Challenges Faced by Malaysian Polytechnic English Lecturers in Utilizing Digital Language Lab

Mohd Khalid Ustati, Izaham Shah Ismail

Abstract

The installation and upgrading of Digital Language Lab (DLL) from the analogue language laboratories into all Malaysia’s polytechnic to improve the students’ English language learning experience has received feedback both positive and negative from their English Language lecturers. This study explores the challenges of Seberang Perai Polytechnic English Language lecturers faced upon the utilization of DLL and its integration toward their teaching of English. The challenges are classified under three categories: challenges from the lab facilities, challenges from the teaching practices and challenges from the students themselves. This purpose of this study was to identify issues faced by the lecturers during DLL sessions that are detrimental in improving polytechnics students’ language proficiency. From a total of 18 English Language lecturers from Seberang Perai Polytechnics, seven interviewees were purposively sampled and consented to be interviewed for in-depth research. Findings of this research reflect that majority of lecturers agree that although digital language lab enhances their teaching experiences in a variety of ways consecutively to catch up with the digitally native students yet at the same time informs of various challenges faced in order to integrate DLL into their lesson plan.

Keywords: Educational Technology; Computer Assisted Language Learning; ESL

1. Introduction

The Seberang Perai Polytechnic’s (PSP) lecturers have always been instructed to apply technology in their teaching by the Director of PSP. Several events, courses and activities have been introduced throughout the years to promote the usage of technology in the teaching and learning process. The upgrading of the most of classrooms within PSP with LCD projectors and projector screen since 2003 reflects PSP’s strong view toward promoting the importance of technology integration in teaching. This shows that PSP is preparing itself in providing a better learning platform for the new generation of students, particularly the digitally native students.

Through the integration of Digital Language Lab (DLL) with polytechnic English language lecturers teaching practice, several challenges have been recognized which need to be overcome as what had been commented by Bo-Kristensen (2006) that while language education must embrace these technological opportunities, it must also reflect on the complexity of institutional and educational contexts that serve to consolidate and integrate technology in language teaching. One of the challenges is the high cost for building, upgrading, running and maintaining a DLL. A number of polytechnic lecturers questioned whether the money

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spent on DLL is well spent. Then there are others who questioned if research was conducted in choosing the labs system before installing it and if there are any forms of standardization were adhered to when choosing the system. These questions have also been pointed out by Davies et al (2005) who claimed there are several issues that need to be carefully considered before upgrading an analogue lab to DLL which include factors such as the costs of installing, maintaining, supporting and upgrading equipment, the time needed for staff training, selection and creation of resources and also on the management of resources for storage space, lifespan of resources and the need for regular upgrading.

Hence, the most critical aspect hoped to be gained from this study is the perceptions of Polytechnic English Language lecturers in the usage of DLL and its integration into their teaching context, for lecturers are the implementer, the facilitator, and the end user of the DLL product. Although sophisticated DLL facilities provide polytechnic lecturers with the chance to integrate all digital media easily in their lesson plan and improve their teaching approach yet, if the lecturer is still using the digital lab the same way they use past stand-alone audiostream recorder lab or the older type of analogue or the tape-based language lab then that would be considered as an inappropriate use of the technology, for it would be under-utilizing the technology and in itself the digital lab in their institution will be nothing more than a waste of space and money. The fact that the digital language lab is gradually exiting its ‘Golden Era’ is undeniable since the emergence of new technologies such as the virtual language lab. Yet the researcher’s perceive that a study do need to be conducted upon DLL impact towards Malaysian polytechnic lecturers perception in order to prepare for any polytechnic education administration’s future decision in implementing new educational technologies into the curriculum.

