"Facebook and Pedagogy" Heating Up Everyday English Communication

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Abstract: Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), when conducted under time and space constraints, has been closely linked to effective language learning. This paper first examines and evaluates the pedagogical effects of teacher-student interaction on Facebook Group Page and then analyzes sampled data concerning online collaborative discussions based on children's literature. The level of teacher participation affects student motivation and increases a more positive teacher- student relationship. In response to teacher-generated questions based on a children's book, participations are asked to express themselves in English. The messages/reflections that the teacher self discloses encourage participants frequently to access the Facebook Group Page. Discussions of student feedback concerning their involvement in writing and participating in English and the effects of teacher self-disclosure via Facebook are stated. A survey on how often students post entries in English to the Facebook Group Page is conducted. Finally, potential drawbacks of relying too heavily on the use of technology are cited. Methods used in this study include Computer-Mediated Communication and literature-based on-line Collaborative Learning.

Keywords: Teacher-student interaction, Computer Mediated Communication, teacher-student relationship, on-line collaborative learning; English children's literature

Introduction

This paper describes the elements incorporated within Computer Mediated Communication and literature-based Collaborative Online Learning (COL) approach. Stevick (1976) emphasizes that language learning methods should take account of both learners' and teachers' attitudes toward language teaching to achieve the goal of effective learning. This paper proposes the idea of integrating the Collaborative Online Learning (COL) approach with the teaching of English children's literature. The emphasis here is to enhance students' reading and writing skills and engage their interest by an online learning environment.

The paper advances and encourages the creation of "digital natives" (Prensky 2001), and seeks both to foster authentic conditions for language learning and heat up classroom discussion. According to Lashinsky (2005), approximately 8 million students from over 2,000 colleges and 22,000 high schools use Facebook.

1.   Research Purpose

The traditional Taiwanese classroom organizationally permits teachers to spend more time talking than their students. In so doing, teachers may self-disclose information about themselves at the same time that they lecture on course content. Wheeless & Grotz (1976: 47) define self-disclosure as "any message about the self that a person communicates to another." How frequently a teacher self-discloses affects the rate of student participation on

the Facebook group page. This paper proposes a "literature-based" Facebook environment to facilitate collaborative learning. Specifically, the proposed learning approach advances the following objectives in teaching literature online to
1) develop students' problem-solving skills
2) provide online learning environment to encourage independent learning
3) recognize everyday expressions through the reading of English children's literature
4) encourage teachers of "digital natives" (Prensky 2001) to create authentic conditions for language learning that heat up classroom discussions.

2. Computer Mediated Communication via Utility Social Networks

Computer mediated communication (CMC) has been closely linked to effective language learning (e.g., on-line social networks via mobile learning [Prensky 2005]) due to time and space constraints. Facebook has shown itself to be an effective online social network. Recent evidence as of 2012 accounts for 800 million Facebook subscribers worldwide. Stelter (2008) stresses that ubiquitous learning using Facebook and mobile devices has become normative and acceptable to large numbers of educators.

Scholars have also found that students who use CMC collaboratively with other students adopt more direct uncertainty reduction strategies (e.g., more intimate questions and self- disclosures) than those in face-to-face conversations (Tidwell & Walther, 2002).

3. Using Facebook Group Page in Teaching English Children's Literature

This paper employs the elements incorporated in the Collaborative Online Learning environment. A situation is collaborative if students are at the same level, perform the same activities, have a common goal, and interact in a collaborative way (Lee 2009: 87). Yeh (2007: 830); in effect, these conditions, when met, propose a synchronous scaffolding environment on collaborative technical writing. Yeh (2007:830) states that "collaborative learning helps students use their own prerequisite knowledge to go beyond what they currently think."

The paper is interested in discovering how teacher self-disclosure affects the students' level of participation in discussions over open-ended literary questions. The research question being posed is: *How much does the teacher's consistent self-disclosure on Facebook affect the level of student participation and ultimately teacher-student relationships?*

4. Participants

The participants were 32 undergraduates (23 first-year students, 6 second-year students, 3 third-year students) enrolled in a selective course on English Children's Literature at a vocational College. The sample consisted of 4 males and 28 females, (age ranged from 18 to 21).

5. Qualitative data

Participants responded to open-ended questions. Levels of participation reflected participants' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure on Facebook. The following aspects

were observed: (1) the frequency of teacher-posted messages; (2) the frequency of participants who responded to open-ended questions; (3) the levels of English of the participants; (4) a student satisfaction questionnaire that was completed to evaluate student feedback regarding use of Facebook.

6. Discussion

32 aspiring EFL college students were observed over one semester for the survey. The results of the evaluation indicate that after reading continuously at least half of the novel and answer open-ended questions about it. The teacher's self disclosures/confessions of her view points aroused students' interest and generated more discussion.

A Student Satisfaction questionnaire was carried out at the end of this study. The survey procedure revealed approval of the Facebook activity, with mean scores on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 4.71 to 4.48.

7. Conclusion

This paper discusses the use of Facebook for language learning and evaluates the effect of teacher self-disclosure on Facebook Group Page. If employed effectively, the integration of the children's literature and online collaborative learning in EFL learning has great pedagogical value. It can stimulate learner autonomy, create authentic conditions for language learning, and heat up classroom discussions that hold everyone's attention.

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