Technology in ELT: Achievements and challenges for ELT development

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The Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (Interinstitutional Doctorate on Education), ELT Education Major, at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas was one of the stakeholders supporting the 51st ASOCOPI's Annual Congress. Named after the title of this introduction the Congress was a vivid forum for English language teachers and experts interested in discussing how technology has been integrated into English language teaching (ELT) and learning. This book shows a selection of papers presented in the Congress that reflect achievements and challenges for English language teaching and learning development. There are three parts to this book, which constitute the three Rs of technology in ELT as a contribution of this Congress for the academic community: Rethinking, Researching and Re-experiencing.

The two chapters in Part I are based on reflections that operate as a response to the paradigm shifts within education where the use of information and communication technologies have transited from technical and instrumental curricular views to more praxis-based or critical ones. Reinhardt (this volume) presents a "literacies-informed approach to developing autonomy that balances agency and awareness" within a social media framework. In presenting a state of the art of research on social media in second language teaching and learning, Reinhardt establishes that social media technologies such as blogs, wikis, social networking sites, as well as SNECSs are the context where L2 learning could be facilitated. They should also be constrained if conditions for learners' investment and autonomy are not sensitive to the "micro-politics" of social media use for educational purposes. In order to develop social media enhanced learner-autonomy it is challenging to bear in mind the interrelationship between agency and awareness. Méndez and Guerrero (this volume) critically examine potential contributions of virtual learning

environments to the professional development and profiles of English language teachers. It is suggested that in such contexts of professional development, the teacher as an intellectual, the possibilities for actual teaching, the emergence of other voices and situated practices should be taken into account. Méndez and Guerrero also introduce virtual learning environment competences that have become part of language teachers' profiles incorporating resistance practices. Such practices if appropriately understood could aid to more adequate and context sensitive programs for language teachers' professional development.

Part II introduces three research chapters. López (this volume) introduces an action research process where student teachers got support from the use of Web 2.0 tools to improve lesson planning and classroom management in a pre-practicum experience. Results referred to raising awareness in relation to teaching knowledge, lesson planning and managing the class. Such awareness was strengthened through reflective journals that facilitated transformations in the pedagogical praxis; this allows us to conclude that "educators are to face capabilities of selecting and organizing information and digital processing at the benefit of learners." Castañeda and Rincón (this volume) explored over a year and a half the integration of information and communication technologies in the context of pre-service English language education aiming at "improving the formative processes, and … finding strategies that empower future foreign language teachers in the pedagogical and methodological use of ICTs to boost their professional practice and professional development". This resulted in enriching learning experiences for the future language teachers that require "a variety of topics, activities, materials, and the active participation of learners throughout the process". Simultaneously, the authors highlight that the integration of ICTs into educational processes of future language teachers have advantages but also challenges at the pedagogical level. Finally, Castañeda-Peña (this volume) introduces a pedagogical experience attempting to describe emergent and initial practice architectures when pre-service English language teachers are immersed in a virtual world such as Second Life. He suggests that it is important for language teacher education to bear in mind how practice architectures are fluid and changeable over time according to the types of activity teacher educators propose in their pedagogical and didactic designs. Additionally, this author argues that comprehending practice architectures could help to understand the practice architectures that have become normalized as models of teacher education.

The last part of the book looks at workshops that integrate information and communication technologies within the framework of flipped learning

(Díaz and Rodríguez, this volume; Ramírez and Rodríguez, this volume). Díaz and Rodríguez propose writing workshops as a "way to engage students in their learning process by offering them assistance and guidance while performing writing tasks" based on in-class and out-of-class activities. They conclude that these types of writing workshops aid at differentiating ones' own classroom providing "students with personalized and relevant feedback about their written products guiding them to improvement and higher levels of achievement". Ramírez and Rodríguez introduce an interesting reflection of flipped learning in relation to teachers' professional development that defies the traditional model of the expert "training" teachers. The strategy used is known as loop input, which serves, the authors suggest, "providing teachers with a hands-on learning experience where 'the process is the content'".

The chapters in this book illustrate a central debate: "Technology in ELT: Achievements and challenges for ELT development". Surrounding this debate, one could draw on the relationships of agency and awareness in social media incorporation to education and L2 literacy development. One could also draw on the idea of (re)configuring resistances to fixed language teacher profiles and professional development opportunities for in-service teacher working within virtual learning environments. The book also illustrates research on pre-service English language teacher, which aids to fuel the debate whether one incorporates strategies for lesson planning, for pedagogical reflection or for planning language instruction. Finally, within this debate, workshops inspired in principles of flipped learning explore the usefulness of thinking language instruction, skills development and professional development differently. What next? This book is a contribution to the debate and hopefully will be used as basis for continuing debating the issues that would open doors for new technology in ELT achievements and challenges.

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