CONNECTING LEARNERS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE WITH CLASSROOM

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Annotation

This article emphasizes the importance of conducting research and how it helps learners to be better at digitally literate citizens in this ever rapidly growing high-tech era. In this article, one can infer that it is vital for educators to connect learners' background knowledge before introducing a new lesson to meet their expectations. Only when students can see personalization or connection between what they are going to study and what they have experienced so far in connection with the current material. It is no secret that these days mixed cultural students can be found in the same classroom where they have a diverse cultural specification, political views, social identities as well as languages. Therefore, much depends on teachers how to (re)construct the material in such a way that it can fulfill learners' demands.

Key words: Technology, digital literacy, integrating technology to EFL classes.

Introduction

One of the elements could be to be able to bridge the gap between learners' classrooms and world classrooms. Thanks to advanced technology in many parts of the world now teachers have windows of opportunities to conduct engaging, interactive, learner-centered, negotiation-based, as well as peer-educative classes. A perfect field could be an art where learners can develop their interpersonal competencies such as problem-solving, decision making, thinking-pairing- sharing, critical and creative thinking skills. It should be pointed out that to enhance learners' skills mentioned above, students need proper and effective guidelines to master digital skills such as the ability to find and select necessary information "they" need, strong evaluation, cultural and social understanding, collaboration.

More importantly, teachers should teach learners the ways of avoiding plagiarism and use a proper citation. According to the article, it is crystal clear that to produce well-written and qualitative writing, learners need to be critical of the material they select. One of the major reasons for this is that nowadays due to massive mass media where there might be a lack of context, missing authorship as well as problems with hyperlinks, learners might get lost when it comes to choosing reliable and appropriate context.

Integrating social networking tools into ESL writing classroom: Strengths and weaknesses" (Yunus, et. al, 2012) mainly discusses the positive and negative aspects of implementing social network sites during the writing classes. It has been found out that learners learn better with higher self-confidence and motivation when lessons are conducted in the integration of social sites such as Facebook. The underlying reason for this trend is that technology is something that most learners are aware of, thus they feel comfortable, secondly, it is easier when blogs, Facebook pages, or teachers' notes are used during the lesson in an attempt to connect the previous materials. Thirdly, due to the larger audience, which social networks can offer, learners can be better engaged and virtually connected. As a result, the more there is interaction, the easier it is for students to acquire writing skills. (Yunus, et.al 2012).

Turning to the other sides of the argument, using social sites during the classroom might have several setbacks, too. One of them could be deficiency of internet access, less interaction with learners during the lesson as well as scarce of necessary pieces of equipment. Therefore, in some parts of the world, implementing social sites during the lessons would be a problematizing issue.

I tend to hold the view that both articles include pressing elements that can be quite helpful for both learners and teachers. In terms of the former article, I strongly believe that today's generation should be highly encouraged to be good at digital literacy which is not less important than that of others. I am deeply convinced that material developers or writers should take many factors into account such as learners' surrounding, their current e-skills as well as interest. Research has revealed that it has become much more demanding to meet today's learners' needs compared to the past. I think that media literacy is highly essential for all learners irrespective of their age.

One of the suggestions would be to introduce media literacy skills at many educational establishments hoping to improve students' writing skills step by step. What I mean by this is that a) bringing personalization to the classroom; b) integrating cultural specification such as art, history, drama; c) having learners question their assumptions through thinking critically and performing creatively, and improving the quality of their writing by teaching the procedure of making a summary, paraphrasing, and using proper citation.

Regarding my opinions about using social sites during the classroom, I am entirely in favor of the research materials in the article. To the best of my knowledge, my five-year-experience show me that learners enjoy and are engaged when lessons include some components which can be related to their personal life. Social networks would be the perfect example. Whenever I connect my writing or speaking classes with plus and minus sides of Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Telegram I cannot stop

their ongoing contribution to the flow of ideas. The reason for this could be social sites have become their integral part, therefore when used educationally and properly, they can ensure the possibility of having engaging, personalized, memorable, student-centered, and fun classes.

I have, however, an objection regarding the stumbling blocks of utilizing social networking tools. It should be admitted that there are of course some restrictions of integrating such sites due to no internet access or any technology-related distraction. I would agree with the second reason to some extent, yet I would disagree with the first point. I do not think that internet access is a weakness, rather it is an issue that needs addressing before integrating tech tools. Another point that I am not in favor of is the fact that teachers often interact less with learners. There might indeed be classes that are teacher-fronted, yet it could be easily shifted to student-centered as soon as social sites are integrated once there is a stable internet connection. In the article it has been mentioned that scarcity of necessary equipment could be another issue which I do not think is true. Nowadays many sites give access for teachers to use different materials without projectors, computers by offering them to provide with printable worksheets take wordwall.net as an example.

In the previous readings, we have talked about Tomlinson's critical viewpoints about course books as they are far from connecting learners' life with the classroom setting (2010). In the former article which discussed the role of research to enhance learners' digital literacy, we have summarized that in the material development process authenticity plays a big role. As Tomlinson (2010) suggested that implementing text-driven approach help learners to contextualize and personalize the new lesson a lot better.

As we can see, in the first article reality show has been chosen as the main target to be taught followed by improving learners' high tech skills with the help of conducting research. We can, then, assume that the former article can be also considered to be built on Tomlinson's Text-Driven approach. Another approach that has been implemented for the first article is the experimental approach (Tomlinson, 2003) where students are first asked to list their favorite reality shows and give a brief description. By this the teacher probably wanted learners to call for their own experience and engage them holistically.

In addition to this, looking back Krashen (1985), claims that to have a meaningful experience, learners should be offered a lot of input where they practice L2 more. I presume that visiting or re-visiting one element several times would yield positive aspects. Such a feature can be seen in "Research as Authentic Inquiry"(Hobbs, 2011)

where learners were put top-down approach ask asked to discover particular features on their own.

One of the important elements in teaching L2 is integrating technology effectively in content instruction (TESOL, 2010). The second article points out the vital characteristics of implementing social network sites in the writing classroom context. It is believed that writing is one of the most difficult skills to be masters for most language learners as it consists of both gathering ideas as well as taking care of punctuation, grammar range, lexical resources, organization, and many other units. To conduct engaging and interesting writing classes, technology, especially social sites should be introduced as nowadays on the internet we can see different blogs, vlogs, Facebook pages where language is authentic. Brown (2010) claims that one of the teaching principles is that the materials should be authentic for learners. To connect learners' lives with the learning process, such authentic materials should be integrated.

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