

Designing Online Materials for Blended Learning: Optimising on BookWidgets

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ABSTRACT

With the growing advancements in technology and their highly influential role in teaching and learning, present day teachers find themselves grappling with a whole set of parameters against which they need to measure themselves constantly. One cannot be a proficient teacher in the true sense of the word if he or she is merely good at classroom management. There is more to it than meets the eye. The teacher has to cut across domains in order to scale heights in a bid for survival in today's highly competitive scenario. Earlier, materials design, curriculum design, research, teacher development, etc. were the domains of ivy-tower researchers and pedagogues. But now, the teacher has to know a bit of all in order to handle the present tech-savvy learners. This paper is an attempt to orient those teachers who are at the beginner's level or the intermediate level to use user-friendly online platforms to design tasks and activities. The purpose of doing so is to enable teachers to create a highly interactive learning set up for the purpose of blended learning or for any online learning that serves more of a supplementary role. The research focuses on the Belgium-based platform BookWidgets to strengthen its claim that the right materials at the right time for the right learners is sure to yield the right results. There are different types of softwares covered under three main apps in BookWidgets – Test and Review, Games, and Miscellaneous. The research concludes with an evaluation of the platform based on Chapelle's evaluation criteria. The conclusion attempts to strengthen the claim that BookWidgets is, in every sense, one of the best options for interactive learning.

1.0 Introduction

Technology has swept over education since the first decade of the twenty-first century. It is apparent that AL is no exception in this regard, the proof of it seen in its comparatively new fields of CALL and MALL. The World Wide Web teems with websites dedicated to language teaching and learning. Some of these are tutorial in nature, while others optimise on the role of the computer as a tool.

1.1 Boon or Bane?

There are a lot of theories emerging in CALL and MALL that are subsumed under the umbrella term Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL). Nevertheless, the question that one often raises is: Do learners really use the computer and mobile devices for language learning? This is mainly because generations Y and Z are more glued to their laptops, smart phones and tablets and are often accused of "phubbing" (a newly coined term which means ignoring a person who is talking to you,

or who is sitting with you, and being preoccupied with your smart phone or tablet). Research has proved that their purpose of using these devices is mainly for entertainment purposes. As a result, parents and even certain institutions are wary of their use. On the other hand, as mentioned above, the realm of ELT is overwhelmingly filled with theories and research articles pertaining to the relevance of CALL and MALL in the present educational set up.

1.2 Aim and Purpose of the Research

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how effective design of materials, combined with planning and evaluation, can bring about a desired change in blended learning at the tertiary level. The term blended learning specifically refers to a blend of classroom teaching/ learning and online learning. The term 'online learning' refers to learning using the computer or mobile devices (laptop, tablet, or smart phone).

This research seeks to be moderately prescriptive in its approach and is targeted at teachers who have been optimising on the Lecture Method all these years and who are wary of the very idea of online learning and online materials. It aims at emphasising the fact that although technology does have a never-ending list of malcontents that make it seem like the devil incarnate, it does have its silver lining in its learning software and *dedicated websites* (those that specially deal with language teaching and learning). Therefore, the very computers and mobile devices that are viewed with derision and suspicion are tools that aid in the teaching/learning process. The research focuses on the platform *BookWidgets*, which is a standard authoring tool that aids in effective learning. The research aims at affirming the need for such platforms or softwares in content-based courses.

1.3 The Present ELT/ ELL Scenario

It wouldn't be an understatement if one were to say that the Internet is replete with resources for English language teaching and learning. A simple Google search (as on 13 Mar 2019) for "materials for English language teaching" yielded 237,000 results while another one on "materials for English language learning" produced 283,000 results (both key phrases were enclosed in double quotations while doing the search).

At present, technology forms an integral part of the learning curriculum in most countries in the world. The Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) strategy is implemented in many colleges and universities, and in fact, in many cases, one comes across learning situations where flipped learning is preferred to traditional, and to blended learning. But, the scenario is different in some countries, where technology is used in a somewhat restricted sense in the educational set up. However, awareness of present technology and technological tools is the common factor that links teaching/ learning situations across the globe.

