

2020's Technological Tools That Assist Teaching English Language and Teachers in Rural Schools

SMBM Arshad / MA TESL (R)

Computer Mediated Learning Instruction (CMLI)
EnglishAasan Academy email- arshad.smbm@gmail.com

Abstract: Use of technological tools in teaching of all subjects turned to be more normal since 2000s, henceforth, post Covid-19 world of education has evolved into more digital or electronic teaching and learning. This paper is an effort purely put into exploring modern technological tools that help teachers of English and other subjects in their teaching and learning process. Having looked at the definition of the subject term, provide with a list of free and paid Learning Management System (LMS) and Virtual Learning Platform (VLP) which is also known as Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Then we will be dealing with advantages and disadvantages of technological tools in the teaching process. The conclusion at the end outlined that the teachers should not be demotivated neither discouraged towards the evolving technology in teaching but become expert in using them well.

Keywords: LMS, VLP, VLE, Online learning, Technology, CALL

Introduction

Technological tools in pedagogy have long been existing, yet the emergence of it after the Covid-19 outbreak has really touched the nerves of people across the length and breadth of the globe. Mike Neer (2014), defines technology broadly as “any tool a teacher uses to convey the lesson or interact with students. That can range from a whiteboard and marker (low-tech) to a tablet with a stylus (high-tech) and beyond”. Further, “The use of modern technology in teaching English is broadly understood to encompass an innovative application of methods, tools, materials, devices, systems, and strategies which are directly relevant to English language teaching and lead to the achievement of the desired goals” Mofareh, (2019). Prensky, (2008), and Richey, Silber, & Ely, (2008) highlighted that technology can improve teaching and learning process in various ways and the quality of education as well as, it improves the quality of education system and evaluation.

“In lesson planning, teachers should use a wide range of audio videos aids and help students in order to determine themselves the skills, knowledge, and sources which are required for the completion of the learning process,” Qurat-ul-Ain (2019). However, after Covid-19 pandemic, I personally believe that the technology has yet walked further steps ahead in the invention of *Learning Management Systems (LMS)* and *Virtual Learning Platform (VLP)* in order for providing students, teachers and parents with facilities to see face-to-face and conduct lessons by creating interactive and animated presentation, assess and evaluate students' performances. As this research is about the use of technology in education, we gathered information mostly from websites and from some other literature.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning:

It's also vital to know what these are. Doug Wintemute (2022), Synchronous classes take place live in real time, with teacher and students attending together at the same time from

different locations, it is much like traditional classrooms with scheduled syllabuses and live discussions, they use web and videoconferencing technologies like Google Meet, Google handouts, Zoom, Microsoft team and etc. However, Asynchronous classes run on a more relaxed manner, features prerecorded lessons that students watch independently at their own time and space, then answer questions posted by the teacher by which teachers understand the learners have understood the lesson. Another component is the discussion board, in which teachers can post discussion task, and students can ask questions and interact with their peers. This provides learners with an interactive experience and space for social learning. Future Learning, Cambly, Udemy, Allision Academy, Coursera are some of the popular Asynchronous learning platforms.

Learning Management System (LMS): Ronghuai Huang, J. Michael Spector, Jungeng Yang (2019), defined LMS as a “Web-based collection of software programs designed to support the management and delivery of learning resources and courses to students. An LMS has tools for registering students, delivering resources (text, audio, and video), tracking user logins, supporting online chatting, calculating grades, administering assessments, and uploading and storing user submissions. Tumskiy (2019), mentioned that LMS-related Projects are “apart from traditional grammar and lexical exercises that advanced-level students usually perform with the help of paper textbooks, they can do a number of creative tasks with the help of an LMS. For instance, they may take part in a number of projects, utilising the multimedia capabilities of online resources and digital devices”. LMS was first developed by Sidney L. Pressey in the 1920s, the teaching machine offered various kinds of practical exercises and multiple-choice questions (MCQs). Resembling a typewriter, the teaching machine required learners to drill in answers instead of typing them out, which would be recorded at the back of the machine. Tarun Athmika (2021), took a step to explain that “the learner could only advance if their

response to the previous question was correct—a feature most of the modern LMSs still use”.

According to J. Ismail (2002). We can basically divide LMS into four types of like: the Learning Management System (LMS), Learning Content Management System (LCMS), Learning Design System (LDS), and Learning Support System (LSS).

Software Testing Help (2022) mentioned that there are both free and paid LMS that are used by.

- Almost all Corporate and organizations.
- All Educational institutions (Schools & Universities).
- Many government companies.
- Private tuition and institutions.

Likewise, Melanie Arden (2021), **Virtual Learning Platform (VLP)** is also known as Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or Virtual Space has been the best way to help students, which provides students with

- an effective remote learning experience,
- Progress with their studies and receive feedback from teachers.
- Learn in a safe environment in line with the school's privacy policies.
- Get more time back for homework and activities instead of traveling to school.

VLP encourages students to work hand in hand with other students in breakout rooms and kind of facilities, enabling students to communicate among students as well as with students. In addition, it also gives students ways to share videos, audios, photos and homework assignments, text messages. *Zoom, Google Classroom, FlipGrid, Miscrosoft Teams* and many VLPs were introduced and became popular ever since the outbreak of pandemic.

