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CREATIVITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL EL TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamically changing world, educational settings are increasingly relying on employee creativity. By promoting educators to generate creative ideas and products for the market, organizations can achieve innovation and maintain competitive advantages (Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993; Zhou & Hoever, 2014). Considering the critical importance of creativity, practitioners are searching for ways to facilitate teachers' creative performance. However, existing knowledge on creativity predictors and drivers remains incomplete. To help teaching organizations effectively manage employees' creativity, this course work aims to elucidate what predictors from universities and teachers themselves can align to engender creative results.

KEYWORDS

Creativity, teaching, Educational setting.

INTRODUCTION

One of the effects of the growth of English as an international language is an increase in demand for skilled English language teachers at all levels in both

public and private schooling. Teachers who are dedicated, well-qualified, have a strong command of the English language, work effectively with their

colleagues, can engage, and motivate their students, and are committed to helping their students achieve are sought after by schools. They are, however, most interested in persons who are good teachers. Paper I'd want to focus on one of the many qualities that distinguish excellent teachers: the capacity to educate with a creative mindset. The concept of what it takes to be a successful teacher is a complicated one, because good teaching draws on a variety of attributes that instructors bring to their classrooms, reflecting the knowledge, abilities, and understanding they've gained via their professional education and teaching experience. In this paper, I'd want to look at one of the many qualities that distinguish excellent teachers: the capacity to teach with a creative mindset.

Creativity is a necessary component of thinking and learning in all fields. There is a widespread belief that creativity should be encouraged and nurtured in educational settings (Williams, 2002). However, there is still a lack of understanding about how to use creative teaching effectively in the classroom. This could be due to the complicated nature of creativity

And the lack of a uniform definition of "what creativity is" or "what it signifies" in education or research (Marksberry, 1963; Sternberg, 1999; Baker et al., 2001; Friedel & Rudd, 2005).

Maley's (1997) work in language instruction has stressed an emphasis on creativity using texts derived

from a variety of literary and non-literary sources to encourage creative thinking and foster the ability to make creative connections. Levels of achievement in second language learning have also been connected to creativity. Many of the language tasks favored by modern language teaching methods are thought to release creativity in learners – particularly those involving student-centered, interaction-based, and open-ended elements – and are thus in theory ideally suited to fostering creative thinking and behavior on the part of learners.

It's interesting to consider what makes a teacher creative. In some ways, creative teachers are comparable to creative students. According to Richards' web post, innovative teachers have the following characteristics: (1) creative teachers are knowledgeable; (2) creativity in teachers necessitates confidence; (3) creative teachers are dedicated to assisting their students in succeeding; (4) creative teachers are non-conformists; (5) creative teachers are familiar with a variety of strategies and techniques; (6) creative teachers are risk-takers; (7) creative teachers strive for learner-centered lessons; (8) creative teachers are reflective. Here are some of the author's personal thoughts on the attributes described above. Teachers that are creative take in a lot of information from several places. With all their knowledge and efforts, they like experimenting with new concepts in class to assist their pupils learn more effectively. They

are unconcerned about being distinct from other instructors' beliefs or actions, or about "teaching as a subversive activity," as Postman and Weingartner put it in a classic work. They appreciate reviewing their own teaching practices, such as notes (teaching journals), student comments (typically by having them jot on a piece of paper or filling out questionnaires), videotaping, or feedback from colleagues (through observation).

Creativity in language teaching

Creative intelligence seems to be a factor that can facilitate language learning because it helps learners cope with novel and unpredictable experiences. Communicative teaching methods have a role to play here since they emphasize functional and situational language use and employ activities such as role-play and simulations that require students to use their imaginations and think creatively. So, what does creativity look like in a language classroom?

Here is an example of a creative teacher at work. She was confronted with the following

Situation:

A teacher has just called in sick. You are going to teach her 50-minute spoken English class, lower-intermediate level, in five minutes. Your only teaching aid is an empty glass.

The teacher thought about it for less than a minute and then elaborated her idea for the lesson.

