



**British Journal of Education, Society &
Behavioural Science**
5(3): 321-340, 2015, Article no.BJESBS.2015.027
ISSN: 2278-0998



SCIENCEDOMAIN international
www.sciencedomain.org

The Effect of Weblogging on Iranian English Teacher Professional Development

Azam Saeedan^{1*}, Hamid Ashraf¹ and Khalil Motallebzadeh¹

¹Department of English, Islamic Azad University Torbat-e Heydarieh Branch, Iran.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author AS designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, managed the analyses of the study, managed the literature searches and wrote all drafts of the manuscript under the guidance and supervision of the other authors. Authors HA and KM wrote the protocol and revised paper and proofread it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/BJESBS/2015/12771

Editor(s):

(1) Chih-Wei Pai, Taipei Medical University, Taiwan ROC.

Reviewers:

(1) Anonymous, Egypt.

(2) Anonymous, Indonesia.

Complete Peer review History: <http://www.sciencedomain.org/review-history.php?iid=816&id=21&aid=6943>

Original Research Article

Received 20th July 2014
Accepted 23rd August 2014
Published 15th November 2014

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the effect of weblogging on Iranian English teacher professional development. Blogs, which are interactive, easy to access and manage technologies, enable ELT teachers to engage in online exchanges and to share information, consequently may improve their knowledge in their profession. The project was conducted on 50 ELT teachers who were divided into two groups of experimental and control. The same treatments were given to both groups, but experimental group received it by means of the designed blog while the control group received it in the pamphlet format. Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT)) was used as pretest and post test. The result revealed that blogging has significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' professional development.

Keywords: Blogging; professional development; teaching knowledge test; ELT teachers.

*Corresponding author: E-mail: hamid.ashraf.elt@gmail.com;

1. INTRODUCTION

It may be a sort of interest among language education specialist to provide English teachers with new materials, new integrated method, educational technology, new events in language teaching domain, and new tasks and activities in new and different ways. Instructional blogging has increasingly played a significant role in education and has been recently incorporated in language teaching. Instructional blogging may positively enhance the teacher' education especially in the area of educational technology. It is the availability of blogs and their easy usages that make them one of the easiest ways to present new materials, news, pictures and so on. According to Aaron Campbell [1] there are three types of blog that are used in language teaching: The tutor blog, the class blog and the learner blog. This study emphasized on the Tutor blog, which is almost run by a teacher. The content of this type of blog can be limited to syllabus, course information, homework, assignments and etc [1]. However, there is a difference between what was used in this study and tutor blog; In this study the members of the blog were teachers not students and the researchers acted as the conductor of the designed blog. This study attempted to explore the effect of instructional blogging on Iranian English teacher professional development.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

As information technology advances, an increasing number of young teachers have their own blogs. Blogs represent "conversation" and it seems that there has been a blogging craze in Iran. Instructional blogs are not new to some L2 instructors. But instructional blogging is not widely followed as an educational technology in Iran.

More and more teachers and students now have their own blogs and usually leave messages on friends' blogs as well. To build on this blogging craze, the researchers who were increasingly professional and interested in blogging aimed to construct an English language instructional platform that uses blogs to enhance Iranian English teachers' professional development. "In the Educational realm weblogs are redefining the way students and teachers use the internet, particularly in second and foreign language education. In fast-growing numbers, educators

throughout the world are finding just how powerful this new interactive internet, in particular blogging, can be" [2].

Therefore, the result of this study may help young English teachers to improve their professional development. The purpose of the study is to explore the effects of instructional blogging on English teachers' professional development. It refers to finding out how teachers can enhance their skills and proficient of language teaching when exposed to blogs technologies.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Much broader in scope than career development, professional development in English language teaching does not have a long history since just in the twentieth century language teaching came into its own as a profession. "A profession simply means a type of job that requires special training and high level of knowledge and skills" [3]. Glattenhorn [4] believed that, by gaining increased experience in one's teaching role teachers systematically gain increased experience in their professional growth through examination of their teaching ability. Professional development is defined as a growth that occurs through the professional cycle of a teacher [4]. This view, somehow, is not old to ELT in that professional development and in-service training simply consisted of workshops, short term courses and seminars that offered teachers and educators with new information and knowledge on specific aspects of their profession [5]. The researchers believed that in order to advance in their careers, teachers put emphasis on any opportunities to take part in professional development courses or workshops. Richardson, [6] published a list of characteristics associated with effective professional development, emphasizing that a professional development course would optimally be:

statewide, long term with follow-up; encourage collegiality; foster agreement among participants on goals and visions; have a supportive administration; have access to adequate funds for materials, outside speakers, substitute teachers, and so on; encourage and develop agreement among participants; acknowledge participants existing beliefs and practices; and make use of outside facilitator/staff developers [6].

Norris, [7] believed that the term itself put emphasis on linguistic knowledge as opposed to pedagogical or cultural knowledge and it is obvious that effective language teaching involves something more than linguistic competence. "The 'multiple knowledge' _ both linguistic or pedagogical knowledge and an interrelation of them _ approach provides a more complete picture of the interrelated components of language teacher proficiency. Adopting such an approach has certain implications for monitoring language teacher proficiency, for while it may be possible to test linguistic knowledge through a standardized rating system, it is more difficult to assess other forms of knowledge in this way" [7]. Praveen Kumar Yadav [3] in his article named blogging as a means of professional development for ELT professionals tried to draw some ideas about how blogging can help, enhance and enrich English Language Teachers and Learners to develop themselves as ELT Professionals. He believed that too many limitations of journals and conferences, seminars and trainings which were as manifestations of common traditional modes of professional development led him to introduce blogging as a means to represent teachers' professional development. The computerized world where the vast use of computers can play a significant role in language teaching and learning, the blogging may be the most easiest and available way to present new information in these fields. Many specialists in the area of weblogging and ELT such as Richardson, Murugaiah, Azman and Yadav believed that blogging is one the most available and easiest tool for improving professional developments of English teachers and learners. Some studies have carried out that "Integrating technology into language pedagogy has become a reality in the 21st century; Thus, educators and teachers, now, consider the Internet and weblogs as effective tools containing huge amounts of information from variety of sources" [8]. "In 2008, the use of a blog was integrated into English as a Second Language (ESL) methodology course taught at a Canadian university; Its purpose was to help pre-service teachers connect theory with practice through reflective practices" [9]. Yadav [3] as the result of effect of blogging on professional development of teachers stated that "Aforementioned techniques with the help of blogs for professional development for English language teachers largely focus on collaborative learning. They also included that blogs help in building networks among English language teachers and promoting professional dialogues". Few studies done in the

