

content that teachers bring students' real lives to their classrooms. Accordingly, the teachers are no longer limited to static books and could rely on real photos/ videos and embed real questions in them (Richardson, 2010). These days, teachers are recommended to count on real videos clip about quarantine days and remote education, include real questions about the new unit words in the videos, and evaluate the students' knowledge of vocabulary. Which websites do you use to teach different units interactively?

**To make e-learning happen, teachers need to more systematically take e-teaching into account**

### **3. Interactive assessment: Online quizzes/surveys/polls**

Although teachers are currently using different websites that provide ready-made tests, to meet the specific needs of their learners, teachers may find it more relevant to design online mini-quizzes tailored to the course requirements. To actively engage the students in synchronous online classes and dynamically motivate them, the teachers could count on synchronous tests (see Crisp, 2007). By doing so, not only do they evaluate the students' performance on the spot, but also they engage them in meaningful learning-based assessment. However, for weekly reviews, teachers may use asynchronous testing tools to create digital portfolios for the students and assess their performance during the semester. Based on the quality of their performance during the semester, teachers may give them e-badges as positive feedback. Relying on online test design and scoring procedure is efficient, systematic, and time-saving for the teachers. Furthermore,

teachers could make online opinion polls to receive students' feedback on teaching practices and learning experiences. Teachers are recommended to design collaborative tests by engaging the students in preparing, designing, and scoring online tests. As they get involved in testing their peers' knowledge, they begin to make learning more relevant. This peer assessment/peer feedback plays a pivotal role in students' peer learning. What makes online peer assessment practical?

### **Conclusion**

To make e-learning happen, teachers need to more systematically take e-teaching into account. Online education requires teachers that regularly update their technological pedagogical knowledge in the light of emerging digital tools and mini-articles released by e-learning websites. By forming small local e-teaching communities at schools, teachers benefit from a productive platform for sharing their real experiences of technology-enhanced language learning and collectively fixing remote teaching problems.

**To practice "GATE" technique, scan the following QR code.**



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unexplored and less attended to (see Thome, 2016). Such codes can help the language teachers to save their valuable instruction time by enabling them to share their instructional content via a URL and have students access the content easily through scanning the code. As Cruse and Brereton (2018) put, “QR codes can most easily provide links to resources that enhance the lesson materials, functioning as a substitute for nontechnology tools... or working to augment lesson tasks” (p. 342).

Teachers employ QR (Quick Response) codes for a variety of educational purposes. For instance, teachers may use QR codes to share hyperlinked course syllabi and multimedia classroom materials that could be readily adapted to students’ personal interests and learning styles on the one hand, and take them beyond the confines of text-dominated paper-based resources on the other. Assume you use Google Docs to design your interactive syllabus and find a QR code generator website to produce the QR code of your syllabus. In this context, students are given the QR code and begin their virtual journey by clicking on the links provided in the syllabus to gain access to web-based contents, listen to a compelling podcast about the course objectives, or watch a short teacher-narrated clip about the course requirements. Teachers could also use QR codes to facilitate students’ access to supplementary materials. You teach a reading passage in class and students find the topic very amazing. To reinforce students’ extensive reading, you selectively provide a list of links guiding them to supplementary reading sources and share a QR code of the links with the students. As another example, assume you teach a grammatical point (e.g. active vs. passive) in class and share the links to a rich source of grammar websites

and worksheets in form of QR codes. Furthermore, teachers may like to send the students on a virtual expedition for doing team projects. To this end, the learners may be given QR codes to more immediately find the answers to the key questions raised about their projects while doing intensive reading and listening. In addition, teachers could design a set of online review quizzes, share QR codes, and ask the students to take the tests as planned in advance. Moreover, teachers may be interested in



bringing QR codes to their classes by giving different QR codes to different groups and running competitions by requiring the learners to do various word or grammar puzzles. How are you going to use QR codes in your classes?