1. I would start by showing the glass and asking students to form groups and brainstorm for five minutes, to come up with the names of as many kinds of containers as possible. They would then group them, according to their functions. For example, things that contain food, things that are used to carry things, things that are used to store things in and so on. I would model how they should do this and suggest the kind of language they could use. (10 minutes).
2. Students would present their findings to the class to see who had come up with the longest list. (10 minutes).
3. For a change of pace, and to practise functional language, I would do some dialogue work, practising asking to borrow a container from a neighbour. First, I would model the kind of exchange I want them to practise. Then students would plan their dialogue following this outline:
 - a) Apologize for bothering your neighbour.
 - b) Explain what you want and why you need it.
 - c) Your neighbour offers to lend you what you want.
 - d) Thank your neighbour and promise to return it on the weekend.

When creativity is viewed as a product the focus might be on a particular lesson, a task or activity in a book, or a piece of student writing. What are the specific features of the lesson that enables us to say that is creative? When viewed as a process the focus is on the thinking processes and decisions that a person makes use of in producing something that we would describe as creative (Jones, 2012). It is these two dimensions to creativity that I want to illustrate in here by focusing on both the special attributes and qualities of a group of creative teachers of English – this is the product dimension if you like – and then to consider how these attributes lead to classroom processes in language teaching. I will also consider how schools can foster a culture of creativity and the benefits it can bring for the school as well as for teachers and students. But first let me say something about my data sources. My most recent interest in creativity in teaching was prompted by reading a report of a UK research project that was carried out in Kent by a team from Canterbury Christ Church University (Cremin, Barnes, and Scoffham, 2009). This involved an initial survey of 20 schools followed by a more detailed study undertaken in four of the schools – two primary and two secondary – in which the quality of creative teaching was acknowledged to be outstanding. The teachers in these schools were not TESOL teachers but the research identified three interrelated dimensions of creative teaching that are both product and process related, and which also emphasized the school context

as a crucial factor in facilitating creative teaching. The findings in the Kent study highlighted three factors:

- The personal qualities of the teacher
- The pedagogy the teacher adopts; and
- The ethos of the class and school

I decided to look further into these dimensions of creative teaching in relation to the thinking and practices of teachers of English, by first asking a group of English teachers who had participated in an essay writing competition during one of my recent lecture-tours to write about their philosophies of teaching. (The teachers are identified by an initial in this paper). I then selected from the teacher's stories those that appeared to reflect a creative disposition. Following this I conducted follow-up interviews – both spoken and written – to probe further into the teachers' thinking and to find examples from their classroom practice that illustrated creative approaches to teaching. In order to summarize the results of these conversations and interviews and following on from the Kent research we will discuss three different dimensions of creative teaching:

1. The qualities creative teachers possess
2. How teachers apply creativity in their teaching
3. How creativity can be supported in the school

The qualities creative teachers possess

We can probably all recall teachers we know who were very creative in their approach to teaching. Of course we have all encountered teachers who make use of carefully developed lesson plans, who keep their lessons focussed on accurate performance of tasks, who are strict about getting homework in on time and returning it with detailed corrections and suggestions. Hopefully however we also have powerful and fond memories of a teacher who sparked our imagination, who inspired us by their individual and personal teaching style, who motivated us to want to continue learning and perhaps to eventually decide to become an English teacher? What makes teachers like this different? Creativity depends upon the ability to analyse and evaluate situations and to identify novel ways of responding to them. This in turn depends upon a number of different abilities and levels of thinking. Let me now try to describe eight aspects of teacher ability and cognition that characterize some of the qualities of creative teachers.

Creative teachers are knowledgeable

Creative teachers have a solid knowledge base. They know their subject – English, teaching English, and learning English – and they draw on their subject matter knowledge in building creative lessons. A knowledge base is important because without knowledge, imagination cannot be productive. Creativity doesn't mean making unfocussed and unprincipled actions. It doesn't mean making it up as

you go. Let me first give an example of creativity without a solid knowledge base – which I characterize as mis-placed creativity. I once worked with a native-speaker teacher who had no formal education in TESOL but had taught for 8 years in an EFL context by virtue of the fact that he was a native speaker. He had developed a technique he called “sponting”, which he used as a feature of every class he taught. For example, he might take a word to begin a lesson: “English”. He would ask students to come up with words that started with E - N - G - L - I - S - H. Then he would take the ending “ish” and ask for nationalities that ended in “ish”. Suddenly he was comparing “Finnish” – the nationality, with “to finish”. Next he was asking students if they knew what a finishing school was. And so it went on. When I asked him to explain the theoretical rationale for this activity and what it was supposed to achieve he could not come up with a convincing response. This is what I mean by creativity not linked to a solid knowledge base. It leads to activities that have no legitimate goals or purpose. Compare that approach to creativity with this teacher's account of a lesson:

Drawing on knowledge of texts

When I teach, I may not have a detailed lesson plan but I keep my goals firmly in mind and I know what I am trying to teach, whether it is a reading lesson, a speaking lesson and so on. And if I decide to do

something that I hadn't planned it's because I suddenly thought of a more interesting and engaging way of practicing something. For example the other day we were studying narratives and were looking at a text in the book when it occurred to me that it would be fun if students created a jigsaw narrative in groups. Each group would prepare the opening section of a narrative, and then pass them around so that each group added the next section to the story. It turned out to be a good way of reinforcing what we had been studying, about the features of narrative texts – you know about setting, characters, events, problem, and resolution. – C – English teacher, Mexico.

In the next example, the teacher refers to differences in the use of formal and casual speech:

Making use of sociolinguistic knowledge

One of the things that my students seem to find interesting and even amusing is when I present a different point of view from an idea presented in one of the texts we are using. I guess this is just a matter of confidence, but I feel it is good for learners to see that ideas in print can be challenged. The most obvious example of this is when texts we are reading have been written by someone writing in a different cultural context. For instance, the other day we were reading a text, written in the USA, about taking part in a job interview. The text said very clearly that the interviewee should call any male interviewers “Sir” and

any females “Ma’am”. So I explained that in the country I come from, that would be completely inappropriate because those terms of address are not familiar. This opened a very interesting discussion about terms of address, formality and respect. My intention was to highlight for the learners that such matters are defined very differently in different cultural contexts, and it is important to be sensitive to the context. The same issues of formality and informality occur in writing of course, so I was able to refer to this conversation later when we started working on letter writing. – S, university teacher, UAE

Having a solid knowledge base means that the teacher has a rationale and purpose for the creative activities he or she uses. They have not been chosen merely for their novelty value but because they reflect the teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning.

Creative teaching requires confidence

This attribute partly follows on from the preceding one, since knowledge of subject matter can provide a sense of confidence that enables the teacher to be original and creative. One feature of confidence is that it gives teachers a sense that they are in control of their classroom and that is the teacher – not the book or the curriculum- that can make a difference. Creative teachers see their input to the lesson as being decisive and so they have a sense of personal responsibility for how well learners learn.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) add that action research means to plan, act, observe, and reflect more carefully, more systematically, and more rigorously than one usually does in everyday life. Though I present this article as a pedagogical experience, I see action research as paramount in systematically collecting the data that help me organize my thoughts in planning and carrying out classroom activities. In the last fifteen years, teachers and educators have increasingly relied on action research methodology to collect reliable data and provide valuable insights to classroom teachers, and it has proven to be an excellent source of archival data (Zuber-Skerritt, 1991). In carrying out classroom activities, I used Elliot's (1991) action model, in which the teacher plans, acts, observes, and reflects upon the pedagogical experience. This cycle includes the planning of exercises and pertinent observation as the teacher helps students improve their oral and written production skills and increases their motivation to learn. Observing, acting, and reflecting on these activities create a proper space for a pedagogical experience to take place and for students to communicate their feelings and enhance their abilities in the target language.

Several activities were planned according to the time I had with the participants. The purpose was to introduce students to creative methods supported by theory. In the workshops carried out in this teaching experience, students found exercises that led their

language skills in various directions, as well as strategic steps with which to use their knowledge. Besides that, students found techniques to support their views in order to have a solid foundation in their foreign language practice.