2. What is Digital Language Lab

Bo-Kristensen and Meyer (2008) wrote that digital language lab is a technology rich environment suited primarily for audio language learning through a tape recorder. In addition, Davies et al (2005) mention that, digital language labs facilities put forth several benefits such as versatility, ease of movement, interactivity, teacher intervention potential and also independent learning. Firstly, in terms of versatility, the focus is geared towards the production of text, images, audio and video that can then be easily be integrated with the lesson and the teacher can remodel and alter materials to fit the requirements of different groups of learners. Second, as in the ‘Ease of movement’, the advantage is more on how easy it is for the lecturer to swap between different applications such as CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) programs, a word-processor, PowerPoint, the Web, etc. Third, in terms of Interactivity, learners can record their own voice and play back the recordings, interact with each other and the teacher, and store results. Then, there are the potential for teacher’s intervention in the form of oral comments as in a traditional analogue language lab, control of learners’ computers via the teacher’s console, tracking of learners’ work, etc. DLL also promotes learning through access to the unlimited resources provided by the Internet beyond the students’ normal classroom timetable on a self-access basis. With the integration of the Internet to the existing digital language lab system, the lab itself offers an even more extensive range of teaching practices that can be conducted and executed well compared to the traditional classroom. Information on a global basis can be accessed through the Web using the new generation of multimedia system. This allows for an instantaneous access to information worldwide and communication in the ways that is impossible through traditional teaching. Some of the ways are like viewing English and target language web sites; having a person-to-person communication through email, Internet phone, chat rooms, among others.; conducting student-to-student video conferencing with local and foreign classes; conducting direct communication with other students from their country and culture of study, accessing foreign literature and museums for research and study, and also through watching live TV broadcasts and listening to foreign radio broadcasts. Apart from providing different learning and teaching from the regular classroom, DLL also changes the role of the teacher and makes the students to be more active for a longer period of time. Individual students can be monitored by the teacher and be talked to in a much more efficiently than in a regular classroom. The digital language lab allows for the most efficient use of time, improves the teacher/student time ratio and enables the instructor to maximize the use of time in a given lesson.

2.1. Benefits of DLL in the language classroom

Quoting from Bill Gates (2003), “We are in the early years of a time I call the "digital decade" -- an era in which computers move beyond being merely useful and become a significant and indispensable part of everyday life.” The statement reflects that
we are moving into the technological era where computers become a part in education in stimulating students’ higher-order thinking, creativity and problem solving. Kumar and Tammelin (2008) state that language classrooms are increasingly turning into blended learning environments that focus on active learning. It is commonly known that active learning advances the learning process and thus, raises the quality of the language learning experience. Blended language learning uses multiple teaching and guiding methods by combining face-to-face sessions with online activities and utilizing a mix of technology-based materials where technology-enhanced meaningful learning is active, authentic and cooperative. Through Kumar and Tammelin’s (2008) perspective, they draw out three benefits of ICT to language learning and these are:

First, ICT and the Internet in particular provide language learners with the opportunity to use the language in meaningful ways via authentic contexts. The Internet provides an easy and fast access to the use of current and authentic materials in the language being studied, which is motivating for the language learner. Second, the use of ICT in a language classroom is based on the opportunities the system’s software affords for cooperation and collaboration with one’s peers. Language teachers all over the world are introduced to myriads of ICT-enhanced language learning projects, including simulations, between their students and groups in other countries, thus widening the language learning perspective into that of learning about the cultural context of the language being used. Third, the use of ICT in blended language learning classrooms provides ICT-based tools to language teachers where they can tutor their learners more effectively. With the help of ICT-based tools and the constantly growing number of available educational resources language teachers are able to give individual and personalized guidance to the learners.

