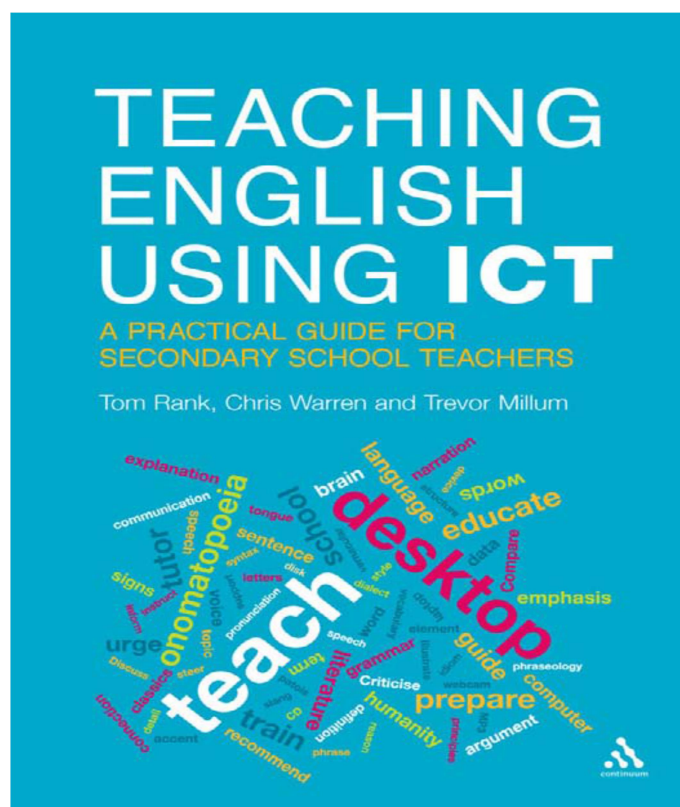# Teaching English Using ICT:
A Practical Guide for Secondary School Teachers
(Book Review)

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Book Details

Teaching English Using ICT: A Practical Guide for Secondary School Teachers

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Continuum International Publishing Group, London, England, 2011, 176 pages

ISBN   978-1-4411-1782-3 (Paperback)

ISBN   978-1-4411-2405-0 (e-book)

£26 (Paperback)

Introduction

"Down to earth common sense, reaffirming ICT's role as a useful tool to support enjoyable learning – exactly where good English teachers need it to be." says **Jon Rosser, Senior Learning Adviser, Flintshire Local Authority, UK.** The effect of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) on language learning and teaching education has been attracting considerable interest in recent years. Nowadays, ICT is widely used in all areas of language education. More recently, there has been a greater focus placed upon ICT within language learning and teaching process. What is known about the effect of ICT is largely based on the applications of especially English teachers.

"This should become a standard text in the field of ICT in English education. But the best thing about it is that it has been written by English teachers, for English teachers." says **Ian McNeilly, Director of the National Association for Teaching English, UK.** This book is written by English teachers. They aim at creating new ideas and sharing their innovative ICT applications with other English teachers. They promote a range of classroom practices in the view of English always central and technology as a server of teaching. Moreover, the authors also emphasis on the use of internet and software freely to assist English teachers in their teaching process. They provide some classroom approaches advocating especially active learning in detail. Remarkably, there are full of creative and fun examples with clear guidance. The authors recommend that all English departments should have a copy of this book to integrate their curriculums.

Although English teachers are mostly aware of its effectiveness and apply it into their teaching practices, there is still much more to do via ICT to present leaners more attractive, useful and effective opportunities. Therefore, this book is a kind of guide for engaging and inspiring students of English through ICT. In the following chapters, the readers will see not only enjoyable activities but also the wrong/right activities used by teachers, some other communication ways including images, stills, recording and editing, and collaboration techniques used in teaching process. The

chapters will give the readers the chance to discover some innovative applications such as Web 2.0, Wordle rather than traditional methods. Finally, this book purposes to inspire the readers to think and discover forms of collaboration uniquely managed by ICT and aims to present both theoretical and practical information about using ICT in language learning and teaching process with its special applications and software programs. That is, this book will tell the readers how to achieve this through ICT.

