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Technology Teacher Training in a Remote Region of Armenia

A design project submitted in

partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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We hereby approve that this design project

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	7
<b>Chapter One: Scope and Background</b> .....	8
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b> .....	10
2.1 The Importance of Technologies in Modern Education.....	10
2.2 Typical Features of "Digital Natives".....	10
2.3 The Integration of Technologies into the Educational System of Armenia.....	11
2.4 The Role of Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching.....	12
2.5 Misconceptions about the Word "Technologies".....	14
2.6 Barriers in Technology Integration.....	15
<b>Chapter Three: Plan and Deliverables</b> .....	21
3.1 Steps to Take into Consideration for Teacher Training Sessions.....	21
3.2 Setting and Stakeholders.....	22
3.3 Needs Analysis.....	22
3.4 Timeline.....	24
3.5 Goals and Objectives.....	25
3.6 Learning and Assessment Plan.....	26
<b>Chapter Four: Recommendations</b> .....	29
<b>References</b> .....	32
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	34
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	35
<b>Appendix C</b> .....	38
<b>Appendix D</b> .....	40

**Appendix E**.....42

**Appendix F**.....44

***'Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn''. (Xunzi)***

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The efficiency of integrating technologies into the existing educational systems, in particular into foreign language teaching, may be high enough. However, the actual process of using them in teaching and learning may be accompanied by obstacles. The following project addressed some barriers existing in one of the educational institutions of a remote region of Armenia. Within the scope of this project technology teacher training materials were designed and piloted with an aim to inform and inspire foreign language professionals in the Ijevan Branch of Yerevan State University to use technologies pedagogically effectively. A list of recommendations for future trainings is discussed in the final part of the paper. The actual teacher training materials are presented in the appendices.

*Keywords:* EFL, technologies, training materials, workshop

## CHAPTER ONE: SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

Nowadays, education, like other spheres of life, is undergoing great changes because of the globalization issues of the 21st century. The bases of the globalization are mostly technologies which make part and parcel of our daily life. One of the results of the great amount of concentration or focus on technologies is that 21st century students gain learning features by which they greatly differ from the previous century students (Prensky, 2001). They want to be active participants in the learning process. They want to interact and collaborate with each other, solve problems by new methods, and also be autonomous in their learning process. Teacher's task becomes creating a modern educational environment which would correspond to students' needs and learning features. This can be done by integrating various technologies into the existing educational systems.

In foreign language classrooms, technologies may be useful in terms of providing access to authentic materials, giving real-life communication opportunities to learners, increasing learner's motivation, raising interactivity and collaboration among students (Zhao, 2003). Moreover, technologies may also contribute to teachers' professional development and lifelong learning. However, the actual application of technologies in foreign language teaching depends on many factors, such as lack of appropriate resources or lack of access to the existing resources, lack of teachers' knowledge and skills, teacher's attitude towards using technologies in their classrooms and other factors. The following project addressed some of the mentioned barriers within the scope of one of the Armenian educational institutions. Teacher training materials were designed and presented during three different workshops with an aim to inform and inspire foreign language professionals in the Ijevan Branch of Yerevan State University' to use technologies pedagogically effectively.

The second chapter discusses the importance of technologies in education in general and also the existing obstacles and the possible strategies to overcome them. The third chapter includes information about needs analysis, goals and objectives, the learning and assessment



plan of the following teacher training project. The final result of the teacher training materials is presented in the appendices.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The Importance of Technologies in Modern Education

21st century is the century of technologies which make an inseparable part of our daily life. But as Kay notes (cited in Prensky, 2001), "technology is only technology if it was invented after you were born" (p. 4). Thus, this technological era is a natural world for kids who are born and who grow up in this century and is completely new experience for generations born before. According to the cognitive psychologist Perez (cited in Prensky, 2001), these kids live in a media world where everything is vivid, fast, graphical and intense. They spend huge amount of time on different technologies which result in their "mind alterations" or "cognitive changes". This leads to new preferences and needs especially during their learning process. However, the idea that brain can experience physical changes caused hot debates among many scholars. Prensky (2001) tries to explain this issue. He states that today the majority of teachers and trainers, especially those who represent old generations, believe that human brain does not physically change after the age of three. But based on numerous research studies carried out by scientists, human brain experiences transformations that goes on throughout life and affects the way people process information. However, these changes do not occur overnight. In particular, if students spend 100 minutes a day, five days a week for 5 to 10 weeks playing, for example, computer games, the desired changes may occur. As a result, these kids who already have different brain formations and different views of learning have to go to schools where the educational system does not correspond to their perceptions of learning. As Prensky states, "Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach" (2001, p.1). Thus, these students often complain that they have to "power down" when they go to schools.