area of effect of blogging on teachers' professional development, but those which were the most related ones such as Yadav [3] stated that blogging has significant effects on improvement of teachers' knowledge.

3. PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the twentieth century with the changes of time and context, the new thoughts and beliefs, new approaches, techniques and methods in the language pedagogy came out and developed. Even the curricula came up with new textbooks and new contexts. The point was that the formal training and pedagogical knowledge and skills that a teacher had already acquired in the college seemed to be insufficient during teacher's professional career, therefore she/he was in need of easy to access, cheap and different learning strategies for professional development. This study was an attempt to bring about awareness and understanding to teachers and curriculum makers regarding the utilization of weblogs on improving the teachers' knowledge of new methods and practices in language teaching.

4. RESEARCH QUESTION

The present study was designed to identify relationships between instructional blogging and teacher professional development. With this concern in mind, the current study attempted to elucidate and address the following question which investigated the contribution of weblogs in teacher education:

1. Does instructional blogging have any significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' professional development?

5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypotheses have been proposed by the researchers:

HO1. Instructional blogging does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' professional development.

6. (DE) LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The most inevitable limitation was the small number of participants and limited duration of time. The study focused on teachers at language

schools not others. The researchers had limited her work with blogging on language technology, not other aspects of ELT. Most teachers might not be willing to participate in such studies since they might not be interested to change their direction in language teaching. The participants were also scattered, therefore administering the pre and posttest was so time consuming and difficult to manage.

7. METHODOLOGY

In order to perform this study 50 English language teachers; 32 Female and 18 male between 25 and 45 years of age were randomly selected from four English institutes from Mashhad and Neyshabour, Khorasan Razavi, Iran. They were randomly assigned in to two groups of control and experimental. The participants had MA and BA degrees. The years of teaching experiences of participant were between 2 and 10 years. A test was used in the project for measuring professional development of the teachers. The most important instrument was the blog which was used as treatment.

7.1 Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT)

The test was a Teaching Knowledge Test, which was used both as pretest and as posttest. The test was driven from a sample TKT, the University of Cambridge ESOL examination. It was used for measuring teachers' professional development. The main sample test consisted of four modules, with 240 items. Since the test was too long for a thesis project and participants were reluctant to answer all items precisely, the researchers decided to reduce it to three modules. Module one was background to language teaching, and module two was lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. And the last module was about managing the teaching and learning process.

Since the number of the test items were reduced, the researchers checked the test's constructed validity through asking two experts to comment on it. Then the researchers piloted the test to 20 teachers, and the reliability Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated (0.79) which was an acceptable reliability index. The purpose of the test was to conclude that all further changes in teachers' professional development were due to the received treatment. The test is available at the appendix A. The beginning of the test

contained items to collect information about the teacher's gender, age, teaching experience, major, university, and degree. The second part (items 1-22) asked matching questions to collect some information about their familiarity with their background knowledge to language learning and teaching. The second part (items 23-48) was related to the teachers' views on lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. And the last part (items 49-115) was about managing the teaching and learning process.

7.2 Teaching Professional Development Blog

A weblog was also created by the researchers which contained the new thoughts and beliefs, new techniques and methods in the language pedagogy and new educational technology. The blog was made as a tool for improving professional development of teachers which consisted of 16 posts. The blog is available at: <http://tpd20013.edublogs.org/>.

The researchers tried to ensure she is on the right track from the moment she created the blog. The blog had 16 posts, here the researchers mentioned topics of each post: Post one: Common Uses of Technology in The Classroom And How To Screw Them Up (use of technology in classroom increase depth of knowledge, learning curiosity, and critical thinking skills.) posted on August 25, 2013, post two: Students Home Works Using Net (doing home work by using computer and internet to motivate students in language learning) posted on September 1, 2013, post three: Learning By Design (a chart that shows all components like planning, frequency of use, purpose, content, focus, task, and information knowledge technology in 'using technology' and 'integrating technology' and 'learning by design') on September 8, 2013, post four: How to deal with problematic students (seven rules to handle difficult students) posted on September 12, 2013, post five: Let Students Enjoy More From The Class (use of emailing and internet so that students enjoy more in class) posted on September 16, 2013, 27 post six: Simple ways to check for understanding (argue, repeat, write, show and twenty three more ways in checking understanding by Mia Mak meekin) posted on September 20, 2013, post seven: Activities To Motivate (Lazy) Students (five steps to have a motivational speech to light fire under lazy students) posted on September 25, 2013, post eight feedback on

