

Research on the Lifelong Self-Learning Ways of English Based on Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Jun Yan

Jiangsu Vocational Institute of Commerce, Nanjing Jiangsu, 211168, China

Keywords: Self-learning ways, Information and Communication Technology, lifelong learning

Abstract: With the rapid development of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT), the concept and ways of lifelong learning has been greatly changed. ICT has facilitated the methods of acquiring knowledge and communicating among the peers. This essay analyzes the main factors of English lifelong self-learning based on ICT and probe the ways like to inspire the self-learning motivation, to use the platforms based on ICT, to enhance the roles of teamwork in learners and to form the self-learning evaluating system to learn English by self-learning.

1. The connotation of lifelong self-learning

Defined by Wikipedia, Lifelong learning is the "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability, as well as competitiveness and employability. From the time dimension, lifelong learning refers to the learning during a person's whole life, generally speaking, from the very young age to the adult stage. From the space dimension, lifelong learning includes the learning in the classroom and out of it, which integrates the education of all the periods, especially the systematic and fragmented learning.

To develop the full potential of mankind illustrates the main functions of lifelong learning. Learning is one of the most effective ways to improve oneself, which is greatly demanded in the rapidly changed society. To adapt to the change, we have to adjust ourselves to be well prepared in many fields. Only keep learning, can we catch up with the development of the society, which is also of the significance of lifelong learning.

2. The Characteristics of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

ICT is vital in the knowledge economy and information society of the 21st century. With the access to ICT at home and school, a majority of people use the Internet mainly for informal interaction as well as self-directed learning. Internet-based learning is referred to by multiple terms, including online learning, cyber learning, e-learning and Web-based learning. Internet-based resources are offered by public, private, and non-profit entities and may operate locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally. Recently, with more internet courses opening, like micro-courses and MOOCs, the practice of online learning is more recently being applied to the life-long learning, whatever the ages and the positions. There are two fundamental types of ICT-based learning: one replaces existing face-to-face courses and the other one is intended to enhance face-to-face courses. The first type, as an evolution of distance education- an instructional arrangement in which a student and teacher are separated by time and space. The second type, as the compliment to the traditional education in the classroom, enhances the relationships and learning among students and teachers. The visualization and auditory reinforcement are of key concepts for the online-learning. The popularity of ICT-based education is premised on its potential to offer access to content and instructional feedback anytime and anywhere that an Internet connection is available.

3. The Advantages of ICT-based Education

ICT-based education provides flexible location and time for learning. Internet has enhanced the

education forms, including course-management systems that encourage communication as well as corporation among the students. Technology can support asynchronous communication via websites, e-mail, digital pictures or other software. Technology allows educators to tailor their management according to the diverse of the learners, which provides rich materials available for them. What's more, the scale of schooling online has been broaden, which can relieve the tension by allowing educators reach larger groups of learners of various kinds of education background.

3.1 ICT-based Education Facilitates the School-Community Relationship.

The educators and the relevant companies develop their approaches to schooling by technology. These approaches involved in the relationship among students, families and communities, which connect all these factors more closely and develop more interaction and influence on one another. As well, with more young people being immersed in technology environment, they are linked to a variety of knowledge media. Facebook, WeChat, Microblog, for example, provide more convenient communicating ways for the people among communities, which allow the most popular or resonant ideas interconnected than before.

3.2 ICT based Learning Promotes the Response between Learners and Educators.

Using the new models of integration of ICT, the teacher began to enhance students' learning effectiveness by technology. With the help of technology, educators tend to diagnose students' questions and answers more easily. After knowing the problem, the educator can display the analysis to the class as a whole, which will enhance both the teacher's and students' awareness of the students' level of understanding of the subject matter being taught.

3.3 ICT Based Learning Foster Self-Directed Learning

Virtual communities make it possible to bring people together from all over the world. In these different internet-based environments, people of different background are gathering to acquire knowledge and exchange the thoughts. Learners explore their own interests on the Web, which form their self-directed ability gradually. With internet, learners can use a number of different strategies for learning on their own. For example, they may learn from the mentors or their friends, as well, take courses online. The diversity of learning ways will benefit the self-directed learners and develop the skills to learn by themselves at any time, which contribute a lot to the forming of habit of lifelong learning.

3.4 ICT Help Learners Share Community-knowledge Base

With the rapid development of information technology, the concept of knowledge-based community has been advanced. People learn from each other via the resources online, as well from other people of totally different background since. The internet itself has transferred as the knowledge-oriented media that present varies opportunities for education, which provide an area for people to build the ability of critical thinking, problem solving and creativity development. What's more, the ICT has also changed the learning practices of all students and teachers in the classroom by using of knowledge-based. The effective use of educational technology can support learning by structuring tasks for students, as well, the teachers can check the answers of students as well as evaluate them by internet. This knowledge-based community has opened up the possibility of learning ways and learning tasks by the assignment of learning curricula in advance and lets students access textbook-publishers' websites featuring tutorials, practical problems and the electronical version of the notes of the textbooks. Other modules as multimedia can invoke more complex questions from students and more flexible thinking among them. ICT based learning affords immediate feedback and multiple opportunities to make students' thinking visible, enabling the teaching more responsive to students' needs.