### 2.2 Typical Features of "Digital Natives"

There are some features that are typical of the new generation of learners or "digital natives" as Prensky calls them (2001, p.1). The first one is that they are *creative learners*. They do not want to be just consumers of information; rather they prefer their active participation in

exploring and creating the learning material. As it was noted by Clarke (cited by Mitra, 2010), "If children have interest, then education happens". It implies that educational environment should be of students' interest in order to result in efficient learning. Besides, the learners of the new generation are *parallel learners*. Unlike the linear learners of the previous centuries who prefer studying "A" and then "B", and then "C", and so on, the parallel learners prefer learning several things at once. Third, teachers or trainers often complain that the learners of new generation have short *attention* spans. But the problem is not that they actually have them. The students just pay great attention to what are of their interest, like, internet, mobile apps, computer games, and so on. Besides, the learners of this generation prefer *more graphics* than written texts. Since their childhood their brains have been exposed to visuals and they do not always perceive the written text easily and consider it to be boring. Another typical feature of the new generation is *collaboration*. Students can solve different problems through collaboration. One more interesting difference between new and old generations is their *learning style*. For example, the learners of old generation usually prefer first reading the material and then actually performing, like, they may first read about certain chemical procedure and then perform it. While the new students would first do the chemical procedure and then read the relevant information if needed (Gee, 2010).

Modern educational environment should correspond to the mentioned features of new learners in order to ensure their interest towards the learning process. Hence, organizing education with the help of technologies may provide the desired result.

### **2.3 The Integration of Technologies into the Educational System of Armenia**

Taking into consideration the importance of information and communication technologies for developing modern educational environment, the government of the Republic of Armenia (RA) founded non-profit organisation "National Center of Educational Technologies (NCET)" in accordance with the Republic of Armenia (RA) government decision 408-N, March 11, 2004.

Having "to introduce ICT in general schools in Armenia and ensure their further availability" as an objective, NCET (2007) has planned the following activities to reach its goal:

- ◆ provide general schools with up to date computer facilities;
- ◆ integrate universal computer network among general schools;
- ◆ provide general schools with Internet;
- ◆ open computer training centres in general schools;
- ◆ systematize educational ICT curricula in Armenia;
- ◆ improve the computer competence of the teachers by means of training;
- ◆ develop and operate general schools internet portals;
- ◆ develop, publish and provide computer teaching materials and curricula for the general schools;
- ◆ create educational information and communication environment by gradually involving the high and higher specialized institutions as well in the computer common network (p.3).

NCET has already managed to implement some of its activities. For example, by 2011 about 944 schools throughout the Republic of Armenia have internet connection (*"ՀՀ Կրթության և Գիտության Նախարարության Գործունեության Հաշվետվություն, 2012 թ.*). However, some of the activities are still in progress and need more time and resources to carry out.

#### **2.4 The Role of Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching**

Regarding the importance of technologies in education, especially in language learning, some questions come up: How can information and communication technologies be used in foreign language classrooms? How do they contribute to the learning process? What types of technologies are used in foreign language teaching? Are there any barriers for integrating technologies into the classrooms? Below, some of these questions are discussed and explored in more depth.

According to Blake (2008), foreign language acquisition is an intensive and time consuming process. Bialystok and Hakuta (cited in Blake, 2008) state that the hours required for reaching high proficiency level in a foreign language ranges from 700 to 1,320, and interestingly enough students learning foreign languages at universities hardly reach the lowest threshold of the required proficiency as, on average, they spend 150 hours per academic year to study a foreign language. The picture does not greatly change even if the students study the foreign language at school and then continue at university. The process of learning a foreign language can become more efficient if the students get direct contact with the target language. It can be regular communication with native speakers, whether in their own countries or in a country where the L2 is the mother tongue. Some schools are lucky enough to host experienced and proficient native teachers or some of the students get chances to study in countries where the L2 is the mother tongue. But not all of the schools and not all of the students have the mentioned opportunities. Regarding this Sugata Mitra notes that "There are places on Earth, in every country, where for various reasons, good schools cannot be built and good teachers cannot or do not want to go..." (2010). The contribution of technologies in this case may be irreplaceable, provided they are used wisely.

According to Zhao (2003, p. 13), information and communication technologies (ICT) can serve for four main purposes in language classrooms

- a) **access to materials**- information and communication technologies can provide direct access to multimedia (visual, audio and text) materials which are in fact engaging, authentic, comprehensible, but yet challenging for the learners. They can create successful language learning process for students of different learning styles.
- b) **communication opportunities**- communicative opportunities through technologies are of two types:
  - ◆ interaction with the computer- e.g. computer and video games, etc.

- ♦ interaction through the computer with remote audiences- e.g. blogs, wikis, 3D virtual worlds, etc.
- c) **feedback**- certain computer programs have the capacity to provide instant feedback for various linguistic skills.
- d) **learner motivation**- students become more engaged and active participants in the learning process.

The following project aimed at informing the training participants about the above mentioned benefits of technology integration into foreign language teaching and contributing them to organize their teaching process through authentic materials provided by technologies.

## **2.5 Misconceptions about the Word "Technologies"**

According to Blake (2008) language professionals often have four misconceptions when using the word "technology" in language teaching:

*Technology is monolithic*- Some language specialists consider the technology as a monolithic concept which means that all the technologies are either good or bad. But the fact is that there isn't *one* technology that suits for all aspects of language teaching. They may work in one situation but may not in another. Moreover, these technological tools change quite rapidly.

