

**Technology and the Classroom: A Comparative Study of English
and TESL T.A. Technology Use**

ENG 576 – Case Study

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Rachel Schienke & Emily Dammer

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Technology and the Classroom: A Comparative Study of English and TESL T.A. Technology Use

Abstract: This study worked to examine the practices of two Minnesota State University, Mankato ENG 101 graduate teaching assistants (Dammer & Schienke) and three TESL graduate teaching assistants (Boltaeva, Jabeen, & Pavliuk) to best determine how different varieties of technology are used in a classroom setting. Based on surveys and interviews, we aimed to discover variants in teaching styles and technology uses of both instructors and students. Also incorporated into the Results phase were international technological research practices informed by Huatong Sun's value-oriented cultural dimensions and "C.L.U.E" concept, which highlights a Culturally Localized User Experience of technology both in and out of the classroom. Through C.L.U.E methodology, we can evaluate the effectiveness of technologies used to assist students both during in-class learning and out-of-class homework and class communication. Included in this study are classroom technologies such as SmartBoards, LanSchool, Desire2Learn Brightspace, and MavMail, among others offered by Minnesota State University, Mankato; personal technologies such as social media, handheld translators and recorders, and cell phones; and homework technology such as word processing software, Google Docs, and spreadsheets.

Research Questions

- What classroom technology most impacts classroom dynamics in TESL classrooms at Minnesota State University, Mankato?
- What other factors, such as class size, gender ratio, or prominent nationality in the class come into play when using technology in the classroom?
- How does classroom, homework, and personal technology affect teaching styles in both the English and TESL college classroom?
- How can TAs and instructors in the United States be aware of and utilize technology in cross-cultural classrooms?
- How does Sun's C.L.U.E. framework inform the ways international students use technology in an American classroom?
- Which of Sun's value-oriented cultural dimensions are most prominent in an international college classroom? Which most affects the type of technologies used? How do these dimensions differ in a classroom with primarily English speakers?

Hypothesis: *TESL TAs use more varied technology both in and out of the classroom to aid English-language retention and improvement in non-native speakers.*

Methods

To ensure a varied sample, we interviewed three different TESL TAs (Rubaiyat Jabeen, Nigina Boltaeva, and Ivanna Pavliuk) who have each been teaching for a different amount of time. In the interviews, we asked questions relating to the diversity of their classroom, their students' familiarities with classroom and homework technology, the technology they favored in the classroom, and how they observed students using those technologies as well as social media. Emily conducted two interviews and Rachel conducted one. Follow-up questions clarifying TA use of web-based learning programs, as well as differentiating classroom technology from software tools used in and out of the classroom, proved beneficial to gain further insights of TA teaching practices and methods. Additionally, we ended up questioning our subjects further about classroom activities used with or without the aid of technologies, which gave insight on the differentiation of teaching styles we were aiming to determine. Appendices B, C, and D contain the full interviews with each TA.

To be able to compare and contrast the information gathered from the TAs, we also answered the interview questions collaboratively. Knowing that we worked in similar classrooms with identical technologies available to us, we were able to merge our answers to speak to both our general experiences and that of our ENG 101 TA peers. Appendix A contains a full transcript of our interview.

Results

Our initial question was about the cultural background of the TESL TAs classrooms. Each TA responded that their students all came from a lot of different countries like Saudi Arabia, China, and Pakistan. We wanted to establish how diverse each classroom was, and determine whether or not cultural or gender ratios determined teaching methodology or technological effectiveness.

The second question of the study aimed to determine what classroom technologies are most frequently used and when. The technology most commonly used in the TESL TAs' classrooms was D2L and PowerPoint. Rubaiyat and Nigina also commented that they frequently use both visual and audio recorders to record their students practicing speaking English (Appendix B and C). One of the TESL TAs also frequently uses Lanschool (Appendix D), however, she was the only one who utilized the features that program had to offer. The Doc Cam was also a piece of classroom technology that was used more often than the Smart Board, as all three of the TESL TAs seemed to agree that the Smart Board was something that they never use in their classroom, beyond its purpose as a projector.