students writing; (What best work) (discussion on strategies on students writing' feedback which falls into two common categories: Feedback on form and feedback on content) posted on September 29, 2013, post nine: Good assessment is frequent assessment (make assessment effective by doing ten points like explaining what's matters, big picture, self directed responses and seven more points) posted on October 3, 2013, post ten: Innovative learning and teaching(stages that provide a good example of the methodology that underpins all e-learning competence framework development) posted on October 7, 2013, post eleven: e-books, articles, dictionaries and many other things for language teachers, (thousands of e-books, articles, dictionaries in the area of language teaching and testing, sociolinguistics, mentoring , translation and literature and many other areas available for visitors) posted on October 11, 2013 , post twelve: What Students Want And What They Need: Teachers'4 Strategies For A Successful Year(four strategies to improve students like Challenge your students, Let them create and two more strategies) posted on October 15, 2013 , post thirteen: Who Is Teacher?, (a perfect chart that shows Do and Don't in Teaching) posted on October 19,2013, post fourteen: Ways To Have Participants Introduce Themselves(six Ways to Have Students discuss the lesson like Challenge students to tell why the course is important, Give students a choice of questions to answer and four more ways) posted on October 23, 2013, post fifteen: Introduce A Book; 500 Creative Classroom Techniques For Teachers And Trainers (introducing a book by Marlene Caroselli 2006 with perfect content(ways to test for understanding, ways to add humor, ways to give feedback, and ways to use questions) posted on October 30, 2013, and finally post sixteen: The Last Post: Encourage learner autonomy in ESL classrooms (twelve suggestions to recognize and encourage learners' autonomy in ESL classrooms) posted on October 5, 2013. Copy of some of the blog' posts are available at appendix B.

The procedure was that at the very beginning of the research the researchers did a need analysis to figure out what were the needs and requirements of English teachers about an instructional blog in ELT area. Twelve ELT teachers and two ELT specialists answered to the need analysis questions. The researchers asked them some questions to gather some

information and suggestions about how a blog could fulfill their needs, what they wanted from an instructional blog, and what contents it should have.

When it came to create an instructional blog, it was important to the researchers to determine what she wanted the blog to accomplish. The researchers designed the blog based on these needs of English teachers and gathered many materials on these areas. Then the researchers gathered the participant in English language Institutes of both Mashhad and Neyshaboor via a poster that she herself designed and sent to the English language Institutes and about 70 teachers were willing to participate in the project. After gathering participants she explained and modified for all 50 participants what she was going to do. The groups were chosen through random sampling and after that the researchers divided them in to two groups; one as experimental group and the other as control group. Then the researchers took the professional development test (TKT) as pretest. For control group the test was online made in Google and the researcher send the address of the test to their emails and asked them to answer them. The experimental group took the test in hard copy while the researchers met them one by one and administered test to them. This procedure was repeated for the pretest. Next after this, the only group who were going to visit blog each week and put a comment on it was experimental group. The researchers also gave them feedback on each of their comments. Their comments were closely related to the topic and content of the post. The treatment for control group was the same material but not by the means of blogging, they received the contents of blog in pamphlets each week and they were supposed to write comment on each of the pamphlets. The control group did not have the address of the weblog so they could not visit the blog. The time of presenting material and amount of it were the same as control group. Each week there were two new posts on the blog. It continued for two months. As whole, 16 posts were presented to both groups. Then, there were the same professional development test (TKT) as posttest for both groups. Next, the results of both tests in both groups were compared to find out if instructional blogging had any significant effect on the English teacher professional development. The design of present study was true experimental.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the present study may help English teachers to improve their profession. The purpose of the study was to explore the effects of instructional blogging on English teachers' professional development. It referred to finding out how teachers can enhance their skills and proficient in language teaching when exposed to blogs technologies.

8.1 Participants' Demographic Analysis

The participants of the present study were 50 EFL teachers from English Institutes of Neyshaboor and Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi, Iran. 32 (%64) of the teachers were female and 18 (%36) were male. 14 (%28) had MA degrees and 36(%72) had BA degrees. 35 (%70) studied English Language Teaching (ELT), 10(%20) studied English language translation, and 5 (%10) studied English language literature. 18(%36) teachers were 25-30, 14(%28) teachers were 30-35, 10 (%20) teachers were 35-40, and 8 (%16) teachers were 40-45 years old. 12 (%24) teachers had 2-4 years of teaching experiences, 16 (%32) teachers had 4-6 years of teaching experiences, 13 (%26) teachers had 6-8 years of teaching experiences, and 9 (%18) teachers had 8-more years of teaching experiences. 22(%44) teachers were graduated from Azad University, 9 (%18) teachers were graduated from National University, 7 (%14) teachers were graduated from Payamnoor University, and 12(%24) teachers were graduated from other universities.

8.2 Professional Development Test Analysis

At first, Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics of the experimental and control groups' scores in Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) at the pretest.

To ensure the normality of the distribution of the scores a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. The results showed that there was normal distribution of scores in each group ($p > .05$).

In Table 2 the distribution of scores for the experimental and control groups at the pre-test, post test and gain scores was normal; Thus, to compare their mean scores an independent-samples t-tests was used.

The result in Table 3 indicated that there was no significant difference [$t(48) = .176, p = .861$ (two-

tailed)] between the mean scores of the experimental ($M=75.40, SD=3.867$) and control ($M=75.20, SD=4.163$) groups' scores at pre-test of Teaching Knowledge Test. The p-value (.861) was higher than the significance level of .05; therefore, the participants were homogeneous ($p > .05$).

The descriptive statistics for the experimental and control groups in Teaching Knowledge Test at the post-test are displayed in Table 4. The descriptive statistics for the experimental and control groups in Teaching Knowledge at the gain scores are displayed in Table 5.

To compare the mean scores of experimental and control at the post-test of TKT, an independent-samples t-test was used. The p-value (.000) was lower than the significance level of .05 ($p < .05$).

According to the result in Table 6, there was a significant difference [$t(48) = 10.948, p = .000$ (two-tailed)] between the mean scores of the experimental ($M=103.840, SD=6.004$) and control ($M=88.160, SD=3.901$) groups' scores at post-test of Teaching Knowledge Test. This difference indicated that the teachers of the experimental group performed better than the teachers of the control group in the terms of teacher knowledge. For comparing the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' gain scores, again an independent-samples t-tests was used. The p-value (.000) was lower than the significance level of .05 ($p < .05$).