2.2. Challenges towards the integration of DLL with English Language Learning

Although computer users are constantly reminded that the machines should make their lives easier and better, yet the ever-changing world of operating systems and software applications seriously hampers the potential of computers to augment human capacities. Apart from that, there are people who are still afraid and wary of the increasing usage of computers and Internet; warranting the use of the term technophobe upon them. As claimed by Dudeney and Hockly (2007), those who grow up using technology and are comfortable using it are known as digital native and these digital natives are of the new generation nowadays whilst in comparison their parents are usually of the digital immigrants category where the parents are those who have come late to the world of technology, if at all. In the education environment then, in most cases the students that we have, who are technologically competent are the digital native while the teacher are mostly digital immigrant and this lead towards the inclination of the students toward technology and the teacher’s reluctance to use it. In relation to that most of polytechnic students nowadays are known to be digital native students while some of the lecturers maybe those who are more inclined towardsthe digital immigrant category. Nevertheless, the constraint might also come from some of the students who are digital immigrant especially those who came to PSP with limited IT exposure regardless they are from the urban or rural areas. It is predicted that polytechnic students who are digital natives will lean towards the DLL integration in teaching; as the digital natives are easier to understand the integrated lesson, capable of relating it into the real world and harness the knowledge to its maximum impact due to their higher understanding toward technology compared to those students of the digital immigrant.
Second, Towndrow and Vallance (2004) mention that IT impacts on teachers in many ways as it affects approaches to teaching, beliefs about subject matter, management skills, personal characteristics and the context of teaching. According to Richards and Lockheart (1994) teaching is a personal activity and an individual teacher brings to his teaching very different beliefs and assumptions about what constitutes effective teaching. Thus if the teacher has negative perceptions toward utilizing technology in his or her classroom, then they will never be interested in integrating it in their teaching. Ornstein and Levine (2000) assert that in the early computer revolution, educators are worried that computerized instruction will impair students’ emotional and affective emotional components for substituting a machine for a human teacher left the student with no true guidance and with too little personal interaction. Towndrow and Vallance (2004) reiterate upon the concerns of the educators on the demise of the ability of institutes of higher learning to develop the rational mind; the hypothetical, deductive reasoning which form ideas and theories. This is further impaired by the educator who spent more time may be spent it on teaching ‘about’ the technology rather than ‘with’ the technology. These are among the negative perceptions on the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning and digital language lab.

3. Methodology, Samples and Population

The Seberang Perai Polytechnic General Studies Department has eighteen English language lecturers. Seven out of the total English Language lecturers employed under the General Studies Department from the Seberang Perai Polytechnic gave consent as they were purposively chosen as interviewees. The interviewees were chosen from a typical sample to maximal variation sample according to their English language teaching experience, level of computer literacy, and exposure to the usage of digital language lab.

4. Research Procedures

Semi structured interview sessions were carried out on the seven lecturers from the Seberang Perai Polytechnic who were purposively sampled based on the data obtained from the survey demographic profile in accordance to the lecturers’ English language teaching experience, level of computer literacy, and exposure to the usage of digital language lab. The interviewees were interviewed about their perception and practices on the integration of DLL with their teaching practices.

Firstly, the interviewer handed out to the interviewees a paper containing interview questions. The interviewer gave a sufficient amount of time for the interviewees to read through all of the questions. Prior to that, the interviewer asked the interviewee on any parts of the interview questions that the interviewee might not understand and needed further clarification. The interviewer clarified any issues that the interviewees might have with the interview questions. Any questions that the interviewees had difficulty in answering, either on personal or professional ground, were omitted out before the interview session begins. The interviewer informed the interviewee that the session will be recorded and had asked for their consent for the matter. After any issues that were related to the interview session were cleared out, only then the interview session began.

5. Findings

The difficulties or challenges faced by the PSP lecturers while integrating DLL to their teaching practice can be classified under three categories: challenges from the lab facilities, challenges from the teaching practices and challenges from the students themselves.

5.1 Challenges from the DLL facilities

First in terms of challenges from the DLL facilities, the challenges or difficulties that the PSP lecturers mostly faced as mentioned throughout the interviews are limited number of language labs, limited space per class quota, faulty equipments, technical support, and non conducive environment within the lab. Since the PSP language laboratory facilities reduced to only
two working labs, it caused the problem of limited number of language labs per lecturers. In addition, this problem is made worst as there are rigid booking protocol and procedures that the lecturers have to follow.

The interviewees’ expressed frustration on procuring the lab through the means of booking protocols and procedures. This occurs where there are 18 lecturers who have to share only two labs at a time.