The World Wide Web has indeed proved a boon for teachers and learners in this regard. In most teaching/ learning situations, online resources are a boon for teachers and learners as it saves preparation time. With a few 'cosmetic' changes, the resources are ready to be used in class as teaching or testing materials, or supplementary learning materials. But this is not always the case in traditional classrooms, where online materials play a secondary or supplementary role, or in the case of blended learning, where digital/ online materials play a more significant role.

Before proceeding to the issues related to materials, it is essential to delve deeper into the idea of blended learning.

1.4 Defining Blended Learning

According to Chew, Jones and Turner (2005), 'blended learning involves the combination of two fields of concern: education and educational technology' (5). This definition is too broad in the present sense and therefore it would be worthwhile to consider Graham (2006) whose definition is comparatively more precise – *Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction*' (7). However, considering the fact that technology has advanced by leaps and bounds, this definition falls short of appropriacy. Bryan and Volchenkova (2016) aptly opine: "At the time Graham offered this definition, computer-mediated communication was seen as largely asynchronous and text based" (25). But, the move is more towards synchronous communication at present due to technological advances in audio/ video chat softwares.

Dziuban, Hartman and Moskal (2004) presented their views on blended learning much earlier than Graham, but their definition is more extensive. They strongly affirm that blended learning is "... a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialisation opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment, rather than a ratio of delivery modalities (3)." Now that the foundation is set, the next step would be to discuss the scope of blended learning.

1.5 Scope of Blended Learning

Dziuban et al's definition has opened up a number of possibilities pertaining to the scope of blended learning. Blended learning (as much as flipped learning) can be a 'materials developer's Paradise.' Teachers and CALL/ MALL experts can design interactive online courses or materials that can aid learners in parallel with the traditional face-to-face classroom learning. Delivery modalities can however vary according to the learning situation and the nature of the target audience. In short, blended learning opens up a entire gamut of research and development activities for teachers and researchers as much as the traditional approach. But here again, one needs to identify the actual status of blended learning in the learning environment in which he/ she has to teach.

1.6 The Status of Blended Learning in the Present Educational Setup

Blended learning is a matter of style and prestige these days as far as institutions are concerned. But, as far as teachers and learners are concerned, blended learning produces high levels of motivation in some and a sense of uneasiness in others. This is due to the fact that it offers quite a few challenges in terms of “men, materials, and methods.”

1.7 Issues in Blended Learning

Blended learning is definitely not the learners’ paradise, at least not for all learners. Many learners don’t prefer blended learning because they say that it is a form of ‘distanced’ learning. Therefore, one needs to take the following issues into account while conducting any sort of research in the field of CALL or MALL, whether it is teacher development, learning strategies, or the role of materials in the teaching/ learning process.

1.7.1 Students’ Attitude towards Blended Learning

Students, being the end users, are explicitly or implicitly involved in the decision-making process, as far as teaching/learning is concerned. In some countries (E.g. India, KSA), majority of the students prefer the traditional face-to-face communication in spite of having the advantage of online and blended learning software in their institutions. This, in turn, could be attributed to the following factors like a) Lack of proper mobile devices or updated devices with sufficient memory space b) Learners’ attitude towards mobile devices c) Learners’ mindset in terms of the traditional classroom – face-to-face learning is the best way to learn. d) Lengthy and boring online lessons without proper use of multimedia except for static power point slides. But, in other countries, the case is different. Technology is an inseparable component that is closely linked to the lives of teachers and learners.

1.7.2 Nature of Resources

As mentioned earlier, there is no dearth of resources as far as online materials as concerned. But, while some of them are hosted by open-communities for free, most standard resources come under the paid category. It is natural for most teachers and learners to seek free materials and only few end users attempt to explore the realm of paid online resources.

