

Christiane Lütge
Thorsten Merse (eds.)

Digital Teaching and Learning: Perspectives for English Language Education

narr STUDIENBÜCHER

narr\|f
ranck
e\|atte

Digital Teaching and Learning in the Primary EFL Classroom

Annika Kolb

Introduction

Abstract

The chapter focuses on the use of digital media in the foreign language classroom at primary level. In light of the sometimes controversial debate on whether young learners can benefit from computer-mediated learning and teaching, it advocates the use of digital media for three reasons: first, with digital media playing a relevant role in primary school children's daily life the language classroom has to take account of this reality. Furthermore, media competence is established as a major goal in primary school curricula to which all subjects have to contribute. Last, digital media provide specific chances for teaching English at primary level, most importantly as a tool to produce multimedia texts for learners with limited linguistic competences and as a communication medium to provide authentic communicative situations for children who do not actively use the language outside the classroom. Illustrated by examples from the classroom, it is outlined to what extent digital media can help develop language and cultural competences at primary level in the different competence areas. The chapter ends with a discussion of the challenges the media use brings about and some consequences for the classroom.

Warm-up

- ▶ How many primary school children do you think use the internet on a weekly basis and how many have their own smartphone?
- ▶ What areas of primary EFL could benefit most from the use of digital media?
- ▶ What could be challenging aspects of using digital media at primary school level?

1 Digital Teaching and Learning in the Primary EFL Classroom - Why?

For many children, screen time is already high at home because they spend a great amount of their free time with computers, video games and mobile phones. Should this

time be further increased within the classroom? There are three reasons why digital media should be part of English language learning and teaching already in primary school.

1.1 The Role of Digital Media in Children's Life

high frequency of children's media use

Already at the age of primary school children, digital media play an important role in children's daily lives. The KIM study, a survey on the use of media with approximately 1200 children aged 6–13 and their parents, shows high numbers of media use: In nearly every household, there is a computer with internet connection that children use on a regular basis (Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest 2017: 8). By the end of primary school, 80 % of the children use the internet at least from time to time, at the age of 8 to 9 years, more than 50 % go online (ibid.: 33). About half of the children have their own mobile phone, in every third case this is a smartphone (ibid.: 9). Search engines, WhatsApp, Youtube and Facebook are most frequently accessed. Already one third of 6–7-year-old computer users look for school-related content on the internet. These figures show that primary school children actively employ digital media for school-related purposes and that mobile devices make them increasingly independent from adults.

Furthermore, digital media very often bring students in contact with the English language. Outside the classroom, students' engagement with English frequently takes place through film clips that they watch on mobile devices or computer games which are played in English. In a study on primary school's students' use of English outside the classroom in Mexico, Sayer & Ban (2014) show a variety of functions of the language which are nearly exclusively connected to digital media use.

The significant role that digital media play in children's life calls for the integration of these media into the language classroom. If primary school pedagogy strives for helping the children cope with the demands of the world in which they live, digital media cannot be ignored. Irion claims that teaching at primary level should not just introduce children to any digital media, but offer support to explore the media environment that is relevant for them (Irion 2016: 29).

media education in primary school

On the one hand, the omnipresence of media in children's lives provides the opportunity for students to bring their prior knowledge to the classroom and makes lesson content personally relevant for them. On the other hand, the use of media requires specific competences and strategies. Especially for primary school, Irion (ibid.: 19) sees three areas for media education (Figure 1): a *normative perspective* should protect children from irritating content in media and provide them with high-quality media products. A *functional perspective* should use media to realize teaching and learning goals and a *reflective perspective* should take a critical view on media and their role in society.

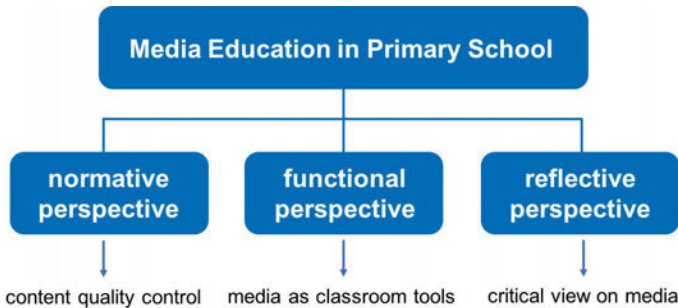


Figure 1: Irion (2016: 19): Areas of media education in Primary School

1.2 Media Literacy in Curricula

As children’s media use shows, the ability to critically use, evaluate, reflect on and create media are highly relevant competences. They have been included into primary school curricula and are seen as interdisciplinary cross-sectional tasks to which all subjects are supposed to contribute. The primary school curriculum of Baden-Württemberg, for example, states:

