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USING MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The object of the research is one of the most discussed and up-to-date topics in the process of teaching nowadays – using modern technologies in teaching foreign languages. I participate in the educational program provided by the company Microsoft "Partners in learning" and this topic is familiar with me. In 2013 I had the training course "Teaching English with technology", completed the Microsoft technology enriched instruction "Faculty development workshop" and was recognized as a "Microsoft faculty fellow". So I'd like to share my experience in using modern technologies with you.

Young people live their lives through technology: they are the web generation and they are hungry for more. Our challenge as teachers is to channel the natural enthusiasm of our students have for ICT by using it in their everyday lives and embed it purposefully into the modern foreign languages (MFL) classroom.

There is great value in incorporating new technologies not as a bolt on or reward, but as an integral part of the process. This allows learners to foster the four c's: communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. ICT lets learners easily draw on authentic resources that promote inter-cultural understanding and interact with virtual peers in real non-fabricated contexts.

Publishing students' multimedia outcomes on a blog or wiki gives them a real audience for their work, facilitates peer assessment through commenting and encourages them to raise their standards as a result. Virtual learning environments also offer students distance learning opportunities wherever and whenever they want. Tools like **Padlet**, **Popplet**, and **Pinterest** let students collaborate easily with others as a class or in small groups and reflect on learning.

Many MFL departments now run their own Twitter accounts to keep in touch with parents, inform pupils of important notices, for celebrating achievement and for retweeting interesting tweets about language learning such as authentic tweets in the target language or tweets for word/expression of the day. This can raise the profile of the school and help to connect with the wider community – **@allsaintslingo** and **@EccoMFL** are good current examples of this in action.

Technology lends itself very well to personalised and independent learning where students can work at their own place, complete interactive exercises rigorously in the class or at home and receive immediate feedback. Gaining points for their efforts and being able to compare their scores with their classmates is motivating for them too and adds an element of engaging gamification to their learning.

For any MFL teacher learning vocabulary is essential and **Quizlet** is an effective way of memorising and embedding words, phrases and making sound spelling links. Students and teachers can search for existing lists and easily create their own. is another free cross-platform tool which allows for classroom voting, instant feedback and formative assessment. You can send students multiple choice, true or false or short answer questions as well self-marking pre-made quizzes. Furthermore, using avatars instead of real students' faces may encourage increased participation especially from reluctant learners.

Rehearsing, recording and editing spoken work digitally allows students to improve

their pronunciation, boost their confidence, extend their speaking and listen back as many times as they like. They can also produce a script individually or collaboratively through a Google doc and import their text into an online teleprompter like or the **Visioprompt app** so they can record their audio while it scrolls up the screen using **Audacity** or **Voice Record Pro**. Some departments employ this technique, as well as **Textivate** and **Triptico**, to help students learn their controlled assessment pieces.

Video is another powerful vehicle in and out of the languages classroom. Making videos draws upon multiple intelligences, promotes creativity and fosters collaboration. The process gives students ownership of their work which increases engagement. They can produce short films in the target language, create animations using apps such as **Puppet Pals** and **Explain Everything screencasts,** as well as peer assess each other's work. These videos can be easily uploaded and stored in the cloud, used to form part of an e-portfolio over time and are accessible at all times. Other tools used for generating e-portfolios and submitting homework are **Edmodo** or **Showbie**. The advantage of these tools is that students don't require an email address just a class code.

Using video to flip the classroom is another possibility where learners access the lesson content they would normally learn in class, at home which frees up more class time for practising and accessing higher-order thinking skills.

Facebook can be an excellent resource for teachers of the English language. Here is the top of Facebook pages for English teachers:

1. **Teaching English – British Council** is just one of the fabulous pages offered by the British Council to accompany their website. It regularly posts about resources and classroom skills, ELT events, and the British culture. This is a fantastic resource for all English teachers, especially those who teach British English.

2. **Grammarly** is a great tool for any educator! This page accompanies www.Grammarly.com, a tool used for proofreading writing and checking for plagiarism. "Like" this page for fun grammar tips and lively discussions.