The results in Table 7 indicate that there was a significant difference [$t(48) = 10.040, p = .000$ (two-tailed)] between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' gain scores of Teaching Knowledge Test ($p = .000, p < .05$). According to this result, it can be concluded that the instructional blogging has significant effect on the professional development of Iranian EFL teachers. The present study was an experimental one that examined the effect of blogging on professional development of ELT teachers but Yadav' study only represented some literature in this area and Murugaiah and Azman' study examined the role of blogging in building computer-assisted language teaching skills [10]. The researchers here concerned professional developments. Consequently, EFL teachers must be provided with opportunities to improve and develop their professional. Online interactive platforms like blogs and other social networks could expose teachers to these aims.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the experimental and control groups' scores at the TKT pre-test

		N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Pre-test	Experimental	25	66	83	75.40	3.867
TKT	Control	25	65	84	75.20	4.163

Table 2. Test of normality for the experimental and control groups' scores at the TKT pre-test, post-test and gain scores

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov^a		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	Experimental	.108	25	.200 [*]
TKT	Control	.081	25	.200 [*]
Post-test	Experimental	.141	25	.200 [*]
TKT	Control	.124	25	.200 [*]
Gain scores for	Experimental	.122	25	.200 [*]
TKT	Control	.136	25	.200 [*]

Table 3. Independent-samples T-tests for the experimental and control groups' scores at the TKT pre-test

	Levene's test for equality				t-test for equality of variances					
	F	sig	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)	difference	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference		
								std. error	Lower	Upper
Pre-test TKT										
Equal variances assumed	.051	.822	.176	48	.861	.20000	1.137	-2.08659	2.48659	
Equal variances not assumed			.176	47.751	.861	.20000	1.137	-2.08690	2.48690	

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the experimental and control groups' scores at the TKT post-test

		N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Post-test	Experimental	25	94	114	103.840	6.004
TKT	Control	25	79	93	88.160	3.901

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the experimental and control groups' scores at the gain scores in the TKT

		N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Gain scores TKT	Experimental	25	14	42	28.44	7.528
	Control	25	7	24	12.96	4.227

Table 6. Independent-samples T-tests for the experimental and control groups' scores at the TKT post-test

	Levene's test for equality of variances					t-test for equality				
	F	sig	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)	difference	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference		
								std. error	Lower	Upper
Post-test of TKT										
Equal variances assumed	9.778	.003	10.948	48	.000		15.680	1.432	12.800	18.559
Equal variances not assumed			10.948	41.200	.000		15.680	1.432	12.788	18.571

Table 7. Independent-samples T-tests for the experimental and control groups' scores at the gain scores in the TKT

	Levene's test for equality of variances					t-test for Equality				
	F	sig	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)	difference	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference		
								std. error	Lower	Upper
Gain scores TKT										
Equal variances assumed	10.040	.003	8.965	48	.000		15.480	1.726	12.008	18.951
Equal variances not assumed			8.965	37.769	.000		15.480	1.726	11.983	18.976

This study has focused on the effect of weblogging on professional development of EFL teachers. Since the continuous development of teachers' profession may have direct impact on students' achievements and developments, the researchers believed that the result of the study can be helpful to both teachers and learners. Therefore the present study was designed to answer the following question:

Does instructional blogging have any significance effect on Iranian EFL teachers' professional development?

8.3 Summary of the Findings

The important conclusion that can be drawn from the present study is the significance effect of instructional blogging on Iranian EFL teachers' professional development. Although the implementation of blogging in the study was carried out on a small scale but it was significantly more effective than traditional paper-based exercises to serve teachers to develop their profession, the researchers can conclude that this investigation revealed that the instructional blogging served those teachers with internet access to develop their profession.

9. CONCLUSION

The researchers concluded from the present study that blogging had significant effect on development of ELT teachers' development. As it was supposed before and just like the studies of Puvaneswary Murugaiah 2010 and Yadav 2011 the result of pretest and posttest revealed that Iranian English teachers highly developed in their profession therefore this study verified that the null hypothesis was rejected.

10. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Consequently, the present study provided researchers and educators with ample evidences regarding the advantages this technology offered. The result of the present study concerned policy makers and educators. The result of the study could also be practical for those who hold Teaching Training Courses, and those who design professional development activities for EFL teachers. The researchers suggested that it would be worth mentioning that there should be an organization that applied all the practical researches in the area of EFL to Language learning and teaching domain. This will encourage most researchers to continue their

studies in more advanced areas. Governments, educational politicians and school managers need to foster teachers' continuous professional development to improve students' outcomes. Teachers, instructors and, student teachers could also benefit from the result of this study to develop their profession by means of blogging, since blogging has many facilities such as accessibility, availability, and easy to manage. These facilities will serve them (teachers, instructors and, student teachers) best.

11. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study addressed the effect of instructional blogging on Iranians EFL teachers' professional development, and to follow up the current discussion, the following area of research can be suggested. Other studies can be done on the effect of being a member of an educational chat room discussion and being an effective EFL teacher or on the relationship of TTC via blogging and professional development of EFL student teachers.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Campbell AP. Weblogs for use with ESL classes. The Internet TESL Journal IX; 2003. Retrieved June 2012, from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Campbell-Weblogs.html>
2. Rezaee AA, Oladi S. The effect of blogging on language learners improvement in social interactions and writing proficiency. University of Tehran, Iran; 2008.
3. Yadav PK. Blogging as a means of professional development for ELT professionals. Journal of NELTA. 2011;16(1-2):December 2011.
4. Glattenhorn A. cooperative professional development: Peer centered options for teacher growth. Educational Leadership. 1987;3(45):31-35.
5. Brookfield S. Power of critical theory for adult learning and teaching. Berkdire, Great Britain: McGraw-Hill Education; 2005.

