

USING ENGLISH DISCOVERIES ONLINE AS AN ONLINE SELF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (SIM) TO IMPROVE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY FOR VIETNAMESE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: Grounded on theories of learning, found many benefits of CALL in supporting learning to level up their English proficiency, the paper details the stages in designing online Self-Instructional Materials (SIM) for high school students in Vietnam to help them overcome their learning obstacles and get CEFR B1 level as high school graduation requirement set by Vietnam Ministry of Education (MoET). The paper is designed in four main parts: except for the introduction and conclusion, the literature reviews provide related works and theories, and the stages of designing integrated courses on ED provide readers with some ideas on designing online SIM for improving english proficiency for vietnamese high school students.

Keywords: CALL, ED, online SIM, improving English proficiency.

1. Introduction

In Vietnam, three periods of English lessons weekly as scheduled seems not to be enough to help its students get CEFR B1 level as high school graduation requirement set by Vietnam Ministry of Education (MoET). The big knowledge amount delivered in each lesson requires english teachers to spend much time ensuring the scheduled syllabus completion, and following the student's progress and learning outcomes. Having not enough time to develop communication skills for students, the teachers are challenged when carrying out the mentioned task. To achieve the goal, having online SIM to bridge the gap of lacking training time has been mostly recognized.

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In this paper, the author would like to detail the stages in designing online SIM for high school students in Vietnam to help them overcome their learning obstacles.

2. Literature reviews

2.1. Computer - assisted language learning (CALL)

CALL is stated to get evolvement from the action of clicking a button to select the correct answer, to show the ability of recognizing students' learnt knowledge in old big computers to various interactions with unlimited online resources. CALL and technology development and teaching theories of foreign languages over the past 30 years are divided into different stages, of which the highest one is using the internet in teaching language from the arrival of

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W.W.W. in 1993 (Warschauer, 1996). So far, CALL has played an important role in teaching and learning in all education levels, especially at high schools and colleges (EUROCALL, 2017). Besides adding sound effects, images and many functions to lessons, CALL allows learners to have “unprecedented learning opportunities” such as free practice and interaction with audio-visual learning and unlimited frequency; an increasing learning motivation through interaction and using English knowledge and skills; an active learning experience at the right pace and level; getting quick feedback; and accessing right to learning resources and open information such as dictionaries, newspapers, etc. (Ward, 2002).

2.2. Theories of learning: implications for online learning

a) Behaviorism

Connecting stimulus and response in the organism, and learning through this procedure to make changes in human behavior are what the behaviorism emphasizes. In his studies in 1953 and 1968, Skinner proved the point.

Programmed instruction and teaching machines are major practical contributions of behaviorism to education. The technology of programmed instruction made its role in online education. Via such electronic devices as audios and videos, computers, clips, etc., online learning can be successfully implemented. Giving students chances to actively take their role in learning and study at their own pace are two principles greatly helping teachers design SIM for effective learning through two-way communication process.

b) Cognitivism

Bruner (1966), a cognitive learning psychologist, defined learning as a

cognitive process, in which human mind acted as a computer: receiving information; processing information; and giving an output of it. The SIM, therefore, should actively provide online learners with such contents enabling them to learn without external reinforcement, autonomously do exercises through self-reward and through the process of problem-solving, form the habit of self-learning.

The applicability to distance requirements in terms of providing instruction mentioned by Holmberg (1981) are step-wise from direct experience to experience representation, then to symbolic representation. From his viewpoint, developing a predisposition toward learning by specifying experiences; generating new propositions and manipulating knowledge by simplifying information for learners to follow; presenting the material in the most effective sequence; and reinforcing the nature of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are essential.

c) Bloom's Theory

Cognitive, affective and psychomotor are three domains of learning outcomes that Bloom, et al (1956) identified, in which knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are six headings referred. In 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl reclassified the headings, basing on the learning level, into remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. Guiding course designers to decide upon the objectives of the course, and helping them choose the best from the various media available are the basic applications of Bloom's model to distance education. Besides, observed and measured learning objectives can be expressed in behavioral terms.