3.5 English Learning Concepts based on ICT

The language learning ways based on ICT means to integrate language, information technology and other internet ways as the main methods to guide the students to understand the language,

culture background and foreign society better, so is English learning under ICT. Students create English surroundings and social environment via using and probing the functions of internet. As a foreign language for Chinese students, we learn English for the purposes of traveling abroad, international communication, surfing for English research references etc. “Foreign language” was raised with “native language” at the same time, which shows the differences and the similarities between them. The differences are due to the acquiring time. Native language was acquired as the very first time when we came to the earth, while the foreign language was learned at least not as the same time as we were born. However, the similarities lie in the acquiring ways of language, namely four main parts: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Whatever a language it is, the four parts combine the whole learning direction.

3.6 English Self-Learning Factors based on ICT

Since 1960's, some scholars have raised that English education was related with the whole society, which includes history, culture, economy and politics. Mack has put forward five main factors affecting English learning, namely teachers' methods and materials, teachers' behaviors, sociolinguistic and social-cultural influences of the environment, instruction and learners' behaviors. With the development of information and communications technology, the English learning factors have been influenced greatly. Firstly, the reform has brought the change of the assist tools of English learning. The traditional teacher-centered English classroom has turned into students-immersed one. Internet has been the mainly adopted way both in the classroom and out of the classroom. Secondly, for the rapider speed of information spreading, it is easier and more convenient for people to know all the world, which propel the globalization. Thirdly, teaching ways combined with information ways promote the students' interest in learning English. Fourthly, students can probe more effective methods in English learning not only in regular time but also in the fragmented time.

3.7 Factors Affecting English Self-learning

Self-learning is driven by the inner and outer motivation to inspire the learners to acquire the knowledge, which results in the static and dynamic development of the learners. Self-learning abilities may be diverse in accordance with the nature and the nurture. For the nature part, we can not change or intervene, while we can inspire the learners' desire for learning through adjusting the educating ways. The first way is to reform the teaching mode. During the class time, teachers can provide more time and space for the students, which includes three steps, self-learning before class, communicating among students in class and self-evaluation after class. The second way is to cultivate students to acquire more learning strategies, including the presenting and evaluating steps in English learning. The third way is to adjust the role of teachers in the education. Change the traditional role of teacher as a lecturer into a guide, an estimator and a coordinator.

3.8 English Self-Learning Situation in Chinese Context

As for the general language learning problems, English self-learning situation is not ideal recently. Chinese students still lack confidence in learning English, who show more interest in English scores instead of language ability. Due to the traditional atmosphere of English class, students are more depressive than active. They are more eager to learn English by “being taught” while not by self-learning. For many years of the evaluating ways, students pay more attention to the grammar and other elements caused the scores of “English”, which means students try to learn English as a subject instead of a language. What's more, the outdated teaching materials have become other barriers for the students to update the learning scopes of language.

4. The Reform of English Self-Learning Ways under the ICT

4.1 Inspire the Self-Learning Motivation

Firstly, the learners should understand the importance of learning English. English is not only the most widely used language but also the preferring language in the research references in the

worldwide. We learn English to communicate better to know many countries better to go to the globe. Besides, learning English as a language instead of a subject helps us to broaden our horizons to the outside world. To know the politics, economy, cultures and customs will bring us a more colorful world. All of these elements contribute to the motivation for the self-learning of English. By making the related plans, students may be inspired by the aims of learning and experience the communicating of mimic situation and enhance the process of self-control and self-assessment of self-learning, through which students will find more interests in learning English. What's more, teachers will inspire students by active evaluation.

4.2 Use the Platforms based on ICT

ICT has changed a lot for people's living, including the thinking styles and the learning ways by providing many related platforms. In recent years, many MOOCs have come out, which provide students more opportunities to participate in different English classes according to the interests and other factors. Besides, the communicating software based on internet like WeChat and QQ make the world smaller. We can just stay at home to communicate with anyone from any side of the world, which broke the barriers of English self-learning. We can talk to the native on the communicating platforms as our will, which help a lot to improve our expressing skills of English. As well, with the development of various kinds of English learning software, people can improve the integrated ability of English via listening and speaking practicing. Take "Liulishuo English" for example, learners can practice speaking via imitating the original English speakers. The software can record the whole learning process of the students, which offer them a very effective way to estimate the learning ways and adjust the learning strategies. With these quantized statistics, learners can understand the learning track better, which will inspire them to insist self-learning.