*Technology constitutes a methodology*- The teachers may sometimes have the belief that the technologies imply some new and superior methodological approach to language teaching and all the web format activities guarantee high results. However, the technology is neutral from theoretical and methodological perspectives and web activities may produce unsatisfactory results if they are not adequately planned.

*Today's technology is all we need to know*-The technologies constantly change and for more conservative teachers it may be frightening to keep up with new advances. This should not be considered as serious problem and all they have to do is to follow constant updates as there are no educational curricula which can prepare the teachers to constant and continuing changes.

*Technology will replace teachers*-This question has recently become a topic of hot debates. As Arthur Clarke states (cited by Mitra, 2010) " Any teacher that can be replaced by a machine should be!". According to Mitra (2010), numerous research studies carried out on the large part of the world help to come to a conclusion that students are self organized learners and they can learn without the teacher's immediate intervention, that is to say, machines may replace the teachers. Clifford (cited in Blake, 2008) tries to give a more rational answer to it saying that the teachers who use technologies will most probably replace the ones that do not.

The mentioned misconceptions may arise especially among those EFL teachers who are novice in integrating technologies into their teaching process. These teachers should be informed about the benefits of technology integration in their teaching. Meanwhile, they should be encouraged not to deviate from personal teaching beliefs and not to consider technology integration as a superior methodology.

## **2.6 Barriers in Technology Integration**

Technologies may have great educational value in language teaching. However, it is not rational to generalize their value and effectiveness to all teaching situations as the success of using technologies in language teaching greatly depends on the teacher, the learner, the task, instructional setting, and other factors (Zhao, 2003). Hew & Brush (2006) identified different barriers while integrating technologies in the educational system. They classify them into the following "categories" (p. 226):

- a) resources
- b) knowledge and skills
- c) institution
- d) attitudes and beliefs
- e) assessment
- f) subject culture

The first of the barriers is **resources**. It includes:

- a) lack of technology
- b) access to available technology
- c) time
- d) technical support

The schools may often lack necessary technologies or the technologies may be available but the teachers and the students may not have direct access to them. Besides, the teachers may lack sufficient time to engage themselves in exploring the opportunities of technologies appropriate for their teaching purposes. And a final problem may be that the teachers do not get enough technical support from experts to feel confident while applying technologies during their teaching process (Hew & Brush, 2006).

The second barrier in Hew & Brush's list (2006) is **knowledge and skills**. They consider that lack of specific technological knowledge and skills, technology-supported pedagogical knowledge and skills, and technology-related-classroom management knowledge and skills inhibit teachers using technologies in their classrooms.

The next barrier is the **institution** itself (Hew & Brush, 2006), that is,

- a) leadership (school administration)
- b) school time-tabling structure
- c) school planning

A major barrier can be the **teacher's attitude** toward the application of technologies in their classrooms (Hew & Brush, 2006). The teacher's attitude may be highly defined by their pedagogical beliefs, that is, educational beliefs about teaching and learning and how they perceive the importance of technologies in this process.

There was a research study conducted by Dashtestani (2012) in Iran who tried to find out the teachers attitude towards integrating technologies into the foreign language teaching. The participants were 212 EFL teachers. They were selected by convenience sampling from 13



different English language institutes. The research revealed that the participants had positive attitude toward using computers in EFL courses. The teacher's positive attitude may encourage the students to use various technologies during their learning process. However, their positive attitude does not imply that they already integrate technologies into their actual teaching process. Dashtestani identified many external and internal factors that prevented teachers to integrate technologies into their teaching. There was another research study carried out in Turkey. The participants were 85 prospective EFL teachers in distance higher education. They had negative attitude towards integrating ICT into their teaching process and were not enthusiastic and confident in exploring technologies to improve their teaching methods and approaches (Hismanoglu, 2012).

Another barrier according to Hew & Brush's list is **assessment** (2006). The teachers may not be aware how to assess technology based education. Besides, sometimes they pay great attention to scoring high in standardized tests and that's why they try to cover a lot of material within short time limits and they become reluctant to try new methodological tools in their classrooms.

According to Hew & Brush's list (2006), the last barrier is **subject culture**. Because of some expectations and the nature of a certain subject, technologies cannot be applied in its teaching and learning process. Teachers consider that the quality of teaching maybe much better without the actual application of technologies during that particular subject course.

Though the list of barriers was described separately, quite often they have close relations and are affected by each other. For example, the lack of specific technological knowledge and skills and the leadership of the educational institution may affect the teacher's attitude toward integrating technologies in their classrooms.

