



## **An Experience of Using Computer Technology in the ESL Classroom**

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### **Abstract**

Computer as a technology used in an educational process is increase the importance of how the students learn and how the teachers teach. Although technologies have been used for decades, blackboard, as a form of technology, has been used for centuries as well as tape recorders, language labs. Nowadays some modern technologies have been used recently like smart boards, Blackboard Learn, a learning management system.

The use of computer technologies nowadays plays an essential role in educational system especial classrooms. This can lead for using technology in language teaching especially English as a second language. Using a computer in classroom will make the teacher distinctive one. He /she shows his lecture in PowerPoint slides, illustrate how to use new program, take the attendance through the teacher web page, check students' homework and assignments that they attach through their blackboard, and show the lecture with in smart board.

This paper reports on using computer technology in classroom, concentrate on ESL /EFL learners. I have discussed briefly some sub-titles concerns the paper title like reason for computer use, objective of using computer in education, problem of using computers in education, use computer in EFL classroom, computer technology that ESL teachers Use, advantages and disadvantages of using computer in classroom, computer testing and grading.

**Key words:** technology, ESL, advantages, attitudes, EFL, distinctive.



## **Introduction**

Computer has become one of the life necessities due to advancement of technology. It has been used in many fields as military, health, education and other fields. In this paper the author, as an English Language Teacher, is going to search and will discuss the use of computers in the field of education especial in English language to involve students in teaching and move away from the teaching method that relies on the teaching of information by the teacher to avoid conservation, which would create a less productive generation for the community. Computer is an effective way that helps students to collect, use and display information in creative way, thereby enhancing student self-confidence.

You can use a computer to maintain good ESL teaching approaches. Often even simple computer programs can help the teacher (a) to motivate students to work independently, (b) to check class participation, attendance and (c) to avoid excess paper work. Many grammar and vocabulary exercises can be easily performed using computers.

### **Reasons for the computer use:**

- To store information, and then retrieved it in any time easily.
- Develop students' skills to achieve educational goals.
- Developing the mental skills of students through their ability to create intellectual environments that motivate the student to explore topics not found in the curriculum.
- Develop students' mental skills through their ability to create intellectual environments that motivate student to explore topics not found in their curriculum.
- Solving the teacher problems that faced him/her in the classroom as (the increasable of students' number - lack of time).
- Presentation of topics with visual concepts (maps, animal species, rocks etc...) in 3D.
- Upgrading student's achievement with increasable the level of learner's understanding of lessons through doing a lot of exercises.
- Works to imparting the learner necessary skills to achieve educational goals.
- Interviewing individual disparities between students.



- Multimedia that used in the computer such as films, slides, sounds etc...
- Encourage the learner on teamwork.
- The teacher able to use the computer in the management of the educational process.
- Computer provides the teacher with sufficient information about the student educational attitudes.
- The computer provides the instructor with test models and continues students' progress in mastering required skills.
- The teacher can use appropriate educational programs more effectively, to follow up a recent development in his /her subject matter.

#### **Objectives of using computer in education:**

- Eradication of computer illiteracy to make the learner computer-based erudite.
- Training the learner to use the computer in solving the problems faced in his/her life.
- Provide advanced skills for outstanding learner in the field of computer.
- Make the learner mastered the basic requirements of computer applications programs.

#### **Problems of using computers in education:**

- Negative attitudes of teachers towards the use of technology.
- Lack of material resources.
- Lack of human resources.

#### **Use computer in ESL classroom**

Because students are so busy with the computers they do not pay attention to the teacher, so using multimedia programs can leave an English teacher out of a job. When workers in the middle Ages destroyed the new manufacturing machines, we are not wanting to destroyed computers. We need to think of ways to use computers in the ESL classroom for better understanding between the teacher and the students when they speak different languages in particular.



## **Computer Technology that ESL Teachers Use**

When we hear, the word technology computer and Lan come to our mind. Many countries are using modern technology while others use an old. This can lead for using technology in language teaching especially English as a second language. Some teachers are intending to use high technology such as computers, while others have only use chalk and a blackboard.

