



**Joint Efforts for Innovation:
Working Together
to Improve
Foreign Language
Teaching in the
21st Century**

**Dolors Masats, Maria Mont
& Nathaly González-Acevedo (Editors)**

A book for the curious and passionate 21st century language teachers and teacher trainers.

Tired of reading about the wonders of technology enhanced project-based learning but not knowing where to seek inspiration to start to adopt this teaching approach? A team of in-service teachers, teacher trainers, pre-service teachers and researchers have worked together to present a simple, engaging and practical book to offer fellow education professionals stimulating ideas for their teaching practice.

Joint efforts for innovation: Working together to improve foreign language teaching in the 21st century offers:

- Inspiring classroom projects and innovative teaching experiences.
- A compilation of digital tools and resources for the foreign language classroom.
- Pioneering proposals to open up the classroom doors.
- Problem-solving and inquiry-based tasks that promote team work.
- Honest reflections from practitioners on their classroom practices.

This book includes

- accessible examples of teacher-led classroom research small-scale studies.
- calls for teachers to do research in their classrooms.
- personal accounts on the importance of school internships for pre-service teachers.

This book is an invitation for practicing teachers and teacher trainers to be creative and to develop learning skills, literacy skills and life skills.

Are you ready to become an innovative 21st century educator?



**JOINT EFFORTS FOR INNOVATION:
WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN
THE 21ST CENTURY**

Dolors Masats, Maria Mont & Nathaly Gonzalez-Acevedo (Editors)

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Hands on! Introducing EdTech in the seminars for tutoring pre-service teachers

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Introduction

The use of computer-based technology in higher education in general, and in teacher training faculties in particular, has widely spread over the last two decades. Yet, the term “technology use” has different interpretations. University teachers may claim to employ technology because they have an online classroom in which they upload course contents and send messages to a group of students they teach face-to-face. Other lecturers may report to be using technologies in their classrooms because they either make use of or get their students to utilise various types of software or internet resources to present or reflect upon the course contents; and a small number of them may recount to be using social media and Web 2.0 tools in their lessons. Given the fact that a vast number of pre-service (and in-service) teachers are digital natives today (Grant and Mims, 2009), teacher education should be tailored around proposals that consider the needs of individuals who are plugged-in in their personal lives and who will be responsible for educating younger generations of social media users.

Social media is “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61). Greenhow (2011) suggests that, amongst others, Internet based applications are of different nature and they include both social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.), media sharing sites (e.g. Instagram, YouTube, etc.) and publishing tools (e.g. blogs, wikis, etc.). Strangely enough, the fact that pre-service teachers use social media in their personal lives does not guarantee that they are going to use it in their classrooms. Russell et al (2003) reported that experienced teachers employ technology more often in their classrooms than novice teachers do. Their study concluded that new teachers feel comfortable with technology and rely on it to prepare their lessons or as communication tools but do not seem to be too eager to engage their students in learning activities that demand the use of social media.

Incorporating social media, getting pre-service teachers to create things with technology, is a must in teacher training programmes as pre-service teachers must acquire first-hand experience as technology users, but also expertise in

creating opportunities for the use of technology in their future classrooms. It is thus necessary to ensure that during their training period, pre-service teachers develop positive views and perceptions on the use of Internet based applications as powerful tools to enhance meaningful learning rather than as a set of mechanistic devices used to accomplish tasks and create products. The presence of technology in teacher training programmes must transform instruction and be associated with learner-centred teaching approaches which promote collaborative learning (Masats, Dooly & Costa, 2009) and must provide pre-service teachers with opportunities not only for experiencing how different resources are used with them by their university teachers but also for creating similar learning activities for young learners during their school internships (Masats & Dooly, 2011).