Die Medienbildung spielt im Fremdsprachenunterricht in Bezug auf authentische Sprachvorbilder ebenso eine große Rolle wie bei der Informationsbeschaffung und bei Präsentationen. Der Umgang mit Medien wird geübt und reflektiert, sodass die Kinder eine sinnvolle und verantwortungsbewusste Nutzung dieser in ihre Lebensgestaltung integrieren können. (Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden-Württemberg 2016: 4)

It is emphasized that the responsible use of media has to be practiced and that the reasonable integration of media in students’ daily lives should be supported through classroom practices. A similar reasoning is followed by the standing conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in their strategy entitled “Education in the Digital World” (KMK 2016). The six dimensions of digital competence spelled out here are supposed to be developed throughout the different subjects. The paper explicitly mentions an early start of digital media education in primary schools:

Da die Digitalisierung auch außerhalb der Schule alle Lebensbereiche und – in unterschiedlicher Intensität – alle Altersstufen umfasst, sollte das Lernen mit und über digitale Medien und Werkzeuge bereits in den Schulen der Primarstufe beginnen. Durch eine pädagogische Begleitung der Kinder und Jugendlichen können sich frühzeitig Kompetenzen entwickeln, die eine kritische Reflektion in Bezug auf den Umgang mit Medien und über die digitale Welt ermöglichen. (ibid.: 11)

Again, the reflective perspective is highlighted. Children do not only have to be introduced to the application of hardware and software; but the impact of media as well as the challenges and the risks of media use should also be addressed (see Classroom

digital media

example *Ad detectives and ad designers*). Issues relevant for primary school children in this context are for example: How can I distinguish between factual information and advertisements if I am looking for material for a presentation in a search engine? What kind of information about myself should I publish on social media? What kind of illustrations from the internet am I allowed to use for a poster? Who should I share pictures of myself and my friends with?

1.3 Chances of Digital Media for the Primary EFL Classroom

Whereas the development of media literacy addresses the reflective perspective, the functional perspective aims at using digital media to foster language and cultural competences. The question here is what the added value of media use for language and cultural learning is. For the primary EFL classroom, Heim (2015) has suggested a helpful categorization:

Digital media can serve as

- ▶ a *communication medium*: In a context in which most students do not use English productively outside the classroom on a regular basis, digital media can help create authentic communicative situations (e. g. in telecollaboration projects).
- ▶ a *tool*: The possibility to combine words, pictures, sounds and animations allows for appealing products that can easily be shared with others (e. g. films, photostories, interviews, ...) which is particularly interesting for learners with limited linguistic abilities.
- ▶ a *resource*: Especially the internet provides a wealth of information and material that students can use for their products. There are several websites which are specifically directed at children or young learners of English, which facilitates the search.
- ▶ a *tutor*: There are various possibilities to provide individual support and facilitate autonomous learning (e. g. digital dictionaries, language learning software) in the heterogeneous learning context of the primary school classroom.

Whyte & Cutrim Schmid (2018) provide an excellent overview of different tools and activities together with their affordances and challenges for the primary EFL classroom. Some of these examples will be presented in the following section.

2 Language and Cultural Competence Development with Digital Media in Primary School

Although competences in primary EFL are developed in an integrated way, digital media provide specific learning opportunities for the different competence areas.

functions of digital media use in the primary classroom

2.1 Speaking and Listening

In the primary classroom, oral communication is at the center. Children develop basic listening and speaking skills to be able to understand classroom discourse, engage in simple dialogues and talk about themselves and topics from their lives. Therefore, they need ample exposure to the language to develop their listening skills and meaningful real-life situations in which they want to talk and have something to say to develop speaking competences (Legutke, Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth 2009: 54 f.). Challenges at the primary level are that learners' limited linguistic means very often do not allow for sophisticated results. Some learners are reluctant to speak in front of the whole class since they feel that they lack the language abilities to properly express themselves. Another problem is that it is quite difficult to establish authentic communicative situations because children in primary school rarely speak English outside the classroom. Digital media can help solve some of these problems:

