DO TEACHERS HAVE ADEQUATE ICT RESOURCES IN PROMOTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING?

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ABSTRACT

It is generally acknowledged that the standard of English in Malaysian schools has been deteriorating over the years. This decline must be put right if we are to maintain our competitiveness in the global market. The on-going ICT revolution has dramatically changed the way teachers teach and students learn, and the appropriate use of ICT resources can give a tremendous boost to the teaching and learning of English. Traditional classroom teaching ought to be complemented by providing a web-based learning environment. This research is based on the findings of a questionnaire survey conducted over a period of five months, from 1st September 2004 to 31st January 2005. According to the findings, 72.4% of the respondents stated that there is a lack of ICT resources in schools. More recently however, the supply of ICT resources in schools have increased by leaps and bounds, yet the use of ICT tools in English language teaching and learning is far from satisfactory. In the concluding part of this article, some obvious obstacles to ICT use in the teaching and learning of English are discussed.

Keywords: ICT resources, ICT integration, interactive lessons, multimedia applications.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In a recent survey conducted from March 29 to 31, 2005 by Asia-Pacific leading Internet recruitment website (JobStreet.com), its chief executive Mark Cheng cited that the main reason for not hiring fresh graduates is due to poor command of English. Fresh graduates from local universities are unable to communicate effectively in English. English is widely used in the private sector and fresh graduates ought to have communicative competence in English if they wished to be employed. There is therefore a dire need to quickly find a way of upgrading the English communicative skills of students. The answer appears to be in the use of technology in the teaching and learning of the English language. Technology offers unlimited new ways of learning and teaching, and the management of schools (Phillips, 2002). Studies undertaken by ImpaCT2 (British Educational Communications & Technology Agency, 2001) in 30 primary and 25 secondary schools show that the effect of ICT on English Language teaching has been good or very good in about one third of the schools in United Kingdom. Morgan (2001) stated that technology is both a resource and a context for communication. This is certainly true and there is increasing evidence that ICT tools which enable web-based teaching and learning can indeed assist students in acquiring subject content competencies as well as enhance the quality of their learning experience (Oblinger & Rush, 1998).

2.0   SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the survey were:
a)   To investigate the types of ICT resources currently used in the school curriculum in the teaching and learning of English.
b)   To find out if there are adequate ICT resources to facilitate English Language teaching and learning as well as promote e-learning.
c)   To find out the obstacles that affect the use of ICT resources in classroom English Language teaching and learning.

2.1 Survey Design

In this research study, the researcher used a cross-sectional survey and teachers from several districts in Selangor were the target population. A cross-sectional survey is used so that the sample respondents were from both the urban and rural areas. The respondents in this survey were from the Kuala Langat District, Hulu Langat District, Bangsar Area, Taman Dato Harun Area, and Taman

Melawati Area in Selangor. The respondents included a good mix of primary and secondary school teachers. The survey questionnaires were first piloted to a sample of 13 English Language teachers in Sekolah Kebangsaan Olak Lempit, Banting in early August 2004. The comments from the respondents were taken into consideration during the process of refining the questionnaire. The primary reason for this was to develop questions that could be understood easily by the respondents. The set of questions were further thoroughly checked for reliability and validity. The final product was a six-page questionnaire that is used for the main survey. Adequate consideration was given in choosing the target sample.

2.2 Administration

The survey was subsequently administered to teachers in the five areas mentioned previously. The survey was conducted over a period of five months (from 1st September 2004 to 31st January 2005. Using a scale of 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree, the respondents were asked to comment on the ICT resources provided by the Ministry of Education. Out of the 120 questionnaires given out, the researchers managed to collect 109 questionnaires that were completed fully. A total of eleven questionnaires were incomplete and were therefore discarded. The response rate was high because the questionnaires were distributed through five BPPT (Bimbingan Perguruan Profesional dalam Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi – http://www.bppt.com.my) training centres located in the five areas mentioned above.

2.3 Analysis

Responses from the survey were recorded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 12. The questionnaire has seven sections and tremendous amount of data had been collected. In this journal paper only Section E which consists of ICT resources available to teachers and ICT tools used by students are analyzed and a report on the findings is presented in this paper.