1.7.3 Matching Resources with the Learning Situation

Although there are resources available for almost every aspect of language teaching and learning, it is difficult to choose resources that promptly suit the

learning situation or the target group’s learning outcomes. Therefore, it is apparent that the teacher must adapt the materials or create similar materials for his/ her learners.

Sevilla-Pavón et al are right in stating, “Nowadays, finding, choosing and developing or adapting materials is a very important component of education as well as a key element for...language teaching and learning...” (269). In other words, finding suitable materials is not an easy task because learning materials that suit one particular target group or learning context may prove out of place with yet another learning group or context.

1.7.4 Designing the Right Materials

Often, teachers assume the role of material or content developers, because they are aware of common learning problems and are more likely to arrive at more plausible solutions than ELT pedagogues and experts. Yet, the problem of finding the right materials continues among learners because, as Brian Tomlinson rightly points out, “...many ELT materials are designed for teaching English rather than for learning it” (3). Simply stated, most materials are teacher-centred rather than learner-centred. It is from this point that the research paper aims at making a start since the whole idea is to discuss the design of materials that are learner-friendly and learner-centred. Levy clearly sums up the different approaches to designing CALL materials:

For those who wish to create new CALL materials, either privately or commercially, independently or as a member of a team, even a cursory glance at contemporary CALL activity shows that there are a multitude of approaches. Points of departure range dramatically from top-down approaches centred perhaps upon a theory of language or language learning, or a curriculum specification, while others might develop CALL materials from the bottom up, perhaps by using the computer to address a particular classroom problem. Other points of departure might include a learning strategy, a macro skill, computer conferencing, or an exploration of aspects of the technology itself. Once the point of departure has been clarified, there are immediately practical issues to consider – for example, the selection of the hardware and software development tools for the project. (Levy 2)

2. Content-based Courses

Often, there is a misconception among teachers that activity-based teaching or task-based teaching is related to the teaching of skills. As a result, literature, linguistics, and applied linguistics courses (henceforth referred to as content-based courses) are often taught using the Lecture Method. Further, there is often a misconception among teachers that the mere use of projectors and laptops in the classroom is computer-assisted language learning. While it is true to a small extent, what seems to be missing is the main objective from the teaching perspective. If one were to teach using the Lecture Method where the black or the white board is substituted with the laptop and the projector, there really isn't much difference except at the marginal level. This is one of the reasons why teachers often consider CALL or MALL either too tedious or a mere supplementary tool for the Lecture Method.

Even with regard to online materials, the Web is loaded with sites and materials that pertain to the teaching/ learning of skills. But, when it comes to courses that are largely content-based, there is a definite dearth of resources that are activity-based.

Students often complain that their course materials are packed with theories and they seem to see nothing but “words, words, words,” which makes learning tedious. It is at this point that the teacher is forced to sideline one of her roles as material seeker and take on the role of a materials designer or a content developer. Goal 2, Standard 3 of the TESOL Technology Standards for Language Teachers clearly states, “Language teachers design and manage language learning activities and tasks using technology appropriately to meet curricular goals and objectives” (34).

2.1 Free or Fee

In most cases, the teacher is at cross roads torn between few resources that are free but offer limited information and relatively lesser activities, and on the other hand, sites whose subscription or membership may turn out to be way too expensive. In most cases, teachers prefer free resources in spite of their extremely limited scope. In addition, most teachers hold the opinion that the institution, where they are employed, is solely responsible for anything related to teaching and learning.

The silver lining in this dark cloud of the academia are those few teachers whose passion for teaching and innovation takes the better of all other impeding factors. These teachers are usually selected about their choice of resources and are ready to pay a subscription if it is a nominal sum and if they

strongly believe that it will hone their abilities not only as teachers but as materials creators and developers, and above all, as practical researchers.

If one were to go by Levy's approaches to designing materials, then the most convenient approach would be the bottom-up approach because of the following reasons:

2.1.1 The Right Approach or Method

Adhering to a particular learning approach or method thoroughly cannot be considered the best solution in the present educational set up. This is due to the fact that learners' attitudes and aptitudes vary to greater extents than what they were two decades ago. Therefore adopting the eclectic approach by choosing the best from most learning approaches and methods would be the best possible way to tackle the teaching/ learning situation.

