

Integrating Internet into classroom teaching

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Abstract:

Technology and its various applications have become an integral part of Language learning. The usage of computers in language learning has been in existence for the past few decades. Now, with the advent of the internet, an immense variety of materials is available for the practitioners of ELT. But, at the same time this also creates a problem of abundance, the sheer volume of materials can be overwhelming. In this paper, an attempt is made to classify and define the various aspects of the internet for teachers who want to integrate the internet into their teaching. The paper discusses how to move away from traditional ways of looking at internet and move towards a creative and challenging use of the same for better learning outcome. With so many lists and links available it is really challenging to be objective about the best sources to be used in the classrooms. This paper looks at some of resources that teachers can integrate in an innovative way. Websites such Read Write Think, ELLOetc are examined for their usefulness. Through the strategies discussed in the paper, the teachers can understand how to weave the web based activities into their pre-existing curricula in order to enhance the teaching learning process.

Keywords: Internet, technology, integrates.

Introduction:

With technology becoming all pervasive, in every walk of life it has also become an integral part of everyday language use. It is now difficult to imagine language learning without the use of technology. Internet in recent days has emerged as a powerful tool of technology. With Internet there is today access to host of different materials that can be used effectively by a resourceful teacher. But the usefulness of Internet is still considered with a lot of apprehension among the ELT practitioners. If one of the problems that most teachers face when it comes to the usage of resources on the web is the sheer volume of the web, the other problem is the lack of understanding or training as to how to integrate the Internet into a language classroom. 'Integrating Internet into the classroom' a course offered by University of Oregon has helped me understand that web based materials are an excellent way of weaving internet materials into pre-existing curricula for better learning outcomes. This paper is an

attempt to share with fellow teachers and teacher educators the different ways in which Internet can be integrated into classroom teaching.

Benefits of Web:

The most common problem that educators face when it comes to Internet is where to start and how to start, for this the suggestion is, as teachers search for Web sites, they should not look for the online equivalent of textbooks or task sheets but look for activities that create insights, the contrasts that excite problem solving, tasks that motivate. As teacher's who are new to the Web, it's not a bad idea for them to surf, stumble and search their way to find their own understanding of the Web. This experience will help the teachers' not inflicting the Internet on students as just one more structured, assigned, have-to -do task.

Basically, the Web-based content and experiences are similar to traditional learning practices in the classrooms. But the outcome is something that educators have not experienced before. In other words, educators are accustomed to references, resources and lessons, but the breadth, depth, immediacy, and interactivity available in the Web-based materials open up an entirely new way to educate.

Another issue that most teachers struggle with is the change in role of the educator. The use of technology brings about a shift in the teacher's sphere of influence in the orbit of the classroom. The basic categories of the learning in traditional learning and Internet based learning being the same, the only gain being the potential of immediacy, relevance, interactivity, authenticity, etc. through Internet access, how does the teacher's relative position in the learning environment change?

In other words, when the teacher is the source of the information, the learning path tends to be teacher-to-learner, sometimes overlooking the critical process of learning. When the source of information, interaction, opinion, imagery, etc. is other than the teacher - i.e., the Internet - what is the teacher role?

There are three main areas the teacher can focus upon:

- (i) creating a learning environment,
- (ii) shaping Web-based activities,
- (iii) hands-on facilitation while students are in the learning process.

So rather than being a threat, the power of the Internet has liberated teachers to move from the controlled setting of curriculum based time bound dissemination, to the one where they no longer need to regulate the flow of information. This enables the teacher to take on the roles that have been suggested by the learner-centred strategies such as: facilitator, guide-on-the-side, mentor, coach, etc.

Shaping activities related to learning goals

'The resources on the Internet become next to worth less without an educator. Creating activities is a main strategy for teachers to integrate the Web with their students' learning' March (2005). Tom March (2005) demonstrates how to create web based activities by adapting them according to the needs of their learners.

Topic Hotlist

One good way to begin integrating the Web for learning is by collecting sites that the teachers find most useful and interesting on the topic of their choice which can be called a Topic Hotlist. Doing this will save your learners hours of aimless browsing. Web browsers can be used to bookmark the favourite sites which can be later used in the classroom. Topic Hotlist, is an activity that can be used effectively to spare the learners from hours of fruitless searching. This gives the students a breadth of materials on the topic they are studying. Hotlist is an easy strategy to employ; teachers can simply add the Web resources to an activity or unit he/she has already prepared.

Sometimes you might choose to have learners search their own sites on the Internet. Given below is hot list of the sites I have shortlisted on the topic *technical report writing*. This list was provided to the students and they asked to go through the sites and make notes on the topic. Their notes were discussed in the classroom to understand the topic.

Example Topic Hotlist - Report writing

<https://blog.domypapers.com/technical-report-writing-examples/>

<https://wac.colostate.edu/resources/writing/guides/engineering-reports/>

<https://www.theiet.org/media/5182/technical-report-writing.pdf>

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/forstudents/engineeringdesign/studyguides/techreportwriting>

E-Portfolio

Though similar to a hotlist in concept, the E-portfolio focuses on providing links to a variety of media and content types (photographs, maps, stories, facts, quotations, sound clips, videos, virtual reality tours, etc.). Learners use the portfolio links to explore aspects of the topic that they feel are important. They can then download or copy and paste these scraps into a variety of formats: newsletter, desktop slide presentation, collage, bulletin board. The students' creations will now be richer and more sophisticated because of resources that had never been available in their classrooms before. This is also a good time to educate students on copyright and fair use policies as well as making contact with more expert learners via e-mail. Finally, by allowing students to pursue their own interests amid an abundance of choices, the portfolio offers a more open, student-centred approach that encourages construction of meaning. Even though neither Topic Hotlists nor e-portfolios target achieving specific learning, a resourceful teacher will use these strategies to promote the constructivist learning that can happen when students synthesize a large and contextually rich selection of data and experiences March(2005).

