

ICT Based Language Teaching and Learning Approaches

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Abstract

A technologically integrated world constitutes the reality of the 21st century. Net environments have pervaded social relationships, professional and commercial settings but also entertainment fields. This ubiquitous presence of technology could not but penetrate into education. In an era when computer applications prevail in all aspects of human life, technology becomes a tool for language learning and language learning becomes a tool with which people can access technology [1]. This entails reshaping traditional reading teaching practices towards the development of web literacy, encompassing a set of new skills and strategies to cope with non-linear hypertext. Over the years, various web tools have been purported as instructional methods of promoting this new form of literacy and several have been the studies that advocated the use of webquest [2] -an inquiry-oriented activity in which, most or all of the information that learners need comes from web resources- as a potential medium to enhance the learners' web reading skills. Since its inception in 1995, the webquest as a tool has been extensively approached, welcomed and researched [3]. March (2003) [4], emphasizing the critical attribute of transformative learning in webquests, provided a revised definition according to which a webquest is 'a scaffolded learning structure that uses links to essential resources on the World Wide Web and an authentic task to motivate students' participation in a group process that transforms newly-acquired information into a more sophisticated understanding'. His definition echoes profound learning theories (i.e. social constructivism, scaffolding, cooperative and active learning) and highlights key attributes of the webquest model. Thus the particular presentation employs webquest as the educational tool, and investigates its potential effectiveness to empower the promotion of web reading strategies. Through the presentation of a technology-based lesson and a meticulous analysis of the reasons for selecting the particular technology, it is hoped that language teachers are intrigued to employ the tool in their teaching practices.

References

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