When asked what technology their students best respond to, all three of the TESL TAs commented that their students often use their cell phones and certain applications as dictionaries and translators to help with writing and speaking in English as a second language. However, the

TESL TAs commented that they have to put in place some very clear cellphone policies to make sure the students don't use them for things other than class related activities. The TESL TAs also seemed to agree that D2L is used by most of their students. Rubaiyat, however, has her students post discussions to a Facebook page as she has found that they are more comfortable using Facebook to communicate through posts than D2L (Appendix B). She made it clear though, that Facebook was an additional assignment to D2L, as D2L is used for uploading papers and exchanging lesson information.

When asked what class activities their students responded to the best, the three TESL TAs responded quite differently. Rubaiyat said her students prefer performance based activities where they present in front of the class. Rubaiyat likes to minimize her time in front of the classroom talking, so she encourages her students to share what they are learning (Appendix B). Nigina said her students like competition based activities where they are rewarded points for their efforts. She also prefers to have her students participate in small group discussions, so they are encouraged to discuss what they are learning (Appendix C). Ivanna said her students enjoy the "Question of the Day" activity that is related to that day's lesson. The students are required to write and post their answers to D2L (Appendix D). Even though the TESL TA's answers varied, they all seem to support that their students react some way or another actively to their learning.

The last thing the TESL TAs were asked is what their students struggled with the most in terms of technology in the classroom. D2L seemed to be the most common tool students struggled with, mostly due to the fact that it was a new program that their students weren't used to and that there is a learning curve with it. Once they spent some time using the program, they became more adept at accessing all of its features.

To compare the TESL TAs answers with our own experiences, we also answered the questions, which are fully enumerated in Appendix A. The majority of our students are from the Midwest region of the United States. Between the two of us, we counted a total of three ESL students in our classrooms over the total time we have been teaching, so our lessons have very much catered to learners using English as their first, and sometimes only, language. The classroom technology that we both use most often includes D2L, PowerPoint, and the projector/document camera. We both agreed that the less technology we use in the classroom, the more our students seem to respond to our lessons, so we try to steer away from lessons dependent on technology. Additionally, there are often technological issues in the computer labs in which we teach. Cell phone use is regulated in our classrooms, and our students seem at ease with most technological tools and classroom software, with the exception of unfamiliar tools with a variety of functions like D2L. Overall, our technology use is very similar to the use of the TESL TAs, but it is our classroom functions and activities that vary most from theirs.

Discussion

Once we collated the information gathered from all three interviews, it became clear that our hypothesis was overreaching - TESL TAs teach very similarly to first-language instructors and use many of the same technologies to do so.

One possible explanation for the results gathered was the location. Minnesota State University, Mankato, offers similar technologies and classroom setups for almost all TAs. Therefore, the TESL TAs were working with the same basic types of technology in the classroom that we were. Additionally, regardless of varied assignments and assignment structure, the methods for completing and turning in assignments were very similar. Students did their assignments using Microsoft Word and turned their assignments into the D2L Dropbox. In-class activities were centered around verbal discussion in class and written discussion on D2L's discussion board, or used technology as a catalyst for learning rather than a primary learning tool. Additionally, both the English and TESL TAs were trained in Minnesota State, Mankato's desired course competencies and given similar curriculums and tools to teach. Because of this, many teaching styles were tailored to fulfilling those similar assignments using similar technologies. If the study would have spanned multiple universities and multiple TESL and English programs, the results would have likely been more varied.

It was this contrast between verbal and written assignments that turned out to be the biggest contrast between teaching styles of TESL and first-language TAs. As seen in our personal interview in Appendix A, in both of our classes, we often utilized a large amount of in- and out-of-class writing assignments. Since the majority of our students spoke English fluently, our focus was on the development of their writing and critical thinking skills. However, in the TESL classroom, there was a more equal emphasis on both English writing and speaking. The TESL TAs want to first make sure their students have a decent grasp of the English language by having their students record themselves speaking using either a visual or audio recording device. They then use these recordings as homework or a basis for in-class work that emphasizes correct grammar and syntax both in speaking and in writing.