3.0   FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

3.1 Respondents' Profile

Most of the respondents (66.1%) in this survey group were below 40 years of age, indicating that the bulk of them were still young and can be receptive to

new ideas and change. Regarding gender, 83% of the respondents were females and only 17% were males. Based on the Malaysian Educational Statistics (2003) as depicted in Table 1 the ratio of female to male teachers in this survey somewhat closely corresponds to the national ratio of 67% females to 33% males. This representation clearly reflects that the majority of the teachers in the teaching profession in Malaysia are women. On academic qualification obtained, 48.6% of the respondents said that they hold a degree and another 42.2% have a Diploma in Education. A small number (9.2%) however have obtained their Masters.

Table 1: Number of Teachers at Primary and Secondary Schools in 2003 by Gender

Level of Education	Number and Percentage of Teachers			
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Primary	58138	33.3 %	116563	66.7 %
Secondary	46128	36.1 %	81645	63.9 %

Source: Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia (Malaysian Educational Statistics, 2003)

ICT resources available to teachers

The respondents' responses are tabulated in Table 2 and Table 3. Though the median for only two statements surpassed 3.00, all six statements and their responses need to be examined and analyzed in detail. Statement 1 says that lack of ICT resources impedes the integration of ICT in the teaching and learning of English. Based on Table 2, 18.3% and 54.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the above statement. This finding shows that ICT resources are generally lacking in many of the schools. ICT resources in all 10,000 schools in Malaysia ought to be improved if we want technology to support teaching and learning. According to Mat (2000), the impact of technology will give a new dimension to the quality of our education system. Recent figures released by the Ministry of Education show that 4,500 schools are already equipped with computer laboratories, 99,000 computer units and 4,600 servers. A total of 8,120 schools are connected to the broadband School-Net and a total of 97,000 laptops and 70,000 LCD projectors have been supplied to teachers teaching core subjects (New Straits Times, 2005). The above information augurs well for promoting English language teaching and learning.

Table 2: ICT resources available to teachers showing frequency (percentage)

No	ICT Resources Available to Teachers (Total number of respondents -109)	1	2	3	4	5
1	Lack of ICT resources impedes the integration of ICT in teaching and learning of English.	18.3	54.1	20.2	5.5	1.8
2	There are sufficient computer labs in schools to support ICT integrated lessons.	6.4	26.6	20.2	30.3	16.5
3	Broadband access is readily available to support on-line learning.	5.5	17.4	33.0	28.4	15.6
4	School computers are too old and too slow with out-of-date software.	10.1	27.5	44.0	14.7	3.7
5	Besides the CD-ROM materials, teachers sometimes refer to suggested e-learning web sites during the English lessons.	6.4	26.6	33.9	26.6	6.4
6	Teacher's attitudes towards ICT integration are not supportive.	7.3	43.1	31.2	13.8	4.6

(Scale: 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree)

Statement 2 has a median of 3.00 and it is concerned about the adequacy of computer laboratories in schools to support ICT integrated activities. About 6.4% strongly agreed and another 26.6% agreed that there were sufficient computer labs. A total of 46.8%, however, disagreed by saying that the computer labs in schools were still insufficient. Twenty teachers were interviewed to verify this data. Many confided that though there were many computers in schools, the operating systems were out-of-date and in poor working condition. This frustrates the teachers' attempts to use them in teaching and learning. One solution to this problem is probably for each teacher to buy a notebook and use it in class. The personal possession of a computer may well be the single most important factor enabling a teacher to integrate ICT into their professional practice (Dawes, 2001).

