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Pedagogy of the Villagers, Developing English Connect for Village Students

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to develop literacy pedagogy to facilitate literacy learning among the Indigenous community. The Developmental Research Approach method was used and thus various groups of people participated in the study. They included subject matter experts, English language teachers from schools with indigenous students, indigenous community as well as indigenous learners in the context of the study. Insights gained from these participants were used as content for the design and development of a literacy pedagogical module.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Villagers, Develop, Students, Connect, Village.

Introduction

With the rampant change of society, English has becoming the dominant language in the 21st century. So, NJIEV would like to create a place where is the South's leading training association with professionals and a series of gathering and organized teaching materials. These training courses provide a unique forum of interaction of native English speakers, teachers, students and community with insightful views, best practices and lessons in order to strengthen the students' macrocosm.

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Literary Worlds engages English language arts content scholarship, self-conscious pedagogical experimentation and research, and the application and development of remote participation, object-oriented multi-user domain, and Internet technology. The mutual development of these different content, pedagogical, and technology knowledge's (TPACK), requires a dynamic and continuing evolution and exchange (Koehler & Mishra, ۲۰۰۹). We have found virtual literary worlds to facilitate constructivist learning in diverse ways depending on their incorporation of active reading, specific textual language, narrative structures, textual geographies, and examination of historical and cultural contexts, visual and aural representations, student interaction and discussion, and student analytical, creative and perspectival writing. After describing the development of technology, pedagogy, and content in these virtual worlds this chapter will closely examine an exemplary virtual literary world, The Village, and conclude by setting forward a typology of virtual world instructional forms developed in the Literary Worlds project.

Important of Developing English

People enjoy making their own choices. Students will feel respected if you let them choose their own reading. Even if you have a "theme" for your unit, have them choose from a selected list of literature, or let them make suggestions to you from books following the same theme. When you select the literature for them to choose from, you should pay attention to your students, the conditions of their lives, and the events unfolding in the world around them (Chritensen, ۲۰۰۷) Selecting literature that is relevant to them is crucial for their motivation.

If you absolutely have to work within some restrictions, such as assigned books or a certain period of literature, try to wiggle as much as possible. Still let students decide certain texts. Another good idea is have self-selected reading and require them to read a certain amount time out of their selected text every night. Allow them to read assigned books for their timed reading at night when you have to get through it. Allowing students to find out what they like and allowing them to not like a book or a type of book can really boost their confidence as a reader. Lausé states how she feels about the plight of classrooms in the US today. She says, "Selecting and reading books in school should not be a luxury, but it certainly feels like it to

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students accustomed to traditional English classes." (Lausé, ۲۰۰۷). This is, unfortunately, often true in many classrooms across the United States. As teachers, we have the ability and responsibility to slowly change how and what literature is taught, not only in our classroom but, across the United States.

Using a workshop to get students to read what they want and figure out what they like can boost their motivation to read and break away from "sticking to the script" that is standard English curriculum and canon in the United States. Even though some students may not know what type of literature they like immediately, they do have the ability to figure out what they like. While students may enter my classroom without skills, they don't enter my classroom without knowledge or talent or potential (Christensen, Reading Writing, ۲۰۰٦). This quote by Christensen shows how students may not always be the best readers or the most well-read students, but all of them have the potential to become a better reader. They all have the potential to figure out what type of reading they like and to choose literature that they find relevant and motivating to themselves.

Self-selected reading can be an easy grade for you to manage and for your students to accomplish. If you set a goal for a certain amount of time for nightly or weekly reading for students to do, they will probably do it. You could easily assess if they are reading by having them write about the reading in a journal or blog or you could just discuss the literature with them. Self-selected reading in the classroom will boost students motivation because they can choose what they want to read, and can read at their own pace. For example, not every student will like The Scarlet Letter, even if you are required to get through it. But you can still have students have their own self-selected reading on the side for them to get through as well. You can explain to your students that you are required to get through a certain text, and have them decide what they like and dislike about it, without forcing them to see what lessons they can pull from it.

