Fostering Reading Motivation Through Technology

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Astract

Technology plays a large role in many aspects of day-to-day life, and education is no different. Technology is rapidly changing the way students learn and how teachers teach. Over the last ten years, educators have seen a significant decrease in the motivation of many students, as well as their abilities to pay attention, stay on task and complete assignments. Research shows that integrating technology into reading instruction tends to move classrooms from teacher-dominated to student-centered learning environments. In doing so, students are motivated and engaged in their reading. They tend to work also cooperatively, have more opportunities to make choices, and play a more active role in their learning. The purpose of this paper is to know how teachers can begin to integrate a variety of technologies to enhance reading instruction and motivate students more fully in the classroom.

Introduction

Students are using technology more and more and teachers often ignore the use of information and communications technology (ICT). According to Dudeney and Hockly(2007),teachers are often far less skilled and knowledgeable than their own students when it comes to using current technology. The use of ICT as a learning tool has long been declared as a catalyst for educational transformation. Some researchers like Alessi and Trollip (2001) believe that technology not only increases students' learning, understanding and achievement but also motivates students to learn, encourages collaborative learning, and helps critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. When someone visits or walks into some classrooms around the world, he or

she will see fixed data projectors, interactive whiteboards and computers with Internet access. Whenever teachers want their students to find any information out, they can get them to use a research on Google for example and the results can be shown to the whole- class on the IWB. In other classes, around the world, there is a whiteboard in the classroom or perhaps a blackboard often not in a very good condition. There are also some classrooms where neither teacher nor students have anything at all in terms of educational technology or other learning aids.

The figure below represents these differing realities in a "reversed pyramid" of resources.
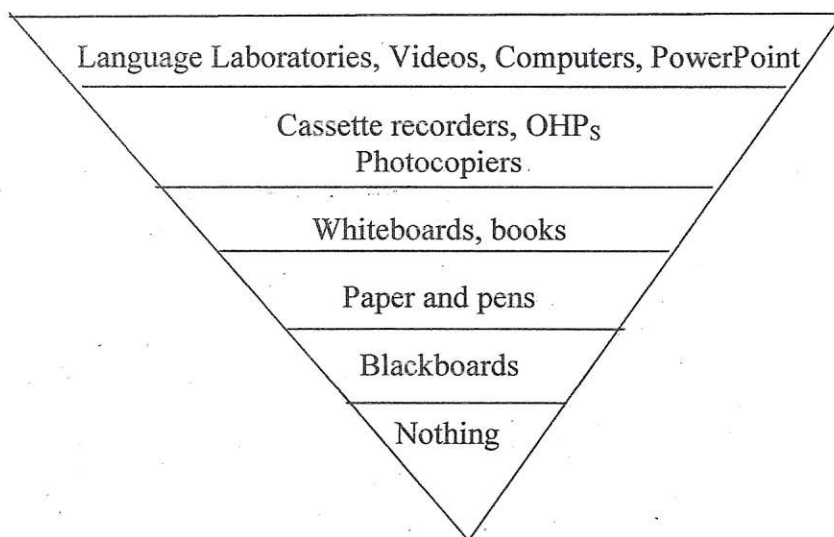
Language Laboratories, Videos, Computers, PowerPoint

Cassette recorders, OHPs
Photocopiers

Whiteboards, books

Paper and pens

Blackboards

Nothing

Figure 1: Reversed resources pyramid (Hadfield, 2003:175)