**Strategies to Overcome the Barriers.** Hew & Brush (2006) suggest some strategies to overcome the mentioned barriers and obstacles (p. 10). They are the following:

- a) having a shared vision and technology integration plan
- b) overcoming the scarcity of resources

- c) changing attitudes and beliefs
- d) conducting professional development
- e) reconsidering assessments

One of the strategies to overcome the barriers is having a **shared vision and technology integration plan** (Hew & Brush, 2006). When the whole school has a shared vision and plan, they accomplish this plan easily. The committee of school leaders, teachers and also technology experts should have their equal contribution to this process. They should see the relationship between technology and curriculum content (Staples et al. cited in Hew & Brush, 2006). The next strategy is for **overcoming lack of resources** (Hew & Brush, 2006). In order to overcome *shortage of technologies* at school, there are several solutions to consider. First, the school administration may buy "thin client computers" which are not expensive and are user-friendly for both teachers and students. Second, instead of building expensive computer laboratories, the school administration may just buy laptops and provide the students on a permanent or temporary one-to-one basis. What regards to overcoming *lack of access to the technologies*, Hew & Brush (2006) offer several possible solutions. The teachers can locate several computers or laptops in their classrooms instead of taking the students to computer laboratories. In this case the students will always have computers at their hand and integration of technologies will become an inseparable part of every lesson. To overcome *lack of time* there are three different options (Hew & brush, 2006). First, schools can increase class time to allow the integration of technologies. Second, the teacher's workload can be reduced. This will help teachers to allocate more time on familiarizing themselves with the technologies and developing appropriate technology-integrated curricula activities (Snoeyink & Ertmer cited in Hew & Brush, 2006). Third, the teachers should be encouraged to collaborate to create technology oriented lesson plans and their collaboration may save a lot of time as compared to working alone.

Hew & Brush (2006) consider that for overcoming *lack of technical support* the school administrators may train their students with basic skills of handling hardware and software problems instead of employing many professional technicians.

Teacher's **attitude and beliefs** may highly be affected by the leadership of the schools. The teachers often need more time and opportunities to explore the field of technologies and they feel relaxed when the school administrators do not want them to be experts (Hew & Brush, 2006).

Providing **professional development** can happen through

- a) developing technology knowledge and skills, technology-supported pedagogy knowledge and skills and technology-related classroom management knowledge and skills
- b) giving the teachers opportunities for "hands-on work"
- c) matching the teacher's needs (Hew & Brush, 2006)

The teachers have to reconsider the **assessment approaches** when integrating technologies into their lessons. Some possible solutions are alternative modes of assessment (Hew & Brush, 2006).

Thus, contemporary educational environment has new requirements and the role of technologies may be irreplaceable in this case. Nowadays, the term "technologies" is not limited only to computers. There are numerous other alternatives which are in constant change.

Integration of technologies into the educational system, especially into the foreign language classrooms, can be beneficial by many aspects (providing access to authentic materials, giving real-life communication opportunities to learners, increasing learner motivation, etc).

Technology integration can be considered as a paradigm shift in the educational system which is accompanied by many obstacles. But through time educational leaders try to develop appropriate strategies to overcome them.

The next chapter discusses the needs, goals and objectives of the following teacher training project in the branch of Yerevan State University in Ijevan. It also includes information about the learning and assessment plan of the project.

### 3.1 Steps to Take into Consideration for Teacher Training Sessions

Taking into consideration the recommendations of various teacher training materials and research studies, the following steps were considered during the training process and after:

- ♦ The teacher should clearly identify *the link between technology and curriculum*, and hence more time may be devoted to figuring out these issues and the actual practice of the technologies in the EFL classrooms.
- ♦ The training can be more effective if there are some teachers who are ready to *collaborate and share their problem solving skills*. That's why the teacher will be encouraged and highly recommended to invite her colleagues to the training sessions. Later they may team teach, observe each other's lessons and also evaluate the results.
- ♦ The teachers are not technicians and they *do not have to be experts* in this field. So, it may take them longer to explore all the technological possibilities in foreign language classrooms.
- ♦ The teacher will be encouraged to get constant updates about the innovations and changes in this field and *take part in future conferences, trainings or workshops* with their own proposals.
- ♦ The *message* of the instructor should be *clear* with all the possible *demos and modelling* if needed.
- ♦ Teachers should *put effort to integrate technologies* in their classes until they feel confident enough, in addition to workshops that introduce target technologies and teach them basic skills.

### 3.2 Setting and Stakeholders

The training took place in the Ijevan branch of the Yerevan State University. All of the three workshops were carried out in the computer laboratory of the University. The laboratory was equipped with workstations connected to the internet for all the participants. There was also a screen projector necessary for demonstrating the application of technologies. The participants were an English professor and 12 students majoring in French and English languages and pedagogy from the Ijevan branch of the Yerevan State University. Their age range was from 19 to 57 years old. Only one of the participants was male.

### 3.3 Needs Analysis

The needs analysis was done by the following two methods:

- a) *questionnaires for the students*
- b) *an interview with the teacher*

A part of the needs analysis was done by administering surveys to the students with an aim to bring out their technological competency, those linguistic skills which they need to improve during their EFL lessons, availability of technologies for them both at home and at the university and also their attitude towards using technologies during their lessons. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions (9 MCQs and 1 open-ended question (Appendix B)).