The exercises were created to let students write/speak with focus and direction, to develop their ideas and descriptions, to discover their voices, and to apply grammar rules in a fun way. I consider my activities such as chain games and teamwork to comprise a great space for students to communicate their feelings through exercises so as to develop their thinking and enhance their abilities in the target language. My intention was to design activities that offered students the opportunity to communicate their feelings, develop their thinking, and enhance their abilities in the target language. Thus, participants were given an opportunity to develop their creative potential and to synthesize and apply knowledge and skills by creating and participating in the teaching process. Activity 1: Boosting Vocabulary Through Screenwriting Instead of writing essays or short texts, I decided to expand on my previous work (Amado, 2010) to boost students' vocabulary as well as to develop their writing skills with screenwriting. According to Argentini (1998), screenwriting is a document that outlines every aural, visual, behavioral, and lingual element required to tell a story. The way students visualize the story they want to write, based on their experience or their

imagination, is relevant in the process of acquiring smoothness in writing. With this form of creative writing, Al-Alami (2013) suggests that students start with the creation of an idea; then the student fleshes out that idea into actions, dialogue, characters, and scenes. Would it not be positive if students had an idea, and from that simple idea, wrote more pages? With screenwriting, students visualize a story, and they can turn a simple sentence or idea into a properly formatted screenplay. In order to practice screenwriting in class, I allowed students to see a movie and then read three scenes of the screenplay. They had to underline or circle unknown vocabulary. They could infer the new vocabulary they learned because they had previously watched the movie. The words they underlined were cohesive devices and unknown words such as clockwise direction, nun, chapel, whispering, kneeling, lights in the windows flick on, stretcher, pulls up in BMW, moves off, among others. These are just some of the words that could evidence how much vocabulary students learned when watching the movie and inferring what those words meant. Pupils learned grammar and my corrections as well. Some of the comments the students made were: “It was great to watch a film and then read some of the scenes;” “I had never read the screenplay of a movie;” “I didn’t know many of the words, but I could infer them easily since I saw the film and the scenes of the screenplay were my favorite.” All these comments motivated students to go on reading scripts instead of

the usual texts teachers give students such as essays, worksheets, and so on.

By stimulating creative strategies in the classroom, I ensured English learning had a purpose in every activity. I was able to expand my knowledge with the students’ contributions and learned that these activities have helped participants to expand their creativity. Hence, these techniques could surely be repeated in any group of students the teacher will be confronting. With the instructional use of creativity in the English class, many insightful, accessible activities emerged and I could observe that pupils experienced new learning techniques to tell more about themselves. Participants at first were reluctant to participate, but later responded positively to the methods. The classes and the students’ contributions provided for a vivid and imaginative experience. They also were a challenge, confronting students with the need to follow English language rules.

The author’s interest in teachers’ creativity was triggered by his noticing that most of the participants in his teacher training and workshops had very limited insights into ELT methodology, classroom activity, media, and resources. For example, a talk about the use of games in English classes often provoked an argument. Some trainees strongly disagreed with the use of games in English classes because it was time-consuming. Later discussion and feedback opened their eyes to the relevance of games in a classroom

situation. It seemed that their attitude had been generally rooted in ignorance due to low motivation in nurturing professional development. In peer teaching sessions of in-service teacher training, the activities the trainees brought to the class predominantly involved merely listening to the teacher. Most pre-service teacher training students who had had teaching practice at schools voiced issues consistent with this upon returning to campus.

In-service teacher training, within their teaching career participants are also expected to continue with professional development, such as by actively taking part in workshops and conferences, extensively reading professional journals and proceedings in the field, and seriously participating in the events held by professional organizations. As far as the author is concerned, the teachers of English are weak in this matter, especially in their use of resources and participation in professional forums. The majority of them do not enjoy reading books and lack familiarity with journals and proceedings. Neither are they encouraged to attend professional development training forums and workshops.

Creativity in ELT can find itself expressed with regards to methodology, media, resources, material, classroom activities, or in some combination these. Nowadays, with the rapid advancement in ICT, teachers are challenged to make use of computer and internet in ELT. Research has reported that English

teaching and learning has become more practical, “appetizing”, efficient, and effective with technology. However, it requires a lot of open-mindedness and curiosity in the part of teachers. Besides open-mindedness and curiosity, at times, creativity needs imagination and/or problem-solving skill too. The following are actual, more detailed examples of teacher’s creativity in ELT.

First of all, the use of dubbing to help students learn English sounds. Teaching pronunciation using drills so far has not been fruitful. Even though during the teaching and learning process student involvement was apparent, in fact, the learning outcome was less than what was expected. It seemed that a new, more subconscious teaching technique was necessary to help them learn.