Not only that, then there is the issue of limited space per class quota where the lab can only accommodate up to maximum of 40 students per class. In addition, the interviewees lament on the issue of crowded labs as shown through one of the interviewees’ feedback:

“...a maximum of students we can put in each lab is 40, but many of the classes, the students’ population is more than that. So, that sort of makes it difficult you know? When the sharing is difficult for them to fully use the equipment, because students population is more than 40 and of course even at 40 not all of the computers are working at all a time this are some constraints. For smaller class I think it is fine...” (Interviewee 2)

If the lecturer are teaching smaller classes of 20 to 30 students per class, then it would not cause any problem but if the number of students per class exceeds 40 students, then the lab itself will be crammed with most students have to share the computers thus create a non conducive environment within the lab.

The interviewees also raised another issue that even with an ideal number of students in a DLL not all forty computers can be used. In terms of faulty equipments the laments are more toward software and hardware problems where the lecturers are faced with technical problems such as faulty computers, inconsistent Internet connection, spamming viruses, malfunctioning LCD projector and broken audio system.

5.2 Challenges from the teaching practices

Lecturers’ knowledge, time management and extra preparation are also the major factors and challenges that they face when integrating the DLL in their teaching practice. In order to fully utilize the lab the lecturers need not only have the target language knowledge but also be at least computer literate with basic knowledge on handling the Digital Language Lab system, the administration program and the supportive multimedia software tools for the teaching processes. The lack of knowledge and skills have affected the keenness in using DLL and integrating it into their lesson plan fearing that they may underutilizing it in some way.

“...we need to know basic about the usage of the computer how to apply them and all that and software... because sometimes when it comes to certain things for example we do sometime we do have some problem and then we don’t know how to solve the problem when it comes to technology”(Interviewee 6)

In addition, undergoing trainings on the DLL system management, technology and pedagogical content knowledge will require additional time management and extra preparation on the lecturer’s part. The lecturers need to prepare the lesson beforehand and enter the classroom 10 to 15 minutes earlier before the classes begin to check on the equipment of the lab to function well such are expressed by majority of the interviewee. Not only have that, the interviewees also lamented that they are required to manage students issues with potential problems with the desktop units before beginning the lesson thus wasting time only for trouble shooting. Notable example of the issue as claimed by one of the interviewee:

“...or we ourselves need to go to each student, ‘Miss, something is wrong with my computer... Something is wrong with the web... I cannot hear you... You cannot hear me...’ that makes it from fifty minutes of lesson to becomes twenty minutes of lesson...” (Interviewee 7)

The excerpt above reflects that the teacher has to waste more time handling the students compared to teaching them. Last but not least, one of the issues raised is classroom management or control within the DLL where a number of interviewees claimed that in a different and new classroom environment such as DLL it is hard to control and monitor students. Some of the interviewees asserted that the students can hide behind the monitor which requires the lecturer to do a constant surveillance on the students’ activity which in someway might distract the lecturer from his or her initial objective of bringing the students to the DLL class. Apart from that compared to classroom setting, DLL setting makes it hard to control the students. A few of the interviewees attributed it to the reason that the DLL does not support large classes where it usually ended up with non conducive
cramped DLL environment where the students have to share PCs thus disrupting their concentrations. Thus in a way, these statements reflect the need of a conducive digital environment to be established in a DLL classroom and the effort should be initiated by the lecturers.

5.3 Challenges from students

As for the challenges that emerge from the students due to the integration of DLL, the issues raised mainly pertain to difficulties faced by digital immigrant and technophobes students in coping with digital language lab, the students inability to master basic necessity of target language and plagiarism issues. Not all students are fully exposed to the computer and the Internet as expressed by one of the interviewees:

“...because we cannot assume that all students know everything about Internet and computers...I mean there might be students from rural areas that have limited use of computer.” (Interviewee 7)

Some of the students only get the chance to learn to use the computer when they started learning in PSP itself. These students can be classified as digital immigrant. It is not the issue of differences between rural or urban students but more toward how much exposure to the computer that the students get before entering Seberang Perai Polytechnic.