In both the TESL and English classrooms, critical thinking about writing, assigned texts, media, voice and articulation, etc. is emphasized and encouraged. In the English classroom, teaching mostly students who are able to articulate critical concepts if they understand them, translating that thinking into writing is practiced constantly. Application of new writing skills to students' structures, organization, and articulation is constant and not expected to be hindered by a lack of understanding of the words themselves. However, in the TESL classroom, sometimes that critical thinking is hindered by language - the students are able to understand and think critically, but they are unable to articulate those thoughts on paper in succinct and correctly structured English. The TESL TAs aim to combine critical thinking with their audio assignments, getting

students to becoming comfortable speaking and using the language. Then, they are able to have that conversational recording to study patterns and potential errors before and while writing. In the end, having to practice English in a variety of ways makes them not only more adept speakers and writers, but also more aware and adept thinkers.

Based on these findings, we concluded that while technology is utilized very similarly between classrooms, the TESL classroom focuses more heavily on verbal English comprehension and usage, incorporating speaking lessons with written lessons to emphasize grammar and syntax, while the first-language English classroom takes a heavier writing-competency approach,

C.L.U.E. Implications

In her text *Cross-Cultural Technology Design* (2012), Huatong Sun outlines the concept of a Culturally Localized User Experience. She highlights implications of using a single technology to teach or inform a variety of users across several cultures by interviewing and tracing the user experience of five college students that used SMS messaging. According to Sun, doing so reveals “how each specific local use develops in a concrete activity situated at the intersection of multiple material, social, cultural, and technological contexts and how this local use echoes with both the subjectivity of the user and the ethos of the surrounding culture” (p. 108). In our study, we were able to determine where and how often TESL T.A.s most frequently employ classroom, personal, and homework technologies, which helped us better understand daily classroom routines and structure international students best responded to.

Results showed that cultural dimensions in the international classroom and English-speaking classroom are similar, and therefore teaching strategies are similar as well. However, as explored in discussion, the main differentiation in teaching styles and technology use occurred not in ways technology was utilized, but rather in ways that it was not.

Utilizing the format of D2L as well as starting class periods with “free writes” and including writing assignments throughout class is a common practice for most T.A.s. Students are often asked to produce writing in-class that early articulates their opinions, or are expected to use the discussion board on D2L to have written discussion with their peers. While the international classroom does use D2L for reasons such as the assignment dropbox, the calendar function, and homework posted to the News section, their in-class work is focused more on English as a spoken language. Regardless of language, thinking critically about text and writing is emphasized and encouraged. And this makes sense for the TESL classroom aims: when working with a group of students speaking English as a second language, it is imperative to have them use as much English as possible when they are actually in the classroom. And the wider the vocabulary and grasp of the language the student has, the better they can articulate that critical thinking in writing - which is the ultimate goal of both classes. While students who speak

English as a first language have the advantage of understanding basic grammar, syntax, and organization, second-language speakers often struggle with nuances in the English language. By foregoing in-class writing assignments with presentations, verbal assignments, and other oral activities, TESL T.A.s aim to facilitate an equal amount of written and spoken English in the classroom, as opposed to the writing-oriented classroom curriculum favored by native speakers.

It can be determined, then, that the C.L.U.E framework can be used in considerations as small as the individual classroom. Even across a variety of ESL classrooms, creating a culturally localized user experience with preselected classroom technology can vary greatly depending on the goals of the instructor, their comfort in utilizing classroom technology, and most importantly, the participation of the students in classroom technological circuits and where they are in the understanding and practice of the English language.

Implications of Value-Oriented Cultural Dimensions

While secondary to our primary goal of understanding the contexts in which classroom technology is most often used in TESL classrooms, another structural factor in this study is the examination of Sun's value-oriented cultural dimensions (p. 11). Evaluating classroom technology use through the lens of each dimension displays potential sociological and cultural structures within the classroom environment that affect how and when technology is employed.

