INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING WRITING

Isakova Barchinoy Ne'matovna
English teacher of Fergana Academic lyceum, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of technology integration has significantly contributed to the change in teaching reading and writing in teaching a foreign language. Such integration in foreign language learning teaching demonstrates a shift in educational models from a behavioral to a constructivist learning approach. These recent developments reveal that rapid changes in literacy have taken place as a result of the arrival of the computer and the development of other new technologies. Consequently, the pressure on teachers to keep up with such developments and to raise standards in their classrooms is ever present. Not only does it motivate and encourage EFL students to engage in reading and writing, but the various ways it is used proves beneficial in cultivating writing skills among this population of students.

Using e-journals, much like a composition notebook, gives students a safe venue for expressing their ideas without having to worry about handwriting or spelling mistakes. This technique hones their vocabulary skills and gives them an opportunity to receive written feedback from an instructor, which in turn aids in reading proficiency.

Another method, among many, is using online discussion boards. With this approach, students can communicate with one another as well as the teacher, receive peer feedback and practice conversational skills, all the while putting complete thoughts together in the form of typed sentences. Peer feedback is one of the most influential methods of becoming a proficient writer of English. Studies show that school age children are more conscious of their peers' reaction and perception than their instructor's, therefore, more apt to learn from their constructivism (Bitchener, Cameron, & Young, 2005). Using these technological tools can provide that much needed opportunity.

By interviewing students, Ghandoura found that students thought computers made the acquisition of writing skills easier and faster. The possible downfall of these tools is that writing on computers gives an immediate alert to grammatical and spelling errors, which could become a lesson learned or a crutch. However, in a rich-technology, EFLs can become better readers and writers of English.

It should be noted that academic writing skills are more difficult for EFLs to develop than communicative listening and speaking skills and often require more time for mastery .This could be due to the socio-cultural aspects of language

acquisition, in which the EFLs learn more communicative language (and less academic language) from the environment and cultural.

TOPIC ANALYSIS

Now, the teacher could use interactive writing and grammar websites filled with games and activities for the students to participate in as a whole group. The EFLs had a renewed excitement for this unit, as interactive websites became visual representations of the content as well as class competitions. Whole-group and-group games focused on writing conventions, and they allowed EFLs the opportunity to work within the zone of proximal development where they were able to acquire more vocabulary and more complex language structures. When the laptops are used in class, the students will continue to visit these websites to independently, they improve their writing skills.

They will be able to manipulate the screen using the keyboard connected to the LCD projector. For other exercises, EFLs will be able to interact with the projector by writing on the board or having races of who can find the correct writing conventions the fastest. The lessons and methods will be fun, engaging, and used innovative technology.

In order to improve writing skills of English language learners, educators must consider new and innovative methods for their instruction. Current methods are simply not moving these students to the level of proficiency that is expected of them. A safe environment can reduce EFL anxiety and provide opportunities for risk taking which is necessary to produce even adequate writing. Scaffolding coupled with peer work provides English language learners the support they need to facilitate the writing process. Finally, diverse literacy along with technology, work together to capture their interest while motivating them to succeed in the writing classroom. When students are given opportunities to write for authentic meaning-making, message-sharing purposes, they can enjoy the benefits of writing even when they are beginning readers and writers who are doing so in a language they have not yet mastered.

The fact that teaching teenagers is a difficult task goes without saying. I feel it's been more and more difficult to draw their attention to what I'm teaching. They come to classes so full of energy that making them concentrate on learning grammar or writing seems an impossible task. At the same time, very little or nothing has been done to change this current situation. In fact, it seems that the more we teachers try, the further away our goal seems to be. What can we do to successfully hold their attention?

There is no doubt that experience and good textbooks do help a lot, but technology has proved to be one of the best tools because adolescents love all kinds of gadgets and software. Teenagers are always so involved with attractive and fast-

paced web pages and social networking sites that a classroom, a teacher and a board seem boring and unattractive to them.