Here are the findings:

- ◆ Most of the students (10 out of 12) use technologies every day and only two of them use technologies some times during a week.
- ◆ Nearly most of the students (10 out of 12) actively use technologies for their lessons, for entertainment (to download movies, songs, games, etc.), and for social websites (Odnoklassniki, Facebook, Vkontakte, etc.).
- ◆ Only one student out of 12 is aware about various technological applications (Blogs, Podcasts, TEDTalks, Microsoft Power Point) that can be used during their classrooms with an aim to improve their linguistic skills.

- ◆ 9 out of 12 students are aware only about Microsoft Power Point (from the provided list of technologies) and 2 of them have no idea about the above mentioned technological applications.

This implies that all of the students have at least basic technological competency and they will be able to use technologies for their lessons. However, they lack specific knowledge about various technologies that can be used during their lessons.

- ◆ 9 out of 12 students answered that they would like to improve their speaking skills with the help of technologies, the rest of the students mentioned also writing and reading skills.
- ◆ All of the students mentioned that they have both computer and internet at home.
- ◆ 10 out of 12 students expressed positive attitude towards using technologies during their lessons. Only 2 of them considered that technologies would be distracters during their learning process.

The second part of the needs analysis was carried out by interviewing the participant professor (Appendix A). The aim of the interview was to reveal the pedagogical principles according to which she organizes her foreign language lessons, also students' linguistic needs that can be improved through technologies from the professor's perspective, and, finally, her attitude towards integrating technologies into foreign language teaching.

The findings of the interview are the following:

- ◆ The main activities of the professor's English lessons are reading, grammar exercises, translations, speaking activities, dictations, etc. She also tries to include extra materials during her lessons, like, discussing newspaper articles, playing various grammatical games, singing songs.
- ◆ Quite often they do group activities which promote collaboration among students.
- ◆ The professor does not use technologies during her foreign language teaching much. The only technology related activities that they have done so far were watching movies in

English, listening to various audio-materials by CD players and communicating in English in their Facebook group.

- ◆ The professor expressed readiness and positive attitude towards learning about more opportunities of technology integration in her lessons, and using them for her future teaching process and professional development.
- ◆ She considered that the linguistic skills which need more attention during their EFL lessons are speaking and listening.

Based on the needs analysis a list of technologies was created for the training purposes.

- ◆ Blogs
- ◆ TED Talks
- ◆ MOOCs/OERs
- ◆ Vocaroo
- ◆ Google in Education (Google Drive/News/Calendar/Scholar)

### **3.4 Timeline**

The preparation process and workshops were organized according to the following timeline:

**Needs analysis:** November-December, 2013

**Preparation of training materials:** December-January, 2013-2014

**Workshop 1:** January 20, 2014

**Workshop 2:** March 10, 2014

**Workshop 3:** April 7, 2014



### 3.6 Goals and Objectives

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
To inform and inspire foreign language professionals in the Ijevan Branch of Yerevan State University' to use technologies pedagogically effectively.	By the end of the training the participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ To contribute to the FL professor's professional development.</li><li>◆ To contribute to the FL pre-service teachers' professional development.</li><li>◆ To contribute to the learning process of foreign language students.</li></ul>

### 3.7 Learning and Assessment Plan

Learning Plan	Procedure	Assessment
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Workshop 1</b>  <b>Blogs &amp; TEDTalks</b>  <b>20/01/2014</b>  <b>90 minutes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Trainer gives an overview about the importance of technologies in education.</li> <li>◆ Trainer presents blogging and the possible benefits of using blogs in TEFL showing her own blog account as an example for the trainees.</li> <li>◆ Trainer demonstrates and helps the participants to open an account in blogger.com. Steps are presented also in the provided handouts (Appendix C).</li> <li>◆ Trainer demonstrates the webpage <a href="http://www.TED.com">www.TED.com</a> and gives a list of suggestions of how to use TEDTalks in foreign language teaching (Appendix C).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Trainees open Goolge accounts, create their blogs in <a href="http://www.blogger.com">www.blogger.com</a> and have their first posts in their blogs.</li> <li>◆ Trainees send the links of their blogs to each other.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Further Practice of</b>  <b>Blogs &amp; TEDTalks</b>  <b>21/01/2014 – 9/03/2014</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Trainer creates a video tutorial (Appendix F) about the application of Blogs to foster the input of the first workshop, posts it in the online space (Facebook group) of their common use and asks the participants to create a blog post on the given topic.</li> <li>◆ Trainer posts an inspiring TEDTalk on the same online space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Two of the participants watched it and tried to create their posts.</li> <li>◆ Only one of the participants watched it.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Workshop 2</b> <b>MOOCs &amp; Vocaroo</b> <b>10/03/2014</b> <b>90 minutes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Trainer presents the agenda of the second workshop.</li> <li>◆ Trainer explains the phenomenon of distance learning and also the difference of MOOCs and OERs.</li> <li>◆ Trainer introduces several web pages which offer MOOCs and OERs, and informs the participants about the benefits of taking MOOCs.</li> <li>◆ Trainer shows her own page of EdX.org/Coursera.org and explains how to subscribe to different courses.</li> <li>◆ Trainer introduces <a href="http://www.vocaroo.com">www.vocaroo.com</a> as a speaking tool and presents the benefits of using speaking tools in TEFL.</li> <li>◆ Trainer demonstrates how to record oneself and the possible ways to share the recording.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Trainees open accounts for themselves in Coursera.com and subscribe to different upcoming courses of their interest (Some of the students registered in Coursera.com and subscribed to courses of their interest both in English and in French).</li> <li>◆ Trainees record themselves through Vocaroo.com and send the links to the trainer's email address (None of the students recorded themselves during the workshop because of technical issues).</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Further Practice of</b> <b>MOOCs &amp; Vocaroo</b> <b>11/03/2014-06/04/2014</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Trainer creates another video tutorial (Appendix F) with Jing about the application of Vocaroo and asks participants to record themselves on the topic "My favourite place in Ijevan" and send to her.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Two of the participants tried to record themselves, but failed because of some technical (microphone) problems.</li> </ul>

