

Internet and English Language Teaching¹

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Introduction

Dudeny and Hockly (2007: 7) mentions that the use of technology in language teaching is not new not to mention in the teaching of English. Tape recorders, language laboratories and video have been widely used in practice of English language teaching since the 1960s. In the early 1980s the use of technology in the practice of English language teaching has been improved in term of using the computer-based materials for language teaching, often referred as CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). In line with widespread access to Information and Communications Technology in the 1990s the use of technology in the practice of English Language teaching embraced to the use of internet and web-based tools that the term TELL (Technology Enhanced Language Learning) appeared (Dudeny &Hockly,2007: 7). The rapid development f the internet in the 1990s has had a wide impact on the teaching and learning of English, despite the use of computers to teach English since the 1960s (Lee, Jor and Lai, 2005: vii). Since then, internet has been becoming an extraordinary source of information in the practice of English Language teaching.

This particular writing, however, tries to identify those kinds of benefits of the use of internet in the practice of English language teaching, particularly for teachers, as one of the main parties involved in the common practice of English Language teaching (ELT).

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The Use of Internet in English Language Teaching

Those involved in the practice of English language teaching can get any kind of information in the internet. Internet also provides answers for almost all of their questions. Most teachers believe that they may get much benefit through the use of internet. They can use it as one way of getting resources for conducting their teaching or to get in touch with other English teachers from other places. They can use it as a medium to exchange information related to their teaching. Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni (2002: 7) propose five main reasons to use the Internet for English teaching called ALIVE. It stands for Authenticity, Literacy, Interaction, Vitality and Empowerment. They believe that internet provides a low-cost method of making language learning meaningful, it also represents important new forms of literacy needed in the 21st century. Internet also provides opportunities for students to interact 24 hours a day with native and nonnative speakers from around the world and it allows them to become autonomous lifelong learners who can find what they need when they need it.

In addition, Warschauer and Whittaker in Richards and Renandya (eds) (2002: 368-369) propose several possible reasons for using the Internet in language teaching. One rationale is found in the belief that the linguistic nature of online communication is desirable for promoting language learning. Another possible reason for using the Internet is that it creates optimal conditions for learning to write, since it provides an authentic audience for written communication. A third possible reason is that it can increase students' motivation. A fourth possible reason is the belief that learning computer skills is essential to students' future success, this reason suggests that it is not only a matter of using the Internet to learn English, but also of learning English to be able to function well on the Internet.

From these two opinions to use internet in the practice of English language teaching, it can be said that teachers and students or learners are two main parties who can get much benefits from the internet. The following discussion describes

the benefits of the use of internet particularly for one of these two parties, that is, the teachers.

The Benefits of Internet for Teachers

Mark Warschauer and Deborah Healey, as quoted by Crystal (2006: 266) mentioned that the Internet is one of the factors that has important contribution in the advancements of the use of computers for language learning. They states that

It is the rise of computer-mediated communication and the Internet, more than anything else, which has reshaped the uses of computers for language learning at the end of the 20th century (Eastment 1996). With the advent of the Internet, the computer-both in sciety and in the classroom – has been transformed from a tool for information processing and display to a tool for information processing and communication. For the first time, learners of a language can now communicate inexpensively and quickly with other learners or speakers of the target language all over the world.

In addition, Dudeney (2007: 39) also mentions one of the benefits of using computers and the Internet in the practice of language teaching and learning, particularly for the teachers. He mentions that essentially, the computer and Net connection become a shared resource, always available to the class on the whiteboard. Teachers and learners can use the whiteboard to show content from CD-ROMs and the Internet, and this content can be annotated, illustrated, saved and printed. They can be used in this way, as an adhoc resource, in most situations.

Hence, it can be stated among the various advantages, the first and the main advantage or benefit of using the Internet for teachers is the fact that it provides a large amount of teaching resources. It is through the Internet that teachers could easily get various materials for their teaching. Some primary sources of materials are sites such as OneStopEnglish at <http://www.onesstopenglish.com/> which features plenty of materials and lesson plans for regular use and the BBC/ British Council collaboration also has plenty of resources on its Teaching English site at <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/> (Dudeney, 2007: 152).