3. Stages of designing integrated courses on ED

Research result shows that ED (created and developed by Edusoft, an educational solution development company- ETS's subsidiary) is suitable for various learners including Vietnamese ones in meeting their needs and characteristics, and being an effective tool for English teachers. The courses adapt to the development trend of applying science and technology to education and training English language. With the task of writing SIM of English for Vietnam high school students, the author needs to overcome the designing process including assessing the need, defining the objectives, identifying and organizing the content, analyzing resources and constraints, selecting of appropriate methods, media and activities, writing lessons / units and Evaluating.

3.1. Assessing the need

Gathering information from the survey in 70 high schools in Hanoi using three appendices, the author found the need of a supplementary course to fulfill the lack of training time for the subject of English and ensure the targeted output of B1 for high school graduation requirement. The courses should be self-study and extracurricular ones helping reinforce student's English knowledge and skills.

3.2. Defining objectives

The SIMs is expected to provide learners with enough standardized authentic training materials and chances for practicing English language and skills with autonomous supports. They should be available all the time for learners to access to study whenever available and with affordable cost to get their parent's support.

3.3. Identifying and organizing the contents

The solution integrating ED with contents in the textbooks allows teachers to use available materials consolidating and expanding the core contents. Especially, the academic support and management system are a well-rounded application making it easier for students study more independently; serving teachers with their teaching or manages their student's self-study at home, and making use of the automated reporting data for learning evaluation activity. The integration model combining traditional learning and technology support learning is a practical and feasible to improve English teaching quality in the contexts, essentially addressing the problems of communication-oriented time shortage in traditional large classes and the need of gradually standardizing English learning output for high school students in the whole country.

3.4. Analyzing resources and constraints

ED is designed with a rich source of materials, arranged into 10 main courses, corresponding to English proficiency levels in the CEFR. Besides course-builder tool, ED allows flexible arrangements of existing contents on the system into new courses, compatible with any program frameworks. With the ED outstanding feature, the integrating process of textbook materials and expanded contents available on ED can be a good solution for the learners at this period.

3.5. Selecting appropriate methods, media and activities

Previous studies have shown that linguistic interaction, or two-way language exchange, promotes language acquisition. Language exchange here is not just about

direct human-to-human communication but also the communications within every human being (Ellis, 1999, Chapelle, 2005). The action of repeatedly listening ED contents with *hear part/ hear all* functions is an inside process of exchanging information, helping students gradually acquire language, expressing the essence of SLA. Simultaneously with the support of CALL, learners can check the meaning of words/ phrases in the *online dictionary, see translation* function, or even *see texts* (when listening), etc. All three types of interactive environments (inside, interpersonal, and computer interaction) promote communication - oriented language skills.

3.6. Writing lessons/units

Preparing contents is an important stage in SIM designing. In this process, the author intentionally bases on the topics in the textbooks to select corresponding contents on ED and other materials to create components on ED platform. When the materials are rich enough as planned, they will be used to build courses using the ED custom-built tool. The completed courses will be assigned to its learners.

3.7. Evaluating

Nine instructional events and corresponding cognitive processes listed by Gagne (1970), further updated by Gagne and Briggs (1974) and Gagne, Briggs and Wager (1992) must be for learning to occur. These basic principles for designing instruction and selecting appropriate media can also be used in conjunction with Bloom's revised taxonomy to an engaging and meaningful SIM design.

3.7.1. Gaining attention of the learners

The learners get motivated to learn when being curious. Interesting lessons

with attractive illustrations and advanced technology support on ED motivate students to gain new language and improve them in unpainful way.

3.7.2. Informing learners of the objective

Each student is provided with a personal online self-study account to study in the right time and pace to match their schedule and individual learning style. Eventually, students have more interest and motivation to learn English. Besides the support features in the regulated courses, a community is a great resource for information and interaction opportunities gradually shaping language use ability independently and confidently in communication.

3.7.3. Stimulating recall of prior learning

The lessons on ED really relates to the ones taught in traditional classes. In fact, they are designed to help improve what have been learnt. Therefore, it's a good chance for learners to revise their knowledge and practice their skills.

