ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH SKILLS THROUGH GAME BSED LEARNING (GBL)

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Abstract

In the advancement of various educational Apps, learning becomes edutainment and a fun way process. Role of curriculum, teacher, learner and parent have been drastically changed. The learner became self dependent in the era of Game based learning.GBL is a useful source for learning English at home and in the school. Bente Meyer (2013) suggested that learning material for English links content directly to the curriculum, to school work and to assessment. The paper will discuss how GBL is an effective process to acquire core skills of English. It will also consider about merits and demerits of GBL. GBL Increases opportunities to bring together researchers, game developers, industry, education experts and learners.

Keywords: *Digital Games, Game Based Learning, Basic Skills, Language Learning, Learner, professional practitioner.*

Introduction:

The teaching of English is a growing focus of many nation, states as English is considered to be a Key competence in the information society. (Graddol, 2006.) India is not exceptional to this, **NCF (2005)** focus on teaching English to the children at the early stages of English. So it may create both competent citizens and competitive nation, (Hansbol and Meyer, 2011. Shore & Wright, 1997.)

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and **NCF 2005** are two of the most important events that have influenced the field of primary education in the country. In the state of Maharashtra, too, primary education curriculum was revised to reflect their guidelines and expectations.

The **RTE ACT** emphasizes all round development of the child, as also learning through activities, discovery and exploration through activities, discovery and exploration in a child – friendly and child centered manner. It makes the child free of fear, trauma, and anxiety and helps the child to express views freely.

In consideration of the above opinions, GBL is a supportive learning source to the students which will fulfill the learning principles.

This paper is based on the analysis of GBL as a teaching- learning platform. It also addresses the market for teaching and learning English online in a global context- and which focuses on both home and school learning.

Concept of Game and Game Based Learning:

There are various definitions of the word game. The majority of these look similar, however just few of them define a game as a useful "tool" or "resource" for teaching. Dictionaries, for instance, give the following concepts:

1. Any specific contest, engagement, amusement, computer simulation, or sport involving physical or mental competition under specific rules, as football, chess, or war games (Webster's New World Dictionary,1991:554)
2. An activity or sport involving skill, Knowledge or chance, in which you follow fixed rules and try to win against an opponent or to solve a puzzle. (Collins Cobuild, 1987:596.)
3. A form of play or sport, especially a competitive one with rules. (Pocket Oxford, 1992: 359.)

Moreover, some Writers have defined as a game as:

1. A structure that - has rules, goals and agreement of players on the surface, and wonderful hidden processes underneath. (Turtledove, 1996:3.)

2. An activity with rules, a goal, and an element of fun. (Hadfield, 1990:5.)

3. An agreeable way of getting a class to use its initiative in English and as it is gently competitive, it increases motivation. It is also a contrast to periods of intensive study. (Haycraft, 1978:94.)

4. The above definitions clear the concept of game. They have some similar aspects competition, rules, and enjoyment.

The term **competition** is significant that an interactive activity should have in order to be considered a game. Competition develops the student's motivation, as they are always in daily competition.

Rules establish the patterns and codes in which the game should be played.

The term **Enjoyment** is considered as an important component for increasing student's motivation in learning a language.

Based on the above concepts, we can redefine definition of game, within the fields of pedagogy.

1. A game is considered a valuable technique which includes three principal elements competition, rules, and enjoyment, which should be well established by a teaching learning objective. (Praxis, T.Y. 2007:47- 66.)

2. Game-based learning (GBL) refers to different kinds of software applications that use games for learning or educational purposes. (JISC, May: 2007.)

Digital Games for English Language Learning:

There are various Apps for English language learning in the market and online. They are as follows:

A. ALPHABET SKILLS

1**. Letters A to Z** (http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/letters-a to z- from-true-learning/ id 307193474? mt=8)

A set of interactive Flashcards that teach children the alphabet.

2. **Letter Tracer Preschool Letter Writing Practice** (http://itunes.apple.com/us apple/letter- tracer- preschool- letters/id 312036740? mt-8)

This app teaches students how to draw and identify letters and numbers, so they can develop the skills for reading and writing etc.

