POWTOON AS DIGITAL MEDIA ALTERNATIVE FOR TEACHER: STAGES AND RESPONSES

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Abstract: Bringing technology into classroom is aimed to create an interactive learning process and to grow student’s enthusiasm as technology offers updated features comparing to traditional method. This study focuses on the process to prepare teacher’s readiness on providing guidance and supervision in using Powtoon. It investigates the stages in integrating the media into classroom for teacher and teacher’s responses towards its integration in teaching and learning process. This study employs qualitative method and involves 10 teachers from non-English department. The findings reveal that the process consist of three stages: brief explanation of Powtoon’s application, comprehensive introduction to Powtoon’s basic features, and self-intensive practices of creating Powtoon’s output. Also, this study rises the fact that as digital immigrants, teachers find it challenging to equip themselves with technology and leave the traditional way of teaching as personal capabilities, limited time, and tight teaching schedule become their limitations. Furthermore, this study suggests that teachers’ comprehensions towards the media should be optimized to ensure that the learning objectives are achieved.

Keywords: Powtoon; Teacher; Digital Media; Stages; Responses

INTRODUCTION
Teachers nowadays face a reality that their students are born in the era where technology has been part of their daily lives. It has incorporated in many aspects: personal life into social issue. With the help of small handy device in their hands, today’s generation are far away from the word ‘clueless’ as their fingertips will give them the direction to the answer of almost every problem occurs in their life.

As the matter of fact, let us start with the biggest search engine that has been used by millions of people: Google. The popularity of it has even produced several new terms, for example ‘googling’ which means ‘search for information about (someone or something) on the Internet using the search engine Google’ or the iconic ‘ungoogleable’ which refers to a term for something that cannot be found easily using the Google Search web search engine. These new terms show the fact that people are no longer have issues in searching of things that they do not know; simply by googling, you will find the answer.

Another interesting example is the presence of online math solver named Cymath. Easily accessed by everyone, this website is powered by a combination of artificial intelligence and heuristics, so that it solves math problems step-by-step like a teacher would. It simply provides reliable and accessible answer to every math problem that students have. This app then let students to skip extra course after school in order to help them finishing their math homework just like the old times.

These two examples indicate current phenomenon which show the world that technology has taken serious part in students’ life. According to Marc Prensky, founder and CEO of the nonprofit Global Future Education Foundation and Institute, a coined term named Digital Native is given for people who are moving into a new culture and a new society and things changing. This concept begins as the fact that the current generation of college students is the first to grow up immersed in technology and they are inseparable with numbers of digital technologies that allow them to instantly capture or communicate with their world (Prensky, 2001). They use these tools as extensions of their bodies and minds, fluidly incorporating them into their daily routines (Prensky, 2005). As they communicate through instant messaging with their peers, they also learn the language of technology. Similar to natives, the process of adaptation within them runs quickly as new technologies try to blend into their daily lives.

The relationship between technology and teacher, on the other hand, has changed the teacher’s role from teaching into facilitating the students since technology makes them be more independent in the classroom. Comparing to the past, where text books took the dominant part of learning process, teacher spent most of the time referring to the only text book and the only chance for students to know more outside the ‘box’ was by giving questions. These activity causes less engagement between student and subject material. Thus, as educators, making use of technology to allow students the freedom to discover solutions to problems both independently and collaboratively is a force for good (Britland, 2013). As educators, the expectation arises then is about them to be active learners and have passion for discovery and knowledge. In short, technology places the world in the hands of every student inside the confines of your classroom (Britland, 2013).

In contrast with digital natives, most teachers are labelled as Digital Immigrant. The Digital Immigrant is the latecomer in the technology revolution and as with any immigrant, there is a certain “accent” that is readily apparent to the native speakers. (Prensky,
2001). In addition, Cunningham (2007) then defines this ‘accent’ such as calling and asking if a recipient received the email that was just sent or typing out text messages with full words rather than the standard abbreviations. In this case, comparing to digital natives, digital immigrant are still trying hard to acknowledge and work around with technology. Then, the next homework for teacher is: find the differences between how us as the digital immigrants copes with the ‘immigration’ process and how students, as the natives’ one, work and run with technology around.