Using film dubbing, similar in form to karaoke in music, as a way of indirectly getting students to develop phonic skills. Within the context of dubbing, the individual was to memorize and concentrate on the verbal and non-verbal behavior of the film artist whose voice he/she was dubbing. The process required a degree of reflection in that the dubber was to produce “professional” voice – one sounding like that of the original speaker. The “Dubbing Group” students learned in a fun and exciting context which resulted in their developing better pronunciation skills, even though statistically the result showed insignificant difference compared to that of “Drill Group” students.

Since too many to mention here, the last example is derived from the author's experience as a certified TEFL TESOL Trainer of Trainer. As a variation, when introducing descriptive texts, once in a while the class was challenged to go through a cooperative learning. Tools/aids/media, namely several pieces of large drawing papers, color markers, and copies of text had been prepared. The class was split into groups of 3 – 5 students. Each group was given a copy of text, a paper, and markers with different colors. It was timed. They drew a picture after or while reading the text. On completion of the task, the picture was stuck on the wall near their joining seats. Usually, a little noise and laughter broke down at this point. Two or three members of each group with notes should leave to visit "neighbors" for information sharing.

CONCLUSION

I have focused here on just one aspect of teaching. There are many other important dimensions to effective teaching. But adding the concept of creative teaching to our understanding of what it means to be an effective language teacher has benefits for teachers, for learners, as well as for schools. For learners, creative teaching helps learners develop their capacities for original ideas and for creative thinking. It also improves the quality of the experience's learners receive and can help learners develop increased levels of motivation and even self-esteem. For the teacher it provides a source of ongoing professional renewal and

satisfaction – since when learners are engaged, motivated, and successful, teaching it motivating for the teacher. For the institution it can lead to increased levels of satisfaction for both teachers and students as well as contribute to the quality, effectiveness, and reputation of the school. To summarize, creative learners need creative teachers and teachers need to work in schools where creativity is valued and shared.

When carrying out this pedagogical intervention, students followed a systematic process from activity to activity that allowed for clarity and better organization. From starting with a simple creative exercise like the chain game, participants ended up giving their own speech and creating their own activities as well, based on the theory previously given. Teaching systematically provides participants with better tools for their final products. English teachers can use their creativity to make classes much more original, and go outside the formal bonds of teaching. There are many more methods, exercises, and activities to explore and teach. For this reason, teachers need to expand their horizons in an EFL context to see what will probably be efficient for future generations.

CHAPTER II. DEVELOPMENT OF CRATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Innovative approaches in ELT

In most of the class rooms in India, conventional teaching methods, materials and teaching techniques

based on prescribed texts and syllabus are used homogeneously in spite of vast differences in class rooms and level of students. The traditional methods which largely depend on lecturing and rote learning reduce English language learning to mechanical memorization and miserably fail in developing language competency among the students. These stereotyped methods and teaching material makes the learning a monotonous activity and creates distaste among the students by reducing them to mere passive receptors of language rather than active participants in the learning process.

Therefore the necessity to deviate from the traditional methods and materials to use of innovative material and techniques of teaching has been strongly felt.. By using novel teaching techniques like miming and dramatics, creating participating activities and using authentic materials such as songs, cartoons, advertisements, sports commentaries, episode from films, local folk literature, etc, the teachers can involve learners in the learning process by providing them direct experience and participation

By using authentic teaching material that is connected to the experiential and background knowledge of the students as well those available around him, an English class room can be made interactive, interesting, enthusiastic and learner friendly.

The methods for teaching the English language can be innovated on any or all of the following ideas:

- Technology based innovative teaching and learning strategies
- Using learners experiential knowledge for ELT
- Using innovative tasks for ELT
- Creating activities in the class room for initiating communication
- Use of innovative material like songs, cartoons, jokes, anecdotes, malapropism for ELT
- Use of social networking sites for learning English
- Project based ELT
- Local and practical ways for ELT
- Creating indigenous pedagogic contents through class room situations
- Creating indigenous themes to initiate discussion in a class room
- Involving students in different roles for ELT
- Teaching pronunciation through music
- Using animated short stories in English language class room
- Using text book innovatively for initiating communication in a classroom
- Use of blended learning strategies in English language teaching and learning
- Using quizzes, puzzles and riddles to create interest in a class room