According to some people, being at the bottom of the pyramid is likely to be at the top for language learning. Harmer (2007) adds that, there are lots of things teachers can do with minimal or even no resources. For example, in Algeria, there are whiteboards and students. Apart from that, there are no other educational aids, not even central heating in

winter and air-conditioner in Summer. Hadfield (2003) proposes in figure below, turning the pyramid the other way up.
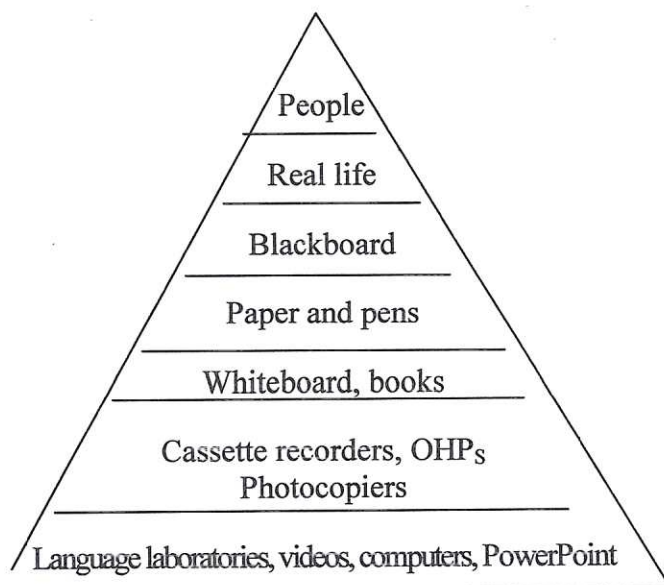
Figure 2: "Other way up" resources pyramid (Hadfield 2003:176)

The resources that have been mentioned above in the pyramid are truly amazing, they offer an amazing variety of routes for learning and discovery. Yet teachers should not see them as methodologies for learning, but rather as tools to help and foster student's motivation not just in developing the reading skills but in all the other skills. Teachers are conscious about the importance of using technology in their classrooms since technology is invading both teachers' personal and professional lives, and students are using technology more and more. And between the writing and ending this present work new technology will have been produced that most of people are as yet unaware of. So, why technology is still missing in most of the Algerian universities?

Authors like Wade (2002) and Lane (2002) share the same idea about the most resources in the classroom are the students themselves. Through their thoughts and experiences they bring their knowledge into the classroom, and this is a powerful resource for teachers to draw on. But students need solid materials in order to motivate them and make really involved in their learning.

Technology in language teaching

Teachers often ignore the use of information and communications technology, they are sometimes far less skilled and knowledgeable than their own students when it comes to use technology.

The combination of the ICTs into teaching and learning processes collaborates to raise the reception and interaction of information and encourage both individual and collaborative learning.

Cabero (2001:07)

Technology in language teaching is not new; it has been around in language teaching for decades if teachers classify the blackboard as a form of technology. Tape recorders and video have been in use since the 1960s and 1970s, and are still used in classrooms around the world. The use of ICT by language teachers is still not widespread, the use of technology in the classroom is becoming increasingly important, and it will become a normal part of ELT practice in the coming years. According to Dudeney and Hockly (2007), there are many reasons for this:

- *Internet access is becoming increasingly available to students.*

- *Students are growing up with technology, and it is a natural and integrated part of their lives. For these students, the use of technology is a way to bring the outside world into*

the classroom. *And some of these students will in turn become teachers themselves.*

   ▪   *English, as an international language, is being used in technologically mediated contexts.*

   ▪   *Technology, especially the Internet, presents students and teachers with new opportunities for authentic tasks and materials, as well as access to a wealth of ready-made ELT materials.*

   ▪   *The Internet offers excellent opportunities for collaboration and communication between students who are geographically dispersed.*

   ▪   *Technology offers new ways for practising language and assessing performance.*

   ▪   *Using a range of ICT tools can give students exposure to and practice in all of the four main language skills, speaking, listening, writing and reading.*

(Dudeney and Hockly 2007: 07)

The contexts in which the teachers are working with technology can vary widely, and the access that teachers have to computer will affect what teachers can do with their classes in terms of implementing technology. A general lack of ICT training for teachers also means that they will have some way to go until the normalization of technology in language teaching, where the use of technology in teaching becomes as natural as the use of pens and paper.

