

# MAXIMIZING TELEGRAM APPLICATION FOR TEACHING READING

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## Abstract

Curriculum, syllabus and technology are the educational terms with their certain components and importance. They are also could be said as the guidelines for gaining educational goals. The use of mobile phone has become an essential part of nowadays students' lives in the world. That is why the role of technology is also could not be separated with the content of the syllabus. This article aims to discuss the use of technology—in the form of Telegram as one of the mobile phone application—by inserting it in the syllabus related to the teaching and learning English especially for teaching reading. At the end of the discussion, it is found that those variables are influencing each other. Curriculum is as the reference of syllabus whereas syllabus is as the implementation of curriculum and technology supports them. A teacher could use Telegram by setting up a certain group discussion in a single classroom to maximize the learning process. When the teachers provided a Telegram group discussion with its interesting and appropriate context for students, it is possible to make students curious. When the students' curiosity occurred, the habitual process of reading begins. This could be one of a problem solving of students' laziness of going to the school library. By the time the students have read several books or articles or another media that they like, the teachers could encourage them to share it with their classmates in some ways by maximizing their Telegram group.

**Keywords:** learning, media, reading, technology, Telegram

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, most of the teachers use printed media to teach their students related to reading activity. It makes the students also have to copy the materials, prepare pens or pencils as well as another stationary during the teaching and learning process. This activity seems boring if runs every day without any innovation.

The euphoria of social media and instant messaging impacts the importance of using an available application in education. It means that the recent curriculum and applied syllabus should take into the communication and technology based. The role of the internet connection is needed exactly. This article aims to describe the use of Telegram application in teaching and learning English especially for teaching reading. Besides, this may also help teacher to maximize Telegram in the classroom and knowing whether the teachers could maximize the role of Telegram is needed. This is due to the context in which students could learn in informal learning situations by maximizing what is available in students' hands to build meaningful and enjoyable learning experience in formal education.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1. Defining Curriculum and Syllabus

Curriculum is more than a vision; it is also a cultural tool. And, like all tools a curriculum is shaped by its users, both those who wield it and those whose lives are managed—or steered—according to its prescriptions. Moreover, as a power tool, a curriculum is more likely to reflect the cultural selections,

values and aspirations of powerful social groups than the cultural assumptions and aspirations of powerless groups. An ideal curriculum is both a blueprint for the future and a set of procedures for realizing such goals (Hamilton, 1990).

Curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the purpose, content, and teaching materials and method that is used to guide the implementation of learning activities to achieve the specific educational goal (Permendikbud, 2013). Besides that, the importance of curriculum in teaching and learning process due to PPRI (2013) Section 77 O Verse (2) Subparagraph a states that, the definition of "the document of curriculum in every academic or educational program" contains the basic framework of the curriculum, the structure of curriculum, the burden of learning, and time allocation.

Laidlaw (2005), based on her experiences, found curriculum as a part of a dynamic system and field of practice that is interconnected with multiple aspects and structures of education, as well as reaching beyond the worlds of schooling. Curriculum does not exist in isolation from the world. Rather, it is embedded in a context of historical, cultural, and economic conditions and is influenced by traditions in science, philosophy, and world-view. While Oliva (1992) states that persons have conveyed some interpretations of curriculum and one of them is, curriculum is a set of materials. It can be said that where there is curriculum, there are also materials.

In sum, curriculum could be said as a formula of courses which is will be done for certain period of education. This formula is changes—not totally—across the changing of era and educational need. Curriculum covers all of academic content and its function is as the general guideline of educational system.

Widdowson (1990) in Long and Doughty (2009) stated that the syllabus formalizes the content to be learned in a domain of knowledge or behavior, and "arranges this content in a succession of interim objectives". While according to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics in Richards *et al* (1992), a syllabus can be defined as 'a description of the contents of a course of instruction and the order in which they are to be taught'. This definition corresponds to the one given by Thornbury (1999), Brown (2001), and Stern (1992) who even suggests 'defining objectives, determining content, and indicating some sort of sequence or progression' to be 'the essential minimum of what is meant by curriculum' (meaning in this context syllabus in British terminology).

It could be concluded that syllabus is also the educational guideline but it is more specific than curriculum. It covers the learning plan for particular subject in the form of topics, rules, instructions, materials, assignments and so on.

## 2.2. An Overview of the Messages' Transmission-Reception Process

Many years ago, people sent and receive information by using the traditional messenger like birds and post mail which need long time to be processed. Since the growth of technology brings significant impact in human life makes the processes become fast. People started to use the computer in term of information exchange by connecting it to the internet access. Later, they used the internet to fulfill almost all of their social need.

As the time goes by, people chose mobile phone related to the information exchange process. However, only few people could have and use mobile phone. It was such thing that included in certain life style due to its high

price and needs. In the other hand, only people who really needed it for some business communication or had more money will buy this thing.

As with visual communication and learning, a message is encoded by a sender and decoded by a receiver. The quality of encoded message is affected by the ability of the sender to express the message clearly and logically. The understandability of decoded message is affected by the ability of the receiver to comprehend the message (Heinich *et al*, 1982).

