BUSINESS NEWS LESSONS

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Has relying on tech affected the way we learn?

Level: Intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes (plus extra time for research and presentation)

Business topics: Tech, learning, AI, job automation

Business language: expressions

Activities: key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, presentation about technology and job automation

Groups: Whole class, one-to-one, pair work or small groups

Overview: This article shares examples of how relying on technology makes us worse at learning and remembering things.

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1. Warmer

a. Ask students to discuss the questions. Then ask students to feed back to the rest of the class. Draw a diagram of technology-related vocabulary on the board with students' suggestions. If students are unsure or incorrect, either provide a correction or assign dictionary consultants to check words. Possible phrases: use a virtual map, use GPS, go on social media, post on social media, send a text, make/have/get/receive a video/voice call, order food/groceries online, shop online, use an online dating app, find a ride online, use a search engine, find a recipe online, etc.

2. Key words

a. Ask students to complete the task individually and then compare their answers in small groups before eliciting examples from the whole class. You can also ask half the students to complete 1–6 and the other half to complete 7–12 and then work together to check and share their answers. If students need support, encourage them to do complete the activity methodically by first reading the definition and example sentence, identifying the part of speech and then looking at each word in the word pool.

Key:
1. generate
2. impediment
3. deprive
4. retain
5. repetitive
6. unique
7. evade
8. master
9. interval; intervals
10. demonstrate
11. bulk out
12. claim; claim(s)

3. Understanding the article

a. First ask students to read the statements and circle the key words. Then have them scan the article for the information related to each statement and underline it. Then to write their answers. Ask students to compare their answers before checking with the whole class.

Key:
1. True (*Suddenly deprived of my tech, I was unable to find my way*)
2. False (*technology can be an impediment to learning. Only through effort and repetition, without shortcuts, can we truly retain useful knowledge.*)
3. True (*It can … generate realistic-sounding articles.*)
4. False (*It's maybe simpler to ask whether the student is cheating themselves, to which the answer is surely yes.*)
5. False (*"10,000 hours rule" – the amount of intensive practice supposedly needed to master something*)
6. True (*how knowledge escapes over time if not consciously remembered – and "spaced learning", repetition over regular intervals*)
7. False (*"GPT-3 can just make up facts that aren't true and say other things that are nonsense," he said.*)

4. Business language

a. Ask students to find the expressions in the mentioned paragraphs and compare their answers with a classmate before checking with the whole class. Check understanding by asking the class to come up with their own very simple definition for each expression.

Key:
1. lean [lean on]
2. stoop [stoop to]
3. create [create waves]
4. practice, perfect [practice makes perfect]

b. You can gamify this by revealing the sentences one at a time and asking students to rewrite them in groups against the clock for a point. Answers provided are possible answers, but other correct options are also acceptable.

Key:
1. *Don't stoop to lying in the interview!*
2. *They're leaning too heavily on their website for sales.*
3. *Customers are creating waves online with awful reviews.*
4. *Just keep on trying, practice makes perfect.*

5. Discussion questions

a. Put the students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

6. Wider business theme – AI and job automation

a. First ask students what they understand by job automation and ask them to give you a few examples, e.g., people use a ride hailing app like Uber instead of calling someone who used to be in charge of sending and managing cabs. Technology now does their job, the role is automated.

Then ask students to look at the table individually before working in pairs or small groups to discuss the questions. Set a time limit and ask one person from each group to summarise their discussion in five sentences.

b. In the same groups, ask students to work together to brainstorm the different points that they might include in the presentation. You can decide to either let students present individually or in groups of three, where each student covers a point.

Encourage students to use the phrases provided to structure their presentations. Also encourage them to choose a few words from the Key Words and Business Language sections to include in their presentations.

Intermediate