Example for E-portfolio

<https://www.weber.edu/Communication/ePortfolio.html>

The next three activities, *treasure hunt*, *media medley* and *subject search* target specific learning, rather than merely sending students to Web sites hoping they will find something useful there that create cognitive insights. These activities are designed to create experiences that would develop perspective and knowledge. Let us understand through the descriptions and examples below to see which format best captures our learning goals.

Treasure Hunt:

This activity aims at developing some solid knowledge on a subject, teachers . The basic strategy here is to find Web pages that hold information (text, graphic, sound, video, etc.) that you feel is essential to understanding the given topic. Maybe you gather 10 - 15 links (and remember, these are the exact pages you want the students to go to for information, not the top page of a huge Web site). After these links are gathered, the teacher poses one key question for each Web site.

A smartly designed Treasure Hunt can go far beyond finding unrelated bits of knowledge. By choosing questions that define the scope or parameters of the topic, the students discover the answers that tap into deeper understanding one that defines the dimensions or schema of the domain being studied. Finally, by including a comprehensive "Big Question," students can synthesize what they have learnt and relate it to a broader understanding of the big picture.

Example Treasure Hunt:Crisis management

<https://www.techtargget.com/whatis/definition/crisis-management>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/service/crisis-management>

<https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/strategy/crisis-management/>

<https://www.rockdovesolutions.com/blog/6-steps-to-create-a-crisis-management-plan>

The above is list of websites on the topic of Crisis management created as part of behavioural skills training. This list has been provided to the students to understand the topic and come up with their own strategy for Crisis management. Open ended questions on the topics will encourage the students to delve deeper on the topic and come up with a creative plan of their own.

Media medley:

Part of what makes the Internet so different is the interesting, passionate, real information that many people and organizations post there. You'll find information on the Web that you'd never find on TV, the newspapers, or magazines. Media medley taps into this vibrant vein in order to connect students to the chosen topic. The students can be encouraged to bring in some videos clippings on a given topic and use the clippings to presnt their own ideas and perspectives. Before assigning the task the teachers should give guidelines to the students about how to identify an authentic source and caution the students not fall into the trap of misinformation. One of the biggest challenges the students of this generation face is how to navigate the mine field of misinformation. This activity can be used by teachers to help develop discernment among students in identifying the right and authentic sources. This activity can be used as a pre task leading to a group discussion. This activity can be used to shape the thought and develop a perspective among advanced learners'.

Example:

<https://www.unicef.org/india/press-releases/unicef-report-spotlights-mental-health-impact-covid-19-children-and-young-people>

<https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2021>

[https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health\](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/)

Subject search: Anothr activity that can be used to go beyond learning facts and develop a critical perspective on a topic, is Subject search. Basically, a subject search is a team activity that presents the students with a challenging task. The abundance of web resources can be

effectively made use of through this activity to enhance their learning process. The provides access to an abundance of online resources and scaffolds the learning process to prompt higher order thinking. The products of Web Quests are usually then put out to the world for some real feedback.

This activity works best with a topic which is debatable and that offers different perspectives. Current events, controversial social and environmental topics work well. Also anything that requires evaluation or scientific hypothesizing that will evoke a variety of interpretations. The reason that internet is so critical is because it offers the breadth of perspectives and viewpoints that are usually needed to construct meaning on complex topics. Students benefit from being linked to a wide variety of Web resources so that they can explore and make sense of the issues involved in the challenge.

To begin with the students are given some common background knowledge, and then divide into groups. In the groups each student or pair of students has a particular role, task, or perspective to master. They effectively become experts on one aspect of a topic. When the roles come together, students must synthesize their learning by completing a summarizing act such as presenting their interpretation to real world experts on the topic.

Teachers can use this as a first activity to quickly immerse students in real learning, then go back and fill in the broader picture with a Treasure Hunt or Subject Sampler.

Gender and issues surrounding it are sensitive to be directly dealt in a classroom. By directing students to various authentic and useful web sources the teacher can develop a healthy discussion on this topic as an extension of their observations. Student own experiences and understanding can be supplemented by the information that is gleaned from the thread of websites.

Example for Subject search - Gender spectrum

Suggestions for Choosing Activity Formats

To start with the teachers can start by slowly integrating internet into their classrooms by simple activities such as hotlist and scrapbook . Once the students are comfortable with the usage of internet based resources they can be guided towards activities that require a deep dive into web resources. Though novelty of usage of web based resources would make the activities interesting to students, however the teachers should never lose sight of the objective of such an integration. Web resources are yet another aid to teachers to enhance their technique and a resourceful teacher would weave them into his/her teaching to suit the methodology adopted.

How to design these activities:

One of the major challenges that the teachers' might face is how to design these activities. A lot of interactive websites available can be used effectively to design the activities. Most of these websites are tailor made to help design activities with ease. These interactive websites are user friendly and easy to navigate even for novice user of technology. A few such websites are mentioned below:

<https://learningapps.org/>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/teaching-tools/home.html>

<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/printing-press>

Conclusion:

These are a few ways in which web based materials can be creatively integrated into classroom teaching. The dynamic and ever changing nature of technology makes it compulsory for CALL practitioner to constantly improvise and build upon the activities. Once the teachers overcome their initial apprehension about using web based activities it is not difficult for them to think ways in which technology can be integrated into classroom. The very nature of technology which is addictive makes this possible.

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