



## USING TECHNOLOGY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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### ABOUT ARTICLE

**Key words:** Learning a new language, curriculum, methods, skill, level, foreign language, activities, result.

**Received:** 08.11.2023

**Accepted:** 13.11.2023

**Published:** 18.11.2023

**Abstract:** The English Language is becoming more and more common in the world. As a result, increasingly people are dedicating time to study English as their second language. In fact, many countries include it in their school syllabus to teach children this language from a young age. However, the true value of this language is that it helps remove many barriers from our life. Whether it is to find a new job or travel the world. In other words, it helps to progress in life both on a personal and professional level.

### INTRODUCTION

Using technology in foreign language teaching has become increasingly popular and effective in recent years. Technology can enhance the learning experience for students and provide them with opportunities to practice and improve their language skills in a variety of ways.

Some of the ways technology can be used in foreign language teaching include:

1. Online language learning platforms: There are numerous websites and apps that offer interactive language learning activities, exercises, and games that can help students practice vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.
2. Virtual reality and augmented reality: These technologies can provide students with immersive language learning experiences, allowing them to virtually visit foreign countries and interact with native speakers in a realistic environment.
3. Language learning software: There are various software programs available that can provide personalized language lessons, track students' progress, and offer feedback on their performance.
4. Video conferencing and online communication tools: These tools can facilitate real-time communication between students and native speakers, as well as enable collaborative learning activities with peers from different parts of the world.
5. Multimedia resources: Teachers can use videos, podcasts, and other multimedia materials to expose students to authentic language use and cultural content.
6. Mobile apps: Language learning apps can provide students with convenient access to language lessons, flashcards, and other resources on their smartphones or tablets.

Overall, using technology in foreign language teaching can help make the learning process more engaging, interactive, and accessible for students, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency. However, it's important for educators to carefully integrate technology into their teaching practices and ensure that it aligns with their instructional goals and the needs of their students.

Language learning is a complex and challenging. For students to achieve the desired proficiency in a foreign language, their institutions need to invest time, effort and huge resources in order to cater for different learning styles. To be cost effective, language-teaching institutions strive to provide intensive foreign language (FL) instruction to reduce the time period needed to learn the target language. This explains the keen interest in combining different methodologies with instructional technologies that promise to motivate learners and to respond effectively to their needs. In fact, generally, technology use in learning environments has presented itself as a necessity for continued lifelong learning with research suggesting that institutions that lag behind in integrating technology “will be unable to meet the needs of knowledge based societies and as a result will not survive the change in paradigm of education” (O’Neill, Singh, & O’ Donoghue, 2004, p. 320).

Helping students to be literate is a high priority. Though this area is one of our greatest educational priorities, it is also one of our greatest challenges. As classroom environments continue to change, teachers face the challenges of a large population who do not speak English and who have high transient rates. For this large population, becoming proficient in English is a very difficult transition; one that is often frustrating and even painful. Students learning a new language need a great deal of language support. Those who teach students learning English as their second language know that any language support is crucial for students’ language acquisition. Therefore, English Language (EL) students need a variety of language experiences. They need opportunities to hear, write, speak, and read English. Technology, especially computers, can play an integral part in providing EL students with valuable language experiences as they learn a new language. Computers can be used to help provide additional language learning opportunities for EL students that take place beyond normal classroom instruction. Combining these opportunities with activities that can be done at home with family members provides EL students with a rich language learning experience. This article focuses on how computer-assisted instruction (CAI) can be a supplemental teaching tool for teaching English Language learners, and on how these activities can be extended at home to produce a greater school-home relationship. Provided in this article are recommendations that educators can use with their EL students and families.

So, now we know what educational technology is and why foreign language teachers use it. But what types of technology do they use, and how do they utilize it for language learning? In any foreign language classroom, you will generally find the tools found in most others, including a computer, tablets and an interactive whiteboard. While such devices may have a variety of purposes in other subjects, language learners may use the above tools for two important functions: listening and speaking. Students need to hear and use language in order to remember it long-term, and the use of technology provides opportunities for students to practice their language skills by hearing and speaking.

According to Liaw (1997), teachers should offer English language learners a language-rich environment in which students are constantly engaged in language activities. Children need to be able to interact with each other so that learning through communication can occur. Computers can facilitate this type of environment. The computer can act as a tool to increase verbal exchange. In a study conducted by Liaw (1997), computer books were used to investigate whether computers increase verbal interaction between students. These computer books are interactive stories that appear on the computer screen as an actual book with text and illustrations. There are also a variety of interactive choices students can

use to read the story, including: real voices that read aloud, music, and sound effects. The story is also highlighted so readers can follow along with the text. This study was conducted by videotaping student interactions while using the computer books. Students were arranged in groups of three to read the stories. Their types of speech used with each other were analyzed. Even though the children had limited English language proficiency, they engaged in various modes of language functions to accomplish their reading of the computer books (Liaw, 1997). They made many comments to each other. They also shared opinions and made suggestions. They tended to ask a lot of questions of their partners and were given responses. The quality of talk was also analyzed by Liaw (1997). The amount of computer related talk and story related talk was measured. Initially, there was a lot of computer related talk, but as the students became more familiar with the format of the stories and software, their talk became story related in subsequent sessions.

