

TECHNOLOGY USE IN NURSERY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS

Mamatkulov Jakhongir Ubaydullo o'g'li

jahongirmamatqulov62@gmail.com

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Annotation. This article studies which and how Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) are used by nursery and primary education in-service teachers as reported by their pre-service teacher trainees after observations in their practicum in two provinces in Spain, Alcalá de Henares- Guadalajara and Navarre. Results indicate that in-service teachers tend to use traditional technological tools (audio files, video files, multimedia, games, Microsoft Word, interactive whiteboards) more than social networking (Facebook, blogs or wikis) both for teaching and for organisational purposes. Thus, more training in recent applications seems necessary to get ICT social applications into education.

Keywords: ICT, teachers, pre-service, pre-school, social networking.

The great investment carried out to introduce ICTs in schools and the fact that young people seem to be technologically savvy has resulted in the assumption that the use of computers and technological tools has increased in education. However, research has started to point out that ICTs are not used as extensively as assumed (Almerich, Suárez, Jornet, & Orellana, 2011), and this lack of usage should be further explored as technological tools can improve students' learning experience, and pre-service teachers need to be provided in their training period with knowledge on how to use technology effectively. Suggested ways of improving teaching in the school where they had carried out their practicum by using ICTs more included:

- better learning, better activities and interactivity by more use of interactive whiteboards (28 students);
- more playful learning with interactive games and activities (19);
- more multimedia for content introduction (12);
- using blogs (7) and wikis (3) for collaborative learning;
- using more videos for listening (6);
- using Survey monkey as an evaluation tool (4);
- using Skype to interact with other speakers (6); and
- using virtual learning platforms for real material, and for homework (4).

The answers of students to how to improve teaching with technological tools indicated that first, some students are quite conscious of the benefits of using

technology as they signalled more interactivity, more playful learning, collaborative learning, etc. as possible improvements.

Second, it showed that few students seem conscious of some of the possible usages of certain tools, for example, real interaction with other speakers by using Skype was only mentioned by six students and, thus, more teacher training in CALL seems to be a priority to extend techno-pedagogical knowledge of the possible affordances of ICT.

ICT mostly used for teaching purposes are audio files, video files, multimedia, games, browsers to search the web, Microsoft Word, interactive whiteboards and Microsoft Power Point, and only the first four are utilised very often with slight differences between both settings analysed.

Technological tools used frequently are mostly traditional programmes and audio and video files downloaded from the Internet. This usage of CALL for teaching seems to be related to traditional transmission of knowledge teaching-centred methodologies. Interactive whiteboards are becoming popular and their use is increasing in both settings.

Technologies mostly used for organisational purposes are Microsoft Word, Internet browsers for searching the web, audio files, video files, multimedia, Microsoft Power Point and Excel, games, interactive whiteboards, virtual learning platforms and blogs, but only the first five very often. Differences are greater between both settings in ICT use for organisational purposes than for teaching purposes.

To sum up, Training pre-service teachers in ICT affordances will probably increase ICT use in primary and nursery schools as these students will train their tutors and give them first-hand experience (Dooly, 2009). Furthermore, even though younger students seem to be more technologically savvy and thus should be more conscious of the affordances of technological tools to improve knowledge, personal usage is not apparently so easy to transpose into academic or educative contexts, and CALL training appears to be necessary to make students aware of the affordances and constraints of technological tools.

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