2.1.2 Personalised Learning

Designing materials for a particular target group clearly indicates a step towards personalized learning and is reflective of the teacher's desire to make learning more suited to the learners' needs. There is no dearth of authoring software or quizzing apps, but most of them are restricted in terms of their assessment tools. They may offer options for framing MCQs, true or false, or matching questions, but nothing beyond. This is precisely why *BookWidgets* proves to be one of the best options available.

3.0 Book Widgets

Book Widgets is a Belgium-based platform for creating interactive learning materials. It is available on Apple Store as an app and can be downloaded and installed on iPhones and iPads. But, with regard to Android mobiles or tabs, it is available only by way of web browsers. The teacher has to pay a nominal subscription fee if he/ she wants to publish information or share it with students. By paying the subscription, the teachers enjoy the advantage of creating as many widgets as they can. *BookWidgets* apps fall under the following categories: Test and Review, Games, Pictures, Math, Embed Third Party, and Miscellaneous. The paper aims at analysing/ reviewing the strengths of select apps that come under Test and Review, Games, and Miscellaneous.

One of the greatest advantages of *BookWidgets* is that it offers a sharing link to *Google Classroom*. So, teachers who have an account on *Google Classroom* can easily share the exercises and activities that they create on *BookWidgets* with their learners.

3.1 Test and Review

Test and Review, one of the commonest of the apps, focuses mainly on recapitulation and assessment. There are nine items that are covered under this category, but the research paper intends to emphasise the significance of five apps.

3.1.1 Quiz

On hearing the word quiz, one gets the impression of the conventional quiz that has only MCQs and true or false or matching questions. But BookWidgets surprises the user with its variety of questions – fill in the blanks, fill in the table, MCQ (which can also be used for true or false questions), multiple answers, drag and drop, picture drag drop, single line text question, matching (text to text, image to image, and text to image), correct words in a sentence, annotate picture (labelling), word ordering, picture ordering, etc.

A teacher with a tinge of creativity within, is sure to design quizzes that are different from the conventional type by using the drag and drop, matching text and image, and picture ordering. For example, a teacher, who teaches fiction, can find pictures that suit a particular situation or event on Google Images. By using such images, he/ she can ask students to find out the sequence or use a matching exercise where the picture has to be matched with a suitable verbal description.

In short, the use of unconventional questions paves way for lateral thinking in contrast to the linear. Nevertheless, this depends to a large extent on the teacher's ability to frame the right kind of questions.

3.1.2 Worksheet

There is hardly any difference between the quiz and the worksheet in terms of structure and scope since both have provision for exam mode, and enable submission of answers to the teacher's registered email. The teacher can project differences between the two by sharing worksheets to students and telling them to take time to submit while making a quiz time-bound and giving students the impression that they have to take up a test on a particular topic.

3.1.3 Split Worksheet

This is one of the best features of BookWidgets. The main aim of this app is to facilitate reading comprehension. But, for a teacher, who wishes to optimise on this app to enable his/ her students to navigate their way through difficult course material, there is a lot that can be done. Here, teachers can create a text and corresponding questions in parallel on the same page. The right side of the webpage is

allotted for the text, while the left is for the comprehension questions. The advantage of this is that learners can read the text and answer questions as they do for most proficiency examinations.

The teacher's challenge as a materials developer lies in his/ her ability to frame the right kind of questions. If the teacher is more in favour of the graded approach, then it would be more effective to start off with simple factual questions that motivate the learner to move ahead and face slightly more challenging questions that may be inferential or evaluative in nature. Split Worksheet is not restricted to texts. It offers scope for audio or video files or links to audio and video files, to be uploaded and which will be played or displayed on the right side of the webpage. In addition, the teacher can also upload audio or video lectures followed by questions.