Then there is the issue of students who are reluctant to participate in learning the target language thru the integration of technology, as commented by one of the interviewees who mentioned that the students go to the DLL only when they were told to do so by the lecturer. The interviewee added that if the lecturer does not clearly justify his or her action for bringing the students to the lab the students will not be able to see the purpose of going to the DLL. To the interviewee believes that these types of students are far more eager to learn language through the traditional method and are learning using DLL due to being instructed by their lecturers. These are the students that can be classified as technophobes.

Apart from such issue, the interviewees also reflected that there are also the issues on students who have not mastered the basic requirement of the target language whom can be classified as a false beginner. When using the digital language lab these students are not only handicapped at having to learn the target language but also at knowing how to utilize and operate the tools of DLL itself. Hence, it might put a heavier learning strain on them compared to the digitally native students.

Lastly the issue of plagiarism, some of the interviewees see it as a window of opportunity for the students to plagiarize their works for any in-class task that is given by the lecturer thru the act of copying and pasting information obtained from the Internet.

In a traditional classroom activity for example, when the students are given the task requiring the students to come up with their own ideas and solutions they have limited option or not opportunities for copying ideas from other sources thus promoting originality. In contrast, within a DLL setting, the students can browse thru the Internet for a likeable response/answer and copy-paste it to their work.

In summary, the difficulties or challenges faced by the PSP lecturers while integrating DLL in their teaching practice can be classified under three major categories: challenges from the lab facilities, challenges from the teaching practices and challenges from the students themselves.

6. Discussion

6.1. Lab Facilities Challenges.

The research salient findings on PSP English Language lecturer’s overall evaluation on their PSP Digital Language Lab reveals that most of the lecturers perceive that the labs that they are currently using are of average level. Responses echoed throughout the interview sessions show that a large number of the Seberang Perai Polytechnic lecturers held negative perception towards the labs that they are currently using due to faulty equipments, lack of technical support, limited number of language labs, limited space per class quota, and non conducive learning environment within the lab. The issue with faulty equipments is more toward software and hardware problems where the lecturers are faced with malfunctioning computers, inconsistent Internet connection, spamming viruses attack, malfunctioning LCD projector and broken audio system. Majority of the interviewees feels
that the DLL administrators need to address these issues and ensuring that the DLLs are always in working conditions and thus providing a good conducive teaching and learning environment for the lecturer and students alike.

Whereas in terms of the issue of the lack of technical support, a large number of interviewees felt that a technician needs to be present at all time during the Digital Language Lab session to help the lecturers troubleshoot problems. Other than that, the interviewees also felt that the lab administrative processes currently uses a complex protocol and procedures that the lecturers have to follow due to the problem of limited number of language labs per lecturer. Not only that, then there is the issue of limited space per class quota where the lab can only accommodate up to maximum of 40 students per class. If the number of students per class exceeds 40 students, the lab itself will be crammed with most students having to share the computers thus create a non conducive environment within the lab. This also leads to another problem that since Digital Language Lab is a closed environment lab, when 40 PCs opened simultaneously at a time with thirty to forty students within generating heat in a confined space as what was claimed by the interviewees where they need a good air-conditioning system to ensure the conduciveness of a digital language lab operation.