- Using debates, extempore, group discussions, interviews, group work and pair work in a class room for ELT
- ELT through bogging, E-mails and SMS
Dealing with using innovative approaches in mixed classes

Among the many challenges facing teaching instructors today is the mixed-ability class. According to Chapman and King (2003), a mixed-ability classroom consists of a group of students with differing levels of learning abilities, interest, and skills. EFL teachers have grown to identify this as one of the greatest aspects that invariably determines the level of teaching and understanding of what the students undergo in the long run. In support of this, Hedge (2000) noted that teaching a classroom of mixed-ability students is a vital and genuine issue that instructors experienced daily. He also went on to reckon that the mixed-ability problem demanded serious attention from experts in the educational field. While each learner has their own unique way of learning English coupled with different linguistic knowledge and the individual pace of learning; there seems to be an overarching need for the instructor to apply methods that would engage all the students in the same measure. This is especially because a dilemma normally arises for the instructor on who to concentrate on. Should they concentrate on the advanced learners and neglect the weaker ones? The converse of this would also be disadvantageous to

the advanced learners, since they will not be able to participate based on their true potential. Following this situation, this study attempts to explore the challenges of mixed-ability classes and strategies that are utilized by EFL teachers to overcome these matters. Teachers are also faced with the shortage of training programs and strategies to prepare them for such situations at the workplace. These strategies have been floated to be very crucial and instrumental in ensuring there is success in the learning experiences of the students. The fact of the matter is that most instructors lack the professional development, planning time, or the capacity to consistently implement differentiation (Loiacono & Allen, 2008). Instructors in mixed-ability classrooms need to be afforded continuous training to better manage the challenges of their diverse learners (Butterworth, 2010).

Most classes are comprised of a large number of students, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to control the students and to deliver the lesson effectively. Since the responsibility of taking care of the individual needs of each student lies on the shoulder of a single teacher, it has become a very tedious process. It has become difficult to administer their lesson plans in a mixed-ability class since every student has a different level of understanding (Northcote 2006). A good example is seen when a teacher is explaining a concept in class. The students with a high-ability of understanding get bored as the instructor tries to

make further explanations to the students with moderate to low levels of knowledge absorbing capabilities. The most challenging part of English language teaching in a mixed-ability class is the fact that the teachers are expected to guide students at their individual pace, regardless of the proficiency differences. Failure by the teacher to address the needs of every student often makes the active students maintain their active state whilst their more passive counterparts remain passive, with no positive development (Hedge, 2000). There is always a huge disconnection between these two types of students and thus, no progress in learning is recorded. This means that the teacher should employ different teaching methods and techniques to meet each individual student's needs; this is a challenging task, as it is usually not practical, especially with large numbers of students to handle. In most cases, the teachers turn to employing average teaching methods in a bid to achieve a healthy balance in the middle ground. This leaves the slow learners struggling while the academically advanced students get lost since the learning process effectively neglects their needs (Winebrenner, 2001). Moreover, other research suggested that all learners, including those recognized as gifted, need educational experiences that help them achieve their maximum potential (Burney, 2008; VanTassel-Baska, 2005) Teaching gifted learners in a diverse-classroom has revealed success, but is not consistent in having all learning abilities involved

(Tyler, 2006). There are several strategies that influence teachers in mixed-ability classes to think in a different way to help their students attain academic success. These strategies are also meant to help them cope with the many challenges they face. The recommended strategy for addressing teaching in a diverse-classroom is differentiation. This strategy has grown in status becoming a recurring theme in classroom instructional strategies (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006; Winebrenner, 2001). Instructors can divide their pupils into various groups, incorporating different student-centered methods to improve on their study and to motivate them to participate more in their preferred learning method. Some of the student-centered methods include; game competition, in-class activities, extra homework, and dramatization (Pedersen & Kronborg 2014). To help address the challenges in mixed-ability classes, the teachers should incorporate other strategies like open-ended plans, contingency plans, appeal to all senses, self-access centers, and personalized tasks to their teaching methods. To enhance the effectiveness in the teaching of language in these classes, there should be good management of classroom activity coupled with effectiveness of presentation and the use of teaching aids such as audio-visual material in the learning process.