3.1.4 Flash Cards

This is one of the most popular techniques for the teaching of vocabulary. Although the use of flash cards warrants a memory strategy that signals a move towards rote learning, in content-based courses, they can be of great use for learning definitions of terms or concepts, or for descriptions of characters or events.

3.1.5 WebQuest

The WebQuest is an online search activity designed for many purposes, but used mainly in teaching and learning. It was first created in 1995 by Bernie Dodge and Tom March. A WebQuest can be defined as, "an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web. WebQuests are designed to use learners' time well, to focus on using information rather than looking for it, and to support learners' thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation" (Dodge 2001, 7).

It is evident that Dodge uses terms from Bloom's taxonomy. But the modern equivalent of synthesis is creating in Anderson's taxonomy (2001). By creating, Anderson refers to the act of generating or producing. Often, in a WebQuest, learners use information to generate meaning.

Here is an example of a WebQuest with reference to Sociolinguistics. Of course, this is possible only in classes where the teacher adopts the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) policy with the class.

Step 1: The teacher asks students to look up the online linguistics dictionary for code and note down the meaning.

Step 2: The teacher asks students to find out the meaning of code-switching, and when it first appeared.

Step 3: The teacher explains the concept of code-switching in a simpler way by giving examples from everyday life.

Step 4 – Homework: There are other types of code-switching in sociolinguistics. Find out information about these types from the Web.

Apparently, the teacher intends to discuss the types of code-switching in class the next day.

The WebQuest clearly sets out to hone students' reference skills and this is clearly related to the cognitive domain. Further, self-learning is encouraged in such situations, thereby fostering an environment of learner autonomy.

WebQuest can also be played like a game depending on how the teacher plans and designs the task. But BookWidgets has an entirely different category titled Games. Before analysing the nature of each app, it is necessary to offer a peek into the role of gamification in language learning.

3.2 Gamification

Sheldon (2012) defines gamification in simple terms: "Gamification is the application of game mechanics to non-game activities" (75). In other words, gamification is the use of games for language teaching and learning. Kapp, Blaire, and Mesch (2013) carry forward the same idea when they state, "Gamification is using game-based mechanics, aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning, and solve problems (10)" According to them, games and gamification come under the term Interactive Learning Event (ILE), since games stimulate interaction and thereby result in effective learning. There has always been a debate regarding which is better – games or traditional learning. As Kapp rightly points out,

In some studies, games have proven more effective than traditional teacher-led instruction, and, in some cases, they have not. The lack of a definite winner between games and traditional instruction has led to confusion about the effective use of games in the classroom among policymakers, administrators, teachers, and parents, who have little practical or actionable advice to guide them. (134)

But, at present, evidence clearly proves that gamification facilitates effective language learning.

There are three main reasons for the growing popularity of language games.

- They instil a strong sense of motivation in learners
- They are easily available and accessible online
- They are not grade or mark-driven, but focus more on the learning process than mere end results

3.2.1 Types of Gamification

According to Kapp (2016), gamification may be divided into two categories –structural gamification and content gamification. It is necessary to discuss the two categories before proceeding to discuss the nature of games in *BookWidgets*.

3.2.2 Structural Gamification

In the case of structural gamification, the teacher uses traditional content but uses the structure of a game to facilitate learning. For instance, the teacher asks students to take up an online quiz, and announces that those who complete the quiz within a particular date or time will get 5 extra points. So, the whole process is structured like a game within which the learners learn the content in the same way as they would for other courses. Most of the exercises that come under Test and Review in *BookWidgets*, may be used in structural gamification.

