

Poster presentations

Using technology to enhance language learning inside and outside the classroom

by I B K Malka N Wickramasinghe

Abstract

In 'Using technology to enhance language learning inside and outside the classroom', Malka Wickramasinghe, explores how the use of technology in teacher education has reportedly increased participation among teacher trainees in the learning process.

The use of smartphones and interactive white boards (IWBs) and the Edmodo learning platform has caused this change in the learning atmosphere. Most trainees are constant users of smartphones and these are employed first to surf the internet to watch videos and search Google for information on authors, subject content and definitions of terms. This simple starting point provides initiative for the next steps towards success. The teacher trainees set up learning support groups via famous social media platforms like WhatsApp and Viber. The trainers upload documents and assignment tasks via this media, where the trainees can view them during lessons for reference. This saves time and energy, with the trainees referring to multiple materials simultaneously without having to make printed copies of them. Furthermore, they can post questions to the group and seek the trainers' advice on certain issues that come up in the process of self-learning. Consequently, new authorities have begun to emerge in this virtual world who promote discussions on complicated subject matter and promote peer-learning. IWBs provide another dimension to face-to-face learning in the classroom.

The potential of IWBs as interactive learning tools is in promoting the learners' engagement in a subject-area otherwise dominated by less interactive modes of delivery. Edmodo is free software that promotes learning allowing trainers and learners to engage in a virtual space. The trainer can create learner profiles and add them to a group that shares subject matter. Most importantly, the use of technology provides an opportunity to meet learners in a virtual space and enable learners to engage in self-learning which promotes deeper learning skills.