In addition, teachers should also be involved in the training programs and equipped with the ideal

leadership skills to help them deal with any challenging situations that arise in their learning environments. To further empower them, they should be equipped with the relevant knowledge to better their understanding of the different abilities and needs of their students (Boaler, 2008). This will help them to use effective strategies in the classrooms to create a thriving learning environment that satisfies the needs of all learners giving them unforgettable learning experiences. The use of all these strategies will help increase student interest and help the teachers to identify the individual weaknesses of each student to assist them accordingly. Tomlinson (2001) suggests that teachers only need to differentiate instruction types in diverse-classrooms to strike a healthy balance and enhance the learning process.

Increasing the usage of educational digital tools in the ELT

In the context of digital language teaching and learning, greater emphasis has been placed on the learning half of the process. Recent developments in the field of computer-assisted language learning proved the positive effects of technology used in promoting learning. An open argument, though, relates to the significant difference in the way learners and teachers have access to technology in educational settings. Learners' access may take place in either or both of these two ways: "learning from" and "learning with" technology – where the former underlines the

instrumental use of technology and the learner's relative passivity in the process, while the latter hints at a more active participation or interaction from the learners. Quite the opposite is the case with teachers: "teaching with" technology generally implies an instrumental approach to the use of technology in language classes, while "teaching from" technology reflects the interactive, immersive experience of teaching from within a learning environment. Whether using online, blended, or class-based learning, teachers are faced with the challenge of combining a more informal learner-centered approach – giving learners control over their learning process – with the prevalent practices of teacher-centered modes – based on set goals and standard forms of assessment. In order to balance learner autonomy, personal choice and the affordances of LMS tools, teachers (as all the stakeholders in the learning process) need to master the complex triangulation of the pedagogical, methodological and technological levels. In this setting, moreover, we have recently witnessed the digital shift of educational publishers, who have sort of re-invented themselves as educational technology providers. The shift from hard copies to software solutions has opened new possibilities, facilitating tech-savvy teachers' work while moving

The most technophobic teachers out of their comfort zone.

Digital tools challenges students to write more formal assignments rather than informal. Digital tools educate students about issues such as plagiarism and fair use. Digital tools encourage students to be more creative and show more personal expressions. According to Purcell, Buchanan and Friedrich (2013) points out that technologies today makes students use: poor spelling and grammar. Furthermore, today's technology makes it easier for students to shape and improve students writing. However, it can be difficult depending on the student's abilities and disabilities, but sometimes it makes no impact on the students if they choose to not show any impact or interests. Digital technologies provide students with many opportunities to practice writing through participation. Mobile technologies allow one to write, capture, edit and publish while on the go, anytime and anywhere. Writing is no longer limited or restricted to time or location. According to Purcell, Buchanan and Friedrich (2013) argue that digital tools make writing more meaningful and less intimidating for many students. Middle school teachers worry that their students are losing the ability to develop, organize and express complex thoughts (p.24). However, many middle school teachers and high school teachers acknowledge that students struggle more when writing in public learning environments. In addition, Purcell, Buchanan and Friedrich (2013) point out that English teachers acknowledge that students are more likely to make shortcuts with digital tools when writing, and use poor

spelling or grammar when writing fast and careless. Nowadays, iPads are often an integral part of the classroom. Eriksson and Olsson (2015) argue that this digital tool is counted as part of the digital toolbox that the teacher uses to teach in the classroom. However, Jönsson and Gjedde (2009) explain that the teachers use digital tools to support their teaching in the classrooms because the work often involves social networking, and mobility for the students allows collaboration between whoever is using the iPads. This means that instead of the students learning from their technologies, they are learning with it. Jönsson and Gjedde (2009) states that "...people employ different strategies for learning, and that these strategies relate to internal strengths and capabilities..." (p. 6). Moreover, they argue that teachers invest their time and efforts to master new technologies all the time, so that they can extend the scope of the new technologies they use in their classrooms to improve the learning environment. Jönsson and Gjedde (2009) mention that using digital tools affects language learning differently depending on the how students use the tools. Since school system is responsible for providing students with skills, knowledge and confidence in the language, it is necessary to examine whether the chosen digital tools for their language learning are effective or not. Take for example Google Apps for Education and the software tools within this tool. This effectiveness depends partly on the

students' social economical background, according to Jönsson and Gjedde (2009).

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