



OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECHNOLOGY ENABLED LEARNING (USE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LABORATORY)

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• Introduction:-

The language laboratory is an audio or audio-visual installation used as an aid in modern language teaching. They can be found, amongst other places, in schools, universities, and academies. Perhaps the first lab was at the University of Grenoble in 1908. In the 1950s up until the 1990s, they were tape-based systems using reel to reel or (latterly) cassette. Current installations are generally multimedia PCs. The original language labs are now very outdated. They allowed a teacher to listen to and manage student audio via a hard-wired analogue tape deck based systems with 'sound booths' in fixed locations.



Russian language class in an East German language laboratory (1975)

Language laboratories in the 1970s and 1980s received a bad reputation due to breakdowns. Common problems stem from the limitations and relative complexity of the reel to reel tape system in use at that time. Design played a part too; the simplest language laboratories had no electronic systems in place for the teacher to remotely control the tape decks, relying on the students to operate the decks correctly. Many had no way to stop the

tape running off the reel in fast rewind or forward wind, which meant time wasting and greater chances of failure through misuse.

The tape recorders in use after the early 1970s in the language laboratory were more complex than those in the home, being capable of multitasking and electronic remote control.

A modern language laboratory control center

The demise of the traditional language laboratory came in the 1980s, with the falling out of favor of the audio-lingual method commonly in place in 1960s teaching methodology, and the expensive repairs needed to the open reel tape machines due to student misuse, neglect, or wear and tear. Many schools transformed their old language labs into computer suites. However, the advent of affordable multimedia capable PCs in the late 1990s led to a resurgence and transformation of the language laboratory with software and hard drives in place of reels of analogue tape.

In the 1990s new digital, hybrid PC based systems allowed extended functionality, in terms of better "management" of student / teacher audio with some levels of internet and video formats.

● **Present day – 2013**



Student terminals and headphone

● **Modern language labs in general offer the following:-**

- Text, images, audio and video can easily be integrated; teachers can alter materials to fit their requirements
- Learners can record their own voice and play back the recordings, interact with each other and the teacher, and store results
- Teachers can intervene and control the learners' computers via the teacher's console, track of learners' work, etc.

- Self-access for independent learning which includes access to resources outside class
- The purpose of a language lab is to involve students to actively participate in language learning exercises and get more practice than otherwise possible in a traditional classroom environment.

• **Common components in a modern language lab:-**

- Teacher has a computer with appropriate software for conducting language exercises
- Teacher and students wear headsets that block outside sounds and disturbances
- Students have a media player/recorder for listening to audio and recording speech

• **Why use a language lab in language teaching?**

In an average foreign-language class, all students combined speak only 23,5% of the class time

In a 45-minute long class 23,5% equals approximately 10 ½ minutes. As this number is the speaking time of all students put together, the time each student gets to practice speaking becomes less as class size is increased.

How much speaking practice each student gets during a 45-minute foreign-language class, depending on class size:

	10 student class	30 student class
Traditional classroom	~1 minute	~21 seconds
Classroom with language lab	~11 minutes*	~11 minutes*

With a language lab, all students in the class can speak simultaneously without distracting each other regardless of the class size. Without a language lab, in a class of more than 10 students, each student gets less than one minute of speaking practice.

• **Language Lab Equipment:-**

The English and Foreign Languages department is proud of the new state-of-the-art foreign language lab which is equipped with the following:

- CAN8 Language Learning System
- 27 LCD Lift desks with headsets
- Speaker System
- Projector
- HP Network Laser Printer
- HP Desktop PCs
 - Atajo
 - Systemé

- Microsoft Office XP
- XClass Classroom management software
- **Instructor Lectern**
 - HP Desktop w/DVD drive
 - Sympodium
 - Amplifier
- **Accessing CAN8 from Off Campus:-**

Students needing to access CAN8 from home will need the to have the following:

- Internet Connection - preferably broadband
- Multimedia PC with noise reduction headset with microphone
- Windows 98/2000/XP

In order to run and access the CAN8 server you will need to:

- Request access to FSU's VPN. This will give you access to the FSU network and put you inside of the firewall. You will receive instructions for downloading and installing.(You will need to sign into VPN prior to running the CAN8 client.)
- Download and install the CAN8 (click on link and select Run and follow installation instructions).
- Once these are both installed, run the VPN client and login using your campus username and password.
- Run the CAN8 client and login as you would from the language lab.

● CAN8 Manuals Foreign Language Lab:-

- Student Guide (PDF)
- Faculty Guide (PDF)
- Authoring Guide (PDF)



● **Uses of Language Lab with Teacher's Console:-**

Language Lab can be used for teaching/learning through teacher's Console and Language Learning Software. It acts as a platform for learning, practicing and producing language skills through interactive lessons and communicative mode of teaching. Learners can act and respond in a variety of ways at their own pace. Language lab may have the following objectives, purposes, functions to work upon.