As a dean of a college that belongs to ancient university in KSA and an English teacher, our institution resorted to employ advanced technology like the informational system (Blackboard). Bb is an informational system for the management of education to follow-up and monitor students' efficiency of the educational process in the educational institution. The system provides great opportunities for students to communicate with the course outside the class anywhere and at any time through this electronic system, which provides him/her with a variety tools to see the content of the course and interact with it in an easy ways in addition to communication with the teacher of the course and other students that enrolled in the same course. This helps students to take lectures without going to the class while the assignment and exam are online, also they may go to the college or university for final exams.

That dedicated to helping you solve your most critical challenges in today's ever-changing environment to increase your students' success.

Blackboard due to Wikipedia “is an educational technology company with corporate headquarters in Washington, D.C.. It is known for Blackboard Learn, a learning management system. In 2006, Blackboard completed the acquisition of its largest competitor, WebCT Inc, enlarging its share of the higher education market to between 65 and 75 percent. Over the next five years, the company invested in a series of new products and acquisitions, including Blackboard Xythos, Blackboard Connect, Blackboard Mobile, Blackboard Collaborate, and Blackboard Analytics., thus expanding beyond the learning management system market.

By 2011, the firm's products were used by over half of colleges and universities in the US. On July 1, 2011, Blackboard agreed to a \$1.64 billion buyout by an investor group led by Providence Equity Partners, completed on October 4, 2011. Following the sale, Providence Equity Partners merged Edline, its K-12 learning system, with Blackboard. Edline was later renamed Blackboard Engage.



According to a TechCrunch article from 2012, despite its success, Blackboard had become "one of the most disliked — even detested — companies in education. In December 2011, Fast Company reported that 93% of respondents to the Amplicate customer opinion survey "hate" the company.

In September 2017, Blackboard announced its expansion to the Indian Educational Market, and it was said to partner with 50 educational institutions.”

Blackboard Learn is a virtual learning environment and a learning management system developed by Blackboard Inc, web-based server software. The Blackboard education system plays an important role in promoting teaching and learning in many universities in the KSA.

Qassim University in 2015 starts using as learning management system. So computers with internet put educational process in its pompous picture. Internet can benefit students that their satisfaction with online courses is linked to the presence of the teacher, collaboration and their sense of community they experience in a successful online learning community. As well as Bb, do to serve the educational process. Students can use their smart phones to deal with their web pages, while other prefers to use their computers with in Wi Fi network to deal with their electronic curriculum.

Using a computer in classroom will make the teacher distinctive one. He /she shows his lecture in PowerPoint s slides, illustrate how to use new program, take the attendance through the teacher web page, check students’ homework and assignments that they attach through their blackboard, and show the lecture with in smart board. Many researchers have generally concerned that:

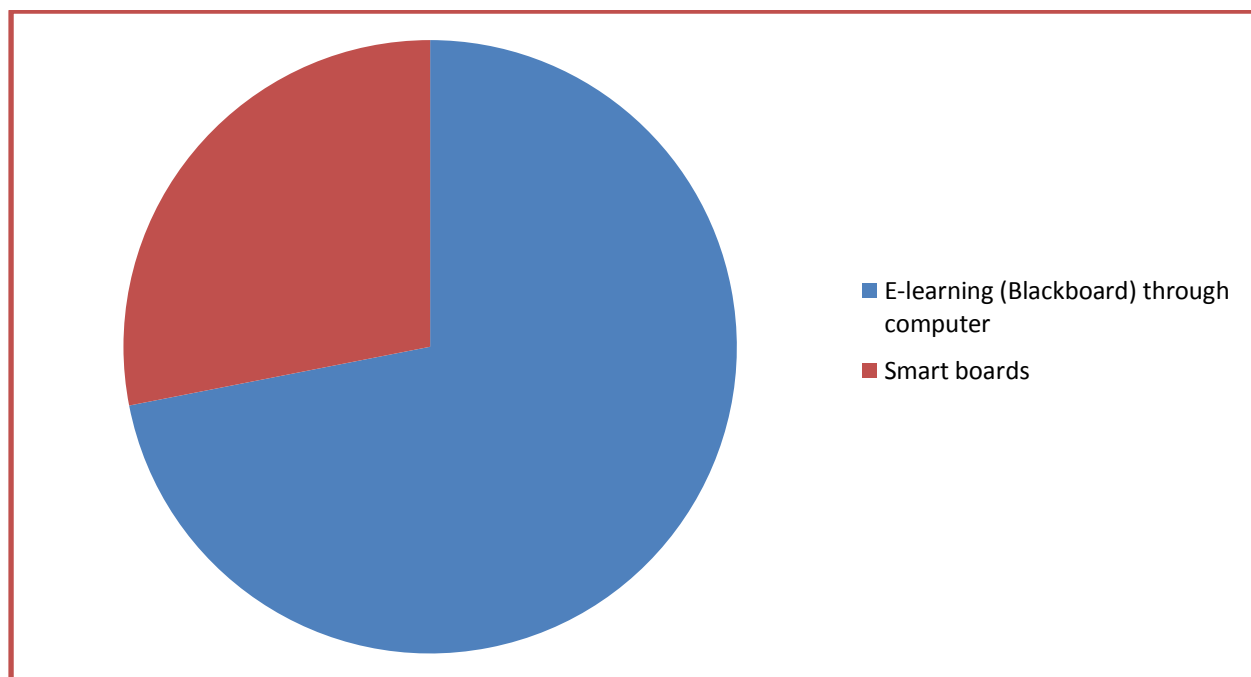
a) the use of computers can reinforce students learning in basic skill area, b) computers integration with traditional instruction produces higher academic achievement in a variety of subject areas) with the aid of computers, students learn more quickly and d) students’ attitudes towards learning are positively affected by computer use (Noeth and Volkov, 2004).

