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Analysis of the Mature and Necessity of Virtual Education in the Present Age with Emphasis on Effective Teaching Methods in Teaching English through Virtual Education

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ABSTRACT

Education is one of the activities that has been done formally and informally since ancient times, and over time, due to the changes that have taken place in human life, the methods of presenting it have changed, and at the same time, with the arrival of the era of information and communication technology. Virtual education has emerged as a result of changing societies and to meet the educational needs of the contemporary world. In virtual education, especially English language teaching by teachers, the selection of effective and appropriate teaching methods according to the characteristics and capabilities of this type of education is one of the problems that teachers face. Reviewing and analyzing teaching methods in virtual education can help teachers to adopt effective teaching methods. In this paper, in a descriptive-analytical method and library resources, the terms synonymous with virtual education and the time of origin of this type of education are presented. Then, the definitions of virtual education, methods of providing virtual education, and the necessity of virtual education are discussed. Then, some effective teaching methods in English virtual education are stated and analyzed, concluding with the advantages and disadvantages of virtual education. Virtual education can be considered as a kind of lifelong learning that focuses on the learner and among the effective and inclusive teaching methods in this type of training that is useful for teaching English can be problem-solving, online discussion, small online groups and methods constructivism pointed out. It can be said that by using special methods, it is possible to teach English better through virtual education

KEYWORDS:

Education;
Virtual Education;
English Language
Teaching;
Methods;

Introduction

The contemporary era has been called the age of "information and communication technology" due to the increasing emergence of information and communication technologies in the world. In this age,

science and technology are rapidly advancing and developing, which has had a tremendous impact on all areas of human life and given that technology and education are two intertwined and inseparable concepts. As one of the most important systems globally, the education system must take action to adapt to new technologies and changes. In this regard, and according to the needs of 21st-century societies, virtual education has entered the field as a kind of efficient education in the current situation and has been opposed to traditional education. Also, paying attention to the virtual teaching of English in the present age and the importance of this language in the international arena; paying attention to the virtual methods of teaching this language is extremely important.

Virtual education is a lifelong and inclusive education that can be provided and used remotely and with the help of new technologies, regardless of spatial dimension and time difference in all parts of the world in two simultaneous and asynchronous ways. Given that today science and technology are rapidly expanding and advancing, and education is an intermediary between these two concepts, it can be said that virtual education due to the acceleration of knowledge and information transfer to various learners., Anytime and anywhere in the world is a logical and efficient answer to the needs of the last century. Through virtual education, various subjects can be provided to learners with appropriate teaching methods and efficient tools. There are also special methods for teaching English that can help teachers to teach this language effectively.

It has long been one of the problems of teachers and has become more prominent in virtual education. In English virtual education, although teachers face new challenges, it should be noted that using special methods and inclusive methods can improve the quality of education in this language. In order for learners to use this type of education easily and quickly, virtual instructors should be able to choose effective and appropriate teaching methods for teaching content according to the

capabilities and facilities of virtual education, educational content, characteristics of learners, and so forth.

What is Virtual Education?

Virtual education is one of the terms of the contemporary century, which overlaps with several concepts such as Internet-based education, distance education, e-learning, etc. (Golzari, 2016). Eric Ashby considers virtual education as the fourth revolution that has emerged simultaneously with the emergence of information and communication technology (Montazer, 2007). Moreover, a review of the interpretation of virtual education shows that this concept was initially considered as a "tool" and "method", but over time in parallel with the traditional education system, has been considered and welcomed by the world (Mahmoudi, 2017). There is no single definition of virtual education and its meanings. Thus, some of the definitions, in this case, are mentioned in this article.

According to Cross, who is considered by many to be the inventor of the term virtual education, he says that virtual education is education that is done through the Internet and distance, using new technologies that provide the latest information and can include a set of educational methods in which the learner takes responsibility for learning (Islahi, 2018). A group considers virtual education as an industrialized education system to organize the learning-teaching process. In order to select and apply solutions for the use of new technology in education, creating a two-way relationship between teacher and learner can facilitate the process of learning and its evaluation by the learner (Norouzi, 2017).

