own views on poetry in the lesson. Though there are some exercises for language learning in this lesson, the emphasis is on "Understanding Poetry" as specified in the text. I realized that what would have been difficult for me to demonstrate in the classroom through my conventional "lecture" pattern, could so easily be done through the use of an e-lesson. The workshop with the students affirmed the point that with the teacher as a facilitator, such a lesson could command the attention of the students and engage them much more meaningfully in the process of "knowing". Many of them claimed that such learning will stay much longer with them than what they'd get out of a conventional lecture

delivered in the classroom.

My experience with the co-ordination and making of e-lessons on the Course on "Cultural Diversity, Linguistic Plurality and Literary Traditions in India" taught me many a truth regarding the use of technology for learning. Most of these lessons themselves offer the rich experience of "multilinguality": the English translation of Padma Sachdev's poem "The Mother Tongue", for instance, is backed by Padma Sachdev's audio-video recording of the poem in the original Dogri, just as F.M. Shinde's dalit poem "The Habit" carries alongside his recording of the poem in the original Marathi. We have incorporated in these lessons recordings of Bulleh Shah in Punjabi, the Bengali Baul, the Kannada Vachana and even the sound of the tribal languages of Mundari, Adi and Kondh, searched meticulously from Youtubes. With the richness of cultural diversity and linguistic plurality resonating in these 24 lessons through pictures, recordings, interviews and relevant comments from writers and philosophers, the student is bound to get a wholesome experience of the course prescribed for them. And indeed, as some of the students suggested in the Workshop on these lessons, the material can be further enhanced and modified, since this is dynamic e-material, certainly not to be seen as something "fixed" and frozen. Knowledge-making is after all an on-going process that demands a constant revision and updating.

What is central to teaching and learning, as I mentioned earlier in this note, is a creative engagement with the very process of "knowing". But, creativity, I believe, can be totally stifled with too much imposition of "structures" and "frames".

This “poem” was scribbled to remain “out of the box” while e-learning!

WHY TEMPLATES?

*Emotions falling as dry leaves
Thoughts shriveled and wooden
Concepts freeze as formulae
Vision out of sight*

*Self on trial
Stiff in the witness box
Tested judged and jailed
In graphs and grids
Knowledge caged in
Absolute truth and
Value quantified
Robots amidst mechanics*

*Getting out of the box
Entering the beginning of
Endgame for search
And exploration*

Not guilty, not confessing.

With some broad guidelines in place, if e-lessons are created with a good range of imagination, research and openness, they need to be used and received too with a matching openness for serious adventures into cyberspace (a lot lies out there!) for exciting edifices of knowledge to be constructed in the classroom.



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Members are requested to write to the secretary, FORTELL at rachnasethi7@yahoo.com regarding their email id and any change in it.

This will enable us to give speedy information to you regarding FORTELL activities and include you in the FORTELL yahoo group.

E-Learning: Suggested Books and Websites

Books

- Butler-Pascoe Mary Ellen and Wiburg Karin M. Technology and teaching English language learners . Allyn and Bacon/ Pearson, 2003.
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<http://www.esl-lab.com>
- Western Pacific Literacy Network, Learning Resources
http://www.literacynet.org/cnnsf/index_cnnsf.html
- Breaking News English
<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>
- Action Mazes from Quandary
http://www.halfbakedsoftware.com/quandary_tutorials_examples.php
- MysteryNet
<http://www.mysterynet.com/>
- NY Times Learning Network, Test Prep Question of the Day
<http://www.nytimes.com>
- Career Quizzes and Tools from Monster <http://resources.monster.com/tools/>
- Amusement Park Physics: Design a Roller Coaster <http://www.learner.org/interactives/parkphysics/coaster/>
- Linguistic Funland
<http://www.linguistic-funland.com/addapal.html>
- Dave’s ESL Cafe, Student Discussion Forums <http://www.eslcafe.com/forums/student/index.php>

Websites for making online crossword puzzles

- www.puzzle-maker.com
- www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com
- www.teach-nology.com
- www.toolsforeducators.com

A Guidebook of Principles, Procedures and Practices: E-Learning

by Som Naidu. 2nd Revised Edition, CEMCA, 2006. First published in 2003.

S. C. Sood

Developed by Dr. Som Naidu of the University of Melbourne, Australia, on behalf of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi, this guidebook is 'neither a definitive publication nor a treatise on e-learning but is designed to highlight the important issues, to ask the key questions and to tease the reader into independent thought so that decisions are based on sound judgment rather than wishful thinking'.

Original in the way it organises relevant ideas from various sources in a very reader-friendly manner, the guidebook is organized under 8 chapters. Neatly structured, they begin with 'goals' followed by a brief synopsis. As a natural consequence, a longer discussion of key principles and procedures comes, which is interspersed with a number of critical questions for the readers to 'reflect' upon in the context of their own situation. 'Reflection' is followed by 'Tell us a Story'. Thus it seeks readers' active involvement by inviting them to describe an occasion from their own situation where the principles and procedures described in the chapter are tried. Finally, each chapter ends with 'Points to remember' for the readers to recapitulate the main points.

Each chapter is self-contained and can be read independently. Through varied e-learning activities, chapter 1 shows how 'e-learning' differs

from similar other terms in common use. It also describes the sources of growing interest in e-learning, its scope, limitations, attributes and the opportunities it affords to design learning environments.