Read to them and Let them Read to Each Other

Reading to students can give them an example of how an active reader will read through a text. It can also make a text more interesting by giving voices to characters and emotions

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behind those voices. If you read out-loud to them, it might make a daunting book seem less challenging and more readable. Even if a student says they do not like to read, most students enjoy hearing a story (Beers ۲۹۰). Reading aloud with expression is entertaining and puts the students into the story. If you are acting out a scene with your voice, you will be entertaining to your students. If you do this you will also be instilling interest in the story for your students as well as actually getting parts of a book read through. They may take the book home and read it on their own just to see what happens to those characters that you were acting out earlier. This can put real people and thoughts behind these characters in a story and make it fun for students.

Another form of reading aloud in the classroom could be audio-books. Audio books can usually be found online for pretty cheap. Sometimes the author will even be the one who reads the book. Sometimes the book is narrated with sound effects and multiple voice actors and actresses to help develop characters. These can be a useful tool to help students get into the literature and get more interested in the story. This can be a good tool to help students follow along in the book while listening to a fluent story. With many pieces of literature, there is a screenplay counterpart. While this may help them get a feel for what is going on in a piece of literature, movies probably shouldn't completely replace the text. However, showing students a powerful scene from something they are about to read (or have just read) could pique their interests and motivate them into reading the text. Movies are a great way to motivate students to read a text. If students know that you will get to watch the movie of the book you are about to read, they will be more likely to want to actually finish reading the book before watching the movie.

Reading aloud can be a good chance to model what active readers do while reading out loud to students in class. Whether reading it aloud, listening to audio-books, or watching the movie take time to pause and ask questions of the text. What is going on here? Why did that happen? What do I think is going to happen next? If you model active reading to your students, they will begin to understand how to actively read better and more efficiently. Kylene Beers mentions that too often secondary teachers forget the value of reading aloud to students. She then goes on to explain how secondary teachers can use reading aloud to model good reading to students.

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Pedagogy

Virtual worlds differ significantly one to another in terms of their pedagogical demands and strategies, but they all draw on immersive, constructivist, multimedia, and technology-enhanced approaches. Student dialogue and writing in a virtual world takes place on a technologically-based performance space created by virtual world builders working within the possibilities and constraints of particular software platforms (in our case enCore). Entering an imaginative world based on a literary work and created by a teacher-builder, students engage in, and, at times, modify, that world based on their reading of the literary text, their learning from writing, dialog, and class instruction, as well as on their previous reading and life experiences. Drawing on prior knowledge, in the virtual world whether interacting with specific objects, images, or other students, learning is also engaged Wesley Hoover (۱۹۹٦) describes constructivist learning theory in a way that captures student experience in Literary Worlds activities,

Learners remain active throughout this process: they apply current understandings, note relevant elements in new learning experiences, judge the consistency of prior and emerging knowledge, and based on that judgment, they can modify knowledge.

The powerful textual, visual, aural, and participatory immersion of virtual world experiences combined with the knowledge from the careful reading of the literary works helps students develop increasingly complex comprehension of contextualized meaning. A constructivist approach to learning is consistent with a reader response approach to understanding how students make meaning from literary works. One strand of reader response emphasizes experiential knowledge, especially appropriate to thinking about the possibilities of virtual literary worlds:

Experiential reader-response theory seeks to identify and describe the strategies readers employ—for example, how they identify with a character, visualize the setting, draw connections to their own lives, and detach themselves from the story in making a critique. (Rozema, ۲۰۰٤, ۹۳)

In thinking about traditional teaching, Jeff Wilhelm (۱۹۹۷) writes about how teenage readers enter imaginatively into the story world. In helping language arts teachers to engage students with reading, Wilhelm particularly emphasizes the potential of dramatic role-play.

Participation in different social worlds offers a form of identity experimentation important for learning and ethical understanding. Beach *et al* (۲۰۰۸) argue "adolescents construct their identities

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through their participation in social worlds, including [imaginative] participation in worlds portrayed in multicultural literature." Critical to a pedagogy based in exploring and examining different social worlds is for students to consider how characters perceive their actions, each other, and the institutions they inhabit. (۲۷۹) This examination can take place through drama activities where students create monologues from the point of view of characters or place characters in real world situations and ask them to respond. Virtual worlds, such as those designed by the Literary Worlds team, move perspective taking and dramatic writing to the level of performance When students enter into a virtual world, they may be extending the plot, action, and dialogue of the novel beyond the source text. Indeed, since the activities in virtual worlds occur collaboratively, one of the best pedagogical models for instruction in virtual worlds ensemble theater. In this sense, student activity and interaction in virtual worlds creates a "devised work."

