



NEW SHIFTS IN THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA ENHANCE THE WRITING SKILLS OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

New shifts in the electronic media offer incredibly efficient ways to improve the skills, techniques and creativity of writing. Many students are struggling with their academic papers without knowing that the internet offers an immense number of tools that can help them become better writers. This paper discusses how the recent technology provides the supports necessary for improving the writing skill of the students. Rather than producing a decline in writing, the spread of digital platforms and mobile devices has led to an explosion in the opportunities for writing. Technology has enhanced the ability for ideas to be expressed more rapidly and has created better conversation on growing topics. Today we are living among a new era of language and communication. Along with a new era of language comes a new era of writing. The writing process can be very difficult for learners of English language as they must do tasks like generating ideas, organization and perfect use of grammar and vocabulary. Some of the technical ways for improving the technical skills are discussed in this paper. It brings out the importance of computers and graphic-based programs which make the writing task much easier

and enjoyable and can make them express their thoughts more clearly. Next is the electronic mail; this is a modern way for writing and transferring messages through the internet. Text chatting and blogging are other important technical methods which provide an online and quick tool for writing and expressing thoughts, transferring ideas and responding instantaneous with the writers on the other side. Thus the present study on the new shifts in the electronic media helps us to know different ways of enhancing the writing skills of the students.

Introduction

Today we are living among a new era of language and communication. Along with a new era of communication comes a new era of writing. The last decade of 20th century witnessed an emergence of digital media includes internet, tablets and smart phones etc. collectively known as new media. These new shifts in electronic media offer incredibly efficient ways to improve the skills, techniques and creativity of writing. Rather than producing a decline in writing, the recent technology provides the support necessary for improving the writing skills of the students.



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Asia Pacific Journals

ELK Asia Pacific Journals – Special Issue

ISBN: 978-81-930411-2-3

Types Of Electronic Communication and Social Media which Enhance The Writing Skills

Information delivery – e-mail and text messaging

Online Publishing – Wikis, RSS feeds, Blogs

Social Network – LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter

E-mail – it is a method for exchanging digital messages from an author to one or more recipients. Modern email operates across the internet or other computer networks. It consists of three components the message envelope, the message header and the message body. Emails are easy to use, fast and can reach a lot of people in a short time. While writing an email it is important to avoid using all upper case or all lower case. One must add informative headings, adequate spacing and typographical effects to make information quickly accessible.

- Written messages do not have to be delivered on the spur of the moment; instead they can be edited and revised several times before they are sent so that the content can be shaped to maximum effect.
- Written communication provides a permanent record of the messages that have been sent and can be saved for later study.
- Regular email writings help the students to write about anything- about what they do, things they hear or see, news or a story.

- The spelling and grammar usage get improved by using online resources to correct them.
- Continuous writing makes them think out of the box.
- Email based exercises are given in some websites such as learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org which are useful for the students to improve their writing skill.

Text messaging – Texting is the act of composing and sending brief electronic messages. Both SMS and IM(Instant Messaging) are the most popular communicating methods nowadays. In the brave new smart phone obsessed world that we live in, more and more people are sending messages through web based applications like ‘we chat’, ‘whatsapp’, ‘viber’ etc. Increased exposure to text message abbreviations such as ‘gr8’, ‘b4’ and ‘lol’ can improve children’s writing skill according to a Government study. Scientists discovered that rather than destroying their use of English, texting improves children’s ability to write properly. Psychologist Dr. Clare Wood who led the study at Coventry University said the use of abbreviations commonly used in text messaging helped in the development of children’s writing and reading skills. David Crystal in his book “Txtng: The Gr8 Db8” refutes the popular view that SMSs language and to profuse use of abbreviations and slang can impact negatively on student language and literacy. Textisms permit more linguistic information to be condensed into the 160 characters allowed per message than conventional



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spelling would allow. In order to create textisms, text message creators and receivers need to be able to accomplish a number of language tasks. Texting through its text manipulations and creations provides a platform for young people to create and practice phonemic activities that enhance phonemic awareness.

Wiki – wiki is a web application which allows collaborative modifications, extension or deletion of its content and structure.