For this reason, I think that newer technology can be an effective way to catch students' attention and interest and help me lead my students along the path of learning a foreign language.

Although choosing a good textbook has certainly made my life easier as a teacher, I often feel like going beyond text books and surprising students with a different project.

This year I was teaching narrative tenses when I came up with this idea of using technology to catch their interest and attention. I needed something simple but innovative. As all my students have mobile phones with cameras, I invited them to walk around the lyceum, choose something, take a picture and write a 50-word story based on that picture. At first, it was a mess. They just could not understand what I meant. It was amazing to see how difficult it was for the students to leave the comfort zone of our classroom and walk along the corridors searching for a good spot to be photographed. They were really hesitating and feeling awkward.

Fortunately, in pairs, they decided to take risks and give themselves a chance. The experience was successful not only in terms of language acquisition, but also in terms of sociability. They went out of the classroom shyly and started walking around the lyceum exchanging ideas with their peers. I was surprised with the results. They found out how creative they are, which was great for their self-esteem.

After this experience, I wanted to explore the idea of using Messengers as a learning tool because I had noticed they were always text messaging to their friends about everything all the time. As it was proving difficult to make them keep their mobiles off during our classes, I was trying to figure out a way to use Messengers as a tool not an enemy. Not until we started discussing short stories from the Reading Circles did I find the appropriate moment to propose it.

Reading circles are a great technique to work with reading; however, I have always felt the lack of a suitable follow-up activity. So, after discussing one of the stories, I asked them to send me a tweet summarizing the story in 140 characters. Some of them argued that they didn´t have twitter which would make it impossible for them to do the task. However, I was ready to solve any difficulty presented. The students were allowed to send me a message or a pretend one by email, or by Facebook. I even said they could write it by hand.

In the end, what they expected to be a piece of cake ended up taking much longer. They had to write and re-write it many times until they got to the number

of characters permitted without using abbreviations, but keeping the summary meaningful.

Sooner than I expected, I had my students writing and rewriting texts with real enthusiasm and that made all the difference in my daily life as a teacher. Not only were they motivated, but I was too. All in all, I noticed that they improved their written skills by analyzing how the process of writing requires thinking and editing, and how much easier it is when one has a wide range of vocabulary.

Besides, I can add some other methods used technological devices. Below is given those innovative methods:

Audio and Videotaped Protocols – Taping students while they are solving problems assesses the learner's awareness of his own thinking.

PowerPoint Presentations – For those teaching in computer-mediated environments, put students into groups of three or four students. Students focus their attention on a chapter or article and present this material to the class using PowerPoint. Have groups conference with you beforehand to outline their presentation strategy and ensure coverage of the material.

Online Chat (All-Day) – For classes meeting at least partially in an online environment, instructors can simulate the benefits gained by a chat-room discussion (more participation from reserved instructors) without requiring everyone to meet in a chat room for a specific length of time. The day begins with a post from the instructor in a discussion board forum. Students respond to the prompt, and continue to check back all day, reading their peers' posts and responding multiple times throughout the day to extend discussion.

CONCLUSION

Writing is a basic skill that can be practiced over and over again. With our help, our students can become better and better as the time passes. Teachers play a huge role in students' education and in their skills development process.

The moment we decide that you want to take a bigger responsibility concerning our students' writing aptitudes, teachers will be one step closer to what want to achieve with them. Teachers should try different types of motivation techniques and instructions, and observe what's working best for our students.

I can say that writing can be improved by learning through repetition. If the teachers would be aware of the writing process, this would help in teaching appropriate strategies and that would also improve the writing abilities of students in education environment.

This work provides guidelines to the teachers as to which pedagogies should they adopt to improve their students' writing skills. I hope that with the help of suggested methods, teachers can conduct classes efficiently.

Firstly, they can contribute to the development of students writing performance as well as they can be motivational for the students.

Secondly, innovative technologies require students to work in a collaborative learning environment. Besides, they increase students' autonomous learning.

Finally, they allow students to write with a low stress environment which encouraged students to communicate in English without worrying too much about making mistakes.

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