

Skype : An Innovative Pedagogical Approach

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Abstract

Innovation has provided new capabilities that can transform the process of teaching and learning. Skype as a cutting edge technology tool has the potential to enhance instructional practices in the classroom and in turn improve student achievement. With Skype, students and teachers can together reach out and bring a world of learning into their classrooms. While many tools exist, Skype is the one tool that provides an interactive platform that promises and promotes interactive teaching and interactive learning.

KEYWORDS: Skype, Skype hardware, Skype software, Syntax of Skype

Education is a light that shows the mankind the right direction to surge. The purpose of education is not just making a student literate but adds rationale thinking, knowledge ability and self sufficiency. When there is a willingness to change, there is hope for progress in any field. During the last decade, Interactive Whole Class Technologies (IWCTs) such as Interactive White Boards (IWBs) have become prevalent in classrooms. Technology promotes the fundamental learning principles essential for excelling in academics. Skype provides as an innovative pedagogical technique providing free and easy way for teachers to open up their classroom and lead their students to a world beyond the classroom walls. With Skype students can learn from other students, connect with other teachers and expand their knowledge in amazing ways.

Skype is a software program using voice over IP or VoIP technology, IP stands for Internet Protocol, cross platform, multi lingual, it is free for both download and use, Skype software permits users to make high quality audio and video phone calls over the internet, send instant messages and do videoconferencing online. It is one of the best voices over Internet services online and was created in 2003 by Niklas and Janus but later on owned by Microsoft particularly in the year 2011. Skype has over 663 million registered users as of September 2011, putting it at the top ranks along with Facebook and Twitter. Teachers may download and use Skype at school. The slogan for Skype is “the whole world can talk for free”.

SKYPE FOR EDUCATION

Twenty-first century educational system is expanding the horizons of the classroom beyond the four walls. Internet connectivity in educational settings provides opportunities for interactive exchange and collaboration between students living on other sides of the town and other sides of the globe. Skype can provide as a free software expanding the walls of the traditional classroom with real time synchronous discussions and involve the students to write, share and communicate with an authentic audience.

Skype for education opens the door to many possibilities. Depending on the type of school, educators can use Skype for everything to improve the quality of education. It can also be used in the classroom to expand the educational landscape with extension lectures, fieldtrips, parent teacher conference and tutoring.

Extension Lectures

Extension lectures by guest lecturers can come to the classroom via Skype. Class teachers can have authors and other guest speakers who cannot travel to the classroom due to various constraints can speak over Skype to share their ideas. Skype enables the guest lecturers to talk with students from anywhere in the world at any time, eliminating the need for the speaker to physically be in the classroom. Students can ask the speaker questions using Skype and also receive answers from the speaker.

FIELDTRIPS

Fieldtrips form an essential part of the curriculum for experiential learning. But, sometimes the school cannot afford a field trip due to various factors as budgetary or distance constraints. With Skype, the fieldtrip can come to the classroom. For example, if a teacher wants to show the museum or highly prohibited industries, try setting up a Skype tour with the guide of a museum or incharge of the industry. This will allow the students to take a tour to the important places without leaving the classroom and on the tightest schedule and budget.

STUDENT INTERACTIONS

Students enjoy learning from other students, Skype can enable student to student interaction to enhance learning. Students in one corner can exchange views and information with students at the other corner of the world. Debates and discussions on recent topics of educational interest can be organised using Skype.

EXTRA CLASSES

Skype can be used for providing extra classes to the students who need extra attention after school at their homes. Special attention can be given to students by subject experts without wasting time on travelling and sitting at their home.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Skype can be used for professional development opportunities such as participation in conferences, workshops, seminars, paper presentations and discussions without the need of travelling to distances.

SYNTAX OF SKYPE AS AN INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Skype is an innovative pedagogical approach that facilitates students learning by providing collaboration with educational organisations through technology to provide an enriched classroom of the present era. The following syntax can be adopted for including Skype as an innovative pedagogical approach in a classroom.

***Classroom setup:** Skype enabled classroom requires internet connectivity and projector, projector screen along with the basic requisites as electricity, connection sockets and extensions and comfortable sitting arrangements for students and

teachers.

***Skype Software:** Skype software can be downloaded for free from Skype website. In the address bar of the institutions browser ,insert the required address and scroll down until download option appears, click and download.

*** Skype Hardware:** Skype requires a computer hardware as Monitor, CPU, Microphones, Headphones, Webcams.

***Connect the group:** Add the contact details of the persons you wish to contact on your account and save them.

***Fix a Schedule for Classroom Interaction:** Fix a schedule for classroom interaction for both the groups for interaction.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF SKYPE:

1. It can be used to provide extra attention to deserving students after school hours and to students with disabilities or special needs.
2. Guest speakers can be invited to classroom from far off places through videoconferencing using Skype.
3. Teachers can connect their classes with other classes on other side of the world.
4. Peer tutoring by expert teachers of the subject can be done using Skype.
5. Online Fieldtrips can be conducted using Skype.
6. Teachers can use Skype for professional development by connecting to other educators, watching and sharing presentations.
7. Students can collaborate with far off students for classroom projects using Skype.
8. Parent teacher discussions can be conducted on Skype focussing on the all round development of the child.

SUMMARY

Skype is an innovative pedagogical technique and provides for an enriched classroom of the twenty-first century. It facilitates collaborations with various educational organisations. It empowers the teachers with educational technology. It opens students eyes to a whole world far beyond the classroom. It provides connectivity to teachers and students around the globe sharing their knowledge and experiences, to discover new cultures, languages and ideas.

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