1) Stay in control:-

New ways of learning and interacting in the classroom demand new ways of managing student activity. Many software language learning solutions keep teachers and learners firmly at the center of learning activity with a suite of classroom management tools: control web browsing; manage chat sessions; monitor students' on-screen work and activities; black out screens; lock cursors and keyboards to focus attention on a given task; shut down, log off or restart student computers etc.

2) Reinforce learning:-

Teachers can use communication tools that are familiar to their students, such as text messaging or chat, to communicate with them in an engaging way and by creating more opportunities to interact in the target language. Learners can reinforce their language in various activities. They can revise pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and conversations

3) Teaching with software that is approachable:-

Teachers will be perfectly at ease by using teaching software, as the interfaces are user-friendly and activity-driven, so that activities that are not in use cannot be accidentally selected to confuse the teacher and disrupt the lesson. No specialized IT skills are needed in the comfortable teaching and learning environment provided by the interface.

4) To ensure the best learning results:-

Language Learning Software gives learners access to resources for independent or supplemental learning and study. This unique learning-on-demand feature creates additional learning opportunities and reinforces classroom activity. It is possible to conduct & practice tests and get results in individualized manner.

● **Functionsof Teacher's Console:-**

Live Audio & Video broadcasting

- To broadcast live Audio and Video from news and educational channels of TV or from internet
- To broadcast the teacher's screen or a selected student's to other computers

- To broadcast Audio and Video from any analog source i.e. DVD, MP3 & CD etc

Monitoring the student's workstations

- To Monitor students' screens as a whole and also on individual basis from the teacher's workstation
- To take control or terminate applications on any student computer

Speech drill exercises

To practice voice based activities like speech drill exercises through model imitation, voice recording, voice graph and variable speed playback to neutralize accent & acquire fluency.

Group Discussions:-

- To bring the students into random or standard groups to conduct group discussions and role plays from their workstations.
- Live recording of discussion content for each group so that the teacher can provide feedback on their performance

Content Authoring and conducting online examination

- To combine text, video, images and audio to design customized course materials.
- To create, edit and score exams, quizzes and tests using text, graphics, audio and video.

● Techniques to improve macro skills of language through Language Lab:-

Among the four macro skills of language learning, listening and reading are receptive skills whereas speaking and writing are the productive skills. These skills can be improved effectively, when the learner learns at his own pace. With the help of the functional tool- Language Lab with Teacher's Console, language skills can be learnt, practiced and evaluated through the techniques followed.

I) Techniques to improve listening:-

a) Perception / Pronunciation:-

- 1) Phonetics
- 2) Interpretation
- 3) Listening to words

b) Tools for Listening:-

- 1) Acoustics
- 2) Usage of language laboratory

c) Organizing listening comprehension activities

- 1) Understanding the setting
- 2) Pre-teach difficult vocabulary
- 3) Focused listening
- 4) Comprehending
- 5) Analysis
- 6) Graded Listening tasks

II) Techniques to improve speaking:-

1. Group Discussions & Role Plays
2. Digital Recorder
3. Voice Recognition Technology

III) Techniques to improve Reading & Writing:-

- Learn a base vocabulary of approximately 2000 words for day-to-day use
- Learn the rules of grammar
- Vocabulary Lessons
- Grammar Exercises
- Interactive Stories/situations

• Advantages and Benefits of Language Lab:-

- Auditory Oriented
- Better Attention
- Comprehensive quickly
- Damper the idea
- Effective learning
- Focus Veracity
- Guide the group
- Have the self evaluation
- Independent learning

• Conclusion:-

There is always scope for improvement and advancement in any field and for any subject. It has to be accomplished with commitment and enthusiasm. We are habituated to the traditional teaching methods. It is high time that our teaching methods have to undergo a change. Unless the new technology is adopted in English language teaching, we cannot impart language skills in our learners at the rate of growing competition.

Today's educational climate is increasingly diverse. Art has long been seen as a visual language. The language lab plays a key role to learn the foreign language in a happy atmosphere and in a successful way. Both the teacher and the students' inputs are very important in this kind of learning activity.. Multicultural countries like India, students are taking taut try to learn the English language and its proficiency. So we need a solution that facilitates the second language learning in a trouble-free way.

Surely language laboratories represent the single largest investment and installment of audio resources in education. By high merit of its unique equipment and its unambiguous pedagogy, it stands alone. The computer now fulfills all the need of language educators and gives life to language for many learners.

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