## **2. Interactive pedagogy: Digital contents**

Are you interested in making animated images and hyperlinked videos to teach new words or grammar? Do you like to engage the students in recording their voices and embedding them in their pictures to practice speaking while describing their daily activities? Do you like to make interactive slides to more meaningfully engage students in the learning process? It is through interactive

## Introduction

The outbreak of Coronavirus has inevitably pushed the teachers to leave their face-to-face classes behind and take their first steps towards online instruction journey. Although the final destination of both traditional and virtual education is to improve learners' English proficiency, each has its own pathways to reach the learning endpoint. It is purely simplistic for a teacher to think of online pedagogy as a linear change of the teaching-learning platform. Instead, e-learning requires English teachers to purposefully, selectively, and systematically adapt digital tools to the target skills and components (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, listening, speaking, and writing) as well as students' interests and needs. To effectively use digital sources for pedagogical and assessment purposes, teachers are expected to raise initial key questions such as "what is the purpose of teaching this skill?", "what are the potential learning outcomes?", "what teaching strategies could I use to activate students' learning process?", "How could I actively engage the students in learning?" Then, based on their pedagogical orientations and students' learning preferences, teachers begin to look for the technology that properly serves their goals.

### **How do you find the digital platform, website, or application that optimally assists you in your technology-enhanced teaching practices?**

The key is GATE (i.e., Googling, Account generation, Tour taking, and Experimentation). Google the key terms you need for teaching a skill or component online! Searching the right words could help you immediately find the websites you need. Sometimes, Google search engine

itself introduces relevant popular websites helping teachers fulfilling their educational goals. Create a teacher account! By doing so, you get access to the affordances provided by the websites for the teachers and their classrooms. Teachers may need to investigate the website potentials for the learners as well by creating a student account. Take the virtual tour! Before using the digital tool, you may like to take the digital tour website offers and watch short tutorials guiding you how to use the tool for different instructional goals. Experiment with the tool! Before introducing any website to your students, take time to fully explore it and do not be afraid of going on with your own trial and error. Tech tools are user friendly and there is always a "return" or "remove" icon to fix whatever going wrong!

### **Our students are digital natives and we have to keep up with them**

Technology is the teachers' digital friend that makes classes more dynamic, innovative, and student-centered. In this short article, we introduce three technology-enhanced resources that could turn a teacher-dominated classroom into an interactive one that students love!

### **Technology is the teachers' digital friend that makes classes more dynamic, innovative, and student-centered**

#### **1. Interactive Materials: QR codes**

First introduced in Japan in 1994 for vehicle tracking, quick response (QR) codes also known as two-dimensional barcodes (Furht, 2011; Law & So, 2010) soon paved their ways into the educational milieu. When it comes to English language teaching and learning; however, QR codes remain largely



# The GATE to Interactive Tech Tools for Language Teachers

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معلمان امروزه به شدت نیازمند ابزارهای الکترونیکی برای رویکردهای آموزشی برخط خود هستند. بار کار کلاسی به علاوه دانش محدود بسیاری از معلمان در زمینه سواد دیجیتال و الکترونیک به طور معمول مانع استفاده از ابزارهای بسیار پیشرفته توسط آنها برای تولید محتوای دیجیتال مرتبط با هدفهای آموزشی می شود. با این حال، ابزارها، پلتفرمها، اپلیکیشن ها و فناوری هایی نیز وجود دارند که استفاده از آنها نیازمند دانش دیجیتال بسیار پیشرفته نیست و در عین حال می توانند برای آموزش و یادگیری زبان سودمند باشند. هدف مقاله حاضر معرفی چنین فناوری هایی براساس رویکرد «GATE» برای معلمان است تا بتوانند منابع دیجیتالی مرتبط را بیابند و به صورت هدفمند از آنها برای آموزش زبان به صورت تعاملی و ارزیابی زبان آموزان استفاده کنند.

**کلیدواژه ها:** آموزش تعاملی زبان، ابزارهای دیجیتال، فناوری آموزشی، هدفهای آموزشی، یادگیری زبان

## Abstract

Teachers are currently in urgent need of using relevant digital tools for their online pedagogical purposes. The classroom workload along with limited digital and technology-related literacy usually prohibit many of them from developing relevant digital materials for their classrooms or using highly sophisticated educational technology. However, there are tools, platforms, apps, and technologies that do not require advanced technological knowledge and are at the same time productive for language learning and teaching. The present article aims at introducing such technologies under GATE technique for teachers to be able to find relevant digital materials and purposefully apply them for their interactive language instruction and/or student assessment.

**Keywords:** interactive language instruction, digital tools, educational technology, pedagogical purposes, language learning