

Sustainable Teaching Perspective in Language Learning

Igor Rižnar

University of Primorska, Faculty of management, Koper

igor.riznar@fm-kp.si

This article is about quality teaching in the context of language learning. It describes some of the factors and prerequisites leading to quality teaching and learning by exploring the possibilities that go beyond traditional classroom approaches (lectures and text-books, teaching by the book). Some innovative strategies used in foreign language learning during the last ten years at the Faculty of management are described (blended learning, use of technology and software, e.g. Flipboard, Basecamp 3, Raspberry Pi, Python, Google AIY, etc.), the pros and cons of such approach are weighed out and student responses outlined.

The review of the literature and our own findings leads us to believe that teaching endeavours should not focus exclusively on the acquisition of subject content but should emphasize the learning to learn skills and the development of autonomous capabilities of students through the promotion of active learning, collaborative learning, self-assessment as well as encouraging critical, out-of-the-box thinking. We believe that the right to education should not be limited to the right to access education, but above all to the right to receive quality education, which is a dynamic concept that changes with time. The fact is that the changes brought about by technology are immense and ubiquitous. Another obvious fact is that digital literacy skills of teachers lag far behind these technological advances., which is especially true for foreign language teachers who are unprepared to use technology in meaningful ways. In other words, few teachers are fluent users of technology, even fewer are creative and collaborative problem solvers aware of all the challenges that using technology may bring about.

According to our previous research endeavours, sustainable teaching/learning in the language learning context should aim at eliminating two things still present at many education institutions: rote-learning and regurgitation. In addition, sustainable teaching practices should inspire students and teachers to make a difference with regard to effective learning and teaching processes. Last but not least, it is fairly easy to admit that technology has the power to change education profoundly, yet it is even more important to add that in the absence of good teaching practices, little if anything at all will change to better with all the technology available to teachers, students and education policy makers at all levels of education.

Keywords: language learning, higher education, Flipboard, Basecamp 3, Raspberry Pi, Python, Google AIY voice kit