In this paper we are going to present the first phase of a two-year programme which aims at enhancing the use of social media amongst fourth year undergraduates enrolled in a pre-service training programme for primary teachers of English offered by a Catalan university. The programme's objective is to help future teachers develop (a) digital abilities to become multimodal competent communicators (Avalos, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2012) and (b) professional abilities to integrate technology in their future classrooms in a significant fashion (Dooly & Sadler, 2013). As part of the requirements of their school internships, in year four pre-service teachers of English have, for four months, weekly 90-minute meetings with their university tutors, who are both in-service primary teachers working part time at the university and full time at their schools. During the same period, pre-service teachers are attending a primary school one day a week. One of the tasks university tutors carry out in these seminar meetings is to guide pre-service teachers on how to plan a project they would later implement in the primary schools where they will be doing their internships. This year, however, a change was made. Prior, and parallel to the task of planning their teaching projects and reflecting on what they do and observe in their primary classrooms, during these meetings, pre-service teachers were engaged in short workshops in which they were presented with practical examples of how their university tutors were using different software with their primary students. Finally, they were also expected to use technology to first present their teaching projects to their practicum team during the seminars and later to implement the projects in the primary schools. Here we will present the technologies employed in the seminars and will briefly discuss what they were used for.

Which technologies?

Guiding pre-service language teachers on how to introduce technologies in their future classrooms means taking decisions on how to minimise the effect of two

digital divides amongst young learners: access and quality. Although not all young learners have computers at home today we cannot divide them into the two groups Wresch (1996) had referred to as “information haves” versus “information have-nots” back in the late 1990s. Technology (and social media) today is not only accessible through computers but also through smartphones, iPads or other devices which most children in Catalonia —where the study takes place— have access to regardless of the socioeconomic situation of their families. If we want young learners to incorporate what they do at school into their daily lives, it is important to make sure that some of the software they would learn to use is accessible through their smartphones. With regards to quality, Fernández Enguita (2012) suggests that there is a big difference between consuming technology and creating with technology. If we adhere to the principles of socio-constructivism and postulate that language learning is a process of knowledge construction through the participation in social activities/actions, we need to present pre-service teachers with tasks that force them to use technology with a creative purpose.

Game-based tools accessible through smartphones

There were two workshops devoted to experimenting with the use of free game-based learning platforms such as *Kahoot* and *Quizizz*, which can be used on any device with a web browser. Being introduced to the practical usability of *Kahoot* first, which is slightly more user-friendly than *Quizizz*, gave pre-service teachers the possibility of becoming familiar with both programmes and discussing their pros and cons.

Kahoot (<https://getkahoot.com/>) allows teachers to create quizzes, discussions, polls or even surveys. It is suitable for all ages and can be used in any subject, in any language. The results learners obtain can be downloaded and viewed in an Excel file, which saves teachers lots of time when monitoring their students’ progress.

Quizizz (<https://quizizz.com/>) also allows teachers to build their own quizzes in a few minutes or use the ones available. *Kahoot* is designed to just show multiple choice questions on a large screen and get students to respond to them by clicking on the buttons on their own devices that correspond to the answers they want to choose. *Quizizz* takes a different approach, which we consider is one of its highlights: No overhead projector is necessary because players see both the questions and the answer options on their own screens. This is a great improvement since fast finishers can use the tool whenever they need to, without having to wait for their classmates to start. However, this could also be a drawback, since students

in *Quizizz* can zip through questions at their own pace, so having group discussions after all answers have been given is not a simple task, compared with what you can do with *Kahoot* (teachers can pause the programme to set discussions).

Tools for developing creativity

Project-based learning is a common methodology in Catalan schools. The outcome of a project is usually related to the creation of multimodal documents (video reports, interactive stories, etc.). Creativity is important when learners (pre-service teachers and primary students alike) need to present and make public the results of the projects they take part in. Having to create a video or a poster to synthesise what they have learnt forces learners to develop their cognitive and communicative skills, as they need to reflect upon how to use a variety of languages (text, iconic, visual, etc.) to transform the information they possess and make it accessible to others. There were three apps used in the workshops planned to deal with it: *EdPuzzle*, *Canva* and *Storybird*.