In the new educational era dominated by digital tools, computer technology and the Internet, more advanced ways of interaction have appeared that allow students to share ideas and experiences that contribute to their learning (John & Wheeler, 2012;Noeth & Volkov, 2004). In addition,



these new technologies make more information available with regard to what the students really do while learning, making it easier to access the learners' opinions, which become a powerful source of information concerning the learning process and its outcomes (Pando- Garcia et al., 2015).

The following figure, showing the approximate amount of technology used in our college



From this figure, one may infer that our college members seems to be the highest in using various types of technology especially computer, 90% of them use computer technology that used in traditional classrooms while other connected computer with smart boards.

Each classroom is prepared with a smart board, an interactive whiteboard, and a data projector. These materials usually focus on integrating auditory and visual language by combining languages skills and observing relationship between spoken forms and written forms. Classrooms are connected with Internet to provide online study tools that will motivate studying and make it more interested for students.



This, in fact, helps reduce the anxiety and pressure that many students, particularly beginners, experience when listening in the second or foreign language especially English learners. Therefore, technology is considered as a tool to help educators meet the educational needs of all students and that will effectively enhance teaching and learning.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Computer in classroom:**

Using computer technology in EFL/ESL class, as with the case of using commercial textbooks, has advantages and disadvantages

#### **Advantages:**

- Computer allows the user to participate positively when he / she using computer various programs may the learner pressing the right answer button, record his/her voice, write a response or check an electronic dictionary and other interaction forms that does not make the learner participate negatively.
- The intensity and diversity of the exercises, that means the amount of the linguistic training provided by the program and the extent of its diversity to far the learner, as well as the extent of its coverage to cover all language skills.
- Computer knows how the exercises can be provided that means the methods or ways used by the program in the provision of exercises that used in the acquisition of skills in terms of presentation method and gradient. Take advantages of computer's technical properties in creating these training exercises.
- The accuracy of the guidelines provided to the learner in each lesson and training.
- How well the course offers to reinforce the correct answers, (feedback) means the position of the program towards learner's answers in cases of error and right before the accumulation and aggravation of errors.
- Computer records errors of the student while dealing with the program and the progress in it, then maintains a performance report that can be viewed by the student or teacher when use it again. Students,



teachers and researchers can benefit from classification of errors and analysis of their results. Therefore, computer can provide a report on the learner's performance.

