REUSABLE LEARNING OBJECT (RLO) – AN IMPERATIVE APPROACH FOR 21ST CENTURY

Introduction to the Authors:

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Abstract

Today’s learners are used to high quality media productions. Hence, it would be futile to use only the traditional methods of teaching. Advancements in technology enable pedagogical enhancements that can revolutionize traditional methods of teaching-learning. Many researches are conducted in the effective use of technology to enable active learning environments to foster students' performance. The use of Reusable Learning Objects gains significance in this perspective as the Learning Objects once created can be used in multiple instructional contexts to optimize learning. The authors in this article highlight the importance of Reusable Learning Objects in the teaching-learning process especially in the development of English language skills.
Introduction:

Technology has gained immense importance in our everyday life. It has not left education untouched and has indeed revolutionized it. A number of best practices are made with the help of modern technology. Researches prove that employing technology in the everyday classroom teaching gives beneficial results. Reusable Learning Objects (RLO) gains significance in this context.

Reusable Learning Objects:

A learning object is “an independent and self-standing unit of learning content that is predisposed to reuse in multiple instructional contexts” Polsani (2003). Learning objects are any digital resource that can be reused to support learning. They are “chunks” of material, which might consist of graphics, text, audio, or animation, designed to be used as a standalone learning experience. These chunks can be assembled with other chunks to form larger units of instruction. They possess the potential for reusability, generatively and adaptability. Reusable learning objects offer the possibility of individualized learning for learners. It is also cost-effective.

There is limited research on the use of learning objects in supporting learning. An educational innovation is gradually taking place in the development and delivery of instruction through the use of learning objects. The changes provide an opportunity to improve the learning with the appropriate use of pedagogy coupled with technologies. It is an instructional technology currently being developed by educational technologists and instructional designers for the design, development and delivery of content.
RLO- a boon to the teachers and learners:

A well-constructed learning object deals with a single idea or chunk of content. As teachers play important roles in technology-rich classrooms, making decisions that significantly affect students' learning, a teacher can string these objects together to create or support a lesson. It is more advantageous as the expertise of a teacher or professional could be benefitted by a large number of learners.

Initially, creating or retrieving learning objects may be time-consuming, but once assembled, the teacher needs to just review and edit them for use with another student or class. It can be used in diverse situations and can be updated from time to time according to the growing needs of the learners. No more flipping through workbooks and hours in front of a copier or rummaging through dusty closets. With a few clicks on a mouse, teachers will be able to construct customized lessons for students. This type of environment, results in active learners.

Reusable learning objects can be implemented in a variety of digital modes including text, images, audio, video, animations, interactive tools and their combinations. Knowledge is absorbed best when more than one human sense is employed. Reusable learning objects that combine technologies and media provides a rich learning environment that engages learners and results in best learning outcomes.

RLOs can be created from scratch or by using existing online materials. In this way even teachers with minimal experience can provide numerous opportunities for learning. Once a student is familiar with the interactivity of the particular learning object, they no longer have to worry about what to do and can focus on learning the content. If a student is familiar with a particular format they can work on their own without having to wait for instructions. Building quizzes and tests into the
objects would also allow the student and the teacher to monitor the student's progress. It provides flexible paths for the learners’ exploration.

**Use of RLOs to acquire English Language Skills:**

The use of technology in English language teaching and learning has been the focus of a number of recent research review studies, including developments in technology and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) research. Acquiring proficiency in English language by the learners is one of the main challenges that are faced across the globe. Learning Objects help in the easy acquisition of English language skills. The graphics, video, audio, etc. that are used can address diverse styles of learning in a more effective way and be a tremendous support to English language learners. It not only helps in the easy acquisition of the second language but also strengthens motivation and confidence in the learners. Learning Objects paves way for meaningful learning as it integrates technology and presents content differently contrasting the traditional methods thereby addressing the different learning styles with ease. For instance, sounds can be incorporated into learning objects to assist with the reading level issue. As well, or for those student whose learning modality is more aural than visual. They may also need to have the content presented differently, or in a number of ways before they get the meaning. Likewise, all the language skills can be easily accomplished with this digital medium.
References:


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