6. Richardson V. The dilemmas of professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 2003;84(5):401–406.
7. Norris S. Language teacher proficiency or teacher language proficiency? An Environmental Scan of Information relating to the Completing /Qualities/ Knowledge Required to Be an Effective Language Teacher; 1999.
8. Rashtchi M, Hajihassani H. Blog-assisted language learning: A possibility in teaching reading to Iranian EFL learners. *International Journal of Language Studies (IJLS)*. 2010;4(4):1-18.
9. Bangou F, Fleming D. Blogging for effective teacher education course in English as a second language. In Mukerji S and Tripathi P. (Eds.), *Cases on technology enhanced learning through collaborative opportunities*. London: IGI Global. 2010;41-55.
10. Azman H, Murugaiah P. Blogging in teacher professional development: Its role in building computer-assisted language teaching skills. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*. 2010;6(3):73-87.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Age: 25-30 30-35
35-40 40-45

Gender: male:
female:

Degree:
B.A: M.A: PhD:

Years of teaching experience:
2-4 4-6 6-8 8-more

University:
Azad National Payamnoor Other

Major:
English teaching English translation
English literature

Module 1: background to language learning and teaching

For question 1-4 match the general advice on motivation with technique encouraging motivation listed A, B, C, or D. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Techniques:

- A: encourage learners autonomy
- B: find out what students think
- C: make your feedback positive and constructive
- D: build variety into your teaching

Advice:

1. Train students to use reference resources to help them study successfully on their own.
2. Think about how you help students about their progress. How can you praise or encourage them instead of just giving them marks?
3. Give comments on students work which are helpful and enable them to feel a sense of progress.
4. Don't always do the same kinds of things in the classroom. Try new activities and change activities in each lesson.

For question 5 -9match the learner to the description of learner listed A to H. One option is extra. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Comments

5. "I prefer working with other student to speaking to the teacher in front of the class.

6. "I really like knowing how language works?"
- 7." rules just confuse me, it's better to works out language from examples".
8. "Why should I listen to other students mistakes? The teacher should talk most of the time.
9. "I just want people to understand what I mean, I don't worry if I make mistake."

Preference

- A. This learner enjoys explaining language to other students.
- B. This learner enjoys practicing language in pairs and groups.
- C. This learner enjoys doing language practices focuses on accuracy.
- D. This learner doesn't want to work with other students.
- E. This learner focuses on communicating.
- F. This learner doesn't want to the teacher to explain grammar.

For question 10-15, match what student does with learning strategies listed A to G. One option is extra. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Learning strategies

- A: Self-monitoring B: Guessing from context
 - C: Memorizing E: Repeating D: Organizing learning aids F: Consulting reference resources
 - G: Using opportunities for practice
- 10: "to learn new words, I always create picture of them in my minds."
 - 11: "I always keep new vocabulary in cards which I separate into topics."
 - 12:"whenever I can I talk to native English speakers in social situations."
 - 13:" I work out the meaning of new word for a language around it."
 - 14: "I pay attention to my own language to make sure it is accurate."
 - 15: "If I am not sure for the meaning of a word or of how to use it, I look it up in dictionary."

For question 16-22, the statement with teaching approaches that they does describe listed A, B or C. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Teaching approaches

- A: Presentation, practice and production
- B: Task-based learning
- C: Grammar translation

Statements

16. The teachers move from providing models of language rules for monitoring learners use of language.
17. First the learners complete a communicative task: They are encouraged to use any English they know and they do not have to use any particular use of language.
18. The written form of language is more important than spoken language.
19. the language focus is at the start of teaching sequence with fluency activities coming later.
20. The language focuses comes after a communicative activity, so that learners notice gaps in their language.
21. Learners acquire language by trying to use it in real communicative situation.
22. The learner's first language plays a central role in the teaching.

Module 2

Lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching

For question 1 to 7 match the learners' activities with appropriate teaching aims listed A to H. One option is extra. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Teaching aims

- A. To practice deducing the meaning of words from context
- B. To develop the skill of peer correction
- C. To give practice in oral fluency
- D. To give practice in extensive reading
- E. To give controlled practice of structures
- F. To recycle vocabulary
- G. To focus on pronunciation
- H. To give practice in using new vocabulary

Learners' activities

1. Learners complete a gap fill grammar exercise on note book
2. Learners have a group discussion on the topic of their choice
3. Learners exchange work book and check their partner's work
4. Learners play a word game based on the words they learn last term
5. Learners write a story using words the teacher has just presented.
6. Learners mark the stress on recently taught words.
7. Learners find words in reading text and match them with definitions given by the teacher.

For question 8-13 look at the stages and aims from a lesson plan about complaining.

Two of the aims are appropriate and one is not. Mark the inappropriate one.

Stages	Aims
<p>8. Lead-in The teacher ask students when they last went on Holiday and what problems they can have when travelling. The teacher elicits ideas about the problems and Writes them on the board.</p>	<p>A: To create interest on the topic <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B: To introduce the past simple tense <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C: To personalize the start of the lesson <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>9. Listening Students listen to a customer complaining in a travel agent</p>	<p>A: To check students understanding of the tape <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B: To provide a model of target language in context <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C: To pre-teach the meaning of new words <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Stages	Aims
Students identify the problems mentioned on the tape. Students compare answers in pair.	
10. Language focus The teachers hands out the tape script Students identify the language of complaining and apologizing in tape script	A: To focus students attention on target language <input type="checkbox"/> B: To give students practice in reading for gist <input type="checkbox"/> C: To provide students with a record on language n context <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Restricted practice The teacher shows target language on an OHT Students try to say the phrases The teacher gives feedback, correcting and drilling when necessary.	A: To allow students to personalize the target language <input type="checkbox"/> B: To allow students to use the target language in controlled way <input type="checkbox"/> C: To develop students confidence in pronouncing the target language <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Preparation for freer practice Students study their role cards: student A is the complaining customer Students B is the travel agent	A: to give students time to think of ideas to use in the role-play <input type="checkbox"/> B: to develop reading comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> C: to allow students to check with the teacher what they have to do <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Freer practice Students act out the situation in peers	A: To focus on the form of target language <input type="checkbox"/> B: To give less controlled practice of the target language <input type="checkbox"/> C: To prepare students for real communication <input type="checkbox"/>

For question 14-18, match the situation in which a teacher set a test with the reason for assessment listed A-H.