Table 3: ICT resources available to teachers showing Median

No	Facilities (Total number of respondents – 109)	Median
1	Lack of ICT resources impedes the integration of ICT in teaching and learning of English.	2.00
2	There are sufficient computer labs in schools to support ICT integrated lessons.	3.00
3	Broadband access is readily available to support on-line learning.	3.00
4	School computers are too old and too slow with out-of-date software.	3.00
5	Besides the CD-ROM materials, teachers sometimes refer to suggested e-learning web sites during the English lessons.	3.00
6	Teacher's attitudes towards ICT integration are not supportive	2.00

In statement 3, which has a median of 3.00, 5.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 17.4% of the respondents agreed that broadband access is readily available to support on-line learning. Out of a total of 109 respondents, 33% remained neutral to this statement while 44% of the respondents said that broadband access is not readily available. Currently, GITN Sdn. Bhd., an associate company of Telekom Malaysia, is in the process of upgrading the School-Net network from 1 Mbps to 2 Mbps in all the 10,000 schools in the country. Web-based learning using the Internet is gaining popularity among primary and secondary school students. Apart from disseminating information, the web is an excellent medium for teacher-student and student-student interaction and communication. The World Wide Web comprises hyper-linked documents that include text, sound, animation, video, and live video streaming that provides a resource-rich multi-media environment which can exert a powerful motivation for students to learn. Multimedia is firmly set in the twenty-first century and its use is increasing exponentially to the extent that many children are learning much of what interest them from the web rather than from school (Bruntlett, 2001).

Statement 5 did mention about CD-ROMs that are available for teachers in the form of courseware materials. A number of multimedia teaching-learning materials in the form of CD-ROMs developed by the Educational Technology Division and Syarikat Telekom Smart School Sdn. Bhd. have been distributed to the 88 existing Smart Schools and these have increased tremendously from year to year. Please see Table 4 for information on the number of CD-ROMs distributed to Smart Schools. As of January 2006, Malaysian government considers all schools to be smart schools and the courseware produced is now distributed to all Government schools.

Table 4: English language teaching-learning materials distributed to 88 smart schools

Subject	Total number of CD-ROMs produced	Year/Form
English Language	408 (Covers 80% of Syllabus)	Year 1, Year 2, Form 1, Form 2

Source: Educational Technology Division Report, 8th March 2004 – www.moe.edu.my

In statement 6 of Table 3, 7.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 43.1 % of the respondents agreed that the teacher's attitude toward ICT integration is not supportive. This finding shows that the negative attitude of teachers could act as a stumbling block to greater use of ICT resources in the teaching and learning of English. Positive attitudes of teachers as well as learners are crucial in the teaching and learning of English. "One of the most important attitudinal factors is the attitude of the learners to the language and to its learners" (Spolsky, 1969). Studies done on Universiti Utara Malaysia matriculation students in learning English revealed that the attitudes of students towards language and the culture of the English speaking people were negative throughout (Hamida , 1996).

Use of ICT Tools by Students

The summaries of the responses given by the sample are tabulated in Tables 5 and 6. The mean for five out of six statements surpassed 3.00 and each statement and their responses will be examined and analyzed in detail. Statement 1 says that students frequently use e-mail in collaborative activities organized by the

teacher. Only 1.8% and 9.2% of the respondents stated that the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the frequent use of e-mail in collaborative activities organized by the teacher. Majority of the students (57.8%) however, disagreed with this statement and said that generally, e-mail is not frequently used. The benefits of using e-mail are abundant in English language teaching and learning. By using e-mail and sharing files, students have the chance to collaborate and work together with other classmates, peers, and teachers. Networking electronically can help learners create, analyze, and produce information and ideas more easily and efficiently. Students should be encouraged to use e-mail to make social contact with pen friends from other countries, especially with native speakers of English. E-mail conversations are social activities and social activities tend to engage students' interests (Nagel, 1999). Research done by Trenchs (1996) in Canada discovered that using email as a supplement to the classroom curriculum can be effective. The students voluntarily used e-mail. They were self-motivated to use their new language in a new and creative way for them. One of the benefits of using email includes the scrolling feature that allows students to view the incoming message and use its structure as a model for creating a response. The scrolling feature further allows students to easily edit and revise. The major benefit of using e-mail as a language learning activity is the fact that students are using meaningful language and authentic text. Liao (1999) stated that based on her study on an e-mail project involving sophomore EFL students at the National Chung Hsing University in Taiwan with key-pals of varying age from Australia, Republic of Czechoslovakia, Germany, Ireland, Romania and the United States, there was an improvement in their reading and writing skills.