Having heard what technology is in an educational context, it is our turn to scrutinise if it can answer all the issues that a teacher has. ViewSonic's technology solutions for education (2020), "Though we generally see progress as a good thing, there are definite disadvantages of technology in the classroom". Digital LEARNING (2020), "Network No matter how advanced or smart a computer program or a product is, it can never come close to the knowledge and life experience a teacher brings. Several researches have been conducted and it has been proven time and again that teachers bring about a change which no technology can". As far as I am concerned, technology does certainly help the teaching by making

considerable activities and procedures easy hence, technology cannot completely take the role of a teacher.

Advantages of technology in teaching

Adel Al-Bataineh et. al (2016), "Most recently, technology has been a new phenomenon to help motivate, differentiate, and allow students to achieve and excel in ways that they have never been able to before". "In this modern world where information is disseminated quickly via the internet, the LMS is an essential tool for university students as not they can keep updated with their coursework, but get instant notifications pertaining to their daily assignments. In turn, lecturers have an easier time reaching out to their students out of class hours and can instantly update them over the LMS about issues regarding their coursework" Nor Azura and Lee Hwei (2013). "Technological development and the consequences of pandemic had reshaped the teaching and learning to a different dimension. Technology, with a sudden introduction of a wide range of devices and the Internet, students got the opportunity to make the learning process much easier and more interesting" Allison Academy (2021). Teachers can reach more students, so can students reach teachers who are abroad synchronously on a real-time and traditional-like classroom atmosphere. Besides, these advantages mentioned above, we have considerable other benefits also, yet all of them will at a point be categorised under one or the other advantages. Despite we agree or not, technology turned to be knit tight together with the everyone's life in this era. Using them in learning at the early learning stage can impart to students an in-depth knowledge on the best of it as well as when school goes reached work it would yet be easier and better for them to accommodate technology in their work and higher studies. Access to international or foreign learners of one's age is a gift which technology brought to this generation. A pupil sitting inside his home in a small village in Sri Lanka can discuss and learn with another student who's attending a high-class school in the USA.

Cost can be argued in both advantages and disadvantages, though it is expensive to afford a technological tool like phone, laptop and so on and so forth. It comparatively reduces the expenses related to travel and vehicle maintenance. Not only that, the time spent on attending physical classes has more opportunity cost than taking part in synchronous or asynchronous learning. .

Disadvantages;

Adel Al-Bataineh (2016), Technology, being laptops or devices, should be seen as tools and not replacements of best practices for teaching in the classroom. While we undoubtedly see some advantages, the technology has not yet turned to be a replacement for teachers. Allison Academy (2021), It is great to be optimistic and believe in the

continuous advancement of technology, however, it is equally important to not lose sight of the negative sides of technology in education, and how it can cause long-term problems for young people.

What do we teach?

“Technology-rich environments represent a system that encompasses the technological tools, curriculum, and context, and the teacher who is equipped to leverage the tools in service of teaching the curriculum and promoting student learning.” Doron Zinger, Tamara Tate and Mark Warschauer (2017). I have personally learnt that using technology we can give students knowledge on various subjects but we cannot teach discipline, moral values and social or cultural norms.

Cost;

It requires to pay considerably high amount of money to pay for a laptop or a mobile phone. It may be argued that the pay for teachers and facilities can be saved but the truth is that the cost of regular maintenance to technology used in teaching would not be less but almost equal. Besides, loss of employment would of course further social disorder and consequence of it would even lead to grave.

Control over the class;

Teachers lose their control over the classroom. Students keep the camera off or the microphone muted and do things that are of their own interest. Moreover, students do what they want but not what the teacher request. Pupils don't do homework and other activities but rush while in class.

Teachers would require a special training;

Majority of the teachers would require training on how to use or better use the technology to help learners in the process of teaching. This training is not just one thing but a set of tools and processes comprises technological tools, applications, operation systems and so on and so forth. Some teachers are well aware of hardware and operating system but not of MS PowerPoint presentation. And yet are some others who are good at all of these but not good at the use of LMS, VLP and VLE. In many third world countries, teachers in general don't own any sophisticated IT or computer devices nor have they got any adequate knowledge in the use of the internet and other tools and apps.

Not compatible with particular mobile devices

Tarun Athmika (2021), Apple released its first iPhone and Android its first smartphone in the early to mid-2000s, starting a mobile revolution in the tech space. People all around the world were taking part in this revolution and had begun to experience the world through their personal mobile devices. LMSs, however, were not accessible on these then modern devices, limiting access to (training) content from a desktop computer.

Conclusion:

According to Johnson (2003), if computer and technology used aptly, it has the ability to “invoke dream in the minds of visionary educators who saw endless potential for altering traditional notions of teaching and learning”. Allison Academy (2021), It is obvious that ‘Technology is not an answer for all issues that a teacher has in the teaching process.’ Whereas, a continuous insistence on disadvantages should not be seen as a desire to return to traditional education, but as a reason for caution and the possibility to better see the holes in the technologies and methods used in education. Convincing teachers is one of the key factors that integrate technology in the learning and teaching in this era context. Major parties influence in the education could be teachers, learners, parents and schools/institutions have ability to conduct an extensive study on the use of technology in a way how it could be better used by the teacher in according with the social, economic and traditional context of the place. Teachers should be respected the way they deserve and always be honoured and rewarded for their noble service.

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