

The Influence Of Web Technologies On Students' Self-Study Work In English Language Learning Process

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Abstract: *This article discusses the influence of Web technologies on students' self-study work in the English language learning process and gives the reasons of the need to create a new model for its organization. The experience of language preparation in the process of teaching languages at the Tashkent University of Information Technologies is presented in the article. The importance of the Web technologies in model of organization of students' independent work is developed and scientifically justified. The results of experimental studies aimed to test the effectiveness of the developed model of formation of professionally language competence of students are given in this paper.*

Keywords- *Web technologies; Web 2.0; self-study work; teaching English language; internal potential; web-based learning; knowledge construction; collaborative learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Economic and technological developments are increasingly having more and more impact on our social lives. Over the last few years the media and especially, Information technologies have developed incredibly fast and have become extremely complex. The daily routine of our students is influenced by media technologies to an extent which we could not have predicted several years ago. In addition to TV, radio, magazines and newspapers, in recent years the computer, the Internet with its chat rooms, mobile phones have all become an integral part of students' lives.

In figure 1 we can see the definition and examples of Information technology.



Fig.1. Definition and examples of Information technology

The development of Information technology has led to the formation of new ways of using the Internet. Currently, in many countries there is a consistent and steady movement towards building an information society, which is designed to create the best conditions for the maximum self-realization of each person.

The terms Information technology or Web Technologies cover similar areas. Although their meanings overlap a lot, their focus is different. As for Web technology, it is a collective name for technology primarily for the World Wide Web. This does, however, tend to focus more specifically towards technology that aides in the creation, maintenance and development of web-based applications.

The introduction of Web technologies in the educational process improves the quality and level of knowledge, makes it possible to carry out a differentiated approach to teaching students, taking into account their individual characteristics. Means of Web technologies allow for interaction between teacher and student in an interactive mode. This cooperation facilitates the exchange of useful information. [1]

The task of the teacher is to integrate the activity of each student in the learning process, create situations for their creative activity, to increase the motivation for learning English. The combination of traditional methods and teaching aids with modern Information technologies, in particular using Web 2.0, helps to increase student achievement and stimulates the development of independent work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to some experts Web technologies are the various tools and techniques that are utilized in the process of communication between different types of devices over the internet. To understand this term in a better manner, let's break it down into two pieces: 'web' and 'technology'. The web, in this case, refers to the World Wide Web, more commonly known as WWW. It first came into being in 1989 when famous scientist and engineer, Tim Berners-Lee, came up with an efficient mechanism to share resources between scientists all over the world. [2]

Web technologies are used everywhere from daily life to space research. Nowadays, there is a great amount of educational and training systems, which provide different functionality according to specific administrative, pedagogical and technological applications. Authoring tools, content repositories, evaluation and assessment tools, curriculum design and collaborative tools are some pieces of this educational "puzzle". According to Siau Nah and Teng (2002) the growth of web-based applications has made the web an important educational medium.

Based on previous researchers by Asmus, Bonner, Esterhay, Lechner, Rentfrow (2005) proposed that with the creation of emerging Web technologies such as blogs, wikis, instant messengers, social bookmarks, podcasts and vodcasts, the web is transforming into a fully interactive space and the control of content has been decentralized to allow everyone to collaborate, create, publish, subscribe, and share information. Long and Pulichino (2006) have also found that the adoption level of emerging Web technologies is on the rise in academic settings and therefore it would be of real value to describe the significant impingement of web technologies in education.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The changes that took place in our educational system have changed the roles of teachers, too. In the past teachers used to be the major source of knowledge, the leader and educator of their students' life. Teachers would organize after-university activities. They used to be the authority in the class and often took over the role of parents. Nowadays, teachers provide information and show their students how to tackle them. Although they are still considered to be a kind of leader in the class, they can be thought of as facilitators in the learning process. They are supporters rather than educators and also advisors towards parents.

In our view, teacher education needs to change in the near future. Some experts say it is too late to begin the changes, as we need new competencies in teaching right now. However, if teacher education in Uzbekistan follows its best tradition, and it remains practical, flexible and student-centred, there is a hope that the next generation of learners will get the support and skills they need in life during their studying years from their own teachers. The need of a generation of teachers who aim to develop learners instead of teaching them, who help their students to become independent, who provide students with motivation and interest for life-long learning and urge them to become autonomous learners, is essential in the education of the future.