The abundant English language media resources are also available from the some other sites or some online newspaper and magazines as the following (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni, 2002: 23-24)

1. Digital Libraries Initiative (<http://dli.nsf.gov>).
2. Literature Online (<http://lion.chadwyck.com>).
3. Newspapers Online (<http://www.newspapers.com>)
4. The Times (<http://the-times.co.uk>)
5. The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com>)
6. The Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com>)
7. The Wall Street Journal (<http://www.wsj.com>)
8. The Sydney Morning Herald (<http://smh.com.au>)
9. Time (<http://www.time.com>)
10. Newsweek (<http://www.newsweek.com>).
11. CNN.com (<http://www.cnn.com>)
12. BBC Online (<http://www.bbc.co.uk>)
13. The New York Times Learning Network (<http://www.nytimes.com/learning>)
14. BBC School Online (<http://bbc.co.uk/education/schools>), and
15. Learning Resources at <http://literacynet.org/cnnsf> which is developed jointly by CNN San Francisco and Western/Pacific Literacy Network.

Besides, teachers may also get materials from mass media or resources and data bases from the internet. The following are some of the mass media and data bases provided in the internet (Lee, Jor, and Lai, 2005: 84 and Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni: 2005: 24).

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|--|---------------------|
| 1. News Connections for Students, parents and Teachers | |
| <i>For Students</i> | <i>For teachers</i> |
| New Summaries | Daily Lesson Plan |
| Daily News Quiz | Lesson Plan Archive |
| Word of the Day | News Snapshot |
| Science Q and A | Affiliate Program |
| Crossword Puzzle | Education News |

Ask a Reporter

Newspaper in Education
(NIE) Teacher Resources

2. News On-Line: by CUHK, including news from Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, Oceania, and International regions.
-BBC World Service
-CBC Radio
3. BAMBOO: a digest of English Language Education and Applied Linguistics Research from Asia
4. CELIA: Computer Enhanced Language Instruction Archives
5. CRUCIAL: the Centre for Resources and Understanding in Cross-curricular Instruction and Learning
6. Internet Movie Database at <http://www.imdb.com/>

The second benefit of using the Internet in the practice of English language teaching for teachers is the fact that it is through the internet that teachers can get much information not only in terms of material for their teaching but also to improve their own knowledge by reading or writing in the journal related to English language teaching and learning. The following are some professional journals and magazines which are provided online on the Internet (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni: 2005: 22).

1. TESL-EJ (<http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/information/tesl-ej>) which focusses on the theory and practice of language teaching;
2. The Internet TESL Journal (<http://www.aitech.ac.jp/-iteslj>), which includes short, practical articles;
3. Language Learning & Technology (<http://polyglot.cal.msu.edu/llt>), a research journal for second language educators;
4. CALL-EJ Online (<http://www.lerc.ritsumei.ac.jp/callej>) which covers computer-assisted language learning; and
5. Kairos (<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos>), a journal on computer and writing.

The third benefit of using the Internet in the practice of English language teaching for teachers is the fact that it is through the Internet that teachers can exchange information and get connected with other teachers from different countries having the same interest or field. They may send an email or even chat

with other English teachers from other places. They may also join international professional organizations to maintain frequent contact with the organizations. Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni (2005: 24) identify some international professional organizations having their own Web sites. The following is the list of those organizations.

1. TESOL (<http://www.tesol.org>).
2. The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL, <http://www.iatefl.org>)
3. The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT, <http://www.jalt.org>)
4. NAFSA or Association of International Educators (<http://www.nafsa.org>)
5. National Council of Teachers of English (<http://www.ncte.org>)
6. The American Association for Applied Linguistics (<http://www.aaal.org>)
7. The Linguistic Society of America (<http://www.lsadc.org>)
8. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (<http://www.actfl.org>)
9. Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO, <http://www.calico.org>)

Finally, it is also through the internet that teachers can get information related to publishers of English language teaching materials since some publishers often post catalogues of their publications on their Web sites. Some of those publishers are: *Longman ELT Connection* (<http://www.awl-elt.com>), and *Oxford University Press's site* (<http://www.oup.co.uk>).

Conclusion

In line with the important roles of internet in English Language teaching, the use of internet in the practice of English language teaching is unavoidable. In general, the use of internet in English Language teaching contexts provides many

benefits both for teachers and students as Lee, Jor and Lei (2005: 4) claim that innovative uses of technology for education such as the Internet and Web-based instruction are a recent intellectual development in education.

In particular, teachers need to consider the use of the Internet and be familiar to use it in their daily lives not only to support their teaching but also to enhance and improve their own knowledge. It is through the use of the Internet that they can get abundant resources for their teaching as well as to get in touch with other teachers from other places, get recent developments and current issues of the English language teaching by joining some international professional organizations.

Therefore, in taking and using materials from the Internet teachers need to select those match with their learners and students needs as what Crystal (2006: 270) claims that by using materials taken from the Internet means teachers are going to face the fresh challenge that they to work out ways of handling a new kind of difficulty – new, at least, in the order of magnitude that it presents – namely, the fact that so much of the native-speaker usage in chatgroups and virtualworlds is non-standard, often ludic and highly deviant.

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