RSS feeds – Rich Site Summary (RSS) is a format for delivering regularly changing web content. Many news related sites, weblogs and other online publishers syndicate their content as an RSS feed to whoever wants it.

Blog – A blog is a discussion or informal site published on the World Wide Web and consisting of discrete entries typically displayed in reverse chronological order. Until 2009 blogs were usually the work of a single individual occasionally a small group and often covered a single subject. More recently multi-author blogs (MABs) have developed with posts written by large number of authors. A majority are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other via GUI widgets on the blogs. There are high readership blogs which do not allow comments such as ‘Daring Fireball’.

Different types of blogs

- Personal Blogs – The personal blog is an ongoing diary or commentary written by an individual.
- Collaborative Blogs – A type of weblog on which posts are written and published by more than one author.
- Micro blogging – it is the practice of posting small pieces of digital content which could be text, pictures, links, short videos or other media on the internet.
Examples: Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr etc.
- Corporate and organizational blogs used internally for communication and culture in a corporation or externally for marketing, branding or public relations purposes are called corporate blogs.

How blogging improves the writing skill of students

- Online communication not only offer the students rich opportunities for practicing their communication, sharing their writing, exchanging feedback and collaborating with peers but also a great sense of belonging and security.
- When students use social networking practices to communicate with various audiences and purposes they strengthen their reading and writing skills.
- Practice makes a man perfect. To improve the writing skill, the



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students need to write frequently and reach a point where writing becomes second nature.

- Grammar provides the building blocks of language. So one must know the basics of grammar and spelling. Referring standard grammar books and online resources can help the students to improve their writing.
- Self reputation is one of the most important skills for successful writing. Students monitor their writing process while they are writing or after they finish the writing. Through monitoring process, self reputed writers evaluate if they are using appropriate writing strategies and whether they can accomplish their goals by using their writing strategies.
- Proof reading will ensure that the quality of the content remains high and it will also help students to remove any parts that could be considered filler.
- Evaluating our blogs is a good way of looking at areas in which we can improve. Ideally we can arrange for a friend or associate to review our articles and give an honest opinion on what could be improved. A blogging or writing forum is a good place to meet a blogger who can do this for us.
- It should be no surprise that most passionate writers are also passionate readers. Subscribing to blogs of authors and bloggers will help to

learn new writing styles and new words.

The following writing habits will help to enhance the writing skills.

1. Research – Every topic should be researched thoroughly and this will improve the quality of the content and ensure that arguments one puts forward are strong.
 2. Taking notes – The students must have the habit of taking notes everyday so that good ideas are never lost.
 3. Bookmark useful writing tools – This will save a lot of time during the writing process.
 4. Cite sources – Citing sources help the writers to shape their view. The credibility will be higher and it also helps to avoid plagiarism.
- A simple blog post can be effective by including an illustrated graph, photograph, embedded video or by some real life examples.
 - Asking for the opinion of the readers is a simple trick that works every time. So it is important to provide a commenting space after each post.
 - Researchers have found that blogging can help bridge the gap between English language learners' written and spoken communication skills and facilitate the ability to write for audience outside the classroom.



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- When the students share information and discuss issues in the weblog they get the capacity to promote collaborative learning.
- By offering a variety of media and increasingly sophisticated tools, micro blogging fosters communication for students that seems more natural and enjoyable and could inspire them in new genres of performances or art.
- The introduction of new tools and in particular the increasing ease with which multimedia can be posted will determine where micro blogging goes in the near term.

Facebook – Social networking sites like Facebook uniquely allow users to maintain relationships between family and friends across borders making it a valuable new tool to immigrant youth. With the dynamic growth of the internet, students have a new venue in which they can negotiate their identities and build and maintain trans-national relationships. Students also learn how to cross genre, languages and digital platforms through writing.

As the students share many views in the social media they feel very comfortable writing narrative essays and boldly discuss sexual abuse, poverty, alcoholism, gang violence, terrorism etc. students recognize the value of tackling these topics with honesty.

Writing is not just about the spilling of guts obviously but the transparency

encouraged by social networking has laid the foundation for this freedom.