Chapters

The book consists of nine chapters that presents some innovative practices which all teachers of English will desire their students to experience.

Chapter 1, **"Using ICT to Explore and Investigate",** shows how ICT can be employed to help and give chance students to discover words and images within a text or any other kinds which would be hard to succeed by other traditional ways. This chapter will also give useful information about how interactive (Web 2.0) technologies can help students in co-operative situations. As the readers read this chapter, they will understand how much importance and effect ICT has in terms of both teachers and students in language education settings. In addition, the chapter refers that a word processor can be used to do many things including typing, correcting spellings and processing words. It explains that teachers can also analyse and discuss the parts which are hidden within the texts and use different means to scramble a text. So, teachers provide students to explore and investigate interesting qualities for themselves by creating some special activities. What is exciting is that teachers can present students the ways of discovering spoken language and visual images. It can be also understood that teachers will also get chance to see how the opportunity to communicate managed by Web 2.0 applications can be provided to help students engage in fertile discussion and collaborative learning environments. To sum up, this chapter will offer various applications which are effective, enjoyable and useful ways to explore and investigate things in language learning and teaching process.

Chapter 2, **"Using ICT to Analyse Language",** presents Corpus applications and Wordle with powerful tools to explore new things to carry them to the next level. This chapter explores some approaches offered by Corpus and soft wares for using in the English classroom, that is, they don't follow the crude numbers within them or the pseudo-science and jargon related with corpus linguistics, attracting though it is. By contrast, the chapter defines the things they are dealing with are critical thinking, creative spin-offs, ways of applying inspiring examples and innovations that have a direct bearing on the classroom. In the rest of this chapter, the authors mention about possible research ways. However, as the class has equipped what all the thing is about, they will manage to construct their investigations without having difficulty. Additionally, the chapter gives us information about 'Wordle'. It is free. It says, 'To try it out, you simply navigate to www.wordle.net, click on the Create your own link and paste in a text.'

Chapter 3, **"Using ICT to Respond, Interpret, Reflect and Evaluate",** demonstrates how the reactions and comments of the students on texts shape in interesting and creative ways. This chapter also explores in what ways ICT can help students' expressions, responses to a text, a situation or a performance. It gives teachers some useful ideas including 'text mapping', 'exploring the subtexts', 'cartoon activities', 'picture walls', and 'online reading journals.' The authors hope that the activities advised in this chapter also present teachers various, rich and stimulating ways to respond to texts, experience the new things and reflect on topics and in the process let students not expect from someone to explain them what to think and write.

Chapter 4, **"Using ICT to Compose and Create"** presents some ideas to help students so that they can get chance to express themselves. The chapter focuses on composing creativity of students in English lessons with ICT. In addition, it gives teachers visibility about how they create innovative tools and compose ideas with the power of ICT. Furthermore, in this chapter, some text type examples and cultural usages are presented for teachers. The authors express that ICT would be one of the best alternative tools while applying these text types and other ways. However, here

they focus to point some ways that ICT can be applied to reinforce or manage new innovative and creative materials. Finally, the chapter gives teachers information about the ways that ICT can assist to create, organize and compose ideas so that students can experience those ideas with ICT to expand their perspective and wise by applying them in the environments of multimedia learning.

Chapter 5, **"Using ICT to Transform"**, teachers will come across with some teaching approaches providing students to discover the relevance of various genres and text types and to notice the effect of subtle alterations within language, with various writing activities managed by ICT to explore text and transform it. Teachers can enhance the transformation with the applications of ICT. The chapter also presents that ICT tools provide an environment to students, teachers and schools to cooperate, collaborate, and edit texts online around the world. Those activities and tools bring together rich and various English learning skills with an intonation on both understanding and writing and listening comprehension and speech production.