'Devising' is a word applied at various times to any process of collaborative creation, or ensemble-created pieces, or even to what Joan Schirle terms 'making it up ourselves.' The term, even in its loose application, has provided an umbrella for the contemporary re-blossoming of alternative artistic methodologies and has facilitated a sense of community that encourages dialogue among those whose current work challenges traditional models.

Games provide another model for theories of immersive learning in virtual spaces. There are at least ۳۶ different principles that video games draw on to provide the gamers complex skills and information they need to become successful. (Gee, ۲۰۰۳) These games also foster analysis of identity and social relationships.

They situate meaning in a multimodal space through embodied experiences to solve problems and reflect on the intricacies of the design of imagined worlds and the design of both real and imagined social relationships and identities in the modern world.

Some virtual worlds, like many video games, are designed or allow participation by individuals acting alone. In these settings the builder is responsible for creating the options that construct learning for the student. Andrew Burn (۲۰۰۵) argues "Narrative in games oscillates between offering information and demanding action, triggering a cycle in which the player acts, which functions as a demand to the game (what next?), which replies with more information and demands, and so on." (۵۲) Though several of the Literary Worlds Project virtual spaces are explicitly designed as Alternative Reality Game (ARG) activities (*Thoughtcrime*, *Midsummer Madness*, *The Tempest*), all

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of these worlds allow extensive group interaction. Many of the literary worlds we have made could be described as virtual Live Action Role Plays (LARPs), activities typically prepared by a "gamemaster," in this case the virtual world builder. In role-playing games the players participate in the imaginary world through their characters, but they are not necessarily absorbed into a role, and may retain a level of judgment and connection to the world outside the game that allows them to think critically about the experience. (Lancaster, ۱۹۹۹, ٤۰)

Writing and discussion is important both before participation in a virtual world activity and afterward, and the challenges of how best to manage virtual world experiences and integrate them effectively into existing curriculum is developed by repeated use and experimentation. Quality pedagogy is a form of praxis, a continuing exchange between theory and action. Members of the Literary Worlds Project have found that repeated uses of the virtual worlds improve the instructor's ability to plan, manage, and integrate the worlds into class instruction. The more thoroughly integrated the more valuable the experience for the students.

Finally, despite the possibilities for greater understanding of new social worlds, students need to recognize the limitations as well as the possibilities of virtual experiences.   Reading and participation in a virtual world is not the same thing as real-world experiential knowledge. The historical and cultural gaps bridged by virtual literary worlds may be enormous. As students role-play characters from different cultural and historical periods their language makes a claim on authenticity, but it is also, simultaneously what Gyatri Spivak (۱۹۹۰) calls a "worlding," the notion of texuality should be related to the notion of the worlding of the world on an uninscribed territory… basically about the imperialist project which had to assume that the earth that it territorialized was in fact previously uninscribed. (۱)

Care must be taken by teachers and students alike to recognize how devised productions, and live action role plays create constructivist knowledge always in some measure unfinished.

Content

Literature invites readers into an imaginative second world in their own heads. A good writer helps us "see" from the point of view of characters, and discover new interpersonal, historical,

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cultural and geographic spaces. This is the very power of literature, as Emily Dickenson says, "There is no frigate like a book to take us lands away...." Indeed a literary work is itself already a kind of virtual world. The kind of literary reading experiences we are creating were first described as a theoretical possibility in MIT professor Janet Murry's *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (۱۹۹۷). To some degree "choose your own adventure" books or hypertext fictions of the ۱۹۹۰s, such as Patchwork Girl by Shelly Jackson, offer a reading experience that to some degree prefigures virtual literary worlds. As our worlds are inspired by and deeply engaged with the language, setting, characters and context of literature, they invite readers to respond in new ways. Readers may become not simply scholars and critics, but writers themselves, imaginative re-shapers of their reading, moving from a consumption model to an approach based in activity and production. At their best, we have found the virtual spaces we have made facilitating interior and exterior perspectives, extending, rewriting, and re-envisioning the source literary texts. One of the questions that the Literary Worlds team wrestles with is how we can create on-line virtual environments where students will have significant freedom to make choices about their activities or the roles they play, and still maintain fidelity to the imaginative literary text on which the world is based.

