


Chapter 12

Mobile Technologies Course Design: The Use of ICT Skills, Attitudes, and Self-Efficacy in EFL Instructors

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ABSTRACT

Mobile learning has the potential to increase the opportunities to make teaching and learning available beyond the traditional classroom. The main aim of this study was to develop a mobile technologies course delivered online and explore the effects of this online course designed on mobile technologies on the use of ICT skills, attitudes, and views of EFL instructors. While employing mixed methodology, explanatory sequential research design was applied. In this study, participants were selected through convenient sampling and the data were collated through a questionnaire used as pre- and post-tests, followed by semi-structured interviews and class observations. The results of this study indicated that the online training course on mobile technologies had a positive impact on the use of ICT skills and EFL teachers' views in general. Further, attending the mobile technologies course delivered online was very beneficial and effective for the instructors in that it helped them to develop their skills on the use of mobile technologies in English language teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Technological advances have affected almost every part of our daily lives, and in education they have tremendously affected teaching and learning. In the last few decades, some teachers have been incorporating technology into teaching to add variety to their teaching approaches and help students increase their motivation. Considering the effects of the use of technological devices in education, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has emerged as a growing trend. MALL encourages the idea that learning

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may be enhanced by using mobile devices and presents the systematic way of how to utilize mobile learning. Mobile learning suggests the mode of learning by using mobile devices like smart phones, and any other portable devices. Mobile learning may also make teaching and learning available beyond the traditional classroom. Li (2008) stated that "... it focuses on the mobility of the learning practice, and emphasizes the interaction between the learner and the learning content, peers or the instructors which can improve effectiveness, flexibility and convenience of learning" (p.694). Hence, learning enhanced through mobile devices has become a trend in the field of digital learning (Jeng, Wu, Huang, Tan & Yang, 2010).

However, as mobile technologies continue to evolve and monumentally shape the nature of teaching and learning, teachers struggle to incorporate technologies and electronic resources into pedagogically sound activities (Recker et al., 2005; Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007; Wells, & Lewis, 2006).

Considering the needs of the learners in the 21st century, the integration of technology has become an indispensable part of teaching and learning process, leading to technology enhanced learning and teaching. However, educators, leaders, and policy makers face challenges improving teacher quality and strengthening the teaching profession to meet the needs of all 21st century learners as teachers are not sufficiently prepared for their students who are digital literate and digital native (Aydin, 2013; Hubbard, 2008; Wiebe & Kabata, 2010).

In-service training of the language teachers and keeping up with recent developments in education are of utmost importance in Turkey; thus, many projects including the use of effective technologies have been implemented in schools. One of the recent projects by the government is the FATİH Project, through which the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) aims to implement the effective integration of technology at schools. Forty-two thousand schools were aimed to be equipped with good technological infrastructure and tablets by the end of 2014. However, the huge investments in the purchase of the technological equipment are not observed in the training of the teachers to use these technologies. Hence, some problems have risen in terms of finding the teachers who are qualified enough to teach with technology as training element from this project was missing and this has negatively affected the successful implementation.

The integration of technology in education has motivated many researchers around the world to investigate its effectiveness and to explore various aspects of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in education. This chapter will be referring to the studies about teacher training in terms of technology considering the scope of this study. According to Moersch (as cited in Ertmer, 2003), teachers who have finished any technology courses are still unable to create small or whole group activities using technology meaningfully. Although the Higher Education Council (HEC) suggests three or more credit hours of technology instruction, many faculties of education feel technology use is not modeled effectively to put this into action. Thus, the present study aimed to provide a solution through offering a technology integration model for English Language Teachers, which could be used as an in-service course package for English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers. An online training course was designed through hands-on practices and experiential learning for practicing instructors to be able to equip them with sufficient knowledge on the use of educational technology and in particular on the use of mobile technologies while teaching English.

The main aim of this study was to develop an online course for mobile technologies and explore the effects of this online course designed on mobile technologies on the use of ICT skills, attitudes and EFL instructors' views. The subsidiary aims of the study were to train EFL instructors on mobile technologies in language teaching and make them feel comfortable while using different mobile applications.

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