Efficiency of Digital Storytelling in Learning Language

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ABSTRACT

Technology has already become a crucial part of our lives, so hardly can we see any field that is not taking advantage of it. It has not been a long time ago when technology has been introduced in education. People started acquiring knowledge much faster and better thanks to new devices, and especially Internet. Through this many new techniques and approaches are created, and one of the is "Digital storytelling" which is a great help for learning languages more efficiently, and it also boosts creativity.

The article "Extending the flipped classroom model: Developing second language writing skills through student-created digital videos" by M. Engin (2014) describes a study held to increase students' activeness and digital literacy on L2 learning in an academic writing course. The students participated in the research were asked to create digital videos on an aspect of academic writing once they watched sample videos. So, in this study the researchers aimed to identify to what extent student-created digital videos improve language and writing skills learning. Moreover, there is an emphasis on peer-teaching in a technological environment. This makes lessons student-centered, as learners play the role of experts (Goldschmid & Goldschmid, 1976). Another significance of peer-teaching is that it increases students' 'critical thinking, willingness to explore and self-reflection' (Yang & Wu, 2012; Velez, Cano, Whittington, & Wolf, 2011).

The researchers concentrated on a very essential topic, as Thoman (2003) claims media literacy is influential in education, including second language learning. Using audio and video materials is widely spreading in classrooms, however, most of them are prepared by teachers. The study, on the other hand, focuses on student participation in material development, and this creates new effective learning environments where learners are in the center of the process. The students participated in the study told that it was really helpful for them, for instance, they understood the topic while they searching for sources and analyzing, selecting information. Besides, some participants mentioned that they found out new information during the process. These facts show that this study can be valuable for the second language learning once it is applied in class. Another advantage of the activity was the simplification of the materials that involves summarizing, synthesizing, and paraphrasing. This takes student to another level that students they can practice L2 more. According to Ryan (2013), the activity can make learners more responsible and urges them to go out of their comfort zone. In fact, it was stated that the participants did not start working until they completely understood the topic. Regardless of these and some other advantages, there was a problem with the activity. The learners did not believe in their

peers, that is, they had a lack of convenience in the knowledge of their peers, so most of them stated that they prefer teacher's videos and explanation. This situation may happen in any class as learners trust more in the knowledge of their teachers instead of their classmates'.

The article gives one example of how technology can be used effectively in material development. It opens a new technique of developing materials for L2 classes which tells that teachers are not only responsible for the whole lesson and creating materials, but we as teachers should encourage our learners to work and discover the language themselves. Moreover, the technique can be used in teaching all skills, as an example, it was highly suggested using digital materials in class in the previous module Grammar for ESL/EFL Teachers, since they make lessons more interactive, interesting and efficient.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that books and traditional teaching cannot be applied for new generation; they need more up-to-date techniques and methods. As George (2002) points out that "Our students have much imagination for what we might accomplish with the visual than our journals have yet to address.

References:
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