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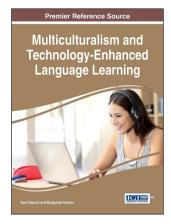Language Instruction
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Book Review

Multiculturalism and Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

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This book is published as part of the IGI Global book series Advances in Educational Technologies and Instructional Design (AETID). Each volume in the series explores various ways of integrating technologies in education, such as through hybrid learning, virtual school environments, online media in classrooms, educational telecommunications, K-12 educational technologies, etc. This book consists of two major sections. Section One contains seven showcases of technology involving enhanced language learning in the classroom. Section Two presents nine research studies on technology-enhanced language learning.

Most significantly, the technology applications and positive outcomes introduced in this book are not trivial and are worth language practitioners' attention. First, online learning platforms such as Edmodo and Glogster (as referenced in Chapter 1 by Barnes) can create a classroom environment that encourages students to use the target language. Moodle e-journals can help

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learners enhance their writing performance and cultural competence, both in their L1 and L2 (suggested in Chapter 2 by Yang). In addition, Chapter 3 (by Ahluwalia and Gupta) illustrates that practical writing assignments using Web 2.0 tools such as blogs, Wikis, language learning websites, online surveys, and interactive audio-visual software, can help students improve their writing skills significantly as compared to writing assignments that don't employ the use of technology. The book also introduces how mobile technologies, particularly iPads, can be useful tools for producing multimodal narratives, or "e-books," which combine digital images and written text (in Chapter 4 by Banares-Marivela and Rayon-Rumayor). More importantly, in the context of school education, mobile technologies foster motivation in learning and allow students to deploy complex multimodal literacy strategies. Next, technology, entertainment, and design (TED) online conferences can help improve university students' oral proficiency, fluency, and accuracy at the academic level (in Chapter 5 by Sadeghi and Ghorbani). In fact, TED vodcasts (video podcasts) can help language teachers evolve from more traditional methods of listening and speaking instruction. This method allows instructors to provide their students with authentic language input. As an example, TED vodcasts demonstrate formal presentation of rich content that learners can use as a self-study resource. Finally, students' collaborative production of audio-visual clips using online tools including Powtoon, Windows Moviemaker, Animoto, Sony Vegas Pro, Splice (iPad app), Comic Life, and YouTube, for proper use of colloquial expressions in the target language and culture, can scaffold independent language learning and cultural encounters for students (in Chapter 6 by Gabaudan; Chapter 7 by Yenromin and Charskykh).

In addition, this book makes an effort to link practice and research in technology-enhanced language teaching and learning. The findings from research present a wide range of educational approaches, rational validities, and theoretical justifications worth adapting. Through the lens of technology-enhanced language learning (also known as TELL), computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), this book illustrates the significant impact of technology on teaching and learning language. Chapter 8 (by Sahragard and Meihami) explains how sociocultural theory supports the idea that CALL can promote intercultural competence. In other words, L2 learners can be connected through computer-mediated communication tools, such as email exchanges, telecommunication, and blogs, and such tools facilitate learners' interaction and promote intercultural competence. Chapter 9 by Kizil and Kilimci, shows how a web-based concordance in the field of corpus linguistics can be useful for language learners in order for them to discover common collocations of a lexical item in a real context. Chapter 10 by Kasemsap suggests good game-based learning (GBL), massive

online courses (MOOCs), and continuing professional development (CPD) as the potential opportunities for improving language learning. Although many Web 2.0 tools (i.e. blogs, Wikis, podcasts) and virtual classes exist, more developed 3D virtual worlds, such as Second Life, can promote social presence functions as well, as explained in Chapter 11 by Akayoglu and Seferoglu. However, this chapter does not provide a comprehensive introduction of the social presence theory, which broadly refers to the degree of awareness of the other person in a communication interaction. On the whole, Second Life can promote learners' competence in projecting themselves into a community, both socially and emotionally as a real member by expressing emotions and vocatives such as darling, sir, honey, etc., and by asking questions.

The book also highlights that TELL, even via a simple and classic technology like a PowerPoint presentation, combined with models of vocabulary teaching (semantic network and syntactic structure development models), remarkably improves learners' vocabulary learning (Chapter 12 by Heirati, Azadsarv and Golzari). This implies that the utilization of technology devices, especially with successful and optimal teaching techniques in the classroom, can result in greater learning. As a matter of fact, learners in general find computers more interesting, motivating, and encouraging, especially in today's digital age (Chapter 13 by Bekleyen and Celik). Finally, dynamic assessment (DA), unlike traditional assessment, emphasizes classroom interactions in which teaching and assessment are integrated as a single activity (Chapter 14 by Azad). What is noteworthy to language instructors is that using multimedia language instruction as a method of DA can enhance students' level of performance. Based on this research finding, development of a variety of multimedia learning language materials is encouraged so learners can use them outside the classroom for further practice.

The effects of technology on language learning depend on *how* it is used, *who* uses it, and *what* it is used for (Kern, 2006). This book provides a breadth of useful information and insightful and practical ideas for *how* technology can help students in different areas of language learning. It offers practicality in implementing technology-integrated classroom activities. The findings and the convincing pedagogical effects presented in the book may be easily adapted for any language.

One of the unique attributes of this book lies in its focus on diversity. As the editors suggest, today's educational technologies and content being produced in developed countries are often distributed in other contexts without consideration of the need for diversity. This book addresses diversity and "multiculturalism" as stated in its title, by exploring TELL practices in several different countries: Iran, Turkey, Australia, India, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, and Taiwan. The various chapters in this book clearly demonstrate the importance

of action research in the classroom, and the idea that its findings can be more widely shared and discussed in multicultural educational settings. Overall, this book is a good resource for new teachers or someone new to technology-enhanced learning that wishes to explore useful tools for language teaching.

The book, despite its broad content, has a few shortcomings. Most of the technological tools covered in this book are not new or innovative to many practitioners in the field, as many language instructors may already be using them in their classrooms (iPads, TED vodcasts, blogs, Wikis, telecommunications). Further, the book is silent regarding learners' voices. Learners' voices are a significant pedagogical concept because they alert teachers to the need and areas in which to re-evaluate their teaching methods; at the same time, they let learners take ownership of their learning. Students' reflections, particularly of their experiences with technology-enhanced learning and its roles in contributing to their autonomous learning, would add value to the book. For example, suggesting implications from learners' reflections or self-evaluations would be helpful to educators who wish to incorporate more technological tools in the areas of teaching and learning languages. Without appropriate and functioning assessments from all dimensions, the effect of technology is bound to be limited.

About the Reviewer

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References

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