4.3 Build Self-Learning English Atmosphere

To form the relaxing and harmonious atmosphere is an efficient guarantee for English self-learning. Firstly, the learners should be completely involved in the learning situation, which means they should feel "self" in the whole process of learning, including making the learning objectives, designing the learning steps and forming the evaluating systems. Teachers will listen to the students' requirements and suggestions to adjust the teaching strategies to make the lessons students-centered. For example, use the mobile phone and other moved internet terminal to instead of only books in the classroom will make students more likely acquire knowledge by their friendly ways. Secondly, the relationship between teacher and students should be harmonious and equal. The teacher needs to adjust the role as a "participator" while not a controller in the classroom. Only in this situation can the students express their own ideas freely based on mutual understanding and respecting. That's what called a "safe and cozy" atmosphere, which can help students build their sense of safety and confidence in the classroom. Therefore, the students will be eager to express themselves in English, which guarantee the effective communication in the classroom. Thirdly, the teacher needs to guide the students to control themselves and enhance their self-discipline. Self-discipline is the foundation of self-learning, for this strategy is the only way to realize all the steps concerning about self-learning. Only form a strong self-control mind can self-learning habit form both in classroom and out of the classroom.

4.4 Enhance the Roles of Teamwork in Learners

Self-learning focus on the self-inspiring learning while focus on the inter-communication among the teams. Students learn English based on a team will be better than alone. Peers can have three aspects of active influence on self-learning. The first aspect is that the team will set examples for all the other members. The relationship among the learning team can be formed as a learning pool for all the members looking into the minor to check their learning track and to evaluate their learning result. The second aspect is that the learning team built not only in real class but also in the virtual class via internet platform can help the learners to improve their own learning strategies to enhance its integrated English ability and individual English level. The third aspect is that with the wide use of internet, the team built based on the ICT will help the learners acquire more related information

about English learning, which provide rich resources for self-learning of language. Besides, the teacher and family members are also parts of the “team” for self-learning, because they support the learners to insist their learning aims and cooperate with them in the respect of time and place as well as the communication.

4.5 Form the Self-Learning Evaluating System

Effective evaluating system will improve the self-learning motivation and inspire the learners’ interest in English. The related evaluating system based on self-learning can be divided into three aspects. First, the evaluation from teachers need to be in time and active. Teachers can get to know the performance of students through the learning platform, which show the learning time and content of the students. According to these quantic statistics, teachers can give the related assessment in the platform as the feedback from. Second, the evaluation from the peers is also a mainly part of feedback of self-learning. Learners can give assessment to each other according to the learning track in the platform, as well, they can communicate about the learning process and result any time. Based on big data of ICT, students can get more objectives evaluation from the related groups, which enhance their confidence in English learning and help them improve the learning tactics.

5. Conclusion

Lifelong English self-learning has been concerned for many years by the scholars and the learners. Whatever the motivation for English learning is, we are all life-long learners in language field. ICT has brought rich resources and convenient ways for people to learn to communicate, which provides a favorable condition for self-learning.

Acknowledgement

Research Project of Jiangsu vocational institute of Commerce, Jiangsu, China
Project Number: JSJM15012

References

- [1] R J Mislavy and F I Winters. Technology Supports for Assessment, MD, USA.[J].International Encyclopedia of Education: 58-65 April. 2014.
- [2] Colvinsterling S. The Correlation between Temperament, Technology Preference, and Proficiency in Middle School Students.[J].Journal of Information Technology Education Research, 2015, 15(2016):1-18.
- [3] Jun Yan. The Role of Network New Media Technology in the Cultivation of Innovative and Entrepreneurial Talents.[J].Advances in Intelligent Systems Research: 273-276 OCT. 2018.
- [4] Wu Jianping. University Revolution-Higher Education in the MOOC Era. [M]. Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2014:92
- [5] Ding Wanyi, Zhang Manjing. The Transformation of Teachers’ Function in Adult Higher Education under the Trend of MOOC. [J]. Journal of Adult Education, 2016(5)
- [6] Wu Jianping. University Revolution-Higher Education in the MOOC Era. [M]. Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2014:92 [7]
- [7] WANG, Shaojie. Patterns and Strategies on Professional Development for College English Teacher in Lifelong Education Perspective. In: 2018 6th International Education, Economics, Social Science, Arts, Sports and Management Engineering Conference. [J] Atlantis Press, 2019(5)
- [8] GAO, Shuang. Interactional straining and the neoliberal self: Learning English in the biggest English corner in China [M] Language in Society, 2016, 45.3: 397-421.
- [9] LI, Jiani. Teaching Method of English Autonomous Learning Based on Metacognitive Strategy Theory. [J].Kuram ve Uygulamada Egitim Bilimleri, 2018:18