

What do/could new technologies mean for your TBLT practice?

Jeroen Lievens¹, Carolien Frijns²

KU Leuven, Belgium

:Centre for Language and Education, KU Leuven, Belgium

This workshop aims to have participants reflect on the intricate ways in which 21st century evolutions in technology are impacting the practice of task-based language teaching. On the one hand, advances in communication media are redefining the idea of “literacy”, based on a traditional understanding of “language”, into “multiliteracies”, an expanded skill set which includes insight into a multimodal and -medial rhetoric of communication (Cope & Kalantzis 2000, Wysocki & Lynch 2007). As new modes of representation beyond the linguistic are being explored and traditional genre boundaries stretched, the domain of language teaching is challenged to find ways of coming to terms with these fundamental changes. On the other hand, new technologies hold forth the promise of groundbreaking task design. As Gonzalez-Lloret & Ortega put it: “Web 2.0 technologies create unprecedented environments in which students can engage in ‘doing things’ through technology-mediated transformation and creation processes rather than just reading about language and culture in textbooks or hearing about them from teachers”(2014, p. 3). Technology, then, confronts TBLT with unforetold challenges, but opportunities too.

This interactive workshop will provide hands-on experience with some exemplary higher education scenarios for technology-mediated TBLT, developed across two educational development projects funded by KU Leuven (OOF). A first project, called “Bee-com a 21st century communicator”(2011-2013), challenged higher education students to develop multimodal and -medial communication designs for real-world situations. In this project, an interdisciplinary team developed a “route planner” that assists students in navigating the many complexities of the communication design process (Lievens & Frijns 2013). A second project, called “Touch Teach Learn”(2013-2015), researches how touch screen enabled mobile devices could be used to transform practices in higher education into more interactive and task-based ones. This project addresses the question how technology “allows for the creation of new tasks, previously inconceivable”(Puenteadura 2012). Successful task-based scenarios, like the task for teacher training students to develop a video rapport of their internship at schools, will be explored succinctly.

Finally, participants will be invited to explore the potential of new technologies for their own TBLT practices. The project websites <https://associatie.kuleuven.be/np/beecom/> and www.touch2learn.be (currently under construction) will provide inspiration. Also, participants will be offered hands-on experience with some useful touch screen enabled apps and tools. Although tablets will be provided, participants are recommended to bring, if possible, their own mobile device as well.

References

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