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The effects of using technology in Afghanistan schools and universities

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Abstract

This article explores and discusses the effects of using technology in Afghanistan schools and universities. It means teachers are using technology as a tool or a support for communicating with others, by using technology students are in an active role rather than the passive role or receivers of information transmitted by a teacher, textbook, or broadcast. Moreover, when technology is used as a tool to support students in performing authentic tasks, the students are in the position of defining their goals, making decisions, and evaluating their progress beside that they increase their interest and willingness to learning. The teacher's role changes as well. The teacher is no longer the center of attention as the source of information, but rather plays the role of a facilitator by using computer, setting project goals and providing guidelines and resources from internet website and support students activity through PowerPoint presentation or other technology tools.

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1. Introduction

The word technology comes from the Greek and it can be most broadly defined as the material created by the application of mental and physical effort to the nature in order to achieve some values of learning. In this use, technology is the current state of our knowledge. The art of living itself can be defined as a technological method of survival. In other words, in today's life one cannot live without technology. Technology deals with human as an important tool for teaching classes' usage and knowledge of tools, and how it affects a species' ability to control and adapt to its natural environment. Most of the value of technology source from the knowledge of using that we bring to the learning experience. In Afghanistan using technologies are not very common as other countries based on different reasons such as 40 years of civil wars that back warded the system of Education in Afghanistan schools and universities and lack of facilities in teaching and learning. This article explores the benefits and significant roles of using technology in teaching and learning in Afghanistan schools and universities.

2. Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to introduce effective strategies using technologies at Afghanistan schools and universities, especially for English teachers and English students. Without knowledge of using technology, English language teachers cannot be used properly while teaching. And teaching could be difficult for the speaker and the listener. So, knowledge of these strategies of using technology is very important. Therefore, in this research the researchers are going to know "what are the effects of using technologies at Afghanistan schools and universities?" and also the researchers are going to know what are effective strategies or techniques for using technology.

3. Research Objectives

In this research the researchers want to find the following goals that need to know

1. Investigating the effects of using technology in Afghanistan schools and universities.
2. Familiarized with different teaching tools in teaching and learning process.
3. Investigating the roles of using technology in teaching at schools and universities.

4. Research Questions

1. What are the Effective strategies of using technology?
2. What are the different teaching tools in teaching and learning process?
3. What are the roles of using technology in teaching at schools and universities?

5. The Methods of the Research

It is a librarian research in which we have collected all the necessary information from reliable resources such as rich libraries, internet sites and expert teachers' experiences including our own experiences of teaching through technology.

6. Literature Review

Adam (2000) ^[1] stated that, one of the demanding issues in Education today is the integration of information technology tools in teaching. Technology can facilitate teaching and learning process in different skills like listening, reading, writing and speaking in schools and universities as a supplementary material. Besides that, according to Costley (2014) ^[2] it motivates students for better learning, it helps teachers to have effective teaching to meet individual students need. In Afghanistan using technology is not very common as other countries based on different reasons. Technology has a great role for effective teaching and learning. According to Nomas (2013) ^[7], listening is an important skill and there are several technical ways for improving the capability of English language learners. Using technology makes students more active in different skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). It is a tool for making the lessons more interesting and there are varieties of tools such as computer: videos, CDs and cellphones to improve students listening skill. Technology encourage students to think more and give them the choice to decide what type of information is more appropriate to be used to make their performance more useful.

Fiser (2004) ^[3] mentioned that, much of the value of technology stems from the content it brings to the learning experience. It means what technology gives to students' shows the importance of using technology. For example, in Afghan elementary schools there was a program that taught students some short stories about, cleanness, gardening, good friends and honesty which aims to bring positive changes in students' behavior and character. Now if we think about the introduction of using technology through movies in schools and universities in Afghanistan that awoke students and brought them in the class with interest and willingness of learning many years ago so, we can say that visualizing teaching and learning process still enhance the opportunities for better learning in the class.

Additionally, Ur (2003) ^[11] said that, many classrooms are now equipped with computers or students may bring them to class for use during the lesson. As we are the evidences many

schools and universities equipped with technology and if there are not enough for all students to use them simultaneously, they can use them collaboratively. Individual computers can be used as both notebook and course book, as well as allowing students to take advantage of various internet-based facilities. Like the email, they influence the kind of interaction that can take place in the classroom-though in a totally different direction. They attract and focus attention, and their use, therefor, move the class towards individual and personalized learning, and away from cooperative or teacher-led classroom process-far more so, than the conventional books that they may use it to some extent replace, so again, we need to be aware of where and why computes are useful and where thy might be counterproductive. But, there is the problem of control, it is very easy for students using computers that are connected to the internet to access websites that are irrelevant to the work in progress and or to do not facilitate learning. Some classes may need careful direction and monitoring to make sure that the equipment is being used as intended.