Chapter 6**, "Using ICT to Present and Perform"** informs teachers about lots of ways how they apply ICT in terms of sharing their students' products and presents many examples to let them get opportunity to improve all leaning skills including writing, reading, listening and speaking. ICT allows, indeed encourages us, to communicate and collaborate. In this chapter the authors demonstrate presentations to provide some special techniques to communicate, especially a specific audience. Besides presentations, they also give some information about how to perform these techniques. These performances contain a full of fun despite their aim to use within an educational context or text.

Chapter 7, **"Using ICT to Communicate and Collaborate"** explains teachers to discover the facilities mostly used in English teaching process and give chance to explore purpose of these facilities. The chapter informs teachers about the contributions of presented activities and approaches and how to reinforce students to interested in and motivate to apply them. Additionally, these approaches tell

students how to be autonomous, save their pace and time and use digital tools in their learning process. The authors expect students will be encouraged to experience one more independently. These applications can include videos, recordings, images, online sources, poems, news and different rich materials. Furthermore, the authors present the readers in this chapter some programs such as wikis, PowerPoint slides, articles and videos. On these learning environments, teachers can let students collaborate, co-operate and communicate with each other. Hence, students get opportunity to follow their learning process together, give and get feedback from each other and notice the barriers, errors, problems and surely the whole system, that is what is going on the online environment about English education setting and content. Also, the authors refer about how students get help when they need. They explain some phases how teachers manage to direct students about it. So, they gain chance to follow students' progress as well.

Chapter 8, **"Using ICT to Inspire and Engage",** considers software created particularly to enhance the creativity and imagination of students and so encourage them to think, engage and write. In this chapter the authors desire to keep on some critical thinking as providing various inspirational techniques and approaches. Through these approaches they say they are sure that students have fun and engage in English learning process. This chapter also discovers the various applications randomly chose to influence students' learning such as electronic 'dice throwing'. In summary, this chapter focuses on engagement, enthusiasm, collaboration, imagination, self-paced learning, getting genuine materials and inspiration of students so that they motivate and are interested in learning English in an enjoyable way. Hence, the authors say teachers will have more successful and comprehensible teaching process.

Chapter 9, **"Using ICT to Entertain"** presents overall entertaining activities for teachers who are bored of using same activities. In this chapter the authors refer about lots of applications teachers are able to use so that they can have a full of engagement and entertainment during the teaching process. They put together both

fun and education in various ways. 'Podcasting', 'word games', 'Whizzy', 'Quiz Time' and 'Story-Starter Fruit Machine' are some popular applications the authors suggest teacher to use in their teaching practices.

Evaluation

The book presents useful and innovative digital applications and creative ideas to teachers to enhance students' learning environment and let them learn self-paced practices through ICT during their English education process in secondary schools. For this reason, the authors show some ways of applying these digital tools and how to integrate them into this process. In addition, the chapters include various websites, software and programs which are inspirational, motivating and trendy. They state that teachers have chance to download, shape, create and use them during their classes. Furthermore, teachers can find online sources, materials and interactive whiteboard programs additionally in the book.

Throughout the book, there are many examples teachers can benefit from. All the applications the book presents are very useful, fresh and entertaining in terms of both teachers and students. Through these applications, students can explore some new digital tools to increase their success of English learning skills in different ways. Students are also able to discover themselves in terms of the approaches they can apply, create and perform. What is more, teachers manage to adjust and present the ICT tools to students and can adapt them from the book according to their teaching functions, content and setting. Moreover, teachers can perform teaching practices with new trendy methods rather than traditional ones so that students engage and enjoy with learning English. If they have computer skills or not, this book will help teachers to know more, to do more and to learn better.

There is a copy of the book in the site of the 'National Training Resource Centre.' I think as students begin to apply these ways and consist their own knowledge and products an effective learning process will occur, and enthusiasm will increase among students. I sincerely advise teachers to reach and read this book, use the

methods and let students benefit from them. At the end, you will see how students engage, inspire, enjoy and create their materials and be more successful in learning English skills.