- ▶ Digital devices can contribute to maximizing students' speaking time in a safe environment. If children can produce their own recordings, they do not have to speak in front of the whole class and can have several attempts until they are satisfied with their product. Furthermore, teachers can use the recordings for diagnostic purposes.
- ▶ Digital products can easily be shared with others. Children can present their recordings to their parents and collect it in their portfolios which makes their success visible and provides a sense of achievement.
- ▶ Language production is supported through applications that facilitate the creation of multimodal products by providing illustrations, sounds, animations etc. (Dausend 2018). With limited linguistic means, a professionally appearing product can be achieved through the visual and acoustic elements as well as the animations. For example, students can make a movie about their own school (Cutrim Schmid & Cvetkovic 2016) or develop a presentation about their favorite pet by using *Voice Thread* (Heim et al. 2013).
- ▶ For listening tasks, the use of mobile devices provides the possibility for differentiated input. Learners can choose listening texts on different levels as opposed to one text for everyone in the class that is traditionally played on a CD player, for example stories or short informational texts like the weather report or interviews with children.
- ▶ Telecollaboration projects in which learners need the foreign language to communicate with partners offer real-life tasks and are considerably facilitated by digital media (see classroom example). Research shows that these kinds of projects can foster motivation and self-confidence to use the target language (Cutrim Schmid & Whyte 2015).

Classroom example: Completing an identity card via video communication (Whyte & Cutrim Schmid 2014)

Two groups of French and German primary school learners communicate in a video communication (VC) setting using an interactive whiteboard. In small groups, learners present themselves (names, age, hobbies) in front of a webcam while their partners in the remote class arrange pictures and text according to the given information to create an identity card for each learner. Support for this speaking and listening task is provided through the camera feed of the remote partner (live screen sharing) and the visual elements on the IWB page. Since the learners are no native speakers, English is used as a lingua franca. The live communication provides a real-life task.

2.2 Reading and Writing

In recent years, the role of reading and writing in primary EFL has changed considerably. Research has shown that the use of written language is beneficial for learners' language development, even at the beginning stage of their learning (Frisch 2015; Diehr & Rymarczyk 2012). A major challenge for primary school learners in this area is the opaque phoneme-grapheme correspondence of the English language which makes it difficult to rely on decoding skills students have acquired in German. Reading unknown texts therefore frequently poses significant problems for young learners. Due to their limited vocabulary, writing tasks that go beyond copying texts or filling gaps need a lot of help. Digital media can provide the following support:

- ▶ As with speaking, multimedia elements in texts facilitate the development of products and allow to communicate interesting content with limited linguistic means (e. g. combining pictures and text in a photostory, using apps like *Book Creator* to create multimedia e-books).
- ▶ The so-called Web 2.0 enables students to publish texts in blogs, wikis, on social media and websites that invite participation. This creates motivating and meaningful writing tasks even for beginners, for example writing a text about their own pets for the website *Pet of the day* (Müller-Hartmann & Schocker 2015). In this way foreign language learning goes beyond the classroom and is linked to students' lives outside school (Alhinty 2015).
- ▶ Applications for cooperative work (e. g. *Etherpad*) allow for the joint writing of texts and mind maps. Especially for beginning learners, it is often helpful to pool one's resources and jointly work on a product.
- ▶ Using a spell checker or online dictionaries when writing texts on a computer can be a major support for children when writing their first texts.
- ▶ Digital texts provide new opportunities for teaching reading skills (Al-Yaqout & Nikolajeva 2015; Manresa & Real 2015). In story apps, for example, the audio

narration helps children to connect written and spoken text and promotes their reading skills. Multimedia elements, opportunities of user interaction (see Figure 2) and vocabulary support can promote independent reading, foster reading motivation and help develop reading strategies (Brunsmeier & Kolb 2017, 2018). Providing different texts on several mobile devices enables children to choose a text according to their interests and their competence levels (Kolb 2018, see also classroom example).



Figure 2: Screenshot from the story app *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Nosy Crow & Bryan 2015; used by friendly permission of Nosy Crow Ltd.)

- ▶ Accessing picturebooks on the screen (both in a whole-class setting or on mobile devices) provides additional possibilities for involvement as opposed to a traditional storytelling scenario (Kegenhof 2014).
- ▶ Telecollaboration projects that rely on email exchanges provide meaningful writing tasks (Ellermann 2008; Rau 2009). If the partners are native speakers or more advanced learners, their texts (e.g. *personal profile, this is my school*) can be used as models for students' own texts.