Power distance - This "refers to the extent to which less powerful members of a culture expects and accept unequal power and authority distribution" (p.11). Through technology such as LanSchool and D2L, teachers are able to establish authority early on in the classroom. Despite two international classrooms with high ratios of males to females, power distance and subsequence distribution seemed to be consistent across classroom environments

Uncertainty avoidance - There seemed to be similar levels of uncertainty avoidance in both international and English-speaking classrooms. Students across all five classes were introduced to D2L for the first time at the beginning of the Fall 2015 semester. The two English-speaking classrooms use D2L for grades, homework, assignment postings, etc., but D2L functions are less frequently employed in the ESL classroom. This is partially due to both students' and instructors' willingness to engage with the technology; some instructors are more willing to experiment with functions of LanSchool or the SmartBoard and thus encourage their students to become more familiar with classroom technology as well.

Individualism and collectivism - Despite differences in representations for both individualistic and collectivist cultures across five classrooms, the structure of an English class allows for students to work both individually and in groups. Because of this, despite a wide representation of cultures throughout the classrooms, individualistic and collectivist cultures are set aside in favor of a culture of the classroom and its expectations, whether that be working alone or having your success determined by the performance of your group or team assigned for a particular assignment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the original proposed hypothesis proved false; TESL TAs do not vary greatly in their use of technologies and teaching methods in their classrooms. However, we did find a variance in actual classroom activities: TESL TAs focus on language oracy and writing, while first-language TAs rely more heavily on written in- and out-of-class assignments to improve written English syntax and grammar. Since TESL TAs focus on a more complete comprehension and usage of the English language as a whole, their teaching styles and class time focus on written and verbal language skills. TAs from both the TESL and ENG 101 classroom both tend to avoid use of complex and/or a wide variety of technologies, choosing instead to focus on student participation, interactive learning activities using technology as an aid rather than a means, and student comprehension by practice, whether that practice be writing or speaking.

Appendix A

Dammer and Schienke Personal Interview

Course: ENG 101 English Composition

1. What is the cultural background of the majority of your students?
 - The cultural background of the majority of our students is American, specifically from the Midwest.
2. What kinds of technology do you use most often in your classroom?
 - We both use the projector to display and annotate documents designed for concept comprehension or class discussion.
 - a. What classroom technology do your students best respond to?
 - We have both discovered that the less technology the more our students seem to respond to the lesson, so we encourage small group and in-class discussions in response to our lessons that we try to teach from either the Whiteboard or from a shorter PowerPoint projected onto the screen at the front. The more interaction with the lesson, the more we have found the students respond to the information. After and/or along with small group and in-class discussions we encourage as much writing as possible. That either entails short writing exercises during class that respond to the lesson or homework assignments that deal with the drafting process for their four major essays.
 - b. What kind of technology do your students use personally most often?
 - We have found that our students use either their personal computers or the computers available in the labs that we teach in. In terms of programs that we use on the computers, our students seem to use Word or Google Docs most often to create their essays and writing assignments and then to share them with each other for peer reviews. They also use the Dropbox feature on D2L to send their essays and assignments to us.
 - c. What tools on D2L do you use the most often in or for your classroom?
 - We use the Discussion board, the Content page, the News Feed, and the Dropbox most often on D2L.
 - The Discussion board is used for students to respond to the homework assignments or readings outside of class. The hope is that if they respond before class on the readings, they will have at least one thing to say during in-class discussions because they have already processed the assignment.
 - The Content page is used to post assignment sheets and readings so our students have access to them at all times.
 - The News Feed is used to post homework assignments and any information we need to let our students know at a short notice. It's almost used like a bulletin board. The students can look there for any new or important information.