6.2 Challenges from the teaching practice.

Any higher learning institution can provide high-end multimedia language lab or technologically advance educational facilities for its lecturers, but how many of these facilities are actually fully optimized by the lecturers themselves? Do the lecturers have the expertise to fully integrate the facilities into their teaching practice? Are the lecturers fully trained in DLL educational technology given just a one day briefing by the DLL program engineer or software developer who can only inform on the functions of the technology but fail to address on how to fully integrate the technological marvel with the lecturers’ own teaching practice? Any educational technology devices are complicated tools especially to those who have just started to learn to use it as the technology on its own does not necessarily make anything easier or faster. Effective use of DLL in the language classroom is entirely dependent on the lecturers’ level of IT competence, knowledge, training of the technology to be richly connected to any particular curriculum. Similar concerns are posed by Koehler and Mishra (2008) where they claimed that teachers are often provided with inadequate training for the task of integrating technology with their teaching practice. NWP, Devoss, Eidman-Aadahl, and Hicks (2010) assert that through teachers point of view it is not simply a matter of “integrating technology” into school day, but more of a matter of uncovering the most powerful uses of the technology to accomplish learning goals for specific students in order to create digital environment and experiences to extend their most effective practices into an even more powerful learning opportunities for students. Thus, time management and extra preparation are the major attributors to the challenges that the interviewees faced when integrating the DLL with their teaching practice.

In order to fully utilize the lab not only are the lecturers required to have a good command of the target language but they also need to be at least computer literate with basic knowledge on handling Digital Language Lab system, administration program and supportive multimedia software tools for the teaching processes. Majority of the interviewees interviewed reflect that they are not keen on using DLL and integrating it into their lessons due mostly to the lack of knowledge in handling the ever changing technology itself, fearing that they are underutilizing it in some way. In a way there is a sliver of truth to the claim as Koehler and Mishra (2008) state that many teachers earned degrees at a time where educational technology was at a very different stage of development than it is today and it affects the way they perceive the technology that they are unfamiliar with.

Last but not least is the issue on the classroom management within the DLL environment where a number of interviewees claimed that within this new environment it is hard to control and monitor students. This is especially a concern when the focus of the learning and teaching event is shifted to constant monitoring of the students who can hide behind the monitor and not paying attention to the lesson. In such situations the whole objective of utilizing DLL in the language classrooms to optimize learning processes can be marred.

6.3 Challenges from the students

The challenges brought about by student factors mainly pertain to the difficulties faced by digital immigrant and technophobe students in coping with digital language lab, the inability of the students to master basic necessity of target language and plagiarism. This finding is consistent with that of Kumar and Tammelin (2008) who assert that many teachers seem to think their students are more knowledgeable about the use of technologies than they themselves due to the digital nativity of the younger
generation. Yet this may lead to the false impression that learners in ICT-enhanced or online learning environments automatically know how to study in online learning environments, which requires a high degree of learner autonomy. The language educator should also consider on the issues of digital divide, where Lever-Duffy and McDonald (2011) refer it to as the gap between those who have ready access to and knowledge of digital technologies and those who do not. Some of these students only got the chance to learn to use computers and ICT technology when they started learning in higher learning institution such as PSP itself and it is not an issue of whether they are rural or urban students. The issue lies more towards the amount of technological exposure the students get before entering Seberang Perai Polytechnic.

Then there is also the issue of students who are reluctant to participate in learning the target language through the integration of technology such as DLL. These types of students can be classified as technophobes for they prefer or are more comfortable learning English through the traditional method and utilize the lab only because they were instructed by their lecturers. Apart from this issue, the interviewees also put forth the problem of students who have not mastered the basic requirement of the target language where they can be classified as a false beginner. Malaysian students who are learning English are usually and appropriately referred to as students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD). When using the digital language lab these students who have not mastered the basic of the language are not only handicapped by having to learn the target language but also the need to know how to utilize and operate the tools of DLL itself. This might put a heavier learning strain on them compared to the digitally native students.

Lastly on the issue of plagiarism, some of the interviewees see that DLL provides the window of opportunity for the students to plagiarize their works. For example, unlike in the traditional classroom setting, when the students are given the task, the students need to come up with their own ideas and solutions with limited sources and option at hand. DLL on the other hand often offers the students a chance of copying/plagiarizing others’ work or answers from variety of sources available in the Internet and claim the work as their own. This in away also mar the ability for the lecturer and students alike to create a critical thinking environment in the classroom for the students are occasionally ‘spoon-fed’ with answers from the Wikipedia and Internet that sometimes the authenticity of its facts might be questionable and misleading.