The use of Web-based learning resources in education creates favorable conditions for the formation of a student's personality and meets the needs of modern society. It should be noted that it is very convenient, fruitful and promising to use Web technologies for teaching foreign languages. In the classroom, the learning process becomes more attractive for students, as they get unlimited access to interesting regional studies materials that compare favorably with outdated texts in textbooks. Thanks to Web technologies, educators have access to an unlimited amount of authentic information in a foreign language. Due to the figure 2, we can consider Web-based learning resources and its main features.

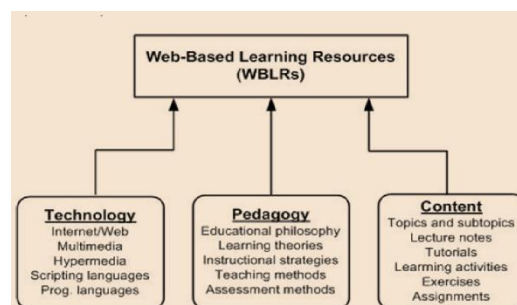


Fig. 2: Web-based learning resources: Main features

The first thing that needs to be said is Web 2.0 technologies now resemble a huge corporation of knowledge, attracting students from different parts of the world. These technologies are not only a way of providing information; they also imply cooperation of interested users in the formation of information and communication resources.

This development is accompanied by the need for the formation of new tools for manipulating digital data and, undoubtedly, tools for managing the knowledge and experience gained.

Figure 3 demonstrates an introduction to Web 2.0.

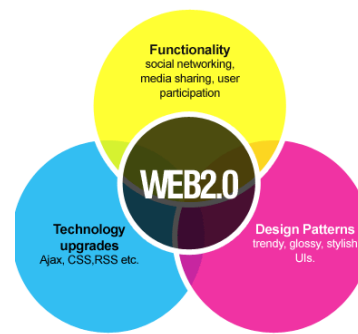


Fig.3. An introduction to Web 2.0

To study the influence of Web technologies on students' self-study work in the English language learning process we realized that these technologies open access to information and more online materials being accessed outside of those provided by teachers, and indeed institutions, is likely to accelerate and change the way students are learning.

Teaching a foreign language cannot be carried out without modern information and communication technologies. Modern technologies include Web technologies, namely Web 2.0. The advantage of Web 2.0 is that students have the opportunity to work on educational material at a convenient time and in any place where there is Internet access.

Let us consider key features of Web 2.0:

- a way to classify information, such as through tagging photos;
- websites or links;
- tagging enables users to find information in an organized fashion. [3]

Web 2.0 technologies differ from computer technologies in that students use the Internet not only as a source of information, but at the same time they become active participants in the creation of multimedia content. They can make their own changes, corrections, ask questions and get answers from professionals. [4]

Teachers were positive in their assessment of the impact of Web 2.0 educational activities to their students' self-study work and identified a number of ways in which the learning practices and results were improved.

This is a study is carried out to find in what way or manner Web technologies are affecting students' self-study work achievement and understanding of the concepts in English teaching and learning. The data for this study was collected from a sample of students and teachers. The sample selected was of 19 to 20 years students of age group. This study was carried out among the students and teachers of Tashkent University of Information Technologies, Uzbekistan as they were more exposed to web technologies as a part of their curriculum. For data collection, action research in the form of an experiment was conducted. A pre-test post test design was used. Besides, a pre-tested questionnaire was also used to collect the feedback of students regarding the use of Web 2.0 technology and the impact of it in their learning process.

Thanks to figure 4 we made the conceptual model of a Web 2.0 community of inquiry, illustrating relationships between teacher, student and the integrated use of Web 2.0 tools.

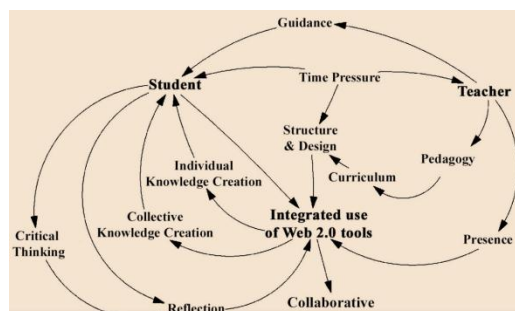


Fig. 4: Conceptual model of a Web 2.0 community of inquiry, illustrating relationships between teacher, student and the integrated use of Web 2.0 tools.

