

## Chapter 6

# Using ICTs and Mobile Devices to Assist Adult English–Language Learning: An E–Portfolio–Based Learning Approach

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and mobile devices to assist language acquisition has expanded rapidly during the past decade given the prevalence of broadband networks and mobile phones. Many studies have examined how these technologies can facilitate English-language learning. The chapter will discuss the current research on using ICTs to create e-portfolios to support language learning, the role of mobile devices in the language-learning process, the impact of using ICTs on English-language learners' (ELLs) learning other than language acquisition (e.g., increasing their sense of a learning community), and the design procedure of such a learning environment. Future research in this area also will be discussed.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3223-1.ch006

## **INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS FOR TEACHING ELLS**

To develop students' fluency in a second language, instruction needs to focus on improving learners' vocabulary, grammatical skills, reading and writing skills, and conversational skills. This chapter focuses on adult ELLs (non-native English speakers in higher education) who have limited English proficiency and need to take developmental courses when studying in universities in English-speaking countries. These international students usually have to face challenges such as language proficiency, cultural differences, and learning styles, undergoing an adjustment period at university (Samuelowicz, 2006). After assessing these students' English proficiency and identifying their learning needs, those who are at risk and need language support are advised to take content-based English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. The goals of these courses usually are designed to improve students' English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills to foster their college success in academic performance. Many instructors take the communicative-language teaching approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 156) to focus on comprehensive pronunciation. The desired outcome is to develop communicative competence, including language and thoughts (flow and fluency), comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation. A typical lesson consists of the instructor reinforcing oral practices during the formal learning session in the classroom, assigning students learning materials (e.g., pronunciation exercises, formal speeches, and group conversations), and providing feedback after assessing students' oral performances through recordings. The time spent and amount of practice in the formal learning sessions simply are not enough to make noticeable differences in communicative skills (Hsu, Wang & Comac, 2008), especially when teaching a large group of students.

Another instructional need is to provide oral feedback to language learners. Feedback is extremely important in reinforcing learners' language-learning process. Tsutsui (2004) suggested three types of feedback that instructors could provide to students in the language-learning environment: interactive, intrusive, and delayed feedback (p. 374). In secondary English education, many instructors mostly focus on drill-based pedagogies, such as grammar and translation, limiting students' opportunities to practice speaking during class time (Hsu, 2015). Due to limited classroom time, the number of students, and students' learning styles, it is unrealistic to provide interactive feedback, which is immediate feedback given to the student right after their performance, or intrusive feedback, which is given by the instructor during the student's performance, to all students. It also is difficult to provide delayed feedback, which is post-performance feedback given after instructors review the performances of all their students, especially for oral practices, because the instructor

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