On students' referring to web resources to help them in completing their homework, only 2.8% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 14.7% agreed to this statement. The majority of the respondents, i.e. 56.7% did not agree that many students refer to web resources to aid them in their homework tasks. This finding is a setback for students. For the language learner, the Internet as an ICT tool offers a world of information available to students at the touch of a button and lends itself to communication possibilities that can greatly enhance the language learning experience (Cononelos & Olivia, 1993). One pertinent point about the internet needs to be mentioned here. Students are intrinsically motivated to use the Internet as they see the Internet as trendy and want to be part of it. Teachers need to encourage students to do web browsing of relevant websites as the benefits are many. Kang's (1995) study on secondary school students in Malaysia found that students enjoy learning through Internet activities because they can search for information in a direct, active, and interactive

Table 5: ICT Tools used by students showing percentage

No	ICT Tools used by students (Total number of respondents -109)	1	2	3	4	5
1	Students frequently use e-mail in collaborative activities organized by the teacher.	1.8	9.2	31.2	42.2	15.6
2	Many students refer to web resources to help them in completing their homework.	2.8	14.7	25.7	41.3	15.6
3	ICT tools have helped in the production and presentation of students' work..	5.5	35.8	33.0	14.7	11.0
4	Revision sites are popular among students and are referred to on a number of occasions at home.	2.8	21.1	36.7	31.2	8.3
5	Students frequently use the internet to gather information at home as they have the time and the facility.	0.9	28.4	29.4	27.5	13.8
6	Students are able to find useful resources including past lessons in the school intranet.	2.8	15.6	31.2	33.9	16.5

(Scale: 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree)

manner. Out of a total of 109 respondents, 5.5% and another 35.8% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to statement 3 which says ICT tools have helped in the production and presentation of students' work. These figures implied that students generally (41.3%) believe that ICT tools can help in the production and presentation of students' work. In statement 4, 23.9% of the respondents said that revision sites are popular among students and are referred to on a number of occasions at home, while 39.5 % of the respondents thought otherwise.

In statement 5, 0.9% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 28.4% agreed that students frequently use the Internet to gather information at home as they have the time and the facility. Discounting the respondents who remained neutral, 41.3% of the respondents said that students do not frequently use the Internet to obtain information at home. Of all the ICT tools, the researcher

Table 6: Use of ICT Tools used by students showing median

No	Statements referring to use of ICT skills (Total number of respondents – 109)	Median
1	Students frequently use e-mail in collaborative activities organized by the teacher.	4.00
2	Many students refer to web resources to help them in completing their homework.	4.00
3	ICT tools have helped in the production and presentation of students' work.	3.00
4	Revision sites are popular among students and are referred to on a number of occasions at home.	3.00
5	Students frequently use the internet to gather information at home as they have the time and the facility.	3.00
6	Students are able to find useful resources including past lessons in the school intranet.	4.00

considers the Internet as the most significant ICT tool in enhancing teaching and learning of the English language. The Internet represents a vast array of authentic resources as well as motivational opportunities (Singhal, 1997). The use of Internet is widespread in numerous fields and domains and therefore it has great potential for educational use, especially in English language teaching and learning.

Out of a total of 109 respondents, only 2.8% and another 15.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to statement 6, which stated students were able to find useful resources including past lessons in the school intranet. About 50.4% of students disagreed to this statement probably because they were ignorant of the usefulness of the school intranet. An interesting interactive English lesson when uploaded into the school intranet provides many opportunities for that content to be shared by other users in the school. A local intranet can give many users access to the same materials at the same time and enable knowledge, concepts, and understanding to be communicated between many users (Leafe, 2000).

