

CHALLENGES FOR THE TEACHERS IN 21ST CENTURY - ELT AND ICT INTERFACE

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Abstract

Education structure everywhere the world is in service of using It and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for universalising education, improving the outreach of excellence education and also making class-room teaching interesting, stimulating, motivating and effective. The arrival of new technology in education and information technology at large has added a new dimension to teaching and learning in the class-room in general and English language teaching in particular and as a magnitude stances new challenges for a teacher. These new challenges address issues of integrating ICT in teacher education and effective use of ICT in class-room teaching. Though ICT is being used at the tertiary level, especially in teaching of science and technology and engineering subjects, it is yet to be fully integrated in school education system as needed. The present study attempts to drop challenges faced by the teachers in the class-room teaching and also tries to trace the status of integration of ICT in teacher education. This study suggests that the need for the use of technology in teacher training programme is essential and needs to be implemented properly.

Keywords: ICT, Teacher Education, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Today, Information and Communication technology (ICT) tools such as radio, T.V., the Internet, YouTube, Podcast, mobile phone, computer, laptop, tablets, Web 2.0. technology and many other hardware and software applications have become common for formal as well as informal use. Assured tools like laptops, computers, mobile phones have become essential in education. The It & ICT course in teacher education is known as Educational Technology. At tertiary level particularly it is being used and at school level initiatives are also taken. ICT like smart Edu.com is used in schools to educate students from class one to ten. Prior, the teaching was done in the traditional way, but the situation has changed and modern technology like smart-board is getting used in school teaching. Similarly, to use these technological tools in the class-room, teachers are needed to be well qualified and techno savvy to use it. The present study efforts to trace challenges faced by teachers in the class-room teaching and also tries to trace the status of integration of ICT in teacher education institute. This paper discusses the challenges which have come up in English language teaching (ELT) due to the occurrence and fast growth of ICT and highlights how the present system of class-room teaching finds it difficult to address these challenges. This paper also talks about the necessity of incorporating ICT as a compulsory component of teacher education so that the teachers could address these challenges appropriately.

ICT IN SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

The ICT has a dynamic role in the process of language teaching and learning by providing an influential base for efficient education. ICT has completely changed the criteria for teaching and learning. According to MHRD (n.d.) it was launched in December, 2004 and revised in 2010 for schools of India. It has become one of the important tools, especially in an English language class-room globally. Mulayand Chaudhary state that Technology in education is the efficient organisation of any learning system adapting or adopting methods, processes, and products to serve identified educational goals." This also involves systematic identification of the goals of education, recognition of the diversity of learners' needs, the contexts in which learning will take place, and the range of provisions needed for each of these. The integration of ICT in school education has brought a revolution in teaching as well as learning of all subjects. Teaching and learning with ICT brings innovation and develops creative and motivational environment. Richard states that ELT is an area that has changed over the years, moving from very teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered ones. Use of ICT helps in creating learner-centered environment in the ELT class-rooms. Now a days, availability of electronic workbook as embellishments to textbook represents the technological developments in learning (Garret 705). Software comprising all the four skills are available. In recent times, the use of technology as a tool to develop the different language skills has received great attention, hence the ELT teachers should be exposed to new

practices. Hennessy stated that “the introduction of ICTs could act as a catalyst in stimulating teachers and pupils to work in new ways.” Also, Warschauer has mentioned different perspectives about integration of technology into class-room. These reflects the demand of knowledge of ICT and practical aspects of ICT to ELT teachers. ICT is very useful in teaching all the four skills, i.e. (LSRW) Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Blogs and social networking sites have been proved very useful in developing writing skills. Discussion on the forum provides fruitful results for teachers as well as students, scaffolding the teachers’ knowledge of content as well as technology. Audio-visual aids accommodate the teaching of listening and speaking skills. Use of ICT creates more interest and enthusiasm among students towards language learning as compared to traditional language teaching. The use of audio-visual aids in English class-rooms has transformed the method of teaching and learning. The use of ICT has emerged as a necessity and demand of the time to meet the professional development of the teachers as well as the upcoming students in schools.