According to our teaching experience in university level teaching through computer-mediated communications means that teacher input is not immediately followed by students' response, and vice versa. Responses are given in the participants own time, when convenient. Therefore, for example, we can ask the class a question which each student answers when they are home: this may be a day, a week, or maybe more, late. This can be done through email, wikis and blogs that currently students are familiar with. While interaction with students, teachers can do all or any of the following things: It is for teachers to provide explanations of other written input; students indicate that they have read and understood also, upload reading texts, audio or video: students read, listen to or view them and do comprehension or other task related to them, which you can check them easily. It is significant to start a discussion and invite students' contributions, responding. Finally, teachers should receive, comment on and assess tasks the students have done and announce final grades for the course to motivate students more to use technology.

According to Ur (2003) ^[11], Email enables far more individual communication between teacher and students than was possible previously. It is used by students to submit individual written assignment, as well as by the teacher to check and return them and give grades. It is also useful if the teacher wants to correspond with individual students about any particular issues that need to be discussed personally. Students can use e-mail to send direct questions to their teachers and materials they read in class. The Faculty can develop and retain professional relationships with students and colleagues across the university, the country, or anywhere in the world. Finally, in addition to that we give students more opportunity of learning experiences we also encourage them to benefits of using technology in their real life situation. In Afghanistan we are still in the first stages of using distance technology. Teachers create possibilities and facilitate learning to happen. They just guide students for completing their projects and provide rubrics by using computer and give to students to score them based on the rubric or if they use power point for their teaching beside that it makes their teaching easy, it also makes their lessons more interesting for drawing students attention and activate their mind to think more effectively about a topic when it is visualized.

7. The Evidence of Using Technology Tools to Enhance Learning

Fiser (2004) ^[3] stated that, we need to be honest about the gap between teaching and learning aims and performance. And being honest requires that we acknowledge we don't yet have clear, compelling evidence about the impact of information technology on student learning and educational outcomes. To think about Afghan teachers and students' technology knowledge and skills I agree with the author there is a big gap, it means today's students are more a head from their teachers because they are technology generation and they have lots of opportunities for using technology and teachers are back warded according to their learning opportunities, age, time limitation to experience new technology, improve and keep themselves up to date therefore, the way that teachers set teaching goals and students' needs to learn and perform do not achieve the aims of learning. Moreover, using technology into the educational experience and in higher education is not like a surgical or medical intervention. To date there is no magic pill, no "killer app" or content, no definitive technology that consistently and reliably improves academic achievement and learning outcomes.

In Afghan context we are evidence that using information technology tools really increases students learning abilities but still we are enough skillful in using technology tools because we still face with lack of facilities. It means that schools and universities are not completely equipped with technology tools such as number of projectors, TVs, internet access, educational websites and enough computers to be well prepared. However, educational organizations devote so much of their resources to fund more hardware, software, and professional development activities and today Afghan, students of all ages need to learn about technology with acquired IT skills. It needs IT resources to enhance their learning experiences and opportunities.

Rogers (1995) ^[8] proposed that, the "diffusion of innovation" curve, he first described more than two decades ago to track the migration of an innovation across a population agricultural innovations, fashion, new technologies such as VCRs and cell phones characterizes the innovators and early adopters, about 17 percent of the population, as the first to reach out for new technologies, ideas, and tools. I agree because the new technology poses students and teachers a wide range of interesting challenges. They are willing and highly motivated to learn and use them. Now the new products are a normal resource for instruction. Our students need to come to the educational areas to learn about technology and acquire new IT skills and also to learn with technology, to use technology as a resource of information in their learning process.

It is true that the new products also present interesting opportunities for higher Education. So, new products and technologies get learners attention to come over on the challenges to have more effective on using technology. For example, the first of the much-discussed e-books have begun to arrive. It seems the education market is a feasible market for these products. We are really happy about this opportunity to supplement, replaced the traditional textbook and books that students download and most of them use them for their projects and monographs. E-book means another technology, another interface, and more start-up costs in acquiring and mastering the device (Adam, 2000) ^[1].

Besides the benefits it is worth mentioning to point out on some problems with using technology. According to our

experience in schools and university level, it hurts those students and teachers who do not have the possibilities of using technology tools. In our context the challenges of technology include issues such as: lack of access to technology tools with most of students, the big gap between teaching and learning goals based on lack of teachers' knowledge and skills of using technology, misuse of technology (wasting time) by most of students, copy and paste of assignments and lessons reflections (pilgrim) decreasing the speed of writing and spelling with student in different levels.

