Technology Use in an Adult Intensive English Program - Issues and Challenges

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I. Background (1/3)

- Exploratory survey study on language teachers' technology proficiency and use of various Web tools

- Lines between traditional and online language learning contexts blurred (Goodfellow & Lamy, 2009) on-going call to equip teachers with the skills to teach with technology seems more important than ever (e.g., Pegrum, 2009; Willis, 2001; Hubbard & Levy, 2006)

- Back in the early 1990s, Woodrow already advocated that "[pre]service teachers need to perceive computers as integral parts of the instructional strategies and professional activities of teachers and become committed to their use" (1993, p. 373)

I. Background (2/3)

- Need to equip teachers with basic ICT competence (e.g., Hampel and Stickler, 2005; Hampel & Hauck, 2006)
- Benefit of ACMC (wikis, blogs) for peer editing (Kessler, 2009) and reflective/collaborative writing in foreign language instruction (e.g., Egbert & Hanson-Smith, 2007; Mak & Coniam, 2008; Kovacic, Bubas & Zlatovic, 2007; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2007; Richardson, 2006; Warschauer, 1996, 2010)
- SCMC tools such as Skype (e.g., Develotte, Guichon, Kern, 2008; Yanguas, 2010) and telecollaboration for language study and intercultural learning (Belz & Thorne, 2005; Blake, 2008; Guth & Helm, 2010)
- Teachers need to possess organizational, pedagogical, electronic literacy, intercultural, and socio-affective competences in order to conduct telecollaborative projects (O'Dowd, 2011)

I. Background (3/3)

- **Ineffective use of technology in teacher education** (e.g., Egbert, Paulus & Nakamichi, 2002; Gibson, 2002)

- **Teaching about technology as a separate or decontextualized subject and not as teaching technology across the curriculum** (U.S. Congress, 1995, as cited in Gimbert & Zembal-Saul, 2002, p. 205)

- **Computer-aided instruction and multimedia were frequently the subject of research but not frequently used by ESOL teachers** (Meskill & Mossop, 2000; Meskill, Anthony, Hilliker-Vanstrander, Tseng &You, 2006)

II. Research Questions

1) **What technology tools have been used by teachers/ student teachers in the CEP?**

2) **How has training in using technology in language - teaching/learning impacted the use of technological tools by the CEP teachers/student-teachers? Do participants feel well-prepared in using technology in language teaching?**

3) **What are the areas for future professional development with regard to technology-enhanced language teaching for CEP teachers/student-teachers?**

III. Research Design (1/3)

Participants:

39 teachers/student teachers enrolled in the TESOL/Applied Linguistic (AL) Programs at TC (as part of their teaching practicum courses, they (team-)teach 2 hours 3 times a week in the CEP)

-32 in the two most advanced practicum courses (2 or more years of full-time ESL/EFL teaching experience)

-2 novice teachers (less than 2 years)

-5 experienced teachers (with MA degree, hired by the CEP)

-1 student-researcher (who had taken two practicum courses)

-1 teacher-researcher (who has been instrumental in teaching technology-based courses and in introducing the electronic portfolio in the practicum courses)

III. Research Design (2/3)

Data Collection and Analysis

- **Administered anonymously via Google Forms**
- **Piloted in May 2010, sent out to participants via email between June and October 2010. The return rate was 39**
- **5 multiple choice items: Role in the CEP (Novice teacher, Master teacher, etc.), prior teaching experience, prior technology training, proficiency and frequency of using tech tools in teaching**
- **5 open-ended questions: Years of teaching experience, prior technology experience in language teaching, use of tech tools in their CEP teaching, a description of how technology use has affected teaching and student learning, and the kind of professional development needed to foster teachers' instructional technology implementation**

III. Research Design (3/3)

- Answers extracted from Google Forms spreadsheet, compiled in a Word document, and numbered
- **Quantitative analysis:** Summary responses exported from Google Forms spreadsheet into Excel to calculate percentages and averages
- **Qualitative analysis:**

-First round of open-coding by the two researchers in a shared online document

-Second round of coding for themes emerging from respondents' *in vivo codes*, i.e., words taken from the subjects themselves (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

-Categories emerged from the codes ("innovation, engagement, authentic materials, integration of skills, or negative prior experience")

IV. Results and Discussion

- **52.5% had prior teaching experience using technology**
- **47.5% had no prior teaching experience using technology**
- **68% of participants indicated that they had either learned how to use technology through the CEP (38%) or through another program at Teachers College (30%)**
- **32% said they had learned to use technology outside of TC (9%) or not at all (23%)**
- **But: CEP training only about use of technology resources at the CEP and TC in general (e.g., CD players and requesting media services)**

IV. Results and Discussion

- Proficiency in using the following technology tools on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 to 4 (1=insufficient; 2=satisfactory; 3=good; 4=very good)

- Frequency of use of tools in CEP teaching (1=Never; 2=Once every other week; 3=Once or twice a week; 4=Every lesson).