Reason for assessment

One option is extra. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

- To familiarize students with test format.
- To allow the teacher to plan appropriate scheme of work.
- To show students how well they have learned specific language.
- To allow students to assess each other.
- To motivate the students to revise a particular language area.
- To assess students progress on a continuous basis.

Situations

14. The teacher has a new class, on the first day of a course, she sets a test which covers some language points, she expects students to be familiar with and others that she thinks the students may not know. The students do not prepare for test.

15. The teacher noticed that her intermediate students are making careless mistakes with basic question information, which they should know; she announces that there will be a test on this the following week. The students have time to be prepared for the test.

16. The students are going to take a public examination test soon. The teacher gives them an example paper to do under test condition.

17. The teacher monitors students whenever they carry out speaking tasks and keeps notes about each student.

18. The class has recently finished a unit of a course book which focuses on the use of the present perfect simple with 'for' and 'since'. The teacher gives the class a surprise test on this.

For question 19-26, match the teachers comments with the resources listed A-I. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

- A.** graded reader's **B.** over head transparencies
C. role- cards **D.** news papers **E.** student's posters **F.** songs **G.** bilingual dictionaries
H. realia **I.** pupils

Teachers' comments

19. Teachers of young learners find these a good way to motivate their students. Young learners can make their own and act out stories using them.

20. These can be based on authentic material but contain language that has been made easier for students. They can help students to develop their vocabulary.

21. These can help students to understand difficult texts.
 22. These can be very useful, but finding suitable texts for low level learners is often a problem.
 23. Students find these useful because they provide ideas for what to say
24. These provide enjoyable listening practice and can also be used as the basis for language work.
 25. They can have many different uses, such as correction, feedbacks, setting the scene and comprehension questions.
 26. I put these up around the classroom so that students can see their own work on display.

Module 3

Managing the teaching and learning process

For question 1-7, match the example of teachers' classroom language with their functions listed A-H. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Teachers classroom language	Function
1. Listen, I like playing football, repeat every one, I like playing football.	A. checking understanding
2. Maria, collect the book, please.	B. emphasizing word stress
3. tell me three adjectives beginning with the letter C	C. drilling
4. Just listen to how I say it-poT Atoes.	D. checking instruction
5. Okay discuss it with your partner now, please.	E. monitoring
6. I'm really full; I've just eaten a big lunch. Am I hungry now?	F. eliciting
7. Let's have a look. Yes that's great, now try the next one.	H. organizing pair work
	I. nominating

For question 8-12 read the following instruction which a teacher use with adult elementary learners. Some of these instructions may not be appropriate. Match the instruction with trainers comment listed A-F.

One option is extra. write the correct letter in front of right sentence

Instruction

8. Imagine you were in a shop and you decided to buy some chocolates. What do you think you might say?
 9. Read the text and identify cohesive devices.
 10. Look at the text and underline all the verbs.
 11. Why don't you just get into pairs or a small group, if you like, and discuss a few of the questions for a little bit?
 12. Weren't you listening? I said exercise three. Don't waste my time?

Trainers comment

- A. this is a dear instruction for adult elementary learners.
 B. the grammar in this instruction is above elementary learners.
 C. some adult students might find this instruction rude.
 D. this instruction is not well sequenced.
 E. this instruction does not tell students exactly what to do.
 F. some of the lexis in this instruction is above elementary level.

For question 13-18, match what the teacher is going to do with the purpose for using ‘the students first language’ listed A, B, or C. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Purpose for using the students’ first language

- A. checking understanding B. explaining procedures C. motivating

The teacher is

- 13. Asking students to show they know what to do for homework.
- 14. Giving individual written feedback to a weak student.
- 15. Encouraging elementary students to try new ways of learning.
- 16. Telling a large group of teenagers the rules of the game.
- 17. Asking students to translate the meaning of new words.
- 18. showing a group of beginners exactly how to use a self assess center.

For question 19-26, match the underlined mistakes with the type of mistakes listed A-I. One option is extra. write the correct letter in front of right sentence

Underlined mistakes	Types of mistakes
19. The weather in London is badder than the weather in Tokyo.	A. wrong tense B. wrong verb pattern C. wrong preposition
20. The teacher made me to stay in school after class.	
21. What you doing this weekend?	
22. I go to the cinema last week.	E. wrong comparative form
23. He worked very hardly to finish the project.	F. wrong word order
24. Don’t blame you. it’s not your fault	G. missing auxiliary verb H. missing preposition
26. They’ve been away since a long time.	I. wrong pronoun

For questions 27-34, match the teacher activities with teacher role, listed A, B, C, or D.

You need to use some option more than once. write the correct letter in front of right sentence

Teacher roles

- A. MANAGER** (manages students and activities during class time)
- B. PLANNER** (chooses materials and/or methodology before the course or lesson)
- C. PROVIDER** (gives expert information about target language)
- D. DIAGNOSTICATION** (finds out the needs and interest of students)

- 27. The teacher puts students into groups of three for a role play.
- 28. The teacher invites students to suggest topics for course contents.
- 29. While students write a story the teacher walks around the class, helping students who make error or ask for new words.

- 30. The teacher wants to identify gaps in their knowledge so she asks students to brain storm crime vocabulary.
- 31. The teacher introduces the present perfect continuous.
- 32. The teacher decides which course book activities will fit into the time available for the lesson.
- 33. The teacher finds a video to fit into the topic of the unit.
- 34. The teacher gives students a questionnaire in order to find out more about their learning styles and preferences.

