Chapter 14

Fiction and Non–Fiction Adventures on Tablets: Open Doors and Open Hearts With Picture Books

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this chapter is the development and implementation of a few lesson plans for Primary Education students using multicultural books and a game-based activity to unravel information about a city. It traces the philosophy and rationale related to the rapidly changing field of Information and Communication Technology in Primary Education. The authors reflect on how the use of an iPad by primary teachers motivates students to learn, read and create positive attitudes towards issues of identity, diversity and inclusion. They also share the challenges that they have faced in implementing the process.

INTRODUCTION

The authors report on the development and implementation of two lesson plans for primary education students, underpinning the conceptual framework of the Identity and Diversity Picture Book Collection (IDPBC) Project, an Erasmus+ initiative, in which Doukas School is a partner. The development and content of the lessons are also related to the rapidly changing field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in primary education. The present lesson plans are based on the hypothesis that when primary teachers involve the use of an iPad within an investigative, reading and literature teaching process, then students may display more positive attitudes towards learning and reading. By selecting DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3053-4.ch014
appropriate reading material, one can succeed in engaging children to try to explore and understand issues of identity, diversity and inclusion.

In the first section, the chapter reports on the justification of selecting the use of the iPad for the development and implementation of the lessons. In the second section, reference is made to the conceptual framework of the IDPBC Program as a theoretical and practical influence on teachers to design the lessons that are currently in progress.

THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS WITHIN PRIMARY EDUCATION

The rapidly changing field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has affected the trends and concerns of the current primary educational system. Galloway et al. (2015) report on the tendency of schools to bring ICT media into the classroom in order to enhance a greater range of innovative teaching and learning approaches. Hal (2010) and Younie & Leask (2013) referred to the significant progression in the use of ICT in classrooms, within the schools in the UK, since computers made their initial appearance in its schools in the early 1980s. There has been a continuous development from the perspective of teachers’ knowledge and training in using ICT facilities as well as understanding that ICT media are important tools for enhancing teaching rather than replacing it. Thus, ICT has marked a turning point in the field of education. Caldwell and Bird (2015) argue that there is a rapidly growing evolvement of the use of technology in schools as new devices and tools have become available in recent years. As teachers began to exploit the possibilities for integrating media devices into learning practice with the iPad or tablet, the latter became the predominant device to enhance teaching and achieve successful learning (Galloway et al., 2015).

Although the iPad or the tablet was first introduced in the worldwide consumer environment as an individual tool, it has been successfully implemented in schools both as a pedagogical and as an administrative tool (Caldwell, 2015; Galloway et al., 2015). Hatchison et al. (2012) and Flewitt et al. (2014) argue that the iPad’s pedagogical development depends on the teacher’s ability to include and link it to their teaching process and curriculum. Thus, it is the pedagogy in the use of technological devices, including iPads and tablets that make the difference and forms and expands children’s learning and teachers’ teaching methods, rather than the tablets themselves.

ICT and iPads in the Early Years

ICT devices and iPads were less developed in the early years of the Foundation stage, than in the other stages of primary education. However, there has been a prospective interest in the use of tablets since 2012 (Caldwell, 2015). Emphasis has been given by a number of researchers on the potential benefits of the appropriate use of iPads in early years classrooms. First of all, according to Kucirkova (2014) the iPad is regarded as the most pedagogical and easy to use tool for young children, because of its simple design and functionality. iPads are portable because of their light weight; they eliminate the need for additional devices, such as a mouse; and they contain a significant number of pedagogical applications appropriate for young children to use alone or under a teacher’s supervision.

Two other significant benefits and assumptions that underpin current research are: whether one can determine social interaction between children and their task engagement with the use of the iPad in the early year’s stage. The results of the work of Wild (2011) and Clark & Luckin (2013) affirm the positive
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