Digitization in education industry has totally changed the learning and also the teaching process to a very great extent (Johari, 2013). It means that the development of information and communication technology in education has forced schools to gradually improve their learning facilities which are integrated into technology, such as the use of iPad in the classroom. This digitization also includes the online education system which has been adapted in many universities. Johari (2013) then adds that online education is a type of distance learning which does not require the students to attend the college or university in person as the courses are available online. This kind of revolution has reformed education industry to be more immersive and constructive.

This new paradigm then simply states that empowering and coaching students should be along the line they want, not the lines that teacher has already set up for them (Lieberman, 2017). In this case, teachers should be ready to accept the wave of digitization although they need some more efforts when it comes to teacher training. Another important point to underline is that although students are already familiar with technology in early age, they don’t possess the discernment skills they will have in adulthood (Davis, 2017, as cited in Lieberman, 2017). This is where teacher takes part to assist them facing and growing with this rapidly evolving technology.

One of the skills to support teacher in teaching is the presentation skill. There are many ways teacher can use technology to support the way they present the material. For example, they use Ms PowerPoint. In advance, they can utilize Powtoon. Founded in 2012, Powtoon adapts such technology that generates the XML file to be executed in Powtoon online website or simply being exported to Youtube. Simply, this media provides various templates for those who want simple and fast design and also blanks template for starting from a scratch. To save the project, the users are able to save it as a common presentation which moves slide by slide, or they can export it as a movie then export to Youtube directly.

In contrary with PowerPoint, Pais, Nogues and Munoz (2017) states that this kind of online visual presentation has several benefits such as:

- They allow individuals to display or present any topic of interest and are able to share it with others
- They immediately attract the viewer if the presentation is well designed.
- They require students (when assigned tasks connected to the presentations) to read and synthesize information to later be able to present it.
- They achieve greater comprehension of the information being shown and make it easier to remember.
- They integrate different types of formats and media, increasing the integration capabilities of the visual, auditory and motion resources.
- Currently, most of these tools, in their basic version, are free of charge or are offered at a very low cost.
- These resources are generally compatible with several operating systems.

Despite those fascinating aspects offered by Powtoon, the next question is how to bridge the gap between natives and immigrants. Cunningham (2007) offers several strategies to help digital immigrants reach their native students as follows:

- Get to know into students’ zone.
- Listen to students’ perception about how they use technology and value their knowledge about it.
- Focus on how to communicate rather than on what to communicate.
- Involve students in decision making.
- Let students explore from other and give them chance to work without placing teacher as the ‘expert’.

Finally, Cunningham (2007) concludes that natives know that we are not as comfortable or familiar with technology as they are and do not expect us to keep up with them. What teachers need to do is to delicately pleased to share their experience along with students about how technology will help them in achieving the objective of the material better.

METHOD
This study employs a qualitative approach which data was collected from three sources: observation, interview, and questionnaire. The subjects of the study are lecturer from non-English department in Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. The stages of introducing Powtoon was done in one day workshop consisting of introduction of generation types, gap between each generation, the importance of digital media for teaching and types of digital media for teaching. The first stage introduces the participant about digital teaching media types and importance. During the demo by the instructor, the participants are personally assisted by several students from English department who have already mastered Powtoon in classroom to ensure the process of transferring the knowledge runs well. Participants are also allowed to give questions during the demo. The third stage is two weeks assistance to let participants learn and explore Powtoon individually and finally produces an output. The last stage is online evaluation by the instructor to give several feedbacks to the output.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stages of Powtoon Implementation

The findings reveal that the process consist of three stages: brief explanation of Powtoon’s application, comprehensive introduction to Powtoon’s basic features, and self-intensive practices of creating Powtoon’ output.