Web 2.0 technology tools allow learners and teachers to attend a single live training session from any place of the world, but they have to have a computer and perfect Internet connection. If learners miss a traditional classroom-based training session, they have very little opportunity to engage in the learning experience that took place. The good idea of Web 2.0 technology is the given opportunity for those students who miss a lesson or training session by this or that reason to review the performance of any class activities or lecture as it has a facility to record a session and can be replayed afterwards.

The use of Web 2.0 technologies contributes to the formation of students' skills of independent work, on the basis of which the process of their further self-education is built. The use of Web 2.0 technologies contributes to the development of the proposed educational Internet materials and filling the educational process with new content. [5]

The survey results provided insightful guidelines and tips for using Web 2.0 technologies in teaching and learning. Web 2.0 technologies used by the students and teachers include: blogs, Wikis, Youtube, social bookmarking, podcasts, webcasts, Facebook, Myspace, Flickr, Twitter, Skype, Second Life, and Tegrity. The participants of the survey reported how they used these Web 2.0 technologies in their teaching and learning process, what worked well, what did not work well, and so forth.

The discussion of results was organized around the following three focus areas:

- benefits of using Web 2.0 technologies in teaching and learning;
- barriers to using Web 2.0 technologies in teaching and learning;
- best practices for students and tips for teaching with Web 2.0 technologies. [6]

The analysis of the results was done using suitable statistical techniques.

4. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Today, knowledge of English opens a window into a large global world with its wide flow of information and innovations. Nowadays Web technologies are an effective assistant and integral part of everyone, which allows to improve the quality of training and the effectiveness of control. Currently, the use of Web technologies in the educational process is very important.

Due to the results of our current research, we designed the learning cycle: useful to bear in mind when planning a web based course, which is demonstrated in figure 5:

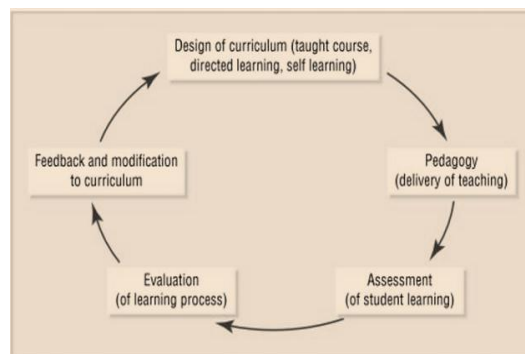


Fig. 5: The learning cycle: useful to bear in mind when planning a web based course.

The simplicity and effectiveness of Web 2.0 technology tools are the main criteria for their use in teaching foreign languages, in particular English. There is no need for the teacher and the student to master programming skills. They have the opportunity to use the templates that are offered on the Web 2.0 resources to create their blogs, podcasts, presentations and post them on the network on-line.

Figure 5 shows us a List of favourite WEB 2.0 tools used around the world for learning and teaching:



Fig. 5: A List of favourite WEB 2.0 tools used around the world for learning and teaching

Web 2.0 technologies tools give students “the opportunity to create content themselves instead of just listening to teachers,” and this supports active and student-centered learning in which students take responsibility for their learning. Web 2.0 technologies create an environment where a teacher becomes a facilitator of learning rather than a distributor of knowledge.

The use of Web 2.0 technology should become an integral part of the educational process. The use of Web 2.0 technology increases interest in the learning process. Students are motivated to use this technology not only by technological capabilities, but also by the fact that students write about what is important to them. Students independently manage their learning process, actively seeking information. [7]

Web technologies tools play a massive part in day to day life for so many of students and teachers; it makes sense that it is incorporated into learning. Web technologies fascinate us and engage us.

5. DISCUSSIONS

Obviously, Web technologies are not to be used in place of effective teaching, but interactive tasks, text-to-speech conversion and online tutorials allow students to translate on-the-go. Self studying working, with access to relevant teaching material for support, means more practice and therefore more confidence to push perceived limitations – students are given the courage to try books beyond their current reading level, for example.

For our students, practicing English outside of a lesson offers exposure to English culture, and so context around what they are learning. Opportunities to practice English in a real life setting are far more readily available. This can be from news sites, through social media, or visiting online forums, all of which provide a variety in language use that is difficult to replicate in the classroom.

The success of the usage of Web technologies is not dependent on the availability or absence of one individual factor, but is determined through a dynamic process involving a complex of interrelated reasons. It is suggested that up to date professional development have to be provided for educators to model the new pedagogies and instruments for learning with the purpose of developing the teaching-learning process. [8]

Today, new methods of using Web technologies are opposed to traditional teaching foreign languages. To teach communication in a foreign language, you need to create real life situations that will stimulate the study of the material and develop adequate behavior. Now everyone understands that web technologies have tremendous information capabilities and no less impressive services.