- The extent to which computer capabilities and advanced features are exploited day by day to maximize linguistic utilization and to provide a high degree of suspense and attractiveness to learners. This lead to the extent of utilization of computer properties (audio - image - video - links - iterative - interactive - reinforcement - correction - degree of difficulty - diversity of activities
- The availability of services such as (dictionaries - synonyms - antibodies - translation) It means the computer provides services such as a glossary at the end of each lesson or unit, a dictionary for the translation of words, or lists of synonyms or interpretation of the word appear if the learner pressed twice or other specifications).
- The ability of computer to provide educational conditions and attitudes that helps the learner to learn.It means that computer uses video footage that contributes to the filming of multiple situations that are difficult to present through books, this contribute in the acquisition of targeted skills.
- Computer made how much language is associated with scenes, actions, places, and people. It means that learning is easy when it is related to scenes, activities, people, and places, vocabulary can't presented in a arid manner, as in the textbooks. Even if it's accompanied with a translation, it does not remain in the learner's mind for a long time.
- The information provided through the computer is correct in terms of scientific content, cultural content, grammar and linguistic methods.
- Computers program focuses on how the learner learns vocabulary, phrases and expressions continuously so that he/she has sufficient ammunition for expression.





## **Disadvantages:**

Regardless of the advantages with positive effects above about using computer technology on language teaching and learning, there are still some limitations or disadvantages.

- The use of computers in education is an economically costly process there is a need for a sufficient number of devices for each learner this requires an extraordinary expenditure that education budgets, even in high-economies, may not be able to address.
- The necessary maintenance of the used equipment that need computer analysts continuously and this exhausted the economic.
- Lack of computer-based educational process to the natural interaction between the teacher and the learner.
- Some studies showed that the procedures of dealing with the computer, such as clicking and dealing with the mouse lead to district the mental awareness of the learners in reverse with books that does not disperse learner's attention.
- Computer cause health damage.

Erin Schreiner is a freelance writer Write about disadvantages of a computer in education in five points:

### **1. Technological Dependence**

When computers and other technological tools are used constantly, students develop a dependence upon these tools. Just as pupils who are never required to do math without a calculator lose the ability to solve math problems manually, students who use computers for nearly every activity experience a decline in their ability to spell and even write by hand. Students must practice these simple skills without technological tools regularly to ensure that their skills do not atrophy.

### **2. Varied Computer Literacy**

Computers present an added challenge to educators because teachers must deal with students of varying computer literacy levels. Some students enter the classroom fully versed in the applications of a computer, while others come with no prior experience.



It is difficult for teachers to deal with this vast difference and ensure that they provide students who need assistance with that assistance while not requiring capable students to slow their academic progress and wait.

### **3. Technologically Enhanced Academic Dishonesty**

While cheating is hardly a new phenomenon, computers make academic dishonesty even easier for students to perpetrate. Students who wish to plagiarize can simply copy and paste information into their reports, and those who wish to share answers to tests or assignment questions can transmit those answers digitally. This added ease of cheating may incline more students to attempt academic dishonesty

### **4. Reduced Interaction**

While computer games are just as, if not more, engaging than board or card games, they do not afford the same degree of player interaction. Many computer games are individual pursuits. When students complete these digital games and activities they miss out on the interaction practice that they receive through the playing of traditional games

### **5. Potential Dangers**

The use of computers opens students to potential dangers. Students can fall victim to Internet predators or become the target of cyber-bullying while on the Internet. Many parents elect to closely monitor their children's Internet usage at home, but at school keeping a close eye on all students simultaneously can be difficult. When computers are used in school, teachers must be vigilant in their monitoring of student activity to ensure that they do not become entangled in a dangerous situation.

Therefore, from what has been mentioned above there is no comprehensive professional program to foster a technology culture in education in general.

Computer technologies undoubtedly raise the quality of language learning experience. However, to include technology in language teaching and learning, considerations should be offered to our educational goal. On the other hand using computer technology in language classroom allows student to work individually, helps teachers to deal more effectively with a large group of students, allows students to experience real life and real language situation. Also allows a teacher to create learning activities that improve learners' general language abilities.



Computer technology offers new ways of teaching and learning. It has positive effects on student attitudes towards learning and on student-centered learning has many benefits that improve the learning of language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing. In addition, computer technologies help us to motivate students by getting the outside things into the classroom and by presenting language in its more complete communicative context. Computer technology can also provide a lot of information and cultural input that help teacher to avoid questioning.

Therefore, anyone who interested in learning and teaching languages in the 21st century should be familiar with the nature of educational tasks based on technology.

