Exploring Digital Literacy in the ESL Classroom

Technology in Adult Education Conference
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Objectives

1. History - What do past methods tell us about where we are today?
2. Today’s Demands - What challenges do today’s language learners face?
3. Building Digital Literacy - How can we build language and digital literacy skills simultaneously?
A Bit of History
Grammar Translation

1. Student Demands
   a. Learn a classic language
   b. Read classic literature
   c. Understand NL grammar more thoroughly
Audiolingual Method (1940s)

1. Student Demands
   a. Deployment overseas

1. Influences
   a. Skinner - Behaviorism
   b. Conditioning
   c. Oral drills
Communicative Language Teaching (70s-80s)

1. Student Demands
   a. Communicative Competence
   b. Ability to complete language functions
Post-Methods Era

Focus on strong learning principles to meet the students’ needs and goals (Celce-Murcia, 2014).
Language teaching has evolved not only with our knowledge of SLA but also with the demands our learners face.
Today’s Demands: Communicating in Digital Spheres
What language demands do our students face as they attempt to communicate in a digital setting?
Standards-Based Demand

1. ELPS
   a. Guiding Principle 9
   b. Standard 3 - Levels 4 and 5

1. CCRS
   a. SL Anchor 5
   b. Writing Anchor 8

Speak and listen effectively in a range of contexts, including collaborative team meetings, presentations, and interviews. Use digital tools and multimedia when useful. Gather relevant information to the ELP Standards for AE and make strategic use of digital and informational texts and data to express information sources, assess the credibility of each source, and integrate the information into your design while avoiding information overload.

Technologies in your design of curriculum, instruction, and assessment will help your students be college and career ready.
Practical Demands
Addressing students’ digital literacy and language learning needs is a demand we can meet.
Digital Literacy - Some Definitions

American Library Association

"The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, and communicate purposes, using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and information, requiring both digital media appropriate to create, and communicate creatively for a variety of technologies to find, evaluate, purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.”

Creative Communicator

ISTE Standards for Students

"Students use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and knowledge by engaging in and constructing new knowledge by working effectively in teams and collaborating with others and locally and globally.”

1. Empowered Learner
2. Digital Citizen
3. Knowledge Constructor
4. Innovative Designer
5. Computational Thinker
6. Creative Communicator
7. Global Collaborator

Global Collaborator
Similar, Complementary Goals

1. Language learning is social (Vygotsky, 1978)
2. Students need communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980)
3. Interaction encourages language acquisition (Long, 1983)
4. Creation is the highest level in the taxonomy (Bloom, 1956)
Building Digital Literacy:
Pre-Existing Lessons
Sample Lesson

Topic: Cover Letters

Function: Constructive Criticism

Grammar Form: Second Conditional

Tool: Google Doc Comments
Alignments

Language Instruction
1. Interaction
2. Social learning

Digital Literacy
Global Collaborator (7b) - “Students use collaborative technologies to work with others [...] to examine issues and problems from multiple viewpoints.”
1. Make opportunities for students to learn from each other
2. Leave time for practice
Building Digital Literacy: New Lessons and Units
Sample Lesson

Topic: Personal Goals

Function: Teaching Each Other

Grammar Form: Ordinal Numbers

Tool: Adobe Spark
Alignments

Language Instruction
1. Creation with language
2. Communicative Competence

Digital Literacy

Creative Communicator (6d) -
“Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for their intended audiences,”

“Students communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively by creating or using a variety of digital objects such as visualizations, models, or simulations.”
Teach digital literacy skills that help your students create more meaning with their language.
Sample Lesson

Topic: Community Maps

Function: Collaboration

Grammar Form: Prepositional Phrases

Tool: Nearpod, Ethermap
Alignments

**Language Instruction**

1. Language is social
2. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995)

**Digital Literacy**

Global Collaborator (7a) - “Students use digital tools to connect with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, engaging with them in ways that broaden mutual understanding and learning.”
Building digital literacy is also an opportunity to build classroom community.
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References