Brief explanation of Digital Media Teaching

This study began with the introduction of digital media teaching to the participant of the workshop. It is important to give prior knowledge to the participants regarding how technology has taken part in education. The introduction started by the explanation of generation types which helps the participants get the idea of what digital natives worked with technology and how digital immigrants coped with that working system. Besides, this stage helped the instructor to make a quick assessment on the level of technology engagement within the participants.

Comprehensive introduction to Powtoon basic’s features

The second stage of this study was the introduction of Powtoon to help participants acknowledge what Powtoon looks like and how does it work. First of all, the participants were described why Powtoon differed from another presentation application. Based on quick assessment in the beginning, most of participants were only familiar with MS PowerPoint features. At the same time, it was a good point as the features of Powtoon has the same ideas with Ms PowerPoint. Next, Powtoon’s basic features introduction includes on how the participants started to work with Powtoon which began by had themselves registered, watched the short tutorial, then explored the features assisted by instructor and team.

Self-intensive practices of creating Powtoon’s output

The last stage of this study was self-intensive practices of creating Powtoon’s output. The participants were asked to create a Powtoon presentation based on the subject they taught in classroom. Participants were also allowed to explore more during self-intensive practice within two weeks to let them found the challenge of integrating technology into their teaching process.

Teacher Responses towards Powtoon Implementation

The result from observation, interview, and questionnaire shows that participants gave various responses towards the use of Powtoon. From the questionnaire, the result reveals that participants put high interest in knowing more about Powtoon and its features although almost 80% of them have only a few information about how Powtoon works before the workshop begins. They find out that the features offered by Powtoon is quite complex yet it raises their curiosity at the same time. The features of music addition and cartoon animation are two most favorite features that the participants choose as the additional values that make Powtoon is more challenging than MS PowerPoint.

Another point that is revealed by the questionnaire is that Powtoon gives them a chance to work closer with students. As it has been mentioned earlier in the introduction, Powtoon offers interactive choices that attract students’ attention simply by its fascinating features. As an example, participants are forced to feel the excitement of trying new technology while also pushed them to produce a good presentation output. It is due to the colorful and easy user interface that facilitate teacher to be more creative in producing and delivering teaching material in the classroom.

In addition to work collaboration, teachers find out that Powtoon can be a tool to improve their skills in integrating technology into classroom. Collection of cartoon, various choices of animation, selection of sound effects and outstanding slide movement are the power that Powtoon gives to teacher as the user.

Besides its plus point, this questionnaire also rises the fact that their position as digital immigrants put them in a challenging situation where several issues occur as they try to get better with Powtoon. In short, teachers find it quite challenging to equip themselves with technology and leave the traditional way of teaching as personal capabilities, limited time, and tight teaching schedule become their limitations.

First, the process of immigrating from traditional teaching way where technology is not being even a part of teaching actually needs certain amount of time. One day workshop with limited time to explain the whole features is not enough for teacher to gain deeper knowledge. To solve this, a quick tutorial is given by the instructor to all of participants to let them learn by themselves at home. This kind of tutorial is expected to help them coping with the issues occurred during their own trial at home.

Due to limited time and tight schedule, the process of exploring Powtoon does not meet the fullest expectation as the objective of the workshop. It was first expected that teacher will be able to elaborate Powtoon into the classroom as the two weeks individual learning has finished. However, it will be another point to underline for the next workshop that will focus on how teacher works maximally with the help of technology.

CONCLUSION

The development of technology has urged everyone, without any exception, to deal with it. In education industry, teachers, as digital immigrants, are now expected to meet the latest criteria of how students learn as they born as the digital natives where technology has been part of their daily lives.

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Furthermore, this study suggests that teachers’ comprehensions towards the media should be optimized to ensure that the learning objectives are achieved.

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REFERENCES