- The Dropbox is used for students to upload their assignments.
3. What kinds of class activities does your class best respond to? What kinds of activities/day-to-day dynamics of your classroom affect the participation of your class?
- Our students best respond to activities that involve active participation. They enjoy small group discussions where they get to participate with the lessons and information. They also enjoy competitive based assignments where they are rewarded points for their efforts. We have found that the less lecture based teaching we do and the more the students are involved with their own learning, the more they enjoy the lessons and assignments.
 - We often have them free write before class starts to get them thinking about the day's lesson, and to help them process the homework Emily has them blog about their writing assignments and any readings they do before class. This is to encourage them to think through what they have written or read.
4. How do you notice students using their cell phones? Are cell phones ever a problem in your classroom?
- Our students use their cell phones to look up information that might have to do with the lessons, but most of the time they use their cell phones to text or look at social media sites.
 - We often have problems keeping our students from using their phones even when they are supposed to be participating in class activities or assignments. Our syllabi indicates they are supposed to participate in class and that cell phones are a distraction, but sometimes students use their phones during lesson presentations and activities.
5. What are your students' biggest technological struggles in the classroom? Do you see any consistent trends in the way they use email, word processing, D2L, or social media?
- Most frequently, we see students struggling with classroom technology they are unfamiliar with and that are also prone to technical errors, such as D2L's Dropbox and discussion functions. Consistently, students take notes and photos on their cell phones in class whenever possible, despite no-cell-phone policies in the classroom.

Appendix B

Interview with Rubaiyat Jabeen performed by Emily Dammer

Course: ESL Intensive Reading and Writing

1. What is the cultural background of the majority of your students?
 - Rubaiyat spoke about having students in her class from all over, specifically from Saudi Arabia, Colombia, South Korea, Indonesia, Pakistan, and China.

2. What kinds of technology do you use most often in your classroom?
 - Rubaiyat said that the technology that she uses in her class spans from PowerPoint, audio recording devices, and the Doc Cam. Some programs that she uses on the Internet included YouTube, Screener, VoiceThread, Facebook, and D2L. She also has her students download the Oxford Dictionary on their cellphones, so the students are at times allowed to have their cellphones out to use that app.
 - In terms of their familiarity with some of the programs mentioned, Rubaiyat commented that her students feel more comfortable using Facebook, so she created a page that she could write posts that the students would respond to. The posts are similar to the D2L Discussion board, but are easier for the students to interact with because they are more familiar with how Facebook works.
 - Rubaiyat still tries to use D2L, but the students just don't seem to respond to it as much as they do to Facebook.

3. What classroom technology do your students best respond to?
 - What kind of technology do your students use personally most often?
 - Rubaiyat said that her students sometimes bring in their own laptops, and they are on their cellphones often. They were also not required to buy the course textbooks, so they can find an electronic version online. They are then allowed to use their laptops to read from that electronic version.
 - Rubaiyat commented that in order to keep cell phone usage under control, she gives the class specific instructions on when to use their cell phones and how. She also monitors them for correct cell phone usage (walks around the classroom during small group and individual work time).
 - What tools on D2L do you use most often in or for your classroom?
 - Rubaiyat said she uses Dropbox most often for having her students turn in assignments. She also posts videos on the D2L Content page (never as links, but as direct files). She shares the videos the students recorded using the audio and video recorders that they checked out of the library on the content page so other students can see each other practicing their English. That way they can learn from each other.

4. What kinds of class activities does your class best respond to? What kinds of activities/day-to-day dynamics of your classroom affect the participation of your class?