**Workshop 3**  
**Google Applications**  
**07/04/2014**  
**90 minutes**

- ◆ Trainer presents the list of Google applications which can be practical in TEFL.
- ◆ Trainer presents Google Drive, Google Calendar, Google News and Google Scholar and the participants brainstorm cases where these applications can be useful for teaching.
- ◆ Trainer finishes the workshop with a short inquiry about the covered technological applications and the ones which seem to be more practical and useful in the participants' future professional lives.

- ◆ Trainees enter their Google accounts/Google Drive and in pairs work on the Google document shared by the trainer.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE TRAININGS

Based on my experience as a trainer during the three workshops and also during the practice periods between the successive trainings, I would suggest the following recommendations for future technology teacher trainings:

- ◆ **Conduct your trainings in a technically equipped room.** A computer lab with workstations connected to the internet could be a right choice. If not available, have trainees bring laptops and ensure their internet connectivity if necessary.
- ◆ **Have a site visit before the workshops.** Shortly before the training, visit the computer lab and test all workstations for the tasks the trainees intend to perform on them.
- **Prepare handouts for your trainings.** Always prepare handouts about the application of the target technology beforehand and distribute them to the participants during the workshops. Based on my own experience, most of the participants did not take notes when being introduced a new technology. The handouts helped in a way that the newly introduced information was presented there and the participants could always refer to them while using the technologies later on.
- **Make the training process interactive.** Ask questions to the trainees; engage them in as many tasks as possible. Have them use the newly introduced technologies right away.
- **Become a facilitator during this process and approach everyone individually.** If the participants are many, then having one or two **assistants** with you could be a great help. During my first workshop, when the trainees started opening their own blog accounts, many of them had difficulties even though I was presenting the steps simultaneously on the screen. I could not manage to approach to all of them. Thus, having one or two assistants would be of great help. Later, I started asking quick learners to help the others.

- Otherwise, if it is possible, **organize your trainings for only small groups of participants.** It would help to integrate all of them and spend more time with each of them.
- **Don't overload the participants with a lot of information about various technologies.** Based on my experience, if the participants are not technologically competent, then presenting one technology at a time will be ideal. In this case, the participants would spend their whole time practicing only one technology, and would become more proficient in using it.
- **Allocate enough time for your workshops.** Quick sessions may not be effective. If the participants have enough time to use the technologies and overcome to subsequent difficulties right away, then the possibility is higher that they will use the new technologies also in the future.
- Give the participants **homework tasks** to allow them to become more proficient in using the new technologies.
- **Create video tutorials** based on the workshops and send them to trainees to foster the input they get during the workshops. Some of my trainees mentioned that watching tutorials after the actual workshops helped to digest the new information better (Appendix F).
- **Create an online space where you could stay in touch with your trainees.** The trainees may have difficulties in using technologies and would like to get support. The online space that I created for my participants was a Facebook group. All of the participants were included in the group. I posted the tutorials and tasks there, and they commented and asked questions if needed.
- **Getting feedback about your workshops from professionals would help to improve the quality.** Have an observer who would provide with some feedback about the way you

do your trainings. Otherwise, take notes/videos during the workshops so as to later on read/watch and improve them.

- **Organize your trainings in the right time, e.g. before the academic year starts.** The trainees need to acquire the new skills and organize their curriculum around the target technologies well before teaching. For instance, if I had my workshops during the summer break, the participants would most probably integrate some of the technologies into their own teaching. However, the workshops were organized throughout the spring semester when the professor had only a few hours left to teach English and her students were busy with their own capstone and final exams.
- **Work with people who are really interested in the workshops.** Organize your training for those who are willing to learn and implement new techniques in their teaching. My workshops were organized during the participants' English lessons and some of them had to be present during the trainings without showing any interest towards them. Thus, it was probably a waste of time for them. The success of the trainings partially depends on the motivation of the participants.
- **Give a follow up survey to the participants at the end of each workshop or the whole training.** The data collected through the surveys may help to figure out how well the trainings were organized, what can be improved, and also which of the presented materials the participants consider to be practical and usable in their own teaching.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

#### General Information:

- ◆ Name/Surname \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ How old are you?
- ◆ What is your University degree?