Sharma and Barrett (2007) ^[9] have said that, a wiki can be used to engage in interactive editing of written assignments so it enables collaborative work between students, with the teacher monitoring and making suggestions as necessary, it can also be used for online discussion. Like email, it enables more interaction between teacher and students outside the lesson, but in this case everything written on the wiki is seen, and edited and commented on, by the entire class. Some teachers, indeed, use a wiki as their class website, with a new 'page' for each lesson or learning unit. It is a tool which leads to a more collaborative, students-centered type of interaction, with the teacher assuming the role of facilitator, monitor and adviser rather than instructor or assessor. In addition, blog is more teacher led than wikis. Students do not edit each other's writing, but add comments as requested by the teacher in the main blog entries, or as responses to each other's comments. Blogs can be used as the class website in the same way as wiki, neither wiki nor blog, however, are appropriate vehicles for the displaying of grades, since they are open to the entire class, and students normally prefer to receive grades privately (Tsui, 2001) ^[10].

Ur (2003) ^[11] a learning management system (LMS) is a platform or multiple facility programs which enables a large number of classroom teaching and management functions to be carried out online. Its advantage is that can provide all the functions like email, wikis and blog in one 'package', as well as tasks and exercises for the students. It also enables you more easily to share texts or links to websites, or even an entire course book, for students to refer to: to keep track of the assignments and assessments given to a group to during the course; and to ensure that in a list of final grades each grades is seen only by its recipient.

In Afghanistan schools and universities students clearly take pride in being able to use the computer-based tools employed by professionals. As one teacher expressed that "Students feel more empower if they use a control the computer and to use it in ways they cope with the real world. To be honest in our context using such types of technology motivate learners to get more benefit from learning and their self-esteem improve because these are very useful tools and it is part of teachers and students' creativity to make a website like Wiki or Blog for more interaction with students and facilitate learning but the big challenge is lack of power and lack of many students' access to internet and needs expense. By giving students technology tools, we are implicitly giving weight to their school activities and their learning" (Koral, 2000) ^[6].

8. Advanced Education Technology Activities

Komaz and Day (1992) ^[4] explained that take appropriate precautions for Internet safety, but a class blog or wiki can be a great way to integrate technology in the classroom and develop student knowledge. Some teachers use blogs to drive outside-of-class discussion – particularly helpful for AP/IB

students who are motivated but short on class time. As it is mentioned a wiki is a website that uses software which allows many different people to edit it (think Wikipedia). Have your students work together to create a wiki on a topic they are studying. They will need to correct each other's work and collaborate in order to make it a success. There are thousands of podcasts available on the Web, search for ones that meet your students' needs. Some colleges are offering professors' lectures via internet, which can be great for advanced students. In other cases, you may be able to find an interview with the author of a book your students are reading, or other supplemental material. It is important for teachers to make arrangements to download it and play it for students. For motivating and independent learning, encourage your students to create their own weblog to share their learning outcomes in a year or discuss on variety of issues relating to the course.

It is computer technology that has been introduced worldwide which gives you the chance to write, edit and produce to be published as a professional work (Kozma and Johnson 1992) [5]. If teachers encourage students to create and use an ongoing class website like blog to share students work and opinions or if they are really interested, teachers can compile their work raise the money to have their work professionally published by a self-publishing company or University magazine. In Afghanistan we do not have the possibility of publishing students' work but if we noticed that it is a professional piece of work we can copy it and take it to stuff meeting and share it with other teachers to use it in their own classes as a supplementary material or share it with the university web site. No matter what your skill level, integrating technology in the classroom offers the chance to increase student interest and teach valuable professional skills.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that technology has its significant role in facilitating teaching and learning. In Afghan context teaching with technology gets students interest and the lesson become more interesting in schools and university level. Tools like smart phone and computer has been existed today to give the chance to students to design and plan their works for achieving their learning goals. A quick Internet search may help teachers identify how to supplement their lessons with interesting new material. When students and teacher want to get more information regarding some issues and different sources are accessible for them they are motivated to work hard and produce the outcome of their knowledge in a creative way and the sense of self-esteem will develop in a professional area.

Moreover, technology provides a very different set of challenges and different ways in which students can demonstrate, also, it improves students' competence. They can complete project tasks easier and in a creative way by using technology tools. In Afghanistan schools and universities students clearly take pride in being able to use the computer-based tools employed by professionals. As one teacher expressed that "Students feel more empower if they use and control the computer and to use it in ways they cope with the real world.

Finally, using information technology tools such as: smart phone, computer, internet websites and projector really increases student learning and it has a great role in the area of education for better learning and goal oriented achievements.

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