- Rubaiyat said that her class responds best to performance based activities, so in-class activities where the students must present. Also where the students are actively participating in the assignment and group discussions.
 - She prefers to minimize the teacher talk time as much as possible to let the students talk. She tries to get in as much pair share as she can; where they get into pairs or small groups and discuss the lessons/activities.
 - She likes to have the students present to encourage them practicing their English and active participation in the class. The presentations usually involve mini-presentations that are prepped by discussions in class.
 - When the students present, Rubaiyat records them with a camcorder and gives evaluations of their oral English presentation.
5. How do you notice students using their cell phones? Are cell phones ever a problem in your classroom?
- Students use their cell phones when asked to look up thing on their Oxford Dictionary App.
 - Rubaiyat tries to monitor their cell phone usage to the best of her ability, but often students get away with using their phones even when they are not supposed to.
6. What are your students' biggest technological struggles in the classroom? Do you see any consistent trends in the way they use email, word processing, D2L, or social media?
- The students seem to struggle with D2L the most, so that's why she uses Facebook because they are more familiar with it. She also prefers to send emails about the homework because the students struggle with finding things on D2L as well. Most of the students have never used anything like D2L before.
 - However, Facebook is not a replacement, but another assignment.

Appendix C

Interview with Nigina Boltaeva performed by Emily Dammer

Course: ESL 125 Advanced Oracy for Non Native Speakers

1. What is the cultural background of the majority of your students?
 - Nigina spoke about having students from all over, including Korea, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Nigeria Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and China.

2. What kinds of technology do you use most often in your classroom?
 - Nigina said that the technology that she uses in her classroom includes audio and video recorders and the Doc Cam. Some programs that she uses on the internet include Google Docs, PowerPoint, D2L, and Prezi for document sharing and presentations.
 - She most often uses the audio and video recorders to record the students speaking in English. This way she can play back the recording so the student can hear themselves speaking English. They can listen and/or watch it to hear where they might make mistakes or where they need to practice. The students can keep watching the videos to practice their English.
 - The students prefer to see and hear themselves speak, rather than just getting feedback from Nigina on where they need work or where they made mistakes in terms of their English.
 - They self assess their performance two or three times during the semester using the audio and video recorders.
 - Nigina mentioned that cell phones are allowed in the classroom as the students use a translator app to help with any English words they may not know.
 - However, the students are not allowed to use their phone for anything else. They must have the phone put away until they are asked to use their phones by the teacher. The teacher also goes around and checks to make sure the students aren't using their phones for other things.
 - They must have their phones in their pockets or stowed in their backpacks.

3. What classroom technology do your students best respond to?
 - Nigina said that she doesn't use the Smartboard often because it doesn't really work, so she has the students work with their own computers. The class watches the Prezi presentations on the projector, but she usually just uses the Whiteboard if she wants to add any notes. She also uses a lot of paper with her notes that she shows on the Doc Cam.
 - Nigina commented that she uses the Doc Cam more often because she is able to write on her notes directly. Students also present projects using the Doc Cam more often than using the projector. They don't have time to type anything into the main computer up at the front, so it's easier to use

the Doc Cam for them to present, where they can just write directly on the paper that they printed out before they came to class.

4. What kind of technology do your students use personally most often?
 - Nigina said very few students actually have their computers with them when they come to class, but they use their phones often when allowed. But mostly the class does in-class discussions so they rarely use technology, but when they do they use the technology that's available to them in the lab.
 - They use the computers in front of them most often. When they are on their computers they use D2L to share information and beyond that they use Google Docs as well.
 - What tools on D2L do you use most often in or for your classroom?
 - Nigina said she doesn't use the Discussion board very often. She mostly uses the Dropbox and Content page. D2L is mostly for her to communicate with students rather than the students to communicate with each other.
 - She would like to use a program on the web called VoiceThread next semester. It's similar to video blogging. It links everyone via videos that the students can record and send to one another. She thinks it will encourage more interaction between the students. The program is like a visual presentation form of blogging where the students can comment as well.
5. What kinds of class activities does your class best respond to? What kinds of activities/day-to-day dynamics of your classroom affect the participation of your class?
 - Nigina said her class best responds to activities in the shape of competitions. She gives extra points as a reward to the winners. These types of activities seem to encourage participation in her classroom.
 - She also does a lot of in-class and small group discussions. Whole class discussions aren't great because only certain students speak, so she does a lot of smaller group discussions that seem to work better because everyone is encouraged to share in the smaller group settings.
6. How do you notice students using their cell phones? Are cell phones ever a problem in your classroom?
 - Nigina said students use their cell phones when using the translator app most often.
 - She said she tries to monitor their cell phone usage by walking around the classroom to make sure they are using them only when she asks them too, but she cannot control the entire class, so unfortunately some get away with using them even when not asked to.
7. What are your students' biggest technological struggles in the classroom? Do you see any consistent trends in the way they use email, word processing, D2L, or social media?