3.2.3 Content Gamification

"Content gamification is the application of game elements, game mechanics, and game thinking to alter content to make it more game-like" (Kapp et al, 2013, 237). In other words, an online crossword puzzle, a riddle, the hangman game are all examples of games. Levels or scores or timed responses are part of game mechanics. Aesthetics covers aspects like graphics, presentation designs and modes, which make the game more interesting. But here again, there is an issue to be considered. Teachers must avoid apps that are heavily loaded with animations because learners often tend to focus on the animation than the content. Game thinking is the process of thinking that helps learners progress to the next step or level in the game. Games that involve critical thinking skills such as creation, interpretation, exemplification, classification, and inference trigger motivation levels more effectively. Therefore, the teacher must choose an app where he/ she can make sure that learners will be able to deploy their memory skills or critical thinking skills.

3.3 Games

There are ten apps in *BookWidgets* that belong to the games category, of which four are discussed here. One must bear in mind that the games are for

teachers who do not possess advanced knowledge of gaming technologies and who are at the beginner or the intermediate level in terms of technology-assisted language learning.

3.3.1 Mind Maps

BookWidgets allows learners to form their graphic organisers or mind maps as part of a collaborative effort. The teacher can start off by creating a graphic organiser and from there on, two or more learners can complete the various components or branches of the components. In doing so, learners take an active part in creating their own learning materials instead of the teacher giving them readymade mind maps. The teacher can have rules in this regard stating that each graphic organizer should be completed by a different group of students. This game offers scope for a memory or an effective strategy and is part of the creation process in Anderson's taxonomy (2001).

Create involves putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole. Objectives classified as *Create* have students make a new product by mentally reorganizing some elements or parts into a pattern or structure not clearly present before. The processes involved in *Create* are generally coordinated with the student's previous learning experiences. Although *Create* requires creative thinking on the part of the student, this is not completely free creative expression unconstrained by the demands of the learning task or situation. (84-85)

3.3.2 Hangman

The Hangman game is the typical guessing game that is mostly related to vocabulary and which stimulates one's memory skills. Here, instead of guessing words related to a particular type of vocabulary (teaching, food, sport), the teacher can always design an activity based on a set of characters from a short story, play, or novel. In linguistics courses, it could be on terms related to a particular chapter or concept. However old-fashioned the game may be, it never fails to interest learners.

3.3.3 Crossword

Designing a crossword sometimes can be more challenging than even solving it. But, it is a game that optimises on learners' thinking skills. The teacher can design crossword puzzles for individual learners or for learners to solve in groups. The app guides the teacher step-by-step on how to go about creating a crossword. In fact, teachers can use their sense of humour and creativity while providing hints so that

learners feel more motivated while performing the task.

3.3.4 Word Search

Word Search is a simpler form of the crossword since the learners have to use their scanning skills to locate words. This could be a warm-up activity in a class where a teacher can introduce the names of characters or terms before delivering a lecture on the same. It can also be a recap activity where the teacher provides a gap-filling exercise and asks learners to find out the answer to each question in the word square. While designing a word square manually can be time-consuming and sometimes strenuous for the teacher, doing the same on *BookWidgets* is relaxing and involves a matter of few minutes.

3.4 Miscellaneous Widgets

The term 'miscellaneous' is often misleading, for it makes one think that these widgets are not related to the teaching/ learning set up. But, on closer analysis, one finds that these widgets (particularly, three of them) are more related to planning and evaluation than to the actual teaching process.

3.4.1 Planner

This is a basic tool that teachers can deploy in order to plan their everyday schedules in terms of quizzes, activities, assignments, and exams. For example, teachers can plan a set of activities for a week and divide them into categories like Recap, Look Up, Quiz, Homework, etc. After doing so, they can share the plan with their learners through *Google Classroom*. This is undoubtedly a metacognitive strategy that enables learners to plan their learning process more effectively.

3.4.2 Checklist

The checklist is undoubtedly a teacher's tool to a great extent. It is a good companion in the planning process and helps teachers keep track of what they are doing. At the same time, teachers can also prepare checklists for students regarding steps in writing an essay or a research paper, and share it with them. Learners can use such checklists while doing an assignment or preparing for an examination.