Chapter 2 raises some seminal concerns related to e-learning. It explores issues relating to the influence of information and communications technology on learning, and examines pedagogical designs for optimizing e-learning. The research finding that 'any learning gain is actually caused by **'the way'** the content is presented via a medium rather than the medium itself, has wide ranging implications for materials production and materials evaluation. Concerned with assessment of learning outcomes, major threats to assessment practices, effective assessment tools, and e-moderation skills, chapter 3 points out that assessment is most effective when it is continuous and based on sound educational principles. Risk of security and plagiarism are among major threats to assessment practices. Though the subject matter of Chapter 4 is, 'Online learning management systems' (LMSs), it also surveys the trends related to them. The special focus is on their strengths and limitations and modes of selection of the right types of LMSs.

The next chapter defines digital learning objects, their characteristics, and their role in e-learning and

on-line learning. It also deals with problems and prospects of packaging, storing and distributing of such learning objects. Chapter 6 explores contemporary online learning practices, models of course development and types of online-learning courses, the experts involved and states that such courses range from 'partially online' to 'fully online'.

Management and implementation of e-learning are taken up in Chapter 7. This chapter describes pre-conditions for e-learning activities, administrative requirements with regard to technology, course design and development, and subject matter content management and implementation requirements including student registration, learner support, testing and assessment, and evaluation of the course.

The last chapter 8 deals with evaluating the impacts of e-learning and modes of evaluation. Since course design is a cyclical process, evaluation assumes an important place for feedback on all the products and the processes of e-learning for future redesigning and development.

The guidebook includes a comprehensive reference list on the subject, which is very useful for further reading on the subject. Many of the references are used to cite the source, or direct the readers to additional sources on the points that are being made. It also includes a glossary of commonly used terms on the subject.

Thus far, we see that this book moves far beyond the simple suggestion made by the author 'to serve as another textbook on e-learning' In fact, it contains many useful insights for all stakeholders in the massive enterprise of e-learning.



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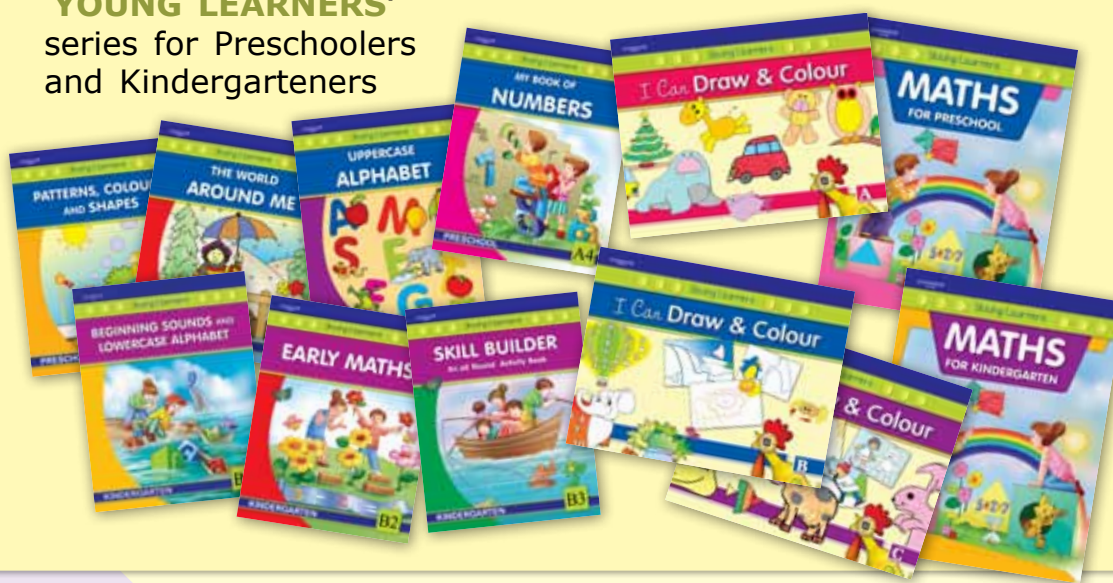


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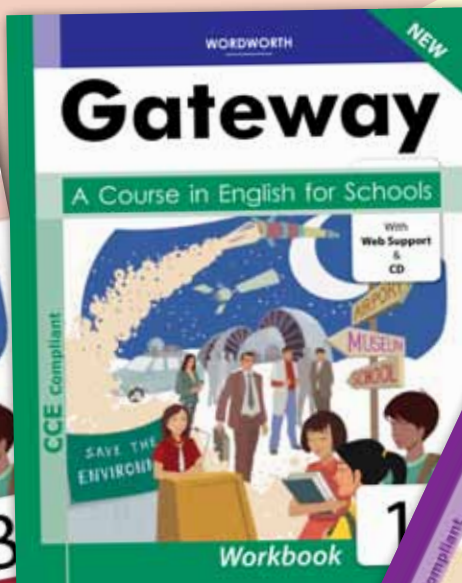
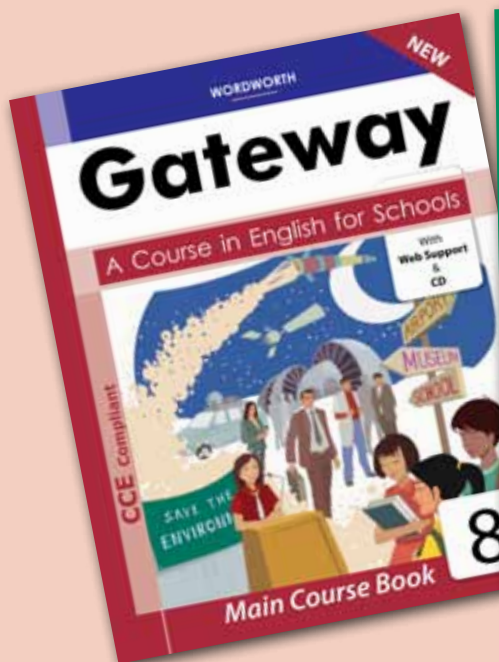


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