Crucial to the development of any of the virtual worlds we have made is a deep engagement with the content and form of the literary source. We have created virtual world projects based on novels, plays, short story and poetry collections, legends, and epics from many historical and cultural periods. The scholars designing these literary worlds include experts in Anglo-Saxon, Renaissance, Early Modern and contemporary British literature, and in American, postcolonial, and children's literature. No virtual world is a replica of any other because the specific themes, character interactions, settings, and language of the literary source profoundly shape the look, form, agenda, and activity that take place in the corresponding virtual world. An important dimension of this new medium is the possibility it creates for exploring the time period and setting of literary works, that is diverse historical and cultural moments, locations that are often dramatically different from the experience of student readers, yet critical to understanding the literary work. In this sense, these worlds open up possibilities for engaging historical, multicultural, and cultural studies teaching (Carey-Webb, ۲۰۰۱). This will be illustrated by an extended examination of *The Village of*, one of the prototype worlds of our project.

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Students in Grade ٦ have been learning about famous plays and productions in their English classes recently, and as a way to expand on it, their Drama teacher, Megan Eddington, has been helping the class to take their knowledge from English and apply it to Drama class.

Using what they knew about such plays and pieces as "Julius Caesar," "Romeo and Juliet" and "The Seven Stages of Man," the students split into groups and posed for "Tableaux." A tableau is a representation of a picture, statue, and scene by one or more persons suitably posed. Such activities are an excellent way for students to put the theories and ideas they learn about in the classroom into a practical activity that enriches their understanding of them. In a drama context, the students need to understand the elements of a tableau and how the technique is applied to performance. The performance is a small part of the process, with students also needing to research and reflect on their drama skills. In Ms. Eddington's words:

"I wanted the students to make connections with what they read in English and Drama. Our English concept is 'Old ideas are timeless and interesting' and we are looking at how we reinvent the stories and themes from old literature. Drama is a great way to recreate and show this." Working in groups is also a good collaboration exercise, and performing their tableaux to their peers is a huge confidence booster. Check out the pics below! Good job, Grade ٦! And thanks to Ms. Eddington for her excellent execution of the class.

The Aim of Research

The aim of this research is to develop literacy pedagogy to facilitate literacy learning among the Indigenous community. Content for pedagogy was sought from experts and the indigenous community. Specifically the study concentrated on strategies to integrate indigenous learners' context and life experiences as integral part in their literacy learning. The design and development of the pedagogy was based on the finding in phase which involved the needs analysis. In sum, the study aimed at answering the following research question:

Methodology

The research is designed based on the Developmental Research Approach (DRA). Development research is the systematic study of design, development and evaluation processes aimed at establishing an empirical basis for the creation of instructional and non- instructional products and new or enhanced models that govern their development (Richey & Klein, ۲۰۰۷). The three phases in this study included needs assessment (phase ۱), design and development (phase ۲) and evaluation (phase ۲). These three phases and the procedure will be explained next. This paper will discuss findings from phase ۲ where the literacy pedagogy was designed and developed.

۱. Phase ۱: finding out the needs of the indigenous learners in literacy learning.

The research question for phase ۱ was: What are the issues and needs of the indigenous learners in literacy learning? A total of twelve participants including teachers, parents and officers in the education field related to the Indigenous community were interviewed. The interview focused on gathering of issues and needs concerning the indigenous learners in literacy. The data were recorded, transcribed and coded according to themes. Curriculum document for Year ۵ was also analyzed to ensure the pedagogy was designed in line with the skill. Findings and conclusions from the analysis phase were used to design the content in phase ۲.