Internet	Youtube
Ning	Online Doc Mgt.
Wiki	Blogs
Group Disc. Forum	Podcasts
Skype	Instant Messenger
Moodle	Social Bookmarking
Twitter	

IV. Results and Discussion

3 Tendencies:

1. High proficiency (3.0 “good” or 4.0 “very good”) and high frequency of use in teaching (3.0 “once or twice a week” or 4.0 “every lesson”)

Internet (74% high P and 69% high F)

Youtube (85% high P and 60% high F)

2. Low proficiency (1.0 “insufficient” or 2.0 “satisfactory”) and low frequency of use (1.0 “never” or 2.0 “once every other week”)

Social Bookmarking (71% low P and 100% low F)

3. High proficiency but low frequency of use

Skype - (79% high P and 94% low F)

Instant Messenger - (72% high P and 94% low F)

Blogs (e.g., Blogger) - 71% high P and 81% low F)

Group discussion forums (70% high P and 83% low F)

Wiki - (53% high P and 89% low F)

IV. Results and Discussion

- Technology tools that **match** both self-rated proficiency and frequency of use:
  - **High proficiency and high use** (e.g., Internet and Youtube)
  - **Low proficiency and low use respectively** (e.g., Social Bookmarking, Twitter or Moodle)
- Technology tools that **do not match** proficiency and use
  - **High proficiency BUT low use** (e.g., Skype, IM, Blogs, Wikis, Group discussion forums).
- Not surprising that SCMC (Skype and IM) low in use
- But puzzling that ACMC (wikis, blogs, and discussion forums) low in use because of prior exposure in classes (efolios, online discussion groups, wikis, blogs in Practicum and Classroom Practices)

IV. Results and Discussion

- **Over 60% of participants agreed on importance of technology in language teaching:**

  "I do not think you can ignore technology in the classroom. It is a given in terms of me using it. It makes the classroom come alive. Technology is relevant in our lives today" - R31

- **Most participants rated proficiency high in ACMC tools (e.g., group discussion forums, blogs, and wikis). But primarily use Internet for research and/or Youtube clips.**

- **High proficiency in the wiki results are not surprising, given that all Practicum students have to do efolio on Google Sites or similar platform**

IV. Results and Discussion

Benefits

- **Innovation/engaging classroom environment**

"Technology provides me with more innovative ways of delivering a lesson and ways to engage students in a class".

R-8

"I remember, for instance, using YouTube for warm-ups, going over a cultural reference from a CEP midterm by showing my learners a scene from "The Brady Bunch" on YouTube....they really loved what I did". R-15

IV. Results and Discussion

- **Authentic materials and integration of skills**

"the use of online corpora has facilitated my students' acquisition of vocabulary." R-5

"I could integrate all the skill i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing by using audio and video clips or platforms like Ning." R-5

IV. Results and Discussion

- **Flexibility/spontaneity**

“Being able to use the Internet in the classroom gave me flexibility... I used the Internet spontaneously for vocabulary teaching. For example, once instead of giving a linguistic definition of the word ‘pine cone’, I found an image of a pine cone." R-3

IV. Results and Discussion

Drawbacks

- **Lack of access by CEP students/low e-literacy skills**

"The level that I teach at the CEP are very low beginners and many of them do not have access to computers or internet at home (some do not even have emails.) Thus, it was not easy to implement a lot of online "tools" and even very basic assignment requiring them to download attachments from emails or access videos online, etc."

R-22

IV. Results and Discussion

- **Negative prior experience projected onto teaching**

  "I don't generally like to use technology in the classroom. I have a personal dislike of social networks and technology used to socialize so I don't really want to bring them into the class." R-35

- **Lesson planning takes precedence over technology with Novices**

  "Once I am less overwhelmed with lesson planning, I hope to integrate more technology into my teaching."

  R-18

V. Conclusion (1/2)

- **Mismatch between high self-rated proficiency in most tools and low frequency of use:**

- 76% of the respondents had received some kind of training in using technology in language teaching and learning.

- More than 70% of the respondents reported high proficiency in tech tools such as Internet, Skype, Youtube, IM, online document management, and Wikis

- Less than 30% of them reported having used these tools in their classes (only Internet for research and Youtube)

- Surprising that established tools (wikis, blogs, discussion forums) are not used more frequently – especially since previous exposure in Classroom Practices and Practicum

V. Conclusion (2/2)

- **Teachers' CEP students seemed to lack technology access or have low e-literacy skills, which constituted an issue especially in beginning-level classes**
- **Negative prior experience has had an impact on current praxis: Some teachers articulated their own dislikes of a certain tool which they subsequently did not use in their class**
- **View of lesson planning and web tool integration as two separate things: Technology as something that should be tackled once the lesson plan is done rather than something that constitutes an integral part of lesson planning**

VI. Implications for Professional Development

- **Establishing a mentor model**

-'Tech fellows' to assist (CEP) teachers with meaningful/effective integration of technology in classrooms

-E-literacy skills as criterion for pairing up teaching partners (in addition to prior teaching experience and context, and English proficiency level)

- **Implementing technology throughout the program**

-Teachers educators model use of course platforms and communication tools in all core courses in the program.

- **Making technology use a requirement in the practicum courses**

-Using technology should become part of the practicum teachers' electronic teaching portfolio for assessment

VII. Implications for Future Research

- **Conducting follow-up in-depth interviews with teachers (pedagogical rationale and procedure for using a certain tool or for choosing one tool over another)**
- **Administrating course evaluations to get language learners' perspectives (on teacher's technology use in class)**
- **Requiring classroom observations of peers (field notes)**
- **Introducing classroom observations by supervisors with main focus on technology (observation sheet)**
- **Differentiating the use of tools in the different practicum courses and drawing up a roadmap of what is needed at which level**

THANK YOU

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