

ADVANTAGES OF MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract:

With the rapid development of information technology, Teachers are, today, provided with advanced teaching means - multimedia. It is true that multimedia has many advantages in language teaching, such as offering more information, saving more time, stimulating students' imagination and creativity, and so on. Although multimedia has many advantages, some scholars suggested that it should not be used blindly. What we should know is that multimedia just only plays an assisting role in English teaching. The thesis analyses some benefits of multimedia technology in teaching foreign languages and tries to provide with some advice in the teaching field.

Key words: multimedia, assisting role, application, diversity, FL, high efficiency.

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It is important to look at how multimedia technology is gradually taking over English classrooms at all levels and the impact technology has on foreign language learners in our country. In the last few years, several research studies have been done in order to establish the advantages of the use of computers for reading, listening, writing and lately speaking for students that are learning a second language. School districts generally assume that second language some teachers and students know how to use the computer technology and the programs that are needed to be efficient teachers (web browser, Microsoft Office, etc.) but the reality is that districts usually do not provide the necessary training and suitable programs to complement the curriculum of each level for optimal implementation of the educational technology.

Frequently, students and teachers have positive thoughts about the use of the technology in the classroom and how it presents a more open format, flexibility and creativity on language learning. Undoubtedly, its accessibility in and out of the classroom is viewed as beneficial by teachers and students because the learning process keeps taking place without walls and time limitations. Second language teachers are confronted with the challenge of how to reach the computer generation. Today's pupils and teachers in one way or another are being exposed to some form of technology. Desk computers, laptops, smart phones and tablets are technologies that are evolving rapidly into the classrooms. These technologies are becoming second nature to today's second language learners but leaving educators behind on technology's updates and specialized program training which are tailored to teach a second language.

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There are lots of beneficial sides of multimedia in the process of teaching and learning foreign languages. With the help of multimedia technology today's teachers have golden opportunities to solve existing problems. Below we will analyze some advantages of multimedia technology:

A. High Effectiveness

The use of video has been found to effectively develop listening skills and grammar. The use of a teacher-controlled multimedia tool increased the amount of communicative discourse in the classroom by both teachers and students. In this multimedia environment, students will become more active and autonomous. They will be engaged in the language learning effectively via the attractive pictures, animation or sound. They collaborate with their classmates to solve a problem or complete a project in a relaxing environment. Students can learn on their own according to their plans or purposes and teachers can act more as a guide rather than a knowledge-giver. This environment increases the effectiveness of language learning and teaching.

B. Diversity

Multimedia is the combination of sound, text, computer data, animation video, etc. So, teachers have multiple conveying and displaying means to present the teaching material to arouse students' interest, which would make the whole class more effective. For example, if encountering a boring topic but a necessary one, teachers can play a piece of light music at the beginning of the class to create a relaxing environment, which can help students become more focused. Teachers can make use of visual images relative to the boring topic to arouse students' interest. Naturally, students can get different kinds of information using computer. Computers can display the written text and use sounds, pictures, and video simultaneously to convey the input in different ways, which assists students to understand the information more easily. Through simulation and other techniques, computer can present abstract things in a concrete way. Besides, computers also have access to various types of aids, such as dictionaries, pictures, graphs, and voice.

B. High Efficiency

In traditional English classrooms, teachers have to spend time on writing the vital language points and important information on the chalkboard. In the multimedia classrooms, the teacher can use the button and keyboard to show significant content in a few seconds as long as he or she is familiar with the operation of the multimedia. Moreover, the microphone and hi-fi stereo can reduce the teacher's laborious work. With the courseware teachers do not need to write the same language points several times for the different classes, which will not only save a lot of time in the class, but also release teachers from heavy labor. Besides, as the internet has been brought in the teaching English class, multimedia is connected with the network and it becomes a "hypermedia", which provides a number of services including the e-mail, video conference, chat room, etc. S. H. Hsu demonstrated the following strength of hypermedia:

Hypermedia consists of different media and integration, such as text, graphic, animation, audio, etc. not only have various media and their integration greatly enriched the learning environment, but also the production of multimedia teaching material. Learners and hypermedia systems can freely realize man-machine interaction. The learner's CAI system allows the learner to make various study commands on his own and can effectively distinguish these commands. On the other hand, responding to the learner's requirements, the study content and the study process given by the system are in accordance with the learner's

study level. information to the students for the purpose of English learning and accelerate the process of information searching. When we need some related information, we can easily find it from the large amount of information stored on the internet. With a wealth of updated information from the internet, multimedia is popular with the teacher who need to update the teaching materials.

Relationship between multimedia and teaching-The most common function of multimedia is to assist or support the teacher. The appropriately-designed instruction media could not only assist teaching, but also promote learning effect; their relationship is as follows.

Multimedia technology acts as a special intellectual activity, which means it has a number of advantages compared with other information technology training:

The pedagogy means continuous improvement of content and methods of education in modern conditions.

Multimedia provides opportunities to identify and support students with linguistic abilities.

It represents the basis of distance learning.

It provides access to best practices in education and training of the general public through the educational world of the Internet and an extensive communication network.

It creates an artificial language environment, allowing the study of foreign languages (FL) at students' own pace, increasing the independence and responsibility of students when organizing FL training for all age groups. Allows building FL training in accordance with student interests and goals, and allows students to enter into training in the intercultural component of FL.

Multimedia technology is new and apparently has limitless possibilities for creation of means of graphic clarity.

Multimedia (computer with additional devices) can be a powerful tool for everyone to learn foreign languages through self-study, and allow close monitoring and ongoing operational support.

In summary, then, the advantages of using new technologies in the language classroom can only be interpreted in light of the changing goals of language education and the changing conditions in postindustrial society. Language educators now seek not only (or even principally) to teach students the rules of grammar, but rather to help them gain apprenticeship into new discourse communities. This is accomplished through creating opportunities for authentic and meaningful interaction both within and outside the classroom, and providing students the tools for their own social, cultural, and linguistic exploration. The computer is a powerful tool for this process as it allows students access to online environments of international communication. By using new technologies in the language classroom, we can better prepare students for the kinds of international cross-cultural interactions which are increasingly required for success in academic, vocational, or personal life.

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