Another group considers virtual education as a type of training launched through the Internet, including providing course materials in multiple formats, educational management, and a network of learners, teachers, experts, and content producers (Maleki, 2012). According to the definitions provided, the following features can be enumerated for virtual

education: A kind of distance education through the Internet and new technologies; Accelerate the teacher's communication with learners; Facilitate the training process; Creating a two-way communication based on interaction; A kind of inclusive education; Has high flexibility; Providing up-to-date information.

The change of educational technologies, educational methods also change. For this reason, virtual education is offered in both simultaneous and asynchronous methods, in which there is no flexibility in simultaneous education, and all learners are expected to enter the site at a particular time. This type of training is often done through a live conference, live broadcast, text dialogue, etc. (Penn, 2020). The traditional classroom also has a specific start and end time that learners can interact with each other and the instructor with the help of cyberspace capabilities in text, audio, or video and deepen their learning.

Asynchronous education has high flexibility in terms of time and place because instructors provide the necessary arrangements for students to take lessons, and they can enter the site at any time and use educational materials, in which case learners learn quickly. This type of education breaks some of the rules of traditional education. It is regulated (same) and the educational system can transfer education outside the classroom (Neyestani, 2011). The educational process is done differently. After studying the educational content, learners can communicate with other learners or their instructor through asynchronous communication tools such as e-mail, e-discussion forums, whiteboards, announcements, etc. Moreover, if they do not understand the content, retrieve and study it again and complete their learning. Therefore, in virtual English language teaching, it is necessary to have two-way communication between the teacher and the learner in order to be able to realize learning in the best way.

The Necessity for Virtual Education in the Present Age

The contemporary era is associated with the emergence and expansion of information and communication technologies (Pirannejad, 2017), that the coexistence of these technologies with various sciences and technologies has led to the transition from industrial society to information society (Khoramabadi, 2005). This transition has brought many changes in all aspects of human life, including the transfer of knowledge and information, and various sciences are rapidly produced and disseminated in all parts of the world. Therefore, the educational system should be able to adapt to existing changes and meet the needs of all sections of society in access to science. Therefore, virtual education was created to meet the educational system's need for quick and equal access to the latest scientific achievements, which today has become an integral part of human life.

In fact, due to the importance of information transfer speed in the 21st century (Basiiri, 2017) can be the need for virtual education, easy, equal, and free access to the latest information (Paknahad, 2015) and upgrade learners' knowledge and skills by using the program and scientific content, global, up-to-date and cost-effective (Maleki, 2012). As a result of the use of virtual education, education has become a global space and learners can anywhere in the world due to the elimination of time and place in education (Marzooqi, 2017), in the fastest possible time, to achieve the latest sciences and the latest results of scientific research and by applying them in their lives, to provide better solutions to solve problems (Najafgholinejad, 2011).

Effective Teaching Methods in Virtual English Language Teaching

The teaching method is a way that helps teachers in achieving the goal of the lesson, ie teaching and learning (Alayi, 2017). Instructors should be able to choose an effective teaching method to provide their desired content according to the available facilities, educational content, characteristics of

learners; the effective teaching method is a method that has been created from a set of ways to help learners that learners can accumulate and build their knowledge, skills and embedded values (Joyce, 2018). Miller divides effective teaching methods into two categories: teacher-centered and inclusive-oriented (Alayi, 2017). In the teacher-centered teaching method, the teacher provides information about a science directly and predetermined to learners (Hashempour, 2017).

In this teaching method, students are passive and do not acquire new information and knowledge themselves, but the information is transmitted to them by the teacher, in which case their learning is superficial, and the material is forgotten after a short time. In the inclusive teaching method, learners, besides learning the subjects, are taught independent study skills, work and partnership with others, also learn to create knowledge through original resources, etc. (Westwood, 2017). Therefore, according to this teaching method, learners are active in the educational process and acquire information and build new knowledge, in which case the material learned by them becomes part of their existence.

