ABSTRACT

Synergizing Facebook and YouTube for e-Teaching Grammar during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Background:

Due to the on-going global COVID-19 pandemic, instructors were propelled to move from face-to-face instruction or even blended learning to online-only instruction to be able to assist, help and e-teach their students in the context of remote distance education. Both actors moved beyond the physical bounds of educational institutions and thus found refuge in social media sanctuary. For this reason, I devised a web-enhanced mode of e-teaching that stems from combining some of the main educational features of two prominent social network platforms namely, Facebook and YouTube. An open community of practice in an open Facebook group was created. It included more than 80 third year secondary school students belonging to six distinct specialties and 50 high school English teachers from different cities, with the aim of leveraging digital technology to explore the potential of these social-media-mediated pathways. To supplement and consolidate secondary students' understanding of grammar lessons, personalized YouTube videos were created by taking into account the interlinked prongs of lingual, social, and cultural perspectives in the creation of these multi-media-format pedagogical materials in a storytelling framework.

Methods:

After four weeks of e-teaching and uploading e-quality-content in the Facebook group, online questionnaires were administered to the participants – though not all of them completed it – to report their perspective regarding the extent to which this e-method of instruction is effective in imparting grammar. Because of using a mixed-method design, qualitative and quantitative data were not only drawn from the questionnaire but also from participant observation along with the different types of Feedback from learners and instructors alike within the online setting.

Results:

Only 65% of the secondary school students took part in the online activities that were carried online and thus fill out the questionnaire. This fact points out that some learners, especially those living in rural areas, have limited internet access and/or do not own a smart-phone as the lion share of students who participated actively in this study used their hand-held devices to complete their assignments. Another element to be mentioned is that even with this active category of secondary students, the e-teacher could not evidently position their learning status in that, giving the right answers did not necessarily imply they have fully grasped the material at-hand.

Findings reveal that active participants touted this e-method for "creating a competitive and cooperative spirit" and describe it as an "efficient way to study online" as it "eases up the process of learning" except for the fact of occasionally being distracted by mobile-push-notifications. What characterized this modality of e-instruction is its flexibility as students were able to choose when and where to study without any constrained, which, in turn, enabled them to take agency of their own learning. Add to that the fact that students can "go back to the video whenever they need to". In fact, they can pause, view, re-view the video-format material, which dispenses the teacher from repeating or re-explaining, as they usually do in a traditional in-class lecture. These elements provide personalized self-paced learning that can be beneficial, to a large extent, to these e-students. Another teacher stated that "it's an up-to-date method that matches students' lifestyle" because they use, to varying degrees, internet and social medial on a frequent basis alongside the fact that they are, by nature, technophile beings.

Conclusions:

In light of the abrupt and bourgeoning use of social media in an educational context caused by the global outbreak COVID-19, merging key features of Facebook and YouTube to e-teach students grammar revealed to be effective to some extent but it's not without its challenges. In this online-only instruction, students can take agency of their own learning and thus set their own-pace regardless of the other participants, however, not all of them have the ability to be fully autonomous and hence self-regulate their learning.

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