For question 35-40, choose the best option to complete each statement about ways of grouping students

- 35. It is a good idea to group less able students together so that
 - A. they feel more comfortable when speaking
 - B. they do not dominate other students
 - C. they can work at a faster pace
- 36. Group work is useful because it

- A. reduces teacher talking time.
B. improves class discipline.
C. makes all students work as hard as they can
37. In mixed ability classes, using group work
A. helps to identify weaker students.
B. means a teacher can give more attention to all students.
C. encourages students to help one another.
38. Pair work activities aim to encourage students
A. To work independently of the teacher
B. To assess their own progress.
C. To develop language awareness.
39. If a teacher wants to assess students' written work. It is best to do
A. group work B. individual work
C. mingling activities
40. If a teacher wants to control what the students do as much as possible, it is best to do
A. pair work B. learn activities
C. whole class work

For question 41-44, match the classroom management strategies with the problems of group or pair work listed A, B or C. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Problems of group or pair work

- A. some students get bored.
B. some students use L1 too much.
C. some students always dominate.

Classroom management strategies

41. Create a purpose for doing group or pair work in English.
42. Teach the language needed for frequent classroom activities.
43. Raise awareness of the importance of giving everyone a chance to take part.
44. Select topics and tasks that motivate the students.

For question 45-49, match the classroom situation with classroom management choices listed A-E. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Classroom situation

45. You notice that some of your students are unsure about how to start some pair work.

46. After a reading comprehension task, you ask the class for the answer to number one. Nobody says anything.
47. You notice that during your activity your class of young learners is making too much noise.
48. During a group work activity about travel, your students talk about a different topic. However, they do this in English.
49. You set up a speaking task in groups. You notice when you monitor closely that the groups stop speaking completely.

Classroom management choices

- A. praises them for using the language but remind them about the task.
B. models the activity yourself with a student, so everyone understands what they have to do.
C. uses strategies that students recognize for 'turning down the volume' e.g. a hand gesture or drawing on the board.
D. stands back and listens from a distance.
E. repeats the instruction and asks if they would like you to play it again.

For question 50-53, look at the situations in which a teacher corrects students and at the correction strategies listed A, B or C. write the correct letter in front of right sentence.

Two of the correction strategies are appropriate in each situation. Mark the inappropriate one.

50. A student says the word 'August' with poor pronunciation, in open class. The teacher

- A. says the word correctly and asks the students to repeat it.
B. writes the word in phonemic script on the white board
C. asks the student to say the word again, with no correction and then moves on.

51. Students tell story about themselves in groups of three, the teacher corrects students' language

- A. quietly as she is monitoring their group story telling.
B. after the group stage by focusing on problem she noted down during the group stage.
C. later when she asks the weaker students to tell their stories to the whole class.

52. In a controlled practice exercise on past continues, a pre-intermediate student says 'I driving down the road when it happened.' the teacher

- A. uses hand gesture to show that there is a missing word.
- B. mimes driving to show the student that she has understood.
- C. points to the model sentence on whiteboard to remind the student of the form.

53. In a controlled writing practice activity, a learner makes several mistakes in recently studied language. The teacher

- A. marks the writing using a correction code.
- B. gives the writing to a peer to correct.
- C. ignores the mistakes in the writing.

For question 54-57, match the ways a teacher gave feedback on students written work with the aims listed A-F. Write the correct letter in front of right sentence

Feedback on students' written work

- 54. The teacher marked students' writing using a correction code. Then she gave them time in the lesson to improve their work while she monitored.
- 55. The teacher use a smiling and sad faces to give students feedback on written work.
- 56. The teacher noted mistakes from students' written work and used these to prepare a language quiz, which students did in teams.
- 57. The teacher only commented on the content of stories that students had written.

Aims

- A.** To focus on language mistakes that many students made in their writing.
- B.** To encourage students to edit their own work.
- C.** To encourage students' creativity and to create positive attitude to writing.
- D.** To provide students with a model for similar written work in the future.
- E.** To inform primary age students about their progress in a fun way.

Appendix B

Post 1

Common Uses of Technology in the Classroom & How to screw them up

Posted on August 15, 2013

Using technology to enhance learning is an incredibly exciting idea as the area of education is growing fast. But the reality in the majority of public schools in the **Iran** is less than cutting edge. While there is little data available to pinpoint exactly what is being done. The unfortunate reality here is that in lieu of significant progress in how technology is used in the learning process, significant work remains to do a better job understanding how these tools can function to increase depth of knowledge, learning curiosity, and critical thinking skills. Below we look at **five** most common uses of technology in the classroom: *websites/social media, computer-based reading programs, computer-based assessment, smart boards and clickers and laptops/i Pods.*

Then we take a look at some of the most common problems with each one.

Five Common Uses of Technology In The Classroom & How We Screw Them Up

Websites and social media ✓ allow students to research and teachers to share—not only lessons plans, but digital resources, assessment data, and even whole-group, away-from-school communication.

Podcasts, multimedia such as music and YouTube videos, and other digital tools can be accessed here as well.

The Wasteful Bit 🗑️: The internet holds within it the biggest bulk of facts, data, and information a student needs to consistently access. While this isn't knowledge or wisdom, it's a start.

The problem is access is so often tethered by district filters or well-intentioned restrictive planning by the teachers that a set of encyclopedias might've functioned just as well.

Computer-based reading programs ✓
Readers, especially struggling readers, can often

make significant gains in reading level throughout a year.

The Wasteful Bit 🗑️:

The bad news is that many of these gains come not from wholesale improvements in literacy, but becoming better at the reading test itself, or more concerted effort to "score higher."

Worse, using a \$1500 computer to take a reading test is a special kind of irony. It's not innovative, not learner-centered, and probably not what the local bank had in mind when they donated \$50,000 for the lab three years ago.

Computer-based standardized tests ✓ from third-party vendors help are given during theyear to predict performance on the end-of-the-year state test.