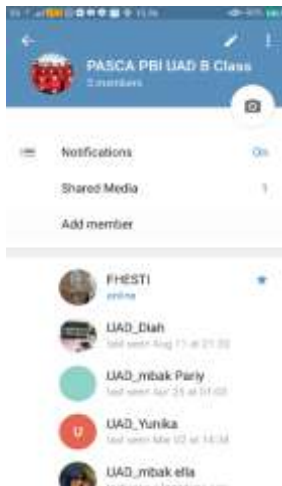
The digital era in twentieth century brings high impact in our life especially in the gadget consumption aspect. Either people who need it for some specific purposes or just want to have it will merely buy gadget. For example, kids under five years old have been given mobile phone from their parents even they have not needed it yet actually. Their parents, later, will say that they do it because their kids need to hear songs, play music, learn to count and another preschool based activities. It could be said that their parents, then, have to invent contexts in which mobile phone as if needed. Actually, we could not ignore and still deeply remember that parents or care taker are able and have been taken part to demonstrate and teach those kind of activities for years before the recent digital media in digital era. Furthermore, mobile phone and internet access are being combined become such kind of portable formula which is the interaction runs easier.

### 2.3. Telegram as a Mobile Technology Application

One famous application of mobile technology is Telegram “instant messaging”. Telegram is a cross-platform mobile messaging application that allowing users to exchange messages in real time without having to pay for SMS. It is available at different devices including personal digital assistants, smartphones, and tablets. All users of those devices can interacts and transfers messages each other through various kind of media such as; text, image, audio and video. Because Telegram uses the same internet data plan as emailing and web browsing, there is not extra charge for messaging and staying in touch with others. In addition to basic messaging, Telegram users can create groups in which consist of up to 30 group members, which allow them to engage in discussion forums.

Another important feature of Telegram is the offline messaging. It means that all messages transmitted when the device is off or when it is the impact of Telegram on interaction in an located outside the coverage area are automatically saved and retrievable when network coverage is restored or when the device is turned on (Bere, 2012). Finally, Telegram works via phone numbers and integrates with users’ address books, thus there is no need to memorize usernames or passwords.

Figures below are the sample of the simple Telegram displays:



**Figure 1**  
**The User Display Menu**



**Figure2**  
**The Personal Chat Display**



**Figure3**  
**The Group Display Menu**

#### 2.4. The Role of Telegram for Students' Reading Comprehension

The near ubiquitous access of mobile technology has attracted the attention of educators to seek ways to become more efficient and effective in their efforts to prepare their students for the demands and challenges of a globally competitive society through utilizing mobile technology as educational tools (Clough, Jones, McAndrew & Scanlon, 2008; Sachs & Bull, 2012).

Klopfer, Squire and Jenkins (2002) describe some features of mobile technology that produce unique educational benefits, including: a) portability—can take the device to different locations; b) social interactivity—can use the device to collaborate and exchange information with others; c) context sensitivity—can use it to collect and gather real or simulated data that is appropriate to a specific location, environment and time; d) connectivity—can use it to connect to data collection devices, other devices, and to a network; and e) individuality—can provide scaffolding for learners which is customized to the individual's need. Thus, the convenience, expediency, and immediacy of mobile devices allow students to learn the right thing at the right time at the right place (Seppälä & Alamäki, 2003; Peng, Su, Chou, & Tsai, 2009).

Interaction and information technologies have reorganized our life in which the recent students and teachers have a massive use of smart phones and other portable devices; moreover, they are continually looking for cutting edge technologies. But often the use of these devices is not in ways anticipated by technology proponents. All these smart phones and other portable devices are equipped or ready for social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, and Instagram, which are part of what is known as social web, best characterized by the notions of social interaction, content sharing, and collective intelligence (Alabdulkareem, 2015).

The role of emerging social media may offer new opportunities to enhance the teaching and learning experiences. Zepke and Leach (2010) conclude that motivation and student dispositions will influence their ability to engage in interactive learning. "Students, often referred to as digital natives have spent most of their time on computers, game consoles, digital music

players, video cameras, cell phones, as well as the web itself” (Jovanovic, Chiong, and Weise, 2012).

Language learning has been an important component of the current lifestyle. Certainly, there are many other ways of delivering the knowledge and learning foreign language during the modern era of information technologies. Various electronic books, videos, cartoons and multimedia software are offered to users in order to teach languages (Yeh, 2014). Majority of such studies are mainly about learning English language. While just few years ago, Telegram was an item of luxury, today, they are the most affordable communication, though depending on their brands and models.

There are some steps that can be implemented in the classroom related to the teaching reading by using Telegram as shown at the Table 1.

**Table 1: Steps in Using Telegram Application for Teaching Reading**

STEP 1	The teachers introduce Telegram to the class and explain what students have to do (download/install and activate the application)
STEP 2	The teachers explain about what, how and why it is important to use Telegram for teaching reading
STEP 3	The teachers make a Telegram group discussion and invite the students to be the members
STEP 4	The teachers start to warm up the discussion by sending a passage to the group and asking the students' comments
STEP 5	The teachers conduct the teaching and learning process by sending another media (articles, e-book, e-novel, e-comic and so on which are suitable and useful for teaching reading)
STEP 6	The teachers administrate comments from the students' in which could be used as the learning evaluation

### 3. CONCLUSION

Capel *et al* (2005) state what teachers teach reflects the times in which they live so change is essential in education. What teachers do depends on what is happening in the wider community. Curriculum change is to be expected through our working life, with new subjects being introduced and old subjects phased out or altered to make way for the new.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Telegram is an application which has multi functions not only as the instant messaging but also as the teaching and learning aids especially for teaching reading. When the teachers provide a Telegram group discussion with its interesting and appropriate context for students, it is possible to make students curious. When the students' curiosity is occur, the habitual process of reading begins. This can be one of a problem solving of students' laziness in going to the school library. By the time the students have read several books or articles or another media that they like, the teachers can encourage them to share it to their classmates in some ways by maximizing their Telegram group. It is belief that students will do that with pleasure because they consider that they only share what they have loved and read without any pressure of teachers' reading task term. Furthermore, the students will keep reading wherever and whenever they are as well as they will do it easily.

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