Philosophies, Traditional Pedagogy, and New Technologies:
A Report on a Case Study of EAP Teachers' Integration of Technology into Traditional Practice

Paul Breen
Greenwich School of Management, UK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter reports on a study of teachers in transition, developing their practice and their cognitions regarding the integration of learning technologies with traditional approaches to the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Taking a case study approach, it examines developments in the practice of three teachers during and after a teacher education programme on the use of technology in the EAP classroom. This is a study of cognition, teaching philosophy, and the relationship between pedagogy, technology, and content, and how teachers situate these within their own practice. The setting is the rapidly changing UK higher education environment, where the speed of change is such that today's latest fashions and gadgets may well be yesterday's news tomorrow. Thus, this is not a tale of individual technologies or tools to make teachers' lives better. This is a story of people, of pedagogy's traditional values intersecting with technology, and the issues arising from this, alongside the evolution of strategies for dealing with these issues.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The research questions at the heart of this study are concerned with developments that occur in terms of EAP teachers' actions, knowledge, and professional practice after a teacher education programme on the use of technologies in the classroom, and how these developments shape or reshape cognition regarding the specific practice of integrating these technologies with traditional teaching approaches. I have used a case study design as the research framework, in which the unit of analysis is a group of three teachers, and drawn on theoretical concepts from TPACK, activity theory, teacher cognition, and sociocultural theory to understand the various phenomena that constitute the case. Through this I have gained an understanding of the cultural system of action which shapes the practice of EAP teachers in one particular context, which happens to be my own former workplace.

This study has been conducted as insider action research, described by Mercer (2007, p. 3) as "a double edged sword" which has both strengths and weaknesses, with the latter needing to be tempered by the researcher's consciousness of their own role in the process. Essentially I was in a management role in a workplace that was a provider of pre-degree courses for a British university, and part of that role involved the provision of training and development opportunities for teachers. This study then began, as does much action research, from a practical and immediate need in the workplace; the identification of a tension which I needed to resolve. Robson (2002, p. 215) defines this form of action research as being one which "aims to produce improvement in practice, our understanding of practice and the situation in which practice is embedded." Thus, as a manager and teacher developer, I had a unique opportunity to study practice and contribute to wider knowledge, whilst also bearing a responsibility to ensure the well-being of all participants in the study. For this reason, participation in the training programme was voluntary, as was further participation in the research study which involved focus group sessions, interviews, and classroom observations. Furthermore, although readily available, there was no institutional compulsion to use particular technologies in the classroom, and I was acting as a teacher developer rather than a manager when conducting this study. Though these roles may seem difficult to separate, and Malone (2003, p. 811) suggests that the most dangerous place in which to conduct research is one's own workplace, I believe that being an insider in this context was a strength through my ability to understand the particularities of the setting, and the needs of participants, and to synthesise their voices into a rich description of the findings.

This was a journey that would have been impossible for an outsider to undertake; a journey of exploration and boundaries, looking at where teaching is moving in the age of technology. Is it flowing, drifting, or being pulled along on a great tide of change? How too does this impact on differing strands of identity, specifically

23 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/philosophies-traditional-pedagogy-and-new-technologies/107883

Related Content

Enclosing Machine Learning
Xunkai Wei (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 744-751).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/enclosing-machine-learning/10903

Web Design Based on User Browsing Patterns
Yinghui Yang (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 2074-2079).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/web-design-based-user-browsing/11105

Text Mining Methods for Hierarchical Document Indexing
Han-Joon Kim (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1957-1965).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/text-mining-methods-hierarchical-document/11087

The Truth We Can't Afford to Ignore: Popular Culture, Media Influence, and the Role of Public School
Danielle Ligockiand Martha Ann Wilkins (2020). *Participatory Literacy Practices for P-12 Classrooms in the Digital Age (pp. 57-72).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-truth-we-cant-afford-to-ignore/237413

Frequent Sets Mining in Data Stream Environments
Xuan Hong Dang, Wee-Keong Ng, Kok-Leong Ongand Vincent Lee (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 901-906).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/frequent-sets-mining-data-stream/10927