7. Conclusion

If we teach today as we taught yesterday, then we rob our children of tomorrow

- John Dewey

The statement given by John Dewey shows the importance of educators to update their teaching skills according to the current needs in order to prepare the students for a challenging future. Considering how fast educational technological tools evolve nowadays, there is no knowing when will Digital Language Lab be considered as an archaic technology similar to its predecessor the Analogue Language Lab. The demise of DLL might be sooner yet this research should provide a basis for the lecturers who are interested in integrating technology with their teaching practice or as a reminder to any schools, educational institutions and higher learning institution management who are interested in introducing new technology into their respective institution’s teaching and learning process. How many times do similar situation occur in any educational institution where when a new technology such as DLL and it is like is being introduced, the administration will have it installed it without consulting of the lecturers the end users. The lecturers are instructed to fully utilize the installed technological tool yet they are only given perhaps a one-off tutorial session on how to use it without any lesson on how to fully integrate it into their curriculum or teaching practice. The situation is made worst when the one who gives the tutorial lesson is only the software engineer or the software developer and not a language teacher/educator or practitioner. Then, what about the lecturers’ own technology level of competency, digital nativity, and technological pedagogical content knowledge level? Are such issues are taken into consideration during the initial planning of installing the DLL or similar educational technology related facilities in the institution? Indeed as educators, the lecturers themselves need to have the initiative to update their knowledge and skills but are there support given by any parties or group to help them to become competent with the new technological facilities or devices? Apart from that there are matters or concerns regarding to the lecturers’ level of confidence, motivation and drive to integrate their content knowledge with technology such as DLL. Should not these also be taken into consideration before implementing a new technological educational aid into any teaching practice? Looking throughout the issues stated, we need to look back at our own institution and reflect on these questions: Are the facilities provided fully utilized and optimized? Is there support to help
lecturers in its integration with the curriculum or teaching practice? If it is not, then where has it gone wrong? Do we simply take one step forward but two steps backward in the whole process? There is no definite answer to the situation.

This study adopted a mixed methodology with the aim to investigate the perceptions of Seberang Perai Polytechnic English Language lecturers upon the utilization of DLL and its integration toward their teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Analysis of the data obtained through qualitative means revealed that although the lecturers are highly positive of their level of technological competency in handling the DLL, yet a large number of the lecturers still feel that they are lagging behind and do need to keep up with the ever changing technological advancement. The main question is similar to the question posed earlier: With the way technology advances nowadays is it even possible to keep up with it? Within this digital age, it is known to be difficult to keep up with the current technology, nevertheless, that does not mean that lecturers should abandon the idea of integrating it with their teaching practice. It means that the educators should know when to integrate technology to their teaching practice and when not to. Not every lesson requires DLL integration. The educators should also learn of the importance of technological pedagogical content knowledge and its implementation to help them in making their judgment. Hughes and Scharber (2008) believe that in becoming “technology integrationist” necessitates educators being able to understand, consider, and choose to use technologies when they uniquely enhance the curriculum, instruction, and/or students’ learning in the subject matter area. Thus technology such as DLL should be used sparingly according to the needs and where it can heightened students level of understanding to the lesson taught.

Thus it can be concluded that although there are several challenges that have to be addressed without putting aside the positive impact of educational technological facilities integration such as DLL to the teaching and learning experience. The polytechnic English language lecturers have to be made understand on the importance of their role and must work towards effective DLL classroom management that combines accessing multimedia resources along with regular traditional teaching activities and tasks. The educators should not integrate DLL just for the sake of jumping in the bandwagon but need to know the justification of the usage of such facilities and improve their computer literacy especially on multimedia and IT knowledge apart from understanding on how to fully optimize the DLL and its troubleshooting. The educators also need to understand when to apply technology such as DLL accordingly using a sound pedagogy to fit the needs and heightened students level of understanding to the lesson taught using unbiased lesson plan that enhance both technophiles and technophobes students. As what was mentioned by John Dewey earlier, that it is important for educators to update their teaching skills and approach according to the current needs in order to prepare the new generation of students for a challenging future.

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