Over the past ten years, inclusive teaching methods have received more attention than other methods (Davoli, 2014). Considering the facilities and capabilities of new technologies, virtual education has also considered inclusive teaching methods and encourages learners to innovate and produce new knowledge in various ways. In this case, learners can learn skills such as learning and innovation, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, information literacy, media literacy, ICT literacy with the help of virtual education (White, 2012). The following are some effective teaching methods in virtual English language teaching according to the features and characteristics of virtual education that teachers should choose the characteristics of learners, the time required to provide content, course content, etc.

Problem-based Teaching Methods

Problem-based learning is one of the most effective virtual English language teaching methods that has received much attention in virtual learning. According to this method, the content of English lessons is prepared and predetermined by the teacher and is not provided to the learners before they face the problem. Rather, learners first identify a problem based on their or the teacher's interests according to the learners' abilities and interests and the time they have, and learners acquire the knowledge and skills they need while working and finding solutions to solve the problem and acquire as well as produce language knowledge.

In problem-based education, the problem is not an incident that causes a problem but achieving a thematic nature can be considered a problem-solving problem (Khorshidi, 2000). The teacher can use this method to express a topic and ask learners to provide feedback in teaching English. For example, in order to strengthen students' speaking skills, s/he can describe this situation and ask students to comment using English vocabulary and grammar, and this helps students' speaking skills: "Suppose you are shopping in a shop and you suddenly realize that thieves are stealing from the shop. What is your reaction?". Clearly, by creating a problem with such questions, students can be encouraged to use words and observe grammatical points while speaking and improve their speaking skills.

In this method, education has high quality because learners are involved in solving new problems and their high-level cognitive skills such as analysis, composition and evaluation and spontaneous and independent learning are developed (Islahi, 2018). Problem-based education can be implemented through cyberspace, and learners can, once the problem is identified by the instructor, individually or in groups, with the instructor's guidance and the extensive information space that cyberspace provides.

Find solutions to solve problems and gain knowledge and skills in a deep and lasting way.

Online Discussion-based Teaching Method

Another effective method to teach English by virtual education is the online discussion-based method. Reece and Walker (2004) consider this teaching method as a way in which learners are involved in commenting on the subject under discussion. The virtual instructor should be able to initiate, lead the discussion, provide feedback, etc. to guide the virtual classroom that is held simultaneously and to improve the quality of this teaching method (Berne, 2011), and learners should engage in regular discussion (Collison, 2000). In this teaching method, learners will interact to a great extent, which shows that there is evidence that interaction in the educational process, learners' knowledge expands and their attitude towards positive learning increases (Ghasemi, 2015). Online discussion-based teaching is done in five stages: 1—determining the subject of teaching 2—preparing the ground for discussion 3—explaining the purpose and instructions for conducting the discussion 4—leading the discussion 5—conclusion (Hashempour, 2017).

In virtual English teaching, the teacher can use this method with different solutions. For example, he can put students in different groups and write sentences on the online board and ask the groups or students to analyze grammatically sentence. The teacher can also inform the students that they must comment on the next lesson next week, improving the students' lexical ability and developing their vocabulary and speaking skills.

According to this teaching method, the teacher must first choose a challenging topic and if this topic needs to be studied, inform the learners about the topic and discussion before starting the virtual class at the same time through asynchronous training and information on the bulletin board and so on., So that learners can use the virtual library if they need to read

more resources. In the second stage, before starting the discussion, the teacher should prepare the ground for the discussion by telling an experience, story, etc., and then state the purpose of choosing the online discussion teaching method with the help of cyberspace capabilities, as well as the purpose of the discussion and a general framework. Specify for the lesson session so that learners can discuss and exchange ideas according to that framework.

Furthermore, during the discussion, the teacher should lead the discussion well and, in the end, summarize the issues raised. As it is clear, the English teacher can use this method to improve students' listening and speaking skills and encourage participation in-class activities.