3. **Teaching Resources** was created by retired teacher, Laura Candler, to share advice and ready-to-use classroom resources. It accompanies her website and blog. Laura's resources are useful for all types of teachers. Topics include Literature Circles, Learning Centers, Classroom Management, and academic subject areas such as math, literacy, science, and social studies.

4. **Real English** is for students and teachers of the English language. It accompanies the resourceful website. There, you will find tips, exercises, advice, lessons, and information for English teachers and students.

5. **Rachel's English** If you need pronunciation videos for American English, it is your one-stop shop. Rachel is an experienced ESL teacher who creates and shares how-to videos covering various topics in American English pronunciation. You can easily share the videos in your classroom or watch them yourself to better understand how to help your students improve their accent and pronunciation.

6. **Teaching ideas** Mark Warner, the creator of Teaching Ideas, wants to make your job a little easier. You will receive links to thousands of creative lesson ideas, activities, videos, and resources to use in your classroom. These free resources are contributed by teachers around the world and cover many topics and subject areas, including classroom management.

7. **Songs for Teaching** Music is a great way to teach content in any classroom. It is fun and is an effective memory aid. Songs for Teaching offers thousands of children's

songs, lyrics, sound clips, and teaching suggestions.

8. **Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Inc** is the Facebook page that accompanies **tesol.org**. This is a professional organization for English language teachers, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, USA. TESOL's mission is to ensure excellence in English language teaching to speakers of other languages.

9. **Teacher's Pet** aims to provide "everything a teacher could need, all under one roof!" They have a collection of display resources, teaching aids, games, tips, projects, and activities that they regularly share with their Facebook fans.

10. **Language Teaching Professionals** was established by David Paul to support the professional development of language teachers. Fans of this page will see regular posts regarding research, articles, and developments in language education and educational psychology. Posts also include teaching tips, educational videos, and links to the resources.

11. **TED** is nonprofit devoted to ideas worth spreading. They have an extensive collection of talks by people from all over the world, covering all sorts of topics. And all of their videos are free. Fans of this page will have TED Talks delivered directly to their Facebook news feed. Further your professional development with TED talks and share them with your students.

12. **Grammar Girl** Mignon Fogarty, the creator and host of Grammar Girl, is the author of several books about grammar and writing. This Facebook page provides short, friendly tips to improve your writing. She writes easy-to-understand explanations that you can use in the classroom to explain complex grammar rules to your students.

13. **Teachers with a Sense of Humor** is the perfect page for teachers with a sense of humor. The moderators and fans regularly post humorous teaching jokes, cartoons, pictures, and even the occasional funny student error.

14. **English Jokes** is a great place to find cartoons and jokes about the English language and life in general. Visit their page whenever you are in need of a little laughter. Remember, laughter is the best medicine!

15. **Really Learn English** is the resource for English teachers and learners around the world. On our Facebook page, you will find:
- Helpful resources for English teachers
- Teaching tips and ideas
- Funny stories and teacher jokes
- Lively discussions about teaching and the English language.

To support the colleagues who find technology integration challenging, here are some of the suggestions:

• Lead by example and introduce some of the easier tools or apps to begin with to boost confidence and then share outcomes generated through their use.

• Team-teach a lesson incorporating technology and afterwards discuss the successes and challenges.

• Offer in-house mentoring sessions at lunchtime, after classes or during professional development days.

• Nominate student digital leaders who can troubleshoot issues and offer support in class.

• Propose having technology as a performance management target.

• Recommend signing up to Twitter or other social media.

• Suggest joining online communities or Facebook pages for English teachers.

• Sign up to your subject association.

For the current generation of teachers using digital media may be a challenge. The good news is by using social media for support and integrating available tools and apps, connected teachers can access technology's power and potential for language learning. Let's make language classrooms for the web generation more relevant, engaging and accessible!

References

1. Gary Motteram "Innovations in learning technologies for English language teaching" – British Council, 2013.

2. Gavin Dudeney, Nicky Hockly "How to… teach English with technology" – Pearson Longman, 2007.