3.7.4. Presenting the stimulus

ED integrated courses provide supportive functions helping develop language knowledge and skills. Reading skill is practiced with supportive tools of *hear part* (allowing listening to a complete sentence), or *hear all* (allowing listening to a whole passage). Listening components and vocabulary reviewing let students record their voices at word and sentence level, receive feedbacks and listen again for checking and comparing. In writing skill, students can use the grammar support in *grammar book* when producing written language. Particularly, for speaking skill, branching dialogues require correct pronunciations and interactions with the questions or comments on computer. With the above supportive features and

feedback, students freely and interactively practice with ED learning materials in unlimited frequency.

3.7.5. Providing learning guidance

In the solution provided, teachers and students will get online and offline syllabi to overview what they are going to work with during each semester. They are also trained how to work with the materials to make use of them.

3.7.6. Eliciting performance

To make sure that students know how to use the materials, pilot periods are recommended, in which, students will study with online SIMs in school labs with teacher's support when necessary.

3.7.7. Providing feedback

With advanced technology on ED, automated feedbacks will be sent to students immediately after their submission. There also detailed explanation for the correct choices.

3.7.8. Assessing performance

There are 4 available assessment types on ED: Placement Test assisting teachers in placing students in the correct level; Lesson Tests helping teachers gauge the students' progress at the lesson end; Mid-term Test at the mid-course measuring the collective effectiveness of the first course half and finally, Course Test assessing student's knowledge from the course. This is an excellent way judging student's overall success and a basis for creating the students future study path.

3.7.9. Enhancing retention and transfer

Thanks to SIMs, the lack of training time and developing communication skills in traditional classroom are solved. In large classes, ED assists in addressing the multiple-level problem by team-building for students with similar abilities. Therefore, teachers provide special support on group rather than individual level without affecting others in the class.

4. Conclusion

By the way of conclusion, in this paper, the author has discussed the implications of learning theories in the contribution of different psychology schools like behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism to the instructional design and the teaching-learning process in online education. The implications of learning and communication theories in materials design and development have also been highlighted in the context of online education in general and SIM designing in particular. Finally, SIM principle significances, features and SIM designing process for online education have been explained. The ultimate outcome having dealt with all SIM designing aspects enables online course designers to arrive at a good unit design- crucial factor of SIM. The integration courses are evidently a typical achievement combining CALL and SLA. The designing process is expected to create good SIMs for vietnamese high school students to help achieve their targets./.

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SỬ DỤNG CÁC BÀI GIẢNG TIẾNG ANH TRỰC TUYẾN LÀM TÀI LIỆU TỰ HỌC TRỰC TUYẾN (SIM) NHẪM NÂNG CAO NĂNG LỰC TIẾNG ANH CHO HỌC SINH TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Dựa trên các khung lý thuyết học tập, nhận thấy nhiều lợi ích của việc sử dụng máy tính để hỗ trợ học tập và nâng cao trình độ tiếng Anh của học sinh phổ thông, bài báo trình bày chi tiết các giai đoạn trong việc thiết kế tài liệu tự học trực tuyến (SIM) cho học sinh trung học ở Việt Nam nhằm giúp các em vượt qua những trở ngại trong học tập, đạt trình độ chuẩn B1 theo yêu cầu tốt nghiệp THPT do Bộ Giáo dục Việt Nam quy định. Bài báo được thiết kế thành bốn phần chính: ngoại trừ phần mở đầu và kết luận, phần tổng quan nghiên cứu cung cấp các công trình và lý thuyết liên quan đến nghiên cứu này, các giai đoạn thiết kế các khóa học tích hợp với ED, cung cấp cho người đọc một số ý tưởng về việc thiết kế tài liệu tự hướng dẫn trực tuyến (SIM) để cải thiện trình độ tiếng Anh cho học sinh phổ thông Việt Nam.

Từ khóa: CALL, ED, Tài liệu tự học trực tuyến, cải thiện năng lực sử dụng tiếng Anh.