- Nigina said email is really difficult for them. They have a hard time replying on time and checking their emails on a regular basis. Some never reply back at all to her emails.
- D2L was difficult for them to navigate through as well. They have a hard time finding things where they are uploaded and keeping up with dates on the Dropbox. They also struggled with uploading files as well. This is really because D2L is there for one semester, and they don't have enough time to familiarize themselves with it.
- Nigina believes that as long as technology use is well planned and not abundant it's fine. But she prefers to use the Whiteboard as technology is not as reliable and always needs a plan B.

Appendix D

Interview with Ivanna Pavliuk performed by Rachel Schienke

1. What is the cultural background of the majority of your students? What is the male:female ratio in your classroom?

- Ivanna's class is diverse, with 6 Koreans, 4 Saudis, 4 Mexicans, and also 1 each from Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, and Germany. The class has 12 males and 8 females.

2. What kinds of technology do you use most often in your classroom? Consider both in-class and out-of-class technology and communication?

- Her class consistently asks for PowerPoint presentations to be posted to D2L for reference materials. They also use Word to complete most of their assignments, and were surprised by the different capabilities of LanSchool. Ivanna often utilizes LanSchool for collaboration or to draw attention to herself or certain features on her own screen she wants to share with her students.
- Most often, they are using email to communicate with Ivanna and each other, Word to complete their assignments, and D2L for notes on homework and other assignments.
- D2L is probably the most frequently used overall, with Ivanna using Dropbox, Content (uploading additional materials), Calendar to post all due dates, News to remind students about homework or other daily work, and she recently started incorporating discussions on the Discussion board to continue to improve her students' English writing in a more casual context..

3. What kinds of class activities does your class best respond to? Do any of the directly involve technology or computers? What kinds of activities in your classroom affect the participation of your class?

- Ivanna usually starts her class with a warm-up activity called "Question of the Day," which is usually related to the topic of the class. Originally, they wrote their answers and submitted them to Dropbox, but recently she started using Discussions for that, so that they can see each others' answers. Student feedback showed that they were very much in favor of posts of the discussion board, because not only do they get to see what kinds of answers the other students provide, but it's a good place to review their writing and determine where they are in terms of English skills compared to their classmates.

4. How do you notice students using their cell phones? Do they use it for anything class-related on a regular basis? Are cell phones ever a problem in your classroom?

- In her syllabus, she wrote that cell phones are not allowed. During the first classes, students were using them to look up different words or translations for those words, but then they were shown how to easily use a computer for this. She stated that overall, cell phones are not a problem in her classroom; she tries to keep them busy during the class so they won't have time to use their smartphones. However, since a lot of her students are friends outside of class, they are connected on Facebook and use that to talk about the class and share information.

5. What are your students' biggest technological struggles in the classroom? Do you see any consistent trends in the way they use email, word processing, D2L, or social media?

- So far, none of her students have had any struggles using any type of technology. The exception was a single student who had some struggles with Word. He had never used it before coming to the US and did not inform Ivanna of that fact, so he quickly fell behind when it came to proper formatting and other word processing functions. Once the problem was brought to light and he was able to work with a tutor to show him the basics, he is now doing well. Her students are not familiar with all features of D2L, e.g. Discussions. Before implementing something new in the classroom, she will show them how to use it (showing the screen of the computer on the smartboard or using LanSchool so they can follow the process). Or, when the class was trying to do a peer review on the computers using “track changes” option for the first time, they needed to be walked through the process. At the end of the day, they use a lot of different social and academic technologies, but their use is not much different from a regular English-speaking classroom.