Teaching Method Based on Small Groups Online

Teaching method based on small groups is one of the teaching methods of virtual education, according to which learners in small groups and to gather information and participate with each other. According to this teaching method, all learners can work on a common topic, and if the topic is broad and has several branches, each group can study a separate branch. For example, if the teaching subject is how to quote at different tenses, each group can discuss a tense such as simple present tense, continuous present tense, etc. For teaching in small groups, students are divided into groups of three or four. The members of the groups should be selected by the teacher according to the characteristics and abilities of the learners so that all the groups are on the same level. Each group should form group learning networks in cyberspace to share different topics with group members.

According to this method, learners can attend group learning networks simultaneously or asynchronously and study the subject matter—commenting and exchanging ideas. Since the instructor will not be present in this network, learners will face dissenting opinions without stress and

worry, and if they have a question in their minds while working with their peers, they will help each other to hypothesize and solve the question that this issue makes the minds of learners active and fluid. The teacher should allow learners to do group activities so that they can think outside the classroom at the same time about the activities and how to do them, as well as planning and doing the activities. It can be said that teaching based on small groups is more effective in English virtual language teaching than traditional teaching because, in virtual education, out-of-class learners are simultaneously and, in the network, they have created for the group, with extensive resources and information. Cyberspace explores the subject, which in turn improves students' English communication skills.

This teaching method is done in six stages: 1. selecting the subject, 2. finding common ground, 3. expressing the goal by the teacher, 4. discussion and cooperation of the learners, 5. evaluation, 6. summarizing and concluding (Mortazavizadeh, 2015). If the teacher realizes that a group member is not very interested in working in the group, he can encourage him to cooperate with other members by providing motivational tips and reasons for the need for inclusive participation in the activities (Hashempour, 2017). In this educational method, a participatory atmosphere is created in which learners exchange their experiences and cooperate, which helps them deepen the content (Attaran, 2017).

Moreover, in the end, after doing the group activities of the learners, with the help of communication facilities and tools of cyberspace, virtual dialogue, news board, etc., they share the result in the classroom with the teacher and other learners summarize it. This can effectively improve students' speech and English skills (Seeker, 2011).

Constructivist Teaching Methods

In this way, teaching real-life situations form the basis of learning, and constructivist teaching believes that students constantly can organize and

reconstruct their perceptions while trying to learn and use different ways to achieve knowledge. In virtual English teaching, the teacher can ask students to express daily events or important events of the day. This method effectively improves the lexical, grammatical, and speech performance of non-native learners, who make up most learners.

According to this teaching method, learners have high freedom of action and can plan and learn independently, but this does not mean denying any educational design for teaching. Constructivist teachers in virtual education, by preparing a flexible and accurate lesson plan, predict appropriate activities for teaching and learning (Mortazavizadeh, 2015). In this teaching method, teachers must teach students how to establish a relationship between students' previous knowledge and new knowledge because to build new knowledge, and learners need to use previous knowledge (Aghazadeh, 2016). For example, the English teacher can also refer to the simple present tense when teaching continuous and perfect present tenses, which is related to the previous sessions, to distinguish this tense from other tenses.

Instructors can also provide learners with opportunities to learn information and build new experiences by asking different questions to evaluate learners' errors in the knowledge-building process. Learners rebel against their thinking and elaborate and violate it until they reach a deep understanding; dealing with learners' mistakes causes them to take risks that lead to new and deeper understandings. This virtual teaching method is planned and implemented in five stages, which are: 1. Involvement 2. Exploration 3. Description 4. Explanation (expansion) 5. Evaluation (Ghatui, 2019).

In this teaching method, the teacher is aware of the learners' prior knowledge and selects a topic for the study that ensures that learners can study with the help of a comprehensive information network provided by new technologies. Moreover, if learners have a question from the teacher

about the result, s/he should do his best not to provide the correct answer directly to them, but to guide them to produce new knowledge by introducing the sources and how to reach the knowledge.

According to this method, the English teacher in his virtual education can review the previous sessions' lessons and force the students to discuss and work in the classroom and improve their English skills. Table 1 lists the names of mentioned methods in order.