B. PHONICS SKILLS:

1. ABC Phonics Animals Free Lite - Talking and Spelling Alphabet Flashcards Kids Games

(http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/abc-phonocs-animalsfree-lite/id335670787?mt=8#)

An interactive set of flashcards featuring animals, complete with animations and animals sounds.

2. ABC Pocket Phonics

(http://itunes:apple.com/us/app/abc-pocketphonics-letter-sounds/id299342927?mt=8#)

This app teaches learners letter sounds and letter writing.

C. READING SKILLS:

1. ABC Magic Reading:

(http://itemes.apple.co/us/app/abc-magic-reading-short-vowel/id416896853?mt=8#)

This app teaches basic reading skills to children learning how to read- including those learning English as a second language.

2. Early Reader: (http://itemes.apple.com/us/app/early-reader/id327782329?mt=8)

This app helps beginning readers develop their reading skills.

D.WRITING/ GRAMMAR SKILLS:

1. Grammar Jammers Primary Edition:

(http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/grammar.jammer-primary/editim/id386384446?mt=8#)

A collection of quizzes, songs, rhymes, and animation that teach Basic English grammar.

2. Language Builder: (http://itemes.apple.com/us/app/grammar.jammar/primaryedition/id 40581365? Mt= 8)

A sentence building app. Children see a picture and form a sentence with the prompts provided.

E. LISTENING, SPEAKING, READING & WRITING SKILLS:

Online **Mingoville School** launched in 2012. It works on several platforms on language learning.

They have software 'Learn Now' which is useful resource to learn listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. They have also "Play Now" software programme for various activities in English. They will develop language skills.

F. INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS:

Cambridge University Press published Raymond Murphy's Essential English Grammar in Use. This book has with it a CD ROM which is useful for inclusive English language skills.

4. Role of Teacher in GBL:

1**. As a Model** – His main function is to give clear instructions and a little demonstration of the game.

2. **As a Moderator** – He /She focuses on observing, analyzing, helping, taking notes, making sure that the game does not get out of hand and providing feedback until the game is over.

3. **As a Judge** – She/he gives opportunity to every student equally and judges them democratically.

4. Teachers should be **digitally competent** and **tech-savvy**.

Role of Learner in GBL:

1. On the other hand, students' roles depend on what the interactive game demands.

2. In addition, students have to follow the rules of the game and even though they are achieving a specific part of the foreign language, they certainly are doing so.

Procedure to Apply Games:

1. The teacher should give the instructons and an example of the game.

2. Then, students play the game. They should never be interrupted to give feedback because it may reduce their motivation and they might lose their confidence in the language. The teacher should be present so as to be able to assist students if they ask for help while the game is played.

3. Afterwards, the winner is decided according to the rules of the game.

4. At the end, there is feedback. It is a teacher's decision if it is given individually or in general to the class.

Advantages of GBL:

Carrier (1980:06) has given the following advantages:

1. Games give a variety of tools to facilitate teaching-learning process. They are complementary to the syllabus.

2. Games are flexible. It means they can be used for teaching any aspect of the language.

3. Games provide variety of class activities which help to maintain student's attention and interest.

4. Games raise the student's motivation.

5. Games make students produce language subconsciously.

6. Games stimulate students' participation and give them confidence.

7. Games transform the teachers role from that formal instructor to that of an organizer and moderator of the class.

8. Games can also serve as a testing mechanism etc.

Disadvantages of GBL:

1. It creates difficulty of classroom management.

2. It faces lack of infrastructure (insufficient availability of computers).

3. It is also difficult to integrate games into the curriculum.

4. Non-savvy teachers are negative about GBL.

5. Ironically, the engaging nature of digital games can sometimes be a distraction from the overall learning objective, because pupils get caught up in the notion of solving the problem or winning the game.(British Council: Emerging Technologies, Emerging Minds:33).

Conclusion:

Serious or educational games are opening up new potential for learning in formal situations and in innovative ways. This paper has presented a variety of games suitable for fostering and enhancing learning in the English language classroom. The importance of learning English Language is part of the economical, professional and educational development of a society in this day and age.

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