ICT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The incorporation of ICT in teaching and learning is considered as a medium in which a variety of approaches and pedagogical philosophies may be implemented. Subsequently, the need for professional development of teachers is worldwide acknowledged. Integration of ICT into teacher education and school education system is an ongoing process. Teacher training in the class-room use of modern technology helps increase teacher’s efficiency in using ICT in education. Teachers need to possess the knowledge of content, pedagogy and also the technology. Teaching as well as learning has changed due to the encroachment of technology into education. The teachers need to acquaint themselves with the new technology in order to carry out their teaching effectively. The aim of the integration of ICT in teacher education should not be only to make the teachers learn the use of technology, but to make them techno-savvy, so that they should use it with their interest and not treat as a load or a burden. The first ICT Proficiency Framework for Teachers was launched in 2008 by UNESCO to help teachers become efficient learners of technology. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is making efforts to enable teacher education institutions produce a workforce of trained teachers who are fully conversant with the technology. Though the ICT was initiated early in the 1984 and again in the 8th five-year plan was emphasized, but finally, the ICT scheme was launched in December, 2004 in Indian school education system to promote computer education (MHRD). Much research has been done on the integration of ICT in teacher education. The current class-room teaching demands from teachers the ability to provide technology-supported learning environment. Similarly, teachers need to be provided with the technology services during their pre-service or in-service training. If the integration of ICT in the class-room is limited, then it is due to teachers’ low level of ICT competence, insufficient ICT-based training, and limited ICT resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study assessed the ELT teachers’ ICT literacy and the problems faced by the teachers in integrating ICT in ELT class-room, where it found that teachers’ ICT literacy was moderate and also the ICT usage was very limited in class-room due to the gap in the knowledge of the teachers (Correos). The study found that teachers seemed to be weak in managing the problems occurred while using ICT in teaching of writing skills (Yunus, et al.). Banand Bronzin have proposed for the training of teachers of informatics based on a hybrid model of distance learning with the help of modern ICT. All these studies describe that learning usage ICT is becoming a global phenomenon and need.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive study that emphasizes on the status of the integration of ICT in teacher education and the challenges faced by the school teachers while using ICT in ELT class-rooms. The data were collected from twenty schools (10 self-financed and 10 Grant-in-Aid) of Bharuch District. The respondents were teachers who have undergone teacher training during 2006 - 2016. The tool for data collection was structured interview, which included three open-ended questions. The collected data were analysed descriptively. The personal teaching experience also helped as a tool in analysing the data and authenticating the results.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WERE

- What is the status of the integration of ICT in teacher education?
- What are the challenges faced by you in real class-room teaching?
- What is the status of usage of ICT in your practical exams of teaching during your teacher education programme?

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data specify that the ICT in teacher education is merely treated as one of the courses and nothing more than that. It is known as 'Educational Technology' in teacher education programs. The respondents said that they got minimum knowledge of ICT skills from training. They also said that during their teacher training programme, there was no emphasis on usage of ICT.

Although the respondents were spread over a decade (2006-2016), but there was no difference in their responses of question one: the status of the integration of ICT in teacher training programme was not good. They were not provided with required amount of exposure, which again affects their class-room teaching. Only the theoretical aspect was taught and that too not very comprehensively. No practice was given to the teacher participants the responses to the second question also indicate dissatisfaction among the teacher participants. The respondents do face problems in usage of ICT in their class-room, due to lack of required exposure of ICT during their teacher training programme. Henceforth, there are lots of barriers in teaching, especially in ELT of all the subjects, technology is used more in language class-room teaching, especially for skills like Listening and Speaking. For this, teachers of ELT need to be well equipped with practical knowledge of technology; they can create technology-oriented learning environment; and they can also bring in innovations in teaching and learning. Use of technology in ELT class-room also creates enthusiasm, eagerness, interest, fervor and motivates the teacher as well as students. The data also indicate that the teachers face some barriers that prevent them from employing ICT in the class-room or develop supporting materials through ICT. The responses to the third question are also not very positive. There was unanimity among the respondents that during their practical exams of teacher training, they were not provided with the environment in which they could use ICT while teaching. There was no emphasis on using ICT during training, which has created a visible gap in their actual performance in class-room teaching. They were given only theoretical knowledge of technology that too very less and without any practice.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the findings, resulting from the data analysis and also based on own personal experiences it may be said that there is a need for practice-oriented training in using ICT. The teacher training institutes have to understand the need for a rigorous use of ICT knowledge in language class-room during training programme itself. The current education system has fully become the technology oriented. ICT to a large extent is proving to be a panacea for all problems related to education. The study has found that there is a greater realization among the teachers that they should be given hands-on experience about integrating ICT in their actual class-room teaching. Though, the conclusion is based on a very small data, the study addresses important issues and their significant on technology driven teaching and learning. Based on the above findings, it may be suggested that:

- ❖ Teacher Education institute should include the theory and practical course on teaching through ICT in class-room.
- ❖ Teachers should be given exhaustive exposure to ICT skills in teacher training programme.
- ❖ Teachers should be encouraged to teach through ICT.
- ❖ ICT instead of one course should be infused in their teaching methodology as a part.

If the data size gets increased, it might cover other aspects detection other significant findings.

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