EdPuzzle (www.edpuzzle.com) is an online platform to upload or link videos, which can later be edited and insert comments or questions in them. It is particularly useful in “flipped classrooms”, as teachers can easily send their students videos to watch and comment (by answering questions, for example). Unlike *Youtube*, *EdPuzzle* is a platform that gives teachers the possibility to know which students watched the video, how many times they did so and whether they answered the questions correctly or not. In this case, in the workshop pre-service teachers were also given examples of how the platform was being used in primary schools. This time, though, they were not asked to attempt to create a flipped classroom, basically because participants were also enrolled on a methodology course which used flipped learning as one of the instruction modes (see Dooly & Sadler, this volume).

Canva (www.canva.com), which can only be used online, is suitable for designing posters, images, slides, etc. During the seminars, pre-service teachers were given examples of products produced by a group of sixth grade students and then they were asked to use it to present their teaching projects and to justify their rationale (see figure 1).



Figure 1. Outline, created with Canva, of a project developed by one of the pre-service teachers in our study during her internship

Storybird (<https://storybird.com>) is a collaborative storytelling tool that allows writers of all ages to select artwork from illustrators and animators as inspirational tools to create visual stories in seconds. First, users choose a collection of artwork and then drag and drop pictures on a storyline before making up a text to match their story. It is attractive for language students and teachers alike. Teachers can easily create student accounts and set them a task. The site allows learners to focus more on writing their stories rather than on drawing pictures to illustrate it. Collaborating with others to create a story is also extremely easy and engaging.

The workshop was used to deconstruct the myth that writing is a very demotivating task for primary students. Writing is an excellent tool to cultivate creativity in language use if students' writing projects have a real purpose and their creations look professional. Some of the pre-service teachers opted to use the tool in the projects they were designing. Figure 2 shows the production of one group of primary students taking part in one of the projects designed by a pre-service teacher.

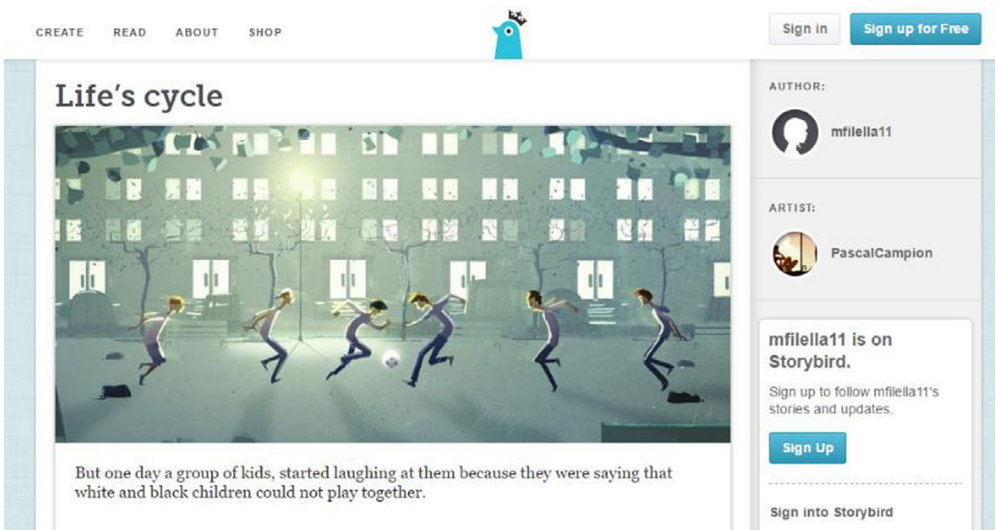


Figure 2. Fragment of a story created with *Storybird* by a group of primary pupils in a project designed by one of the pre-service teachers in our study

Tools for classroom management

Technology can also help teachers manage their groups. One of the fears pre-service teachers share concerns their lack of ideas and resources to keep a relaxed and calm atmosphere in their classrooms. It was thus necessary to include a tool

like *Classdojo* in the workshops, again by showing how it is used in real primary classrooms, as shown in figure 3 below.