Implementing ICT in the classroom

Over the years, technology has changed the way that teachers and students are able to face the world with most important functions of classroom equipment. The present work insists on the most versatile piece of classroom teaching equipment which is the board, it is the traditional chalk-dust

variety, a whiteboard written on with marker pens. Teachers are very proud when they enter the classroom and have the chance to write a variety of different purposes since boards provide a motivating focal point during whole-class grouping. For example, note-pad, explanation aid, picture frame and game board. After the simple board, one of the major technical developments in the last few years has been the IWB.

If you are lucky enough to have access to an IWB ,you will know that the wow effect is extremely high.IWB look and sound impressive.

Dudeney and Hockly (2007:123)

This has the same properties as a computer hooked up to a data projector, the teacher can present visual material as well as Internet pages. Teachers and students can write on the board which the images are being projected onto, and they can manipulate images on the board with the use of special pens or even with nothing but their fingers. The pen or finger acts as a kind of computer mouse. Teacher can also save or print what have been written in order to be looked at again. It is very attractive to move text and graphics around the board with pen or finger in a magnified way for everyone to see. It has never been as easy to find things out as it was in the twenty-first century. The wide range of reference material both online and offline (in the form of CDs) is infinite. Students can access dictionaries in paper or electronic form, there is no denying that there is a greater range of dictionary reference tool available than was the case even some years ago. If you are lucky enough to have access to an IWB, you will know that the "wow" effect is extremely high. IWBs look and sound impressive; according to Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 123). Everyone can imagine a full-size color screen in his/her classroom, with video, CD audio, pictures, interactive exercises like these found on a CD-ROM, and access to the Internet. This means that a huge bank of resources is always available at the touch of a simple pen. The experiences and

opinions of teachers who have used IBWs in the classroom tend to be positive. Teachers point to increased students motivation through the introduction of a new multimedia tool into the classroom. Research carried out into the impact of IWBs suggests that they can directly affect student's motivation, interest and attention levels. Having access to an encyclopedia means to have a large set of shelves on which to store all of the volumes. This collection of volumes then became a small CD-ROM sitting next to students and teachers computers. People may also have access to a collection of web addresses to useful sources online. Informational reference sites based on printed material are a good starting point for any research paper such as, the Encyclopedia Britannica, as well as Microsoft Encarta, which was originally published on CD-ROM.

Using email with students out of classroom

Email is one of the most used and useful in ICT tools around the world today. Most of people write emails in both their personal and professional lives. Email allows teachers to keep in touch with other teachers around the world via mailing lists and discussion groups, thus helping in their professional development. It also permits teachers to communicate with their students outside the classroom, for example receiving homework and other written assignments. The teacher can email students a summary of classwork or extra material after each class. The objective of the teacher is to stimulate their students' curiosity about learning even outside the classroom without controlling the students like he/she uses to do it if they are inside the classroom. The teacher can ask pairs to prepare information on a particular topic, which they can do via email. It will help students to be well prepared for the lecture before entering the classroom. Finally, one of the biggest advantages of using email with students from the teachers' point of view is that technology is relatively simple to use, and most of their students will already be familiar with it. If the students are not familiar with email, it is not difficult to teach them how to use it. It will

permit the teachers to share a good moment with their students since it differs from teaching them how to read well.

Conclusion

Technological opportunities are particularly useful in developing higher-order skills of critical thinking, analysis and inquiry that are necessary for students in the 21st century. To achieve in today's world, students must be given 21st century tools within their classrooms in order to motivate their learning. When students use laptops they will acquire a sense of pride and empowerment, they will also report significantly higher positive attitudes in comparison with the traditional learning environment. In doing so, teachers will have in front of them motivated students and really engaged in their learning process. Students' motivation has always been a factor in driving students to become more successful in their reading as well as educating them through the use of real world technology in order to motivate them to become self-directed students. Access to these technologies can change the teaching and learning dynamics in the classroom. Finally, technology has a positive impact on both teaching and learning .

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