There are several ways in which technology can be used to improve reading ability. Most simple reading texts are also very primary in content. Older children may consider themselves too old to be reading such primary content books. Computers, however can increase the interest level for older students while keeping the text simple and easy to read. Another benefit of using computers for reading instruction is that the computer offers immediate feedback on performance. They also can provide added practice when necessary. According to Case and Truscott (1999), students have been able to improve their sight word vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Computer based reading instruction also allows for "increased interaction with texts, attention to individual needs, and increased independence through an ability to read texts they would not otherwise be able to read" (Case & Truscott, 1999). Technology can also be used to improve parent involvement in their child's education while improving the parents' literacy as well. Landerholm, Karr, and Munshi (2000) created a three year program in Chicago with four specific goals to help parents: become involved in the school community and become comfortable on campus, enjoy reading and writing alone and with their children, understand science and computer technology, and improve their own literacy. This project was as much for the parents as for the child. The computers were the drawing factor for the parents to become involved in the program, though they were not used initially. The program began by using other forms of technology such as photographs. Photos were taken at field trips and special activities.

#### Activities To Encourage Parent Involvement with School Activities

- ◆ Set up a parent center at school that is stocked with resources that help parents. The resources should be available for parents to borrow.
- ◆ Find out why parents indicate they do not get involved. Typically it is because they don't have time, they don't know how to get involved, they don't understand the importance of being involved, and/or they don't speak English.
- ◆ Go out into the community to meet and greet parents. Have a school bus filled with staff and teachers go into the school neighborhood to introduce themselves and to talk with parents about how they can become involved in the school.
- ◆ Organize a Curriculum Fair to give parents a better understanding the curriculum that is being taught, and how they can become involved.
- ◆ Organize and implement a Family Reading Night to inform parents about the reading curriculum through games and activities.
- ◆ Offer parent workshops on various topics dealing with language development and study skills. Vary the times and days that workshops are offered.

◆ Avoid making judgments about the apparent lack of interest of parents in their child's education. Until you have lived a day in their life, it is difficult to understand what they are going through. What you may think is apathy may be something quite different.

◆ Ask parents to be involved. This is one of the most effective ways to get parent involvement. Be ready to specify what they can do to be involved.

I believe that parents must be involved in a child's language development if that child is to be fluent. There are many obstacles to overcome, especially with EL families, to make this happen. I have successfully used the strategies I provided in this article to encourage parent involvement. It has taken a great deal of trial and error to find solutions that work, but the response from parents I have seen has been tremendous. EL parents want to be involved, but there are often tremendous obstacles that prevent them from being involved. It is our job as teachers to help EL parents overcome these as best we can. It is also my job as a teacher educator to assist my pre-service teachers as they learn strategies to effectively develop home-school connections.

To understand curriculum models we need to take a step back and talk about curriculum itself. Curriculum can be defined as a plan used in education that directs teacher instruction. Many districts and schools use a tool designed to help teachers pace their lessons, called a curriculum guide. But a curriculum and a curriculum guide don't just come out of thin air. Time and energy goes into the creation of these documents. This process is known as curriculum development.

All of these things are based on a curriculum model. A model is really the first step in curriculum development. A curriculum model determines the type of curriculum used; it encompasses educational philosophy, approach to teaching, and methodology. The good news is, unless you've been hired to design curriculum, you won't come across many curriculum models. However, it's good for educators to be familiar with the models used in their schools.

Depending on the school, student body and subject matter, the use of technology serves many purposes. Foreign language teachers have a specific niche: Their job is to teach students a whole new language, including the nuanced rules of grammar and cultural norms. Technology offers foreign language teachers a chance to supplement their instruction by:

- Making learning visible: Technology can bring another culture into the classroom. Using technology tools that connect to foreign lands and display how others live allows students to see and experience language in a whole new way.
- Differentiating: Not all students are the same. Each one has different strengths and needs. Technology tools give teachers additional resources to reach all learners.
- Engaging students: Technology these days is often interactive, allowing users a chance to be engaged in learning experiences. You can't do that with a book!
- Applying language: With language acquisition, you either use it or lose it. Technology gives students many opportunities to use their broadening language skills in real-world applications.

Teachers must utilize technology in a way that's intentional and purposeful. No matter how they utilize devices, when planning technology use in foreign language classrooms, teachers should make sure they're meeting an educational objective.

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