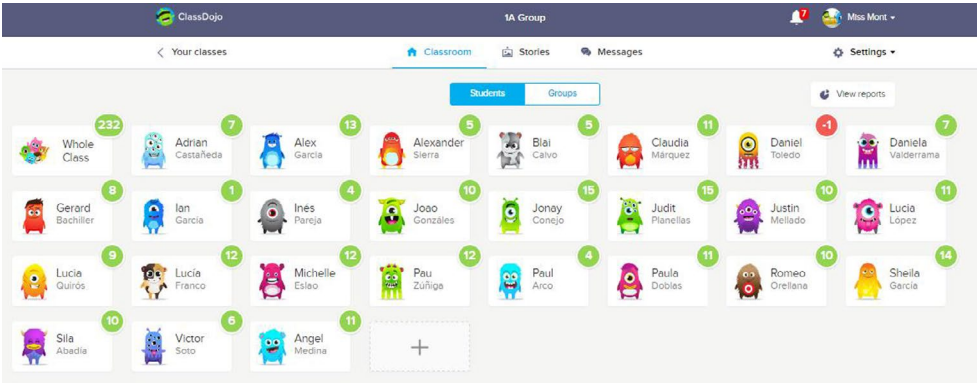


Figure 3. Example of how a class group looks like in ClassDojo.

Classdojo (<https://www.classdojo.com>) is an online behaviour management system designed to foster positive student behaviours and classroom culture. Each kid is given an avatar in the shape of a monster. Guided by their teachers, primary students negotiate classroom rules and how avatars/students are going to get their rewards (points) and how they can avoid being punished (lose points). The time invested to let children become familiar with the system is well spent: as soon as they know what to do, they all try to follow the common and agreed rules. Finally, *Classdojo* can also be used to keep parents updated on their children’s progress and classroom happenings.

Discussion

The two groups of pre-service teachers which participated in the first phase of our project valued very positively the fact that the practicum seminars had a hands-on component that went beyond assisting them in the task of planning the teaching projects they would have to implement at the end of the term. It is too early to assess the kind of impact this methodology would have on the professional life of these future teachers but they all felt confident in the use of the technology presented (they used them in the seminars and during their internships), developed positive attitudes towards the employment of technology in the classroom (they observed real examples of classroom use) and were eager to explore new tools during their internship, as we can see in the practicum report of one of them (see figure 4 below).

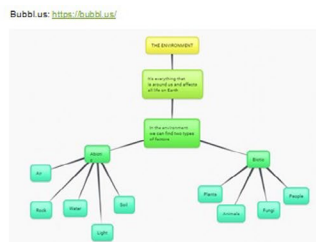
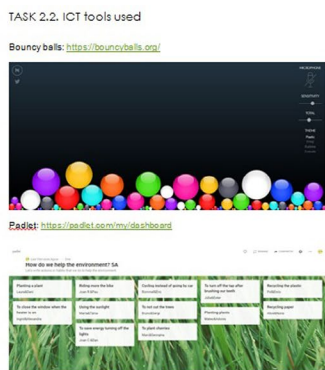


Figure 4. Fragment of the practicum report of one of the pre-service teachers in our study in which she reports having employed other ICT tools with her students.

Concluding remarks

If, as research shows (see McKinney, 1998; Goldsby & Fazal, 2000), pre-service teachers that learn to use technology during their training period are far more likely to incorporate technology in their future classes than those who have not had hands-on experience with its use, we feel that the future is promising. The pre-service teachers in our project could not only use the software themselves, as learners, but also, as prospective teachers, they could observe how in-service teachers were using them to attain real objectives in primary classrooms and experiment on how to design and implement similar proposals during their internships.

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