

Incorporating technology in foreign language instruction: A supporting pedagogy

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Abstract

A new global landscape is emerging as our world now witnesses a period which may be called "a digital age" where countries are trying to catch and utilize amazing technological developments into every area of their technical and social life. it is often assumed that one of the main challenges of current pedagogy seems to be the incursion of technology into classroom tasks. language researchers strongly argue that it appears to be inevitable that, the more a teacher makes use of instructional technology in the classroom, the less teacher-centered and the more student-centered a classroom will become. on the basics of such an assumption, the present paper demonstrates the ways in which technology-enhanced classrooms may promote discovery learning, learner autonomy, and learner-centeredness and to consider the manner in which the inherent characteristics of a particular technology manage the learner's attention and create motivation in the classroom.

Key-words: *Technology, enhanced classrooms, pedagogy, foreign language instruction.*

Résumé

Une nouvelle perspective mondiale est en train d'évoluer dans notre monde actuellement permettant une période qui peut être appelé «l'âge numérique», où les pays tentent d'attraper et utiliser étonnants développements technologiques dans tous les domaines de leur vies technique et sociale. On suppose souvent que l'un des principaux défis de la pédagogie actuelle semble d' être l'intégration de la technologie dans l'enseignement. Les pédagogues fortement supportent qu'il est inévitable pour un enseignant d'utiliser la technologie (TICE) dans la classe, pour créer un environnement basé sur la centralisation des apprenants et non pas des enseignants. Sur ce, le présent article démontre les façons dont l'incorporation des technologies facilitent l'apprentissage et développent l'autonomie de l'apprenant.

Mots-clés : *Technologies de l'information et de communication (TICE), pédagogie, l'enseignement des langues étrangères.*


ملخص

في ظل إرهابات العولمة و التحديات العالمية الجديدة، ظهر مفهوم جديد للعالم يعرف ب "العصر الرقمي"، حيث تتسابق جميع الدول للحصول على آخر المستجدات والاستفادة من التطورات التكنولوجية المذهلة في مجالات الحياة المختلفة التقنية والاجتماعية. فالتعليم كباقي المجالات يواجه حاليا تحدي دمج و استخدام تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات في هذا المجال. لذا يشدد الباحثون على ضرورة استخدام هذه الوسائل في التدريس. فكلما زاد الملقن من استخدام التكنولوجيا التعليمية في الأقسام، كانت النتائج ناجحة. هذا الافتراض يقودنا إلى اكتشاف وإظهار الطرق التي تعزز التعليم في ظل تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات بحيث يصبح المتلقي هو محور التدريس بدلا من الملقن و تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات الوسيلة لتحقيق هذا الهدف. من خلال هذا البحث سنحاول دراسة هذه الفرضية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات، التدريس، تعليم اللغة الأجنبية.

Throughout history, tremendous developments in technology have brought out new needs for human beings to facilitate and to speed up his process to progress. In view of this fact, foreign language teachers have always been ahead of the curve in integrating technology in FL instruction and learning, seeing the benefits of technology even without an extant research database to confirm their judgment. The number of computer applications, communications technologies, and sheer volume of offerings on the Internet has grown at an amazing rate over the last years, and many FL educators have embraced these new technologies as useful instructional tools.

In view of that, one believes the following questions should be asked when implementing technology use in professional pedagogy:

	What needs we are trying to meet when using technology?
	What is the best way to integrate technology in a given context?
	What impact does the use of technology have on the teaching/learning process?

Answers to all these questions are urgently needed to build our knowledge base of the instructional use of technology in professional education, because it is no longer a question of whether we should use technology but in what contexts and for

what purposes is technology appropriate for learning and teaching.

Considering language as being a remarkable index of pedagogy changing, it would be surprising; indeed, if such a radically innovative phenomenon; namely technology did not have a fascinating impact on the way learners learn and grow. However, the feasible combination of technology into education seems reasonably doubtful if it is not carefully integrated the curriculum accompanied by appropriate services, mechanisms and professional development support (Fox, 2003). Within the same line of thought, Collis and Moonen (2001) propose that an important driving force for pedagogical change is technology and that a key-issue in this implementation is how to exploit its power to enhance teaching and learning. Joining this idea, NCEL (2004) states that:

The integration of new and powerful technologies in our educational institutions and increasing emphasis on higher-order skills in curriculum content will not bring about the broad changes required without essentially changing the ways teachers and learners work together.