#### How do you usually organize your lessons?

- ◆ Do you have team/pair activities/projects during your lessons?
- ◆ Is the lesson time enough to do extra activities or the textbook is the main source?
- ◆ What are some of the linguistic skills that need more attention during the lessons?
- ◆ Have you ever used any technology during your lessons? If yes, what type and why?

#### What is your attitude toward integrating technologies into foreign language teaching?

- ◆ Can technology improve the process of language teaching?
- ◆ Can technologies promote interactivity and collaboration in EFL courses?
- ◆ Is it difficult to produce computer-based materials for EFL teachers?
- ◆ What are some of your professional needs/interests about technologies?
- ◆ Would you like to update your knowledge about technology integration in EFL classrooms periodically?

## Appendix B

### Survey

1. Նշիր քո սեռը/Indicate your gender

Ա) աղջիկ/female

Բ) տղա/male

2. Քանի՞ տարեկան ես/How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Շաբաթական, միջին հաշվարկով, որքա՞ն հաճախ ես համակարգչից օգտվում/ On average how often do you use a computer/laptop per week?

Ա) ամեն օր/every day

Բ) շաբաթը մի քանի անգամ/several times per week

Գ) շաբաթական ոչ ավել քան կես ժամ/ less than 30 minutes per week

Դ) համարյա երբեք/ almost never

4. Ի՞նչ նպատակով ես օգտագործում տեխնոլոգիաներ (կարող եք նշել մի քանի տարբերակ)/ For what purposes do you use technologies (circle all that apply)?

Ա) սոցիալական կայքեր (одноклассники, Вконтакте, Facebook...) մտնելու համար/ for social web sites (одноклассники, Вконтакте, Facebook...)

Բ) երգեր/կինոներ/խաղեր ներբեռնելու համար/ to download songs/ movies/ games

Գ) դասերի հետ կապված տարբեր առաջադրանքեր կատարելու համար/ for doing various tasks regarding lessons

Դ) եթե այլ նպատակով, նշիր/ if for any other purpose, please

indicate \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Ունե՞ս արդյո՞ք համակարգիչ և ինտերնետ տանը/ Do you have a computer/laptop and internet at home?**

Ա) ունեմ համակարգիչ և ինտերնետ/ I have both a computer and internet connection

Բ) ունեմ համակարգիչ, բայց չունեմ ինտերնետ/ I have a computer but I don't have internet connection

Գ) չունեմ ոչ համակարգիչ և ոչ էլ ինտերնետ/ I have neither computer nor internet connection

**6. Կցանկանա՞յի՞ր համակարգիչ և այլ տեսակի տեխնոլոգիաներ օգտագործել դասերի ընթացքում/ Would you like to use computer and other types of technologies during your lessons?**

Ա) այո/yes

Բ) այո, բայց ես չունեմ բավարար հմտություններ/ yes, but I don't have enough skills

Գ) ոչ, տեխնոլոգիաները կխանգարեն դասի նորմալ ընթացքը/No, technologies will disturb the learning process

Դ) ոչ, ես չեմ սիրում տեխնոլոգիաներ/No, I don't like technologies

**7. Հետևյալ տեխնոլոգիաներից որո՞նք են քեզ ծանոթ/ Which of the following technological applications are you familiar with?**

Ա) Microsoft Office Power Point

Բ) Blogs

Գ) Podcasts

Դ) TedTalks

Ե) վերը նշվածներից ոչ մեկը/none of the technologies mentioned above

9. Հետևյալ լեզվական հմտություններից որո՞նք կցանկանայիր զազացնել անգլերենի դասերի ժամանակ/Which of the following linguistic skills would you like to improve during the English lessons?

Ա) կարդալը/reading

Բ) գրելը/writing

Գ) խոսելը/speaking

Դ) լսելը/listening

Ե) այլ, նշիր/ if any other type, please indicate \_\_\_\_\_

10. Որքա՞ն հաճախ ես օգտվում համալսարանի համակարգչային լսարանից և ինչ նպատակով/ How often do you need to use the computer laboratory of the university and for what purposes?

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## Appendix C (Handout Blogs/TEDTalks)

Teacher Training #1| Yerevan State University, Ijevan Branch | January 20, 2014



### Why to use blogs in an EFL classroom?

- ◆ Blogs allow the learners to become network creators and users.
- ◆ Blogs increase students' creativity and analytical thinking.
- ◆ Blogs create an interactive learning environment.
- ◆ Blogs provide real audiences for the learners.
- ◆ Blogs contribute to writing fluency and lexical complexity.
- ◆ Blogs create a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- ◆ Blogs serve as knowledge archives.

### How to create your own blogs?

- ◆ Log on to [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)
- ◆ Sign in with your existing Gmail ID and password.
- ◆ Click on the 'New Blog' button.
- ◆ Choose a "Title", "Address", "Template" and "Create blog!"