Language learners often use computers to write research, send and receive e-mails, and navigate the World Wide Web. However, one of the challenges facing language teachers is to employ these uses in language teaching. So computer properties related to the learning process must be considered for teachers and researchers.

### **Computer testing**

Don't forget about marks if you search for something extraordinary to motivate students to study, most teachers grade their students at the end of the term which decrease students' performance. But if students receive more tests during the term, they may not be stressed at the final. Here the attendance will improve; students will be motivated with represent of academic achievement. If there is a computer lab in your educational institution here the Students have a chance to show their knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar rules and computer testing can be helpful in monitoring students' knowledge with a system of many tests.

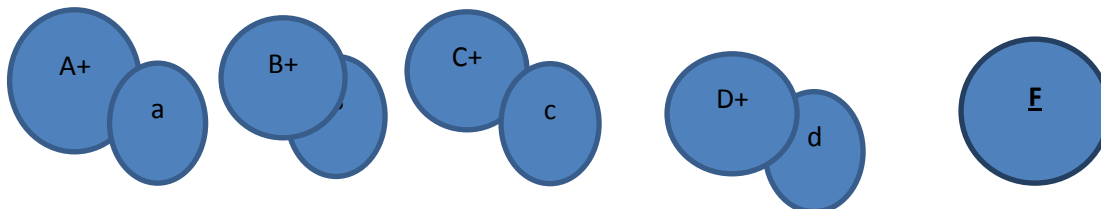
The teachers are become very happy because it does not involve a lot of paper work with checking and grading, all results are provided by the computer. If we compare this with the classroom situation during such a test is much more relaxed. The students look forward, not down or away. The teacher is glad, because he/she knows that all the questions are randomly selected and the students could not cheat. Network is better for scoring and testing. The computer is still considered as a toy by young learners as well as older ones.

Do not be like a teacher who is kind in class but turns mean and disagreeable during tests. It is better to be in the middle; because teaching is a game, like everything in our life. Let us play it using the rules without boring.

## Grading

Imagine you have 30 students each semester to grade (a common situation). You may have many different marks in your list. First, you check for absences. Next, you will have the grades for the 1st midterm test, 2nd midterm test and final exam that ranged from A to F. You may also have these grades for the quizzes, which may count for less or assignment. Sometimes you may give them Fs as a punishment, if they do not do the pair practice or their homework. In this case F, is a negative value. But if you give F for a test, it must be positive, at least it indicates that the student came to English class and did not play around class. The mark f means that the student failed.

This figure shows remarks grade that the teacher use:



## Electronic texts

Many teachers already appreciate the opportunities provided with a system of pair practice (information gap activities). The task is often clear and the material is often interesting. To complete the activities, students must ask questions to their partners and fill in the blank information on their pages. The activities are meant to stimulate students' conversation. What do we see in reality? Our dear partners-students are very busy in copying from page A to page B without troubling themselves to ask questions and the teacher is furiously running around the classroom not trying to explain the importance of pair practice, but just slamming the Student's books closed while crying out: "Only one page!".



The problem with such tasks is in giving feedback. In reality, we should check both the filling in of the blank information and the conversation. It is difficult to manage. What can be done to develop this approach using computers?

English language nowadays is worldwide one, and it is a language of global communication, so learner must familiar with it, in order to be able to communicate with the world

With the spread of the technology revolution and internet sites spread in English, which made learning English is necessary for everyone through internet.

Through these sites and applications, a person can learn English in his/her spare time. Modern technology has also enabled learners to create online courses so that a learner can register and have a conversation with others who have registered for this course from all over the world. It helps students and teachers access modern and original English language materials. Allows learners to communicate with English-speaking speakers, and English is their mother tongue, which gives the learner a great experience in conversation. Modern technologies make students receive instructions immediately, allowing them to correct their mistakes directly.

Thus, modern technology has greatly facilitation on learning of the English language process.

## **Conclusion**

Although many studies show the importance of using computer technology in ESL classroom, and although technology has affected our rules of teaching and learning, many teachers still have negative attitudes towards the use of technology. Educators are not keeping up with the current and great advances in the world of technology the majority of them are not understand the importance of technology and the role it should play in education.



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