Hence, while technology may enhance efficiency, its effectiveness depends on how well one understand a number of interacting chemistry of variables; namely the learners levels, their need and difficulties and how best to address issues of the inclusion. In this vein, both teachers and researchers need to look for a balanced approach entailing appropriate technological instruments which hopefully meet the needs of learners of the newly age in a particular context. For instance, Bruce and Hogan (1998) describe a world in which technology is an invisible but integral aspect of language use. Their point is that language professionals need to recognize how technology is deployed strategically by the competent language user if they are to teach the language learner about and through technology.

Moreover, from technologists' point of view, teachers and researchers should be educated about technological possibilities that could improve or change their work, and that the changes will result progress.

Crystal (2006:271-272), on his part suggests that we are witnessing an ‘*electronic revolution*’ which was bringing about a linguistic revolution. He puts forward the phenomenon of Netspeak in which he believes it is going to ‘*change the way we think*’ about language in a fundamental way, because it is a linguistic singularity – a genuine new medium’.

Within the field of education, the evolution of computer and Internet technologies has made it easy to access learning contents from almost anywhere, anytime, and at user pace. In this line of thought, Crystal (2006:269) claims that ‘*The use of the Internet in foreign-language teaching may be in its infancy, but it is plainly here to stay. Yet it already presents teachers with fresh challenges*’.

Computers have entered the manufacturing arena as an educational aid, it is crucial to remember that linguists usually bring into play computer technology for a variety of purposes to the point that technology becomes integral to applied linguists’ concerns such as communication and language learning. Moreover, technology activities may be different from books and other traditional materials, and therefore, pedagogy should be conceived differently too.

When computer technology is combined with Internet, it creates a channel for students to obtain a huge amount of human experience and guide students to enter the “Global Community”. In this way, students not only can extend their personal view, thought, and experience, but also can learn to live in the real world. They become the creators not just the receivers of knowledge. In this line of thought, Lee (2000) believes on the fact that since the way information is presented is not linear, foreign language learners can still develop thinking skills and choose what to explore.

From another layer of analysis, Fox *et al* (2007: 71) believe that successful integration of technology in education depends on a set of factors which include:

*the provision of co-ordinated,
well-integrated and
strategically considered
programs and projects
supported by documents and*

*policies which are well
disseminated to avoid lost
opportunity and wasted energy.*

He (ibid) put forward the following adopted framework:

- A clearly articulated framework on integrating technology into the curriculum based on critical and pedagogic concerns to ensure overall direction and focus is maintained.
- A focus on teaching and learning issues, rather than an exploration of the potential of technology.
- A strategic, rather than a ‘scatter gun approach’ to selecting, designing, developing and implementing e-learning into the curriculum.
- A considered balance between technologies used to supplement OR to replace existing teaching and learning practices.
- Recognition that the impact of technology enhanced learning on the curriculum and on work practices will continue to grow. Technology itself can skew the direction of its use and therefore should be continually monitored to ensure that it provides the support required;
- the need for changed work practices and a willingness to work differently with different groups of people in new ways;

Based on the fact that the Use of technology especially computers and internet in every area of education enhances language learning, necessary budgets need to be reserved to equip schools with several kinds of technology. Additionally, teacher preparation programs are required to prepare ‘technology aware teachers’ because tomorrow teachers will be expected to follow and use technological developments in their classrooms.

Instructional technology improves student achievement when integrated into education. However, for this improvement to occur, teachers need to be familiar with computers, have positive attitudes towards computers, be comfortable with the technology and be able to use it effectively. Especially, experienced teachers have difficulty in finding effective uses of computers in their classrooms (Rakes & Casey,

2002).

There appears to be an inevitable movement towards the use of technology in professional education; indeed, the incorporation of technologies into professional education seems to be gaining momentum. There is a tendency in today's world to regard any technological innovation as progress and to attempt to find a use for it.

Nevertheless, satisfying learners and supporting their needs through pedagogical richness is considered one way towards greater effectiveness in producing learning.

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