Other platforms for creating blogs:

[www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

<http://edublogs.org/>



*We believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and ultimately, the world... (retrieved from TED.com)*

- ◆ Visit: [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)
- ◆ Go to Talks and choose the Length/Topic/Subtitles/Event/Speaker, etc.
- ◆ Go to TED-Ed and choose "Lessons" or "Series"

**Recommendations for using TED Talks/TED-Ed during the lessons:**

- ◆ Listen to a TED Talk and organize a discussion around it
- ◆ Listen to a TED Talk and make a post in your blog
- ◆ Turn on subtitles in English to help you with comprehension
- ◆ Try to learn new words or guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words of the talk
- ◆ Find TED pages on Facebook and follow them
- ◆ Watch motivational videos and achieve your goals 😊

## Appendix D (Handout MOOCs/OERs & Vocaroo)

Teacher Training # 2| Yerevan State University, Ijevan Branch | March 10, 2014



### How to take Massive Open Online Courses?

- ♦ Go to any of the following education portals (the list is not limited):  
<https://www.edx.org/>  
<https://www.coursera.org/>  
<http://open.umich.edu/>
- ♦ Make an account for yourself
- ♦ Register for any course of your interest
- ♦ Do the tasks for each week, participate in discussion forums, and do not miss the deadlines
- ♦ Get a certificate!

### What are the benefits of taking MOOCs?

- ♦ MOOCs are online courses which are open to everyone usually at no cost.
- ♦ MOOCs provide lifelong learning.
- ♦ MOOCs promote collaborative and interactive learning environment.
- ♦ A MOOC has its syllabus, reading materials, video lectures, discussion forums, Facebook/Twitter groups
- ♦ Students may make study groups and take MOOCs together.
- ♦ Students may get certificates after the successful accomplishment of MOOCs.

### Open Educational Resources (OERs)

<http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/index.htm>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/>





### How to use Vocaroo?

- ◆ Go to [www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com)
- ◆ "Click to Record"
- ◆ Click "Allow"
- ◆ Record your speech
- ◆ "Click to stop"
- ◆ "Retry" or "Listen" your speech
- ◆ If it is fine, then "Click here to save"

Here you have the following options:

1. **"Email"** the recording to your teacher (anyone)
2. **Share** your recording via Facebook/Twitter/Google +/Gmail...
3. **Download** it as [MP3](#), [Ogg](#), [FLAC](#), or [WAV](#).
4. **Copy the link** and share it in your blog

### Why to use Vocaroo?

- ◆ Record yourself and pay attention to your intonation, pronunciation and fillers (um, yeah, I mean, ok, so...), fix them if needed
- ◆ Record yourself throughout the semester and see to what extent your speech improved
- ◆ Listen to TEDTalks, watch YouTube videos, read stories/books, summarize them and record yourself through [www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com) .
- ◆ The teacher may record her assignment/feedback and send it to the students.

### Other technologies to improve speaking

- ◆ <http://voki.com/>
- ◆ <http://www.voxopop.com/>
- ◆ <https://voicethread.com/>

## Appendix E (Handout Google Apps for Education)

Teacher Training # 3| Yerevan State University, Ijevan Branch | April 7, 2014



### Why Google?

#### 1. Google extends learning beyond classroom

- ◆ Provides educational materials in wide range of formats (video, text, etc.)
- ◆ Affords nearly unlimited quantity of educational materials
- ◆ Ensures education anytime, anywhere, and on any device

#### 2. Engages everyone in the school community

- ◆ Involves families into the educational process
- ◆ Increases communication and collaboration opportunities

#### 3. Prepares students for their careers

- ◆ Makes students more proficient in using technologies
- ◆ Develops creativity among students
- ◆ Makes students web creators instead of consumers

Retrieved on 27/03/2014 from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zC3SOHXnv8>



1. **Google Drive** is a [file storage and synchronization service](#) provided by [Google](#), which enables [cloud storage](#), [file sharing](#) and [collaborative editing](#).

- ◆ Go to "**Drive**"
- ◆ Click "**Create**"
- ◆ Choose one of the formats (Folder, Document, Presentation, etc.)
- ◆ Click "**Share**"
- ◆ Name your Document and click "**Save**"
- ◆ Share your document by typing the Gmail address of your addressee.



2. **Google Calendar** is a free time management application offered by Google.



3. **Google Scholar** is a freely accessible [web search engine](#) that offers [scholarly literature](#) across a wide range of publishing formats and disciplines.



4. **Google News** is a free [news](#) provider offered and operated by [Google](#) Inc which selects most up-to-date information from thousands of publications.

\*If you are interested in more Google applications that may be used for educational purposes, then go here: <https://www.google.com/enterprise/apps/education/>

**Appendix F** (Video tutorials about [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) and [www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com))

- ◆ <http://screencast.com/t/Wx6AQiNA1Gv7>
- ◆ <http://screencast.com/t/QAYbxybs2Zk>