Classroom example: Extensive reading (Kolb & Brunsmeier 2019)

Students are provided with a selection of story apps on several tablet computers in the classroom. They choose the stories they want to read, in most cases with a partner to allow for cooperative learning. Each story app is accompanied by pre- and post-reading activities that focus on aspects of the content and language of the stories. These activities try to stimulate the children's use of reading strategies, for example, they ask them to predict actions and events or to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context. Based on this support, the children can read stories according to their interests and language level, independently from the teacher. Post-reading activities ask for a summary of the plot in a story map, an evaluation of the story and subjective reactions to the text. The reading sessions are accompanied by whole-class discussions in which the students rate their favourite stories and recommend story apps to each other.



Suggestions for story apps:

Bacciz, Renert, J. & Jott, B. (2013). *Brave Rooney*.

Crab Hill Press, Doyle, B. & Guidera, D. (2011). *My Dad Drives a Roller Coaster Car*.

Crab Hill Press, Doyler, B. & Cummings, T. (2010), *Nash Smasher*

Heartdrive Media LLC (2012). *Pete's Robot*.

Kite Edizioni (2012). *Bufo's Music*.

Nosy Crow, Carey L. & Blanco, M. (2015). *Cinderella's Sister and the Big Bad Wolf*.

Nosy Crow, Bryan, E. (2015a). *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Nosy Crow & Bryan, E. (2015b). *Snow White*.

Nosy Crow & Bryan, E. (2015c). *The Three Little Pigs*.

Nosy Crow & Bryan, E. (2015). *Goldilocks and Little Bear*.

Nosy Crow, Tranter, B. & Tranter, E. (2012). *Parker Penguin*.

Nosy Crow, Tranter, B. & Tranter, E. (2012). *Franklin Frog*.

Sesame Workshop Apps (2010). *The monster at the end of the book*.

Square Igloo, Tousnakhoff, N. & Roussel, M. (2013), *Zoe's Green Planet*.

Tizio Publishing & Bourgonje, C. (2013), *Mud Monster*

Watermark Limited, Proudfoot, D. & Parton, D. (2013). *Angus the Irritable Bull*.

2.3 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Intercultural communicative competence is the prominent goal of the foreign language classroom and entails knowledge, attitudes and skills (Müller-Hartmann, Schocker & Pant 2013: 110). While many of these competences are best developed through intercultural encounters, live encounters or exchanges are difficult to realize in primary school since students would usually not travel abroad on a school trip. Materials

provided in course books very often do not represent the diversity of the target culture and are not always up-to-date (Legutke et al. 2009: 90f.). Digital media offer a variety of possibilities:

- ▶ The internet offers age-appropriate cultural information to acquire knowledge about the target culture(s) and gives the opportunity to compare daily lives. One example would be Children's TV series that provide insights into school and family life, festivals etc. Many of the mostly short episodes are available on YouTube (e.g. *Peppa Pig*, *Charlie and Lola*).
- ▶ Apart from their potential to develop language skills, telecollaboration projects very often contribute to intercultural learning. Children communicate about their cultural practices, for example how they celebrate birthdays or what a class trip looks like in their school (see classroom example). Research on telecollaboration projects with primary school children shows a very positive outcome in terms of children's openness and positive attitude towards other cultures after the projects (e.g. Cutrim Schmid 2018: 185f.; Brunsmeier 2016).

On these websites, partners for telecollaboration projects can be found:

www.epals.com

<https://www.etwinning.net>

www.globalschoolnet.org/programs/travelbuddies/



Classroom example: Creating a power point presentation about our class trip for a partner class (Brunsmeier 2016)

To show to their partner class what they did on their class trip, a German and an American class each prepare a presentation which is then sent to the partner school. The students select photos, add speech bubbles to explain what is interesting in the pictures and record an audio track to go with the illustrations. The follow-up activities focus on similarities and differences of the two class trips and ask for the planning of a joint trip. The students can talk about cultural specifics, give their opinion on elements of their partners' trip and develop an awareness for characteristics of their own context.



2.4 Language Awareness and Multilingual Learning

Children in the primary classroom are increasingly multilingual. Very often, English is not the second, but rather the third or fourth language they learn. They have already acquired metalinguistic and cognitive abilities that can be beneficial for learning English. These multilingual resources are so far very often insufficiently exploited. Although taking account of children's competences in the foreign language classroom

has frequently been claimed, it is not so easy to put this demand into practice. Digital media offer some opportunities to extend the linguistic input and provide opportunities for building on multilingual competences:

