

PADLET - A Collaborative Language Teaching and Learning Tool



B. Nagamani

Associate Professor of English, Geetanjali College of Engineering & Technology, Hyderabad

Email : santosheflu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Technological sophistication is a significant and promising force for increasing efficiency in education more so in English language teaching and learning. In the past, most teaching was either verbal communication between the teacher and students or written communication from printed materials. These communication channels continue to play important roles in the teaching-learning process even today, though students are learning from pictures, television, recorded lessons and other media. Today, almost all educational institutions around the world use some form of technological media in education. Most technological devices and programmes are prepared to suit the needs of the teacher, students and their learning conditions. The present article discusses the role of ICT in improving the four language skills of engineering students.

Key words: *Technological sophistication, ICT, technological tools.*

Technological advancement has provided teachers with wealth of information. Music, myth, mystery or history can be brought in to the class as never before. Language learning and teaching should not be restricted to the four walls of the classroom. With this as a basic premise a Padlet is created to teach English language to students of our college.

Objectives

- To provide opportunities to learn language beyond classroom
- To integrate technology into language learning
- To provide opportunity for peer learning

Definition& explanation of a Padlet:

Padlet, previously known as Wall Wisher, is a free tool used to create an online bulletin board. It is used to provide information to its users on any topic. Information can be typed on the padlet. Students can record their voices to check for pronunciation errors. This is very helpful especially when they prepare for presentations or seminars. Hyperlinks can be provided for the learners to read further on a topic discussed either in the class or through the padlet. Images, links and videos can be uploaded on the padlet. Padlet wall can either be private, or open to the public. It can also be moderated by

the person who has created it. The background of the padlet can be edited. This editing option available for editing the background creates interest to the readers. Background theme can be selected keeping in mind the latest technological, scientific, business and legal issues of the country. Posts can be added anywhere on the padlet, or can be posted one below the other or can be displayed in a grid-like layout.

Padlet has good security features. Controlling and monitoring of the padlet is also very easy. There are many options available for organizing the padlet. It can be made private, public, password protected or can moderate everything. If the wall is moderated by the teacher all contributions are approved by him/her before they are shown on the padlet.

Advantages:

Padlet is a very simple web tool which can be put into use by any teacher. To use a padlet one need not be very proficient in using computers. This tool can be used by teachers irrespective of their age group, knowledge of computers and experience.

Uses of a Padlet:

Inculcates reading habit:

Students can share their thoughts on any book they read. In fact, teachers can form a reading club of the class or college. Members of the club post their thoughts on the book they read. This creates interest and generates reading habit among the

students. Students can discuss characters, theme and plot. Interesting quotes taken from the book and many more can be shared. Teachers can spark enthusiasm among the students by presenting the printed padlet page for face to face discussion.

Summarizing:

Teachers can summarize large amount of information and present the same in a visually appealing manner to the learners.

Opinion Poll:

Teachers can post topics based on current issues or topics. This will enable the students to analyze an issue in various respects and post their opinions. Students develop writing skills. They learn to write opinion pieces and persuasive essays.

Peer Learning:

Padlet gives an opportunity to the students to learn from each other. Gathering ideas and sharing ideas not only improves their perception, but will also enable them to look at a particular idea from various perspectives.

Listening:

Audio files and videos can be uploaded on the padlet. Thus the students get many opportunities to listen actively.

Writing:

As students write on different topics as posted on the Padlet, it improves their writing skills.

Speaking:

Speaking activities like group discussions can be conducted in the classroom based on the information posted on the Padlet.

Continuous Learning:

Padlet provides the students a wonderful opportunity to learn continuously on a wide range of topics. Padlet provides opportunities to the students to participate in various discussions.

Thus padlet provides both the teachers and the taught to teach and learn the language enthusiastically with ease. Padlet can be used both for review and extension activities. It is very useful for a mixed ability classroom.

Action Plan and Purpose: (Brief report on the Padlet used in our college)

When we started Soft Skills Development classes, our motto was to allow the learners to use their skills rather than their knowledge. The modules were designed in such a way that virtual learning takes place. Though it looks passive from the point of the instructor, it is actually an amalgamation of teaching and learning.

We chose six modules and each module focused on three to four skills. Eg. Interpersonal Skills: listening, empathy, team work and leadership skills. When the students were asked to complete the activity beyond the class, they were asked to send their work to the personal mail of the

instructors. It was difficult for the instructor to give feedback to the individual learner through mail. To overcome this difficulty, a common platform is opened wherein the students along with the peer group can access it. That platform is the Padlet.

After each activity, the learners started accessing and posting their thoughts either on a given quote or a topic. Students responded to the videos and posted their views. The learners had the opportunity to read the posts. The unified attempt of the learners, two hours per week, was a solid exposure and totally different experience for them.

The instructors are the moderators of the tool. They can approve or disapprove the posts. The students can either manipulate or simulate the posts. To support the Padlet, an exclusive gmail account was opened by the instructors as a medium to counsel the learners.

We, the trainers of soft skills from Geetanjali College of Engineering & Technology, have been using this digital tool from two months. Students find the digital tool very useful. The results are encouraging and beneficial.

Evaluation:

Students were evaluated on an individual basis. Feedback was given to them on one on one basis. Moreover, the students also started analyzing their mistakes and showed gradual progress both in their thought process and expression.

Conclusion:

Padlet is a living web page. It is versatile and suitable to language learning and teaching needs. It is a platform which provides equal opportunities to any kind of learners and learning situations. Padlet is free, flexible and versatile tool.

The readers can access the Padlet by clicking the URL provided here:

<http://padlet.com/nagamanikarunasoftskills/GCET>

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