Table1: More effective methods that can be used in virtual education

No	Name of Methods
1	Problem-based Teaching Methods
2	2 Online Discussion-based Teaching Methods
3	Teaching Methods Based on Small Groups Online
4	Constructivist Teaching Methods

Result and Discussion

Benefits of Virtual Learning

1. Cost Savings

Virtual education reduces travel and consulting costs and costs related to the repair and maintenance of educational buildings.

2. Simulation of Educational Environments

Virtual education is able to visualize all educational environments for learners with the help of various and up-to-date software, and learners can learn content by entering those places virtually (Ghanbari, 2017).

3. Lifelong Learning

In this type of education, all people worldwide can benefit from education at any time, and there is no need for the physical presence of learners in the classroom.

4. Cooperation and Interaction

Learners can interact and collaborate in the shortest possible time, which interaction and cooperation in virtual education, like traditional education, helps them deepen the content.

5. Learning without Stress and Worry

In virtual education, learners enter an environment where it is impossible to judge, so they can easily express their opinions and ideas and exchange ideas. In this way, isolated learners can also participate in interactions and conversations. These factors help them increase their self-confidence.

6. Benefit from People with Special Needs from Virtual Education

Due to the lack of need to relocate in this type of education, people who have dropped out of education, people who do not have a place to study near their living environment, people with physical disabilities, etc. can also benefit from this type of education.

7. Provide Up-to-date Training

Due to the rapid spread and updating of information and the possibility of rapid communication in this type of training, instructors can immediately provide the latest scientific findings to learners.

8. Use a Variety of Teaching Methods

Due to the facilities and capabilities of cyberspace and the possibility of quick access of learners to the vast global information through cyberspace, teachers can use effective and diverse methods in education.

9. Reproducibility

Learners can retrieve instructional clips or videos with or without intervals if they do not understand the course material.

Disadvantages of Virtual Education

Endangering Physical Health

Spending a long time in social networks can affect the function of genes in the human body and reduce the level of hormones, immunity, and blood vessels (Zayedieh, 2019).

Lack of Attention to the Educational Dimension of Learners

Considering that in education, in addition to the scientific and specialized dimension, the educational dimension of learners is also considered, and traditional education paid attention to this dimension through the establishment of scientific and recreational camps, cultural activities, etc., but virtual education is indifferent to this.

Reducing Learners' Social Relationships

Learners can not establish social relationships and face-to-face communication due to the spatial dimension of each other and their teacher, so that virtual education may provide more loneliness for learners.

Lack of Computer Literacy

Learners and teachers may not have enough computer literacy to use virtual education and its facilities, in which case the education process will be disrupted

Concealment of Learners' Mistakes

Instead of using their knowledge, learners may receive the answer from another person and answer it when the teacher asks them a question.

Conclusion

Due to the transition from the physical world to the virtual world, the educational system as one of the systems that has been of great importance throughout history has undergone significant changes. Due to the expansion and development of information and communication technology and the high speed of information and science transfer in the 21st century, the educational system to adapt to the changes in the world and meet the basic human needs has provided the solution of providing

virtual education. With the help of its capabilities, virtual education has accelerated the transfer of course content and materials needed by learners and has helped them easily achieve human scientific achievements. In the meantime, it is very important to pay attention to teaching English through virtual education. English language should be considered in virtual education due to its great importance in today's world and global communication. It has been proven that students can be encouraged to work in English classes using some methods and make learning meaningful.

To convey English curriculum content to learners, virtual educators, like traditional education, must use effective teaching methods. Considering the capabilities of virtual education, inclusive teaching methods, according to which learners are responsible for planning and implementing the learning process and the teacher is present in this process as a facilitator of education, have been considered. These include problem-solving teaching methods, online discussion, small online groups, and constructivism. In all these teaching methods, English language learners' study and research in groups or individually and build new knowledge, and if they have any questions or problems via e-mail, live conference bulletin boards, and so forth, they ask their questions, and the language teachers guide them to solve the problem. Most experts believe that when English language learners engage in education and generate new knowledge, they learn deeply and indestructibly to apply what they have learned in various areas of their daily lives. Pay and experience communication in English, which is the method mentioned to achieve this goal.

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