The Wasteful Bit 🗑️: While offering piles of data and a rough picture of a student's academic deficiencies, standardized tests carry huge clout in most public school districts, and success (and failure) here can mean everything. But if the data that is produced is overwhelming to skillfully analyze and revise planned learning as a result, what's the point?

In the classroom, teachers are using **smart boards and clickers** ✓ to not simply engage students, but to offer more diverse platforms for students to work with new ideas and demonstrate understanding. Many of these tools also allow the teacher to garner data in real-time, which not only saves time (less grading), but more critically offers the student immediate feedback that is often easier for them to interpret than nebulous teacher feedback.

The Wasteful Bit 🗑️: They're *smart boards and clickers*. We can do better, can't we?

iPods and laptops ✓ have the potential to make information and resources immediately accessible to learners, and while that was always the case with textbooks, technology makes this information more easily searchable, richer with multimedia, and potentially social beyond the classroom.

The Wasteful Bit 🗑️: Teachers often lack the time or the resources to fully integrate iPads and

laptops meaningfully, with one doing the work of the other, and little gains made over what was possible with desktops ten years ago. It is this approach that arms the naysayers in your department with justified criticism of the expense and complexity of proper technology integration.

Post 16

The last post: Encourage learner autonomy in ESL classrooms

Posted on December 5, 2013

As the title indicates, this is the last post.

It is my great pleasure to get familiar with u, U dear teachers who spend your precious time on the blog. I wish u enjoy materials and u can practice them in your classes.

Now here it is a cookie, what is your idea about it, how can u explain them? Do you believe in it?!



Next after this, let's review an important point;

As we mentioned earlier, it is important to recognize and even encourage learner autonomy in ESL classrooms. Learners should have opportunities to learn according to their own individual styles and preferences.

Here are some suggestions.

1. Encourage students to be interdependent and to work collectively

The less students depend on their teacher the more autonomy is being developed. Many students like working in small groups and usually can be placed in pairs or small groups for various exercises quite easily, that is, not against their wills. Pairs and groups can read dialogues together, do information-gap activities and

consult each other on the meaning and clarification of the task at hand.

2. Ask students to keep a diary of their learning experiences

Through practice, students may become more aware of their learning preferences and start to think of new ways of becoming more independent learners. Diary entries could be written after every lesson so that students can record their sentiments about it. Students could also record whether or not they thought they benefited from what they did and give reasons why or why not. After they record their experiences for a month or two, teachers could help their students interpret their experiences and give them additional techniques to suit their learning styles.

3. Progress gradually from interdependence to independence

Give the students time to adjust to new learning strategies and do not expect too much too soon. Start the development of learner autonomy from larger groups, then work towards smaller groups, pairs, and finally individuals. Also, start courses by giving the students fewer choices concerning their learning and work towards many choices, and finally freer choices, such as open-ended tasks, or allowing students to make their choices entirely on their own.

4. Give the students projects to do outside the classroom

Such projects may increase motivation. For example, set up a pen-pal writing exchange program with a foreign school, or have the students do interviews with foreigners they happen to meet. Outside projects are important for most students learning English because most students in Japan spend so little time in class or language lab. For those serious about learning English, out-of-class time is the only way they are going to study enough to make much of a difference.

6. Give the students non-lesson classroom duties to perform

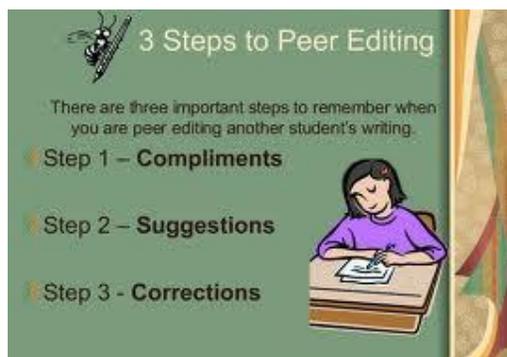
Taking roll, writing instructions, notices, etc. on the board for the teacher, but do this only if it is done in English and there is adequate time. Remember that "time in English" is at a premium.

7. Have the students design lessons or materials to be used in class

Also do an “interests and ability” inventory at the beginning of every school year so you can understand how to tailor your lessons. Time could be set aside at the end of the course for practical criticism of study tasks and textbooks used in the course. More student control over the management of learning resources could be encouraged as well.

8. Emphasize the importance of peer-editing, corrections, and follow-up questioning in the classroom

Inform the students that feedback from their peers can be valuable in that they can become more aware of their language mistakes, including grammar errors and vocabulary misuse. Using follow-up questions not only among classmates but also with their teacher can facilitate learning and higher levels of awareness and understanding of the target language.



10. Encourage the students to use only English in class

Tell the students that this is a great chance for them to use only English, and few opportunities like this exist for them. Part of the role of the

language teacher is to create an environment where students feel they should communicate in the target language and feel comfortable doing so. Heavy reliance on the students' native language may side-track efforts to reach optimal levels of the target language in the classroom. Students could be introduced to ways of greeting each other and starting and maintaining conversations.

11. Stress fluency rather than accuracy

Therefore, emphasize communication and the negotiable and interpretive aspects of English conversation. Students need not constantly over-concern themselves with correct grammar and vocabulary usage and accuracy. Students should be encouraged to use dictionaries sparingly and to try as best they can not to use erasers while taking notes, writing in diaries or journals, or doing writing exercises, including compositions. Much more information could be conveyed and absorbed if students spent less time worrying about their language accuracy.

12. However, do allow the students to use reference books, including dictionaries (preferably English-English), in class

Not to contradict the previous tip, provided students do not use these aids too often or fall into the “accuracy is more important than fluency” fallacy, they can develop autonomy and independence by looking up information and meanings on their own, in pairs, or in groups.

And the last word;

“The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts.” - Bertrand Russel

© 2015 Saeedan et al.; This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

*Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<http://www.sciencedomain.org/review-history.php?iid=816&id=21&aid=6943>*