۲. Phase ۲: Designing the Literacy Pedagogy.

Data were collected from two sources; Interview with experts in the field and observations of daily events at the context of the study. A total of twelve experts from various fields such as in English language teaching, material development in ESL, curriculum development and expert knowledge base of the indigenous community participated in the interview. Data from the interviews were analyzed, coded and categorized. The emerging themes were collated according to content for the module and cross checked by the experts for reliability. Data from observation involved the students, parents, and village community in two particular indigenous settings.

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Video camera recordings of daily events in the two settings were made and later analyzed for the content. Events that captured the cultural background, distinct daily experiences and natural sites were selected to be included in the module.

Based on the insights from the interviews and observations, content for a reading unit was designed. Later the design was translated into a pedagogical module comprising a reading text and the teaching instructions. The reading text, a story about an indigenous boy was written and designed as a digital story which was presented in the form of a video. Participants in the story were taken from the context of the study which included mainly the indigenous community. The final product that emerged from the design and development phase was a digital story pedagogical module which was implemented as well as evaluated in two primary schools for the indigenous learners.

Result

Connect the literature

Connecting literature to other classes can be a great way to connect the student and the literature to the real world. Talk to your co-workers, find out what sections of history, science, math (there has to be at least a few math stories out there!), and any other subject and try to find literature that they could choose from that would fit in with those other sections. If they can see what literature was produced during the ۳۰'s in America was like because of the great depression, they can relate both history and the literature to the world they are living in.

Talking to other teachers and trying to sync up relevant texts with what they are going over in other classes could be a good way to make texts more relevant to the students and to maybe even make reading more interesting for them. If the students already know about a certain topic, it may be interesting for them to expand their knowledge on it by looking at real stories by real people from that time.

Students are people, just like teachers, and are susceptible to the same whims. Unfortunately, we do not always have a say in what we can teach. In the last week, I have co-taught lessons in physics (work and power, acceleration), biology (kingdoms), the Cuban Revolution, Realist poets, and totalitarian leaders in World War II. No matter how wonderful the student, I highly doubt that many students will be intrinsically motivated to learn about all of these disparate subjects even though there were a handful of students who came in the library for science, history, and English in the span of a week.

Students who often say they hate reading are also students who struggle to read. It is important to make sure if you want to motivate students to read, that they have the skills necessary to read on their own and be confident about it. If a student doesn't "get" a book, it is most likely because they lack the skills necessary to be a confident reader. Some students need help in active reading; while some students may need even more basic instructions assessing each student's issues could become time consuming as a teacher. However, these small issues with each student could become a teachable moment for the entire class. If one student is struggling with one area of the text, maybe you could take that and teach a mini-lesson over it the next day. Try to help students get over their problems and they will become better readers in the process. If you allow them to continue to struggle and just throw more work at them, they will not become better readers. They will struggle and give up on you and they will give up on the text.

Continuous Development of Pedagogy, and Content Knowledge

Repeated experimentation with these virtual worlds is essential to developing pedagogical knowledge and strategies, and to refine and develop technological knowledge so that the world can be developed to foster student content learning. Beta testing of the *Village of Umuofia* indicated that as they "escape" from the confines of regular classroom in the virtual world some student's race quickly around the world or engage in partly out-of-character dialog just discussed. Thus our development of the ability of the teacher to transport characters to certain rooms and "lock doors" as well as the transcript function early tests with the village also indicated the importance of students developing thinking from the point of view of their character before entering into the virtual

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experience. Thus we evolved, as mentioned, pedagogies to prepare students for virtual world participation. During early experiments with the village I held what I later considered to be unrealistic expectations for what kind of actions could be taken during the role-play. I thought, for example, that characters might make collective decisions to take specific actions, such as groups of traditional Africans deciding to burn down the missionary church (as happens in the novel) or the British district commissioner deciding to take some of the African leaders prisoner (another event from the novel). While several of the Literary Worlds have been designed to allow for quite complex character actions and collaborations, I did not develop the technology/pedagogical/content knowledge I needed to make this kind of collaborative activity possible in the *Village.*

The Teaching Instructions

Insights from the interviews and observations have revealed that the indigenous learners have very poor memory and thus face problem in learning. So the experts have suggested that a lot of drills and repetition are necessary.