Helpful Resources

While writing, the students need to pour their hearts and souls out on to the paper. They have to bring readers into the reality of their characters' lives, give them real problems and vivid emotions to which readers can connect. There are some helpful online resources for good writing. The Write Life presents: The 100 best websites for writers in 2015 list is broken into eight categories: blogging, creativity and craft, entrepreneurship, freelancing, literary agents, marketing, publishing and writing communities.

- 1) allindiewriters.com - It is a business hub for serious, professional. Independent writers who want to make a living by freelance writing, blogging or publishing their own books.
- 2) beafreelanceblogger.com – They share useful resources, valuable tips and guest posting opportunities for bloggers looking to earn a living from writing.
- 3) advicetowriters.com – Curated by Jon Winokere, this site collects quotes from past and present writers in the form of a Quote of the Day, post and daily email.
- 4) aliventures.com – Author Ali Luke's vast archives include tons of advice about blogging, freelancing,



- writing e-books and creating a loyal reader base.
- 5) dailywritingtips.com – If one needs daily inspiration and writing tips look no further than this site, which features articles on everything writing-related, including grammar, punctuation, spelling usage and vocabulary.
 - 6) grammargirl.com – with Grammar Girl one can boost their writing and grammar confidence.
 - 7) sterlingediting.com – The Sterling Editing team is comprised of experienced writers, editors and literary agents striving to help writers create their best work. Their weekly ‘Written in the Internet’ posts share interesting publishing trends, editing tips and other writing advice from around the web.
 - 8) thewritepractice.com – To become a good writer, one has to practice – it’s as simple as that. The Write Practice, founded by Joe Bunting, offers daily writing prompts, creative writing lessons and a wealth of articles to help the students overcome writer’s block.
 - 9) fundsforwriters.com – If one is serious about making a living as a freelance writer this website offers information on upcoming contests, freelance writing jobs, connections to publishers and everything else one need to make money as a writer.
 - 10) writersdigest.com – Chuck Sambuchino’s Guide to Literary Agents blog is a must read if one is looking to land a literary agent to represent your new book.
 - 11) indiesunlimited.com – created to help independent authors write, publish and promote their work, Indies Unlimited run by a team of writers and publishing industry professionals.
 - 12) writersbucketlist.com – A Writers Bucket List is a place for writers who think outside the box, have a sense of humor and enjoy connecting with quirky, like minded peers.
 - 13) Wattpad.com – Watt Pad is a community of more than 35 million users writing, reading and sharing stories- all for free.

Some techniques to improve writing skills of the students

- Writing in a journal can help them to improve their writing skills. It can also help them to discover new stories and innovative ideas using plain English with everyday words where possible and using a readable font type and size make the writing effective.
- ‘Writer’s Digest’, ‘Creative Copy Challenge’ and other writing resources provide writing exercises and prompts. These are



good ways to improve the writing.

- Rewriting the blog posts or other newspaper articles helps the students to improve their writing.
- Setting up a Google Alert for writing, writing skills, book writing and other alerts and reading them will surely improve the writing skills.
- Writing a decent comment on the favourite blog posts, joining a writers group or attending a writer conference are helpful in enhancing the writing skill.
- Finally, writing at least 1000 words each day and keep on writing really give a fruitful result.

Conclusion

The writing process becomes easy for learners of English language as they use the new shifts in the electronic media when they do tasks like generating ideas, organization and perfect use of grammar and vocabulary. Different types of electronic communication and social media such as email, blogs and facebook really enhance the writing skills of the students. But, as many researchers recommended, decision makers must organize training and workshops for training teachers how to teach writing perfectly through electronic media which has now become not only an essential necessity in teaching writing but also a challenging way of untraditional teaching. So the educators should make themselves aware of this digital

tidal wave about to engulf them and harness its power for the benefit of the students.

Recommendations

- ✓ Universities can frame the curriculum giving much importance to instructional technology.
- ✓ Workshops can be conducted in the educational institutions on regular basis to update the information regarding the electronic media.
- ✓ To inculcate the learning skills and research skill, the government can give financial assistance to institutions for subscribing to useful net sources like infolibnet.ac.in , British council website etc.

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