4.0   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the figures given in Table 2, the bulk of the respondents (72.4%) stated that there was a lack of ICT resources in schools and this inadequacy impedes the integration of ICT tools in teaching and learning of English. More recently, the Malaysian government has 'pumped-in' RM401.1 million in equipping schools with ICT resources (Prime Minister Department, 2001). In statement 4 of Table 2, 37.6% out of a total of 109 respondents still said that the computers in schools were too old and out-of-date. This is generally true as the technological changes in ICT are rapid. Operating systems become old and the wear-and-tear sets in with frequent use of the hardware and software. The researcher has already suggested the personal possession of notebook computers to overcome this problem. The researchers are of the opinion that the greatest stumbling block is not the inadequate ICT resources, but rather the indifferent attitude of English language teachers. The survey findings revealed that 50.4% of the respondents agreed by saying that the teachers' attitude towards ICT integration in the teaching and learning of English were not supportive. A number of teachers in Sekolah Kebangsaan Sri Langat and Sekolah Kebangsaan Olak Lempit in Kuala Langat district were interviewed to double check this finding. The teachers confirmed that besides the computer laboratories, a few other classrooms have been fixed with LCD projectors that are connected to computers. This means that the ICT tools in schools have been increasing steadily but sadly, teachers are not maximizing their use, especially in the teaching and learning of English. There is therefore a need to enforce ICT integration in the teaching and learning of English. Though the number of websites promoting English language teaching and learning has grown by leaps and bounds, only 17.5% of the respondents said that their students were regular visitors and use the web resources to aid them. The researchers are of the opinion that more web related exercises ought to given as homework to promote greater use of the web. A word of caution though on the useful resources offered by the Internet. The reliability and accuracy of some resources in the World Wide Web are in doubt. Thus, the onus is on teachers to thoroughly check the websites and its content before prescribing them to their students.

The responses to statement 5 of the survey in Table 2 showed that besides the CD-ROM materials, 33% of teachers sometimes refer to suggested e-learning websites during the English lessons. But strangely in statement 3, only 22.9% of the respondents said that broadband access is readily available to support on-line learning. A large number of respondents (44%) said that broadband access is not readily available to support on-line learning. A cross tabulation

between these two variables was therefore done to find out the relationship between these two statements. Table 7 shows the cross tabulation results. The Chi-square tests in Table 8 measures the hypothesis that the row and column variables in a cross tabulation are independent. A low significance value, 0.001 for linear-by-linear association, indicates that there may be some relationship between the two variables. Similarly, the low significance values for Kendall's tau-b, Spearman Correlation and Pearson's R in Table 9 indicated that there is a relationship between the two variables. The ordinal symmetric measures in Table 9 indicate the significance, strength, and direction of the relationship between the row and column variables of a cross tabulation. The positive values for Kendall's tau-b (0.259), Spearman Correlation (0.300), and Pearson's R (0.310) indicate that there is a fairly strong relationship between the variables 'Broadband access is readily available to support on-line learning' and 'Besides the CD-ROM materials, teachers sometimes refer to suggested e-learning web sites during the English lessons'. The positive relationship show that if broadband access is readily available, then there are opportunities for more teachers to refer to e-learning web sites during the English lessons.

Referring to Table 5, on the use of e-mail in collaborative activities organized by the teacher, only 12 (11%) out of a total of 109 respondents agreed to this statement. This implies that the students do not have the opportunity to create an e-mail account. The use of e-mail in communicative activities can bring great benefits to the language learner. The survey analysis further shows that

**Table 7: Cross tabulation between 'Broadband access readily available'
and 'Reference to web sites'**

		Reference to web sites					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Broadband access available	Strongly Agree	2	1	2	1	0	6
	Agree	2	9	3	3	2	19
	Neutral	1	8	20	7	0	36
	Disagree	2	8	9	10	2	31
	Strongly Disagree	0	3	3	8	3	17
Total		7	29	37	29	7	109

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests results

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.860(a)	16	.008
Likelihood Ratio	31.405	16	.012
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.411	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	109		

Table 9: Ordinal symmetric measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.259	.085	3.008	.003
	Spearman Correlation	.300	.097	3.253	.002(c)
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.310	.098	3.379	.001(c)
N of Valid Cases		109			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
c Based on normal approximation.

the school intranet has not been utilized to load past lessons. A personal visit to 10 secondary schools in Kuala Langat District revealed that these schools have many useful ICT resources that include computer labs, notebook computers, LCDs, scanners, and even digital cameras, but strangely teachers were hesitant to use the resources in class. A total of 10 key English teachers were interviewed to find out the reasons for not using the available ICT resources in schools. The following reasons were cited for under-utilizing the available ICT resources:
(a)   Heavy workload that includes teaching and administrative duties.
(b)   Long waiting list to use the computer laboratories. Many labs are still using out-of-date operating systems.
(c)   Poor broadband connection and working broadband access are not functioning well. It is unbelievable that some SchoolNet connections are slower than dial-up connections.
(d)   Exam pressure and fear of not being able to complete the syllabus.
(e)   Poor ICT skills of the teachers