In relation to these issues, the teaching instructions for the literacy pedagogy were designed based on Gagne's nine events of instruction. The digital text was divided to six sections and each section has a set of instructions. In conclusion, a culturally responsive pedagogy recognizes cultural knowledge, prior experiences and values of the community concerned. It has the learner's context and experience playing a central role in the learning process. Research in this area has proven that instruction through responsive pedagogical model has positive impact on students' knowledge and skill. The present study had the involvement of the indigenous learners and community as major part of the content. This participation has created excitement and motivation among the learners. As in the other parts of the world, this study has added to the knowledge base of literacy development that the indigenous population requires literacy initiatives that are grounded on responsive pedagogy.

Pedagogy beyond Boundaries

The politico-ideological struggle became expressed through two differing views on how to look at students with some sort of physical or mental 'handicap'. The hegemonic view, which

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also had been broadly accepted as the common sense in remedial teaching, was based on what was considered as 'normal' and 'deviant'. This view was operationalized through the listing of a number of handicaps, which then were translated into a number of competencies that teachers could gain through training and thus becoming legitimate or certified experts within these fields. The alternative view that I and some of my colleagues supported was based on the idea that it is the social structures in society that create the stigma for people who do not fit the norm and that the ultimate goal of education is to create realities that make all people develop socially, emotionally and intellectually by refusing to reduce social stigma to individual handicaps. This struggle continued in relation to the local steering documents that we were set to produce as a common document for all and developed sometimes to desperate attempts to keep track of the 'enemy's' argumentations as we at one occasions found out that a member of our opposition was recording meetings and asked someone to transcribe our dialogue hoping that it could be used against us following a 'Watergate'- model. Under these circumstances there was no other option than to divide the staff into two groups that could carry out our ordinary work in parallel, that is to carry out a one-year teacher education programmer for remedial teachers, by also dividing the students into two groups that followed two different versions of the programmer in line with the basic pedagogical ideas of each group of teacher educators; our team then modeled an approach that in retrospect can be named a critical-participatory project model, which in short is described here.

The major part of the programmer was then organized as project work, when smaller groups worked on specific issues related to what they considered as important aspects of formal education. Study visits, invited speakers, lectures, and team building activities became integrated parts of the studies and to a certain extent you could say that the learning process did not stop when the programmer came to an end. In fact, many of the participants and the teacher educators continued to meet on an annual basis to discuss their experiences 'from the field', to document their experiences, and some of them were also called back to the programmer to act as resource persons or started to run seminars and workshops for other teachers and in that way the ideas that the programmer was based on were influencing many practitioners.

Creating Space and Pace for Students

This narrative starts in experiences as a remedial teacher in basic education for ۱٤-۱٦ years old students who were told that they did not fit into ordinary classes in a school system that was officially designed to include everyone. Therefore, these students ended up as disaffected students and placed in a separate class, where I was supposed to teach them and to keep them away from ordinary classes where they were considered disturbing elements. All students in this class saw themselves as failures and reacted to this social stigma in destructive ways, extrovertly or introvert. Therefore, some of them always ended up in trouble and conflict, while others just 'disappeared socially' through their own self-neglecting behavior. As their teacher, it became important to restore self-respect amongst the students and to develop the classroom to a kind of social sanctuary where students felt needed before anything else was considered. This led to alternative solutions of pedagogy in the sense that we could not work following a 'normal' textbook-led classroom practice but had to create space and pace for the students' own initiatives. Language studies where integrated with own writings even including poetry based on the students own experiences and social studies were organized as projects related to events in the community. The organization of classroom work became dependent on the students own efforts and contributions, and comments where now and then made that 'all are needed in the classroom to make it work' as absenteeism used to be a common problem for the students and which occasionally reappeared.

Conclusion

Effective technology integration for pedagogy around specific subject matter requires developing sensitivity to the dynamic, transactional relationship between all three components. A teacher capable of negotiating these relationships represents a form of expertise different from and greater than, the knowledge of a disciplinary expert (say a mathematician or a historian), a technology expert (a computer scientist) and a pedagogical expert (an experienced educator).

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