

Bringing Digital Literacy into the ESL Classroom: Enhancing Language Learning Tasks Using Web 2.0 Tools

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Abstract

This paper explains the importance of digital literacy and how digital literacy skills can be utilized by ESL teachers for English language lessons. Using a set of sample ESL learning tasks, the paper illustrates how Web 2.0 tools can facilitate digital literacy and language skills of our learners. Three sample tasks are used to demonstrate that teachers can aim to teach communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity competencies (the 4 Cs) by utilizing the participatory environments and microcontent creation features offered by Web 2.0 tools. The paper concludes with a set of implications that weaving digital tasks into ESL classroom instruction can help overcome constraints of print-based tasks, promote optimal conditions of language learning, and foster newer literacy skills to make both language and digital literacy teaching relevant for the 21st century learner.

Keywords: Web 2.0 tools, digital literacy, 4 Cs, 21st century skills

Introduction

One of the primary goals of formal schooling is to develop literacy skills, viz. reading, writing, numeracy, reasoning, etc. in learners. Significant for us as teachers is the fact that literacy is not a static construct; it is deictic in nature (Leu, 2000). The nature of literacy keeps evolving depending on societal contexts and the demands of literacy tools. With an increasing and overarching presence of information and communication technology (ICT) in our daily lives, to be literate now also means having