The researchers agree that one of the major reasons for the under-utilization of ICT resources is primarily due to the poor ICT skills of teachers. Training in ICT skills is crucial in implementing ICT integration in the teaching and learning of English. As more teachers become competent in the use of basic ICT tools, there would be more ICT integrated activities in the classroom. This would give a boost to English language teaching and learning. Several interviews with English Department heads confirmed the view that the teachers who integrate ICT tools in the teaching and learning of English have more than average ICT skills.

> *The extent to which teachers are given time and access to pertinent training to use computers to support learning plays a major role in determining whether or not technology has a positive impact on achievement. Students of teachers with more than ten hours of training significantly outperformed students whose teachers had five or fewer hours of training* (Valdez, McNabb, Foertsch, Anderson, Hawkes, & Raack, 2002).

Computer skills training should be provided on an ongoing basis as more new software and hardware are being introduced at a rapid pace. Interim findings from ImpaCT2 indicate that even experienced teachers may find it challenging to integrate ICT into their teaching if they are unfamiliar with software and hardware (ImpaCT2, 2001). As of December 2005, 3699 English option teachers throughout Malaysia have been given a two-week course on ways of integrating ICT tools in teaching and learning activities (http://www.bppt.com.my/StaffArea). This is a move in the right direction and since 66.1% of the respondents were below the age of 40, it should not be a problem for those teachers to acquire the necessary ICT skills through training.

5.0   CONCLUSION

Integration of ICT resources in teaching and learning that includes multimedia applications would surely enrich the learning environment of the students and provide powerful motivation that would sustain English language learning beyond the classroom. ICT resources provide many opportunities for constructivist learning through their provision and support for resource-based, student-centred settings and by enabling learning to be related to context and to

practice (Barron, 1998). In addition, ICT integration can increase the potential for meaningful interaction by bringing in the outside world via the internet. At the time of the survey, ICT resources in many of schools, especially vernacular schools, had been grossly inadequate. However, more recently, digital resources in most schools have been increasing steadily, but sadly there has been no corresponding increase in the use of ICT resources by teachers in the teaching and learning of English. ICT resources can help pupils to talk, read, and write for a range of purposes. ICT resources are most effective when embedded in the curriculum and integrated into schemes of work. Traditional classroom teaching ought to be complemented by providing a web-based learning environment. Providing a website which is uploaded with interactive English language lessons can give adequate practice and bring quick improvement. Presently, the Ministry of Education through the nationwide Bimbingan Perguruan Profesional Dalam Teknologi Maklumat Dan Komunikasi (BPPT) programme and "Intel: Teach to the Future" is conducting courses on ICT integration in teaching and learning. It may take a while for the school curriculum to feel the full effects of these courses. The survey results showed that many teachers still have negative attitudes in the use of technology in the teaching and learning of English. Out of the 109 respondents, 50.4% of them said that teacher attitude towards ICT integration is not supportive. A concerted effort must be made to change the mindset of English teachers. Teachers have been encouraged time and again to use the web which has rich resources in English language teaching and learning. The World Wide Web comprise hyper-linked documents that contain text, sound, animation, video, and live streaming video that provide powerful motivation to learners. It has hundreds of interactive free websites ready to be used by teachers and students. Other useful ICT resources such as WEBCT, Blackboard, and other online discussion formats have been almost absent in the school environment. Discussion boards give opportunities for students to interact online, in a virtual place, probably in the comforts of their own home where they are free to interact. Online discussion can "diversify and enrich quality teaching practices, enhance student learning, as well as facilitate high educational outcomes for all stakeholders" (Simpson & Harbon, 2004). Last but not least, the researchers firmly believe that increased use of hypermedia via the web, increased use of e-mail between teachers and students, chatting with pen friends especially native speakers beyond the classroom, doing interactive language exercises, collaboration through audio, and video conferencing could bring about the desired improvement in English language proficiency.

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