Whichever way we relate to the Web technologies, we have to recognize the fact that the worldwide network has become an integral part of modern reality. Many students have long appreciated all the advantages of Web technologies and use its services actively in their educational process and self-study work, while for teachers the space of this world web remains mostly unknown, unfamiliar and to some extent frightening.

The use of Web 2.0 technology opens up new possibilities for working in the classroom and beyond. With the traditional organization of teaching, due to lack of time in the classroom, not all students have a chance to speak up and be heard. The introduction of Web 2.0 technology allows each student to take an active part in the lesson, which opens up new perspectives for learning. The use of Web 2.0 technology can help English language teachers solve one of the most important problems in teaching foreign languages, such as the formation of professional foreign language competence, language skills, providing students with the opportunity to receive, find, consolidate and analyze material themselves, using the on-line network.

The analysis of the result of this study showed that the Web 2.0 technology are preferred by majority of students, teachers as a part of teaching and learning process in and out the classroom due to the flexibility and self-pacing nature, and the nonchalance in understanding the concepts.

6. CONCLUSION

These days every modern teacher uses widely the resources of Web technologies to improve students' self-study work. Preparing messages, students filter a lot of information, if they need to listen to music, and most often view photos. Such tasks for students can use the preparatory stage for the lesson, for example, in combination with the project method, allowing students to apply practically for their knowledge and skills. This is one of the forms

of research organization and cognitive activity, in which group activity is successfully realized that allows to increase the motivation for learning a foreign language. In the center of such a work process stands the student himself, with the opportunity to freely express his opinion and practical usage of foreign speech.

Web technologies allow the generation of knowledge and processes to improve systems that tackle problems and develop human skills. In other words, can change how students analyze, access, gather present, simulate and transmit information. The impact of Web technologies is one of the most critical problems in education. [9]

The use of Web technologies provides a fruitful learning environment, develops students' self-study work and transforms the learning and teaching process in which students deal with knowledge in an active, self directed and proper way. Web technologies are not just regarded as an instrument, which can be used as a replacement of existing teaching ways. Web technologies are seen as an important tool to support new methods of teaching and learning. It should be used to develop student's skills for cooperation, communication, problem solving and lifelong learning. [10]

In fact, concerning the development of Web technologies, we believe that in future, the use of multimedia English teaching for students' self-study work will be further developed. The process of English learning will be more student-centered but less time-consuming. Therefore, it promises that the teaching quality will be improved and students' applied English skill scan will be effectively cultivated, meaning that students' communicative competence will be further developed. Nowadays, combining traditional ways of teaching with modern approaches as online e-Learning environments focused on multimedia applications and using Web technologies and tools, developed in a collaborative manner, is compulsory.

Encouraging students to take part is arguably the most important part of any lesson plan, incorporating technology – especially creatively – could be the element that transforms a dull lesson into a captivating one. As so much of learning comes from practice outside of the classroom, motivating students with innovative ideas is also important. If a student is interested in what is being taught, they are far more likely to seek more information on their own.

In conclusion, we believe that this process can fully improve students' self-study work, their ideation and practical language skills, which is helpful and useful to ensure and fulfill an effective result of teaching and learning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Compared to previous generations, the educational process that students and teachers are currently going through is quite different. Primarily, the main cause of changes in education is due to the fast development of modern technology. Because of technology, students are eligible to learn beyond the classroom. Nowadays, teachers and students are able to use the internet to contact each other off university grounds. Instead of sitting face-to-face in a classroom, teachers can now educate their students anywhere, anytime. Today, teachers are beginning to take advantage of technology for educational purposes.

The arguments we have presented in this article suggest that we can say that the effectiveness of Web technologies on students' self-study work and student learning depends not only on what outcomes are targeted and how these technologies are integrated into instruction, but also on how teachers assess student performance in classrooms and adjust instruction

accordingly. Web technologies offer teachers a broad range of tools to collect and analyze data, and richer sets of student data to guide instructional decisions.

To draw the conclusion, one can say that it is important that language teachers should be ready to evaluate their teaching and get feedback from their students. If they did not achieve the result they had aimed at, they must be ready to change their teaching methodology and techniques. A certain amount of openness in the language teacher can really do wonders. They should ask themselves how to make English language teaching and learning more enjoyable and how to enhance students learning and maximize their productivity.

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