

Chapter 35

Technology Instruction in Language Teacher Education Programs

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ABSTRACT

It is important to examine how prospective teachers were prepared with integrating technology in their teaching. This study explored the integration of technology instruction among ten top world language teacher preparation programs in the United States. Data collection included document analysis of syllabi and interviews with program directors and instructors. The findings revealed that technology instruction were provided to language pre-service teachers through general technology courses, methods courses, and a series of technology-related courses infused throughout the entire program. In addition, technology courses organized a variety of approaches to enrich students' experiences with technology. We also generated four main themes to reflect some key elements in current technology instruction for pre-service teachers. The study enriches our knowledge of the current situation for how different world language teacher education programs prepare their pre-service teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The potential of teaching and learning foreign language with technology has been well documented in previous studies (e.g., Egbert, Paulus, & Nakamichi, 2002; Kessler, 2006; Warschauer & Meskill, 2000; Zhao, 2003). As Egbert et al. (2002) revealed, technologies can be beneficial for a variety of purposes, such as supporting experiential learning and practice through a number of modes, providing space to give feedback to learners, allowing for pair and group work, enhancing student achievement, granting access to authentic learning materials, facilitating greater interaction, promoting both exploratory and global learning, and motivating learners. The effectiveness of technology was proved to be powerful and has positive effects on improving foreign language learning (Liu, Moore, Graham, & Lee, 2002; Zhao, 2003).

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The promising future brought up by teaching foreign languages with technology calls for a strong and systematic training in technology for foreign language teachers (Fuchs & Akbar, 2013; Hubbard & Levy, 2006; Luke & Britten, 2007; Moeller & Park, 2003). Teachers play important roles in teaching with technology, as it is the teachers that “select the tools to support their teaching and determine what CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) applications language-learners are exposed to and how learners use them” (Hubbard, 2008, p. 176). Pre-service teachers with adequate technology skills are more likely to apply these skills in their future teaching (Moeller & Park, 2003).

Despite the important need to prepare foreign language teachers with knowledge and skills in teaching with technology, pre-service teachers are often not well-prepared to use technology in their teaching (Egbert et al., 2002; Hegelheimer, 2006). The literature suggests two possible reasons. First, there is insufficient instruction in teaching with technology as a part of many language teacher education programs (Hong, 2010; Hubbard, 2008; Kessler, 2006; Tondeur, van Braak, Sang, Voogt, Fisser, & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2011). Second, the quality of the technology-related courses in these programs is not satisfactory (Dooly, 2009; Dooly & Sadler, 2013; Egbert et al., 2002; Peters, 2006; Schmid & Hegelheimer, 2014). That is, due to the two aforementioned issues, there is a gap between what is offered in pre-service training for technology and teachers actual implementation of technology in everyday teaching. As a result, many language teachers are found to learn little or nothing in terms of using technology in language teaching after graduating from their program (Hubbard, 2008).

To help pre-service teachers better use technology in their instruction, it is important to examine how prospective teachers were prepared to integrate technology in their teaching (Goktas, Yildirim, & Yildirim, 2008). Our current study investigated how ten undergraduate foreign language teacher education programs across the United States prepared their pre-service teachers for the skills of integrating technology into their teaching.

The following research questions were used to guide our study:

1. What technology-related courses were provided at some of the top, world language teacher education programs? How do they compare and contrast with each other?
2. What learning activities were organized in these technology-related courses?
3. What are some key themes for technology instruction among different programs?

BACKGROUND

For most foreign language teacher education programs, there are three common approaches to delivering technology-related instruction: (1) through a *TECHNOLOGY* course; (2) through *LANGUAGE-TEACHING METHODS* courses; and (3) through a succession of technology-related coursework across the program.

The first approach for teacher candidates to receive training in technology is through taking an introductory course in educational technology. Generally, this applies to all education major students, regardless of their content concentration. An introductory-level technology course is important, as it equips students with some prerequisite technical skills that enable them to further integrate technology into their language teaching (Peters, 2006). In the past, many teacher education programs have attempted to develop such technology courses to improve pre-service teachers' technological skills (Polly, Mims,

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