3.4.3 Form/ Survey

Form offers the entire gamut of questions that a quiz or worksheet offers in *BookWidgets*. This places it above the more commonly used *Google Forms*. Teachers can use it to elicit feedback from the students at the end of a semester in order to execute modifications in teaching or in the nature of materials. Since evaluation is an integral part of the

teaching/ learning process, the form is undoubtedly a handy and user-friendly tool for teachers and learners in assessing the methods and materials involved.

4.0 Evaluation of an Online Resource

Any CALL or MALL resource needs proper evaluation for it to stand the test of time and technology. Hubbard (1996) emphasises the need for a methodological framework for CALL evaluation based on previous methodologies and on other existing frameworks for effective evaluation of the language teaching process (12).

Carol Chapelle (2001) in her article, “Computer-Assisted Language Learning” devises six criteria for CALL evaluation (401). This paper aims at adapting these criteria for evaluating *BookWidgets*.

4.1 Language Learning Potential

BookWidgets offers teachers and learners a great deal of opportunities in terms of exploring learning through a wide range of question types and games. Learners can learn through games, recap their learning through quizzes and worksheets, and plan and evaluate their learning through planners and forms respectively.

4.2 Learner Fit

Learners, as mentioned above, can spend qualitative time with their laptops or smart phones in learning information the interesting and entertaining way. But, there is something the teacher must bear in mind. He/ she must never announce the nature of task to the learners beforehand since it reduces the motivation level to a great extent and gives rise to a mindset that may not always be positive. In terms of language learning potential, *BookWidgets* offers a great deal of opportunities for teachers in terms of content use.

4.3 Meaning Focus

According to Chapelle, this refers to “the extent to which learners’ attention is directed toward the meaning of the language” (401). This is largely teacher-dependent since it rests on the nature of the exercise, task or activity that the teacher designs, and how clearly the aim or objective of each activity is conveyed to the learner.

4.4 Authenticity

Chapelle’s criterion here relates largely to skills as it tries to relate the relevance of what is learned to real world tasks in terms of communication. But, as mentioned earlier, this paper aims at dealing with content-based courses where the focus is on learning content in a lighter and more interesting way. So, the best way to use this criterion is to check how much the learner relates this type of learning to other

courses and how useful the learner finds this learning in handling examinations – the formative, summative, or the proficiency type.

4.5 Positive Impact

Learners often speak of their past experiences with a particular course or teacher and mention how cherishable the entire learning experience has been. In fact, the researcher herself found her students (whom she taught content-based courses) taking a great sense of interest in working out the tasks and exercises and posting their feedback on apps like *Padlet*.

4.6 Practicality

“*Practicality* refers to how easy it is for the learners and teachers to implement a CALL task within the particular constraints of a class or language program” (Chapelle 2001, 403). Here, a lot depends on the educational policy of the institution where the teacher is employed. As mentioned at the beginning, some institutions favour the use of smart phones in class, while others are quite wary in allowing students to carry gadgets of any kind to class. If the teacher has the opportunity to implement the BYOD in class, then it would be a learning experience worth considering. There will always be minor impediments in the form of network connectivity, and problems with the devices themselves. If the teacher wishes to experiment on the use of a particular learning platform, then it would be better to have a trial for a week or so to see how it works. Based on the feedback of the students and the teacher’s own observations, the whole plan can be implemented or, to start with, used as a supplementary or an add-on task, activity, or exercise.

5.0 Conclusion

For most teachers, taking the initiative is always the greatest hurdle in their professional competence. But, as the saying goes, technology happens to be the order of the day, and though a device may not be fully successful in replacing a teacher always, a teacher who uses technology is more likely to replace the teacher who doesn’t. Levy’s words form the most befitting conclusion in this regard:

The speed with which technology has developed since the invention of the computer has been both extraordinary and surprisingly sustained. For educators, the rapid and continuing introduction of new technology into education has outpaced the ability of teachers and developers to evaluate it properly...Somehow, we must try and make sense of what is going on, in spite of the rate of change, and invent reliable and

cost-effective mechanisms of dealing with it.
(Levy 1)

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