- ▶ Digital stories are very often available in different languages the users can choose from. Therefore, it is possible to build on the learners' prior knowledge, support the understanding and foster cross-linguistic comparisons (see classroom example). Research has shown that working with digital multilingual stories can significantly increase children's language awareness both on an affective and on a cognitive level (Lohe 2018).
- ▶ Cutrim Schmid (2018) shows how telecollaboration projects between non-native speakers lead to an understanding of English as a lingua franca and trigger conversations between the students about their linguistic repertoire and language learning experiences. The German and French children in her project noted differences in their English accent and the live telecollaboration sessions also made them hear their partners speak the respective school languages French and German which led to language comparisons, including minority languages like Portuguese.
- ▶ Pellerin's (2014) study on the use of iPads in a primary immersion context in Canada gives evidence of how the repeated listening to their recordings made students aware of grammatical errors as well as of lacking vocabulary. Comparing different versions of a product enables learners to self-reflect on their oral competences and thus develop students' awareness of their learning process.



Classroom example: Multilingual Virtual Talking Books (Elsner 2014, Lohe 2018)

Children read digital illustrated stories in different languages on a computer screen. Their text comprehension is supported by audio narration and a highlighting function as well as preliminary vocabulary introduction. After-reading activities focus on text comprehension, language awareness, cross-linguistic comparisons and language reflection. When working with the stories, students can choose between different languages at all times. An authoring tool enables children to develop and share their own digital stories within a web community. The software can help children develop curiosity for other languages and gain basic knowledge about structures and vocabulary in different languages. Moreover, it can value children's full linguistic repertoire and thereby raise the status of minority languages in the classroom.

2.5 Methodological Competences

In addition to laying the basis for linguistic and cultural learning, the primary foreign language classroom also introduces children to strategic competences and teaches first learning strategies. Children get to know how to organize words in word webs, how to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context and learn how to research and organize information for a presentation. Especially working with a dictionary is not an easy task for primary school children. Even if they have found the unknown word, very often they struggle with the unfamiliar pronunciation.

- ▶ Audio pens (e.g. *TING*) that play audio files when touching a specific image or text in a book can support children when working with a dictionary. They provide the pronunciation of unknown words so that children can look for language items that they need for presentations or dialogues independently from the teacher (Glaser 2018). The same goes for online dictionaries on mobile devices that provide children with easy access to written and oral vocabulary support.
- ▶ Applications that facilitate the creation of mind maps (e.g. *Popplet*) can be used to jointly create word webs and collect language items on a topic. Alhinty (2015) shows how the use of tablet computers in primary classrooms encourages the children to cooperate and to creatively use a variety of applications to design their products.

Classroom example: Ad detectives and Ad designers (Kolb 2012)

This task addresses the reflective perspective of media education. The children get insights into some of the strategies advertising companies use to convince costumers to buy their products. In a first step, as “ad detectives” students look for advertising on the internet that uses the English language. The examples are collected in the classroom. Under the headings “Why English?” and “English is” the class reflects on the purpose of the use of the English language. In the target task, as “ad designers” the children use the collected language items to design their own advertisement for a pair of sneakers. A special focus is laid on language used in advertising, such as *super*, *mega*, *extra* etc. In groups, the children create a digital poster using a poster-making app (e.g. *PicKids*). Several methodological competences are addressed: researching information, selecting and structuring material, respecting copyrights, using the software, teamwork.

3 Challenges and Consequences for the Use of Digital Media at Primary School Level

The examples for the different competence areas show significant chances for the use of digital media in primary EFL. However, there are also challenges the integration of technology brings about.

Equipment:

less well-equipped primary schools than secondary schools

Primary schools are in general less well equipped with digital media than secondary schools. In a survey in 2013, more than half of primary school teachers said they never or rarely used computers (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach & Deutsche Telekom Stiftung 2013: 5), only 8 % of primary schools used notebooks and 20 % had WIFI on their school premises (ibid: 18). In many schools digital media are not easily accessible, but in a separate room which complicates the straightforward integration into daily teaching routines. Some schools use concepts like ‘bring-your-own-device’ to make up for their lack of equipment. However, this concept is less realistic in a primary school context since primary school students are less likely to own mobile devices than secondary students. Scenarios in which the work with digital media is one task among others in an open learning setting so that only few devices are needed per class are one solution to this. Current national initiatives like the *DigitalPakt Schule* will probably change the situation in the future.

Task Design:

communicative tasks that support learner-learner interaction

Another factor that influences the successful integration of digital media into the primary EFL classroom is task design. Especially learning software for beginning learners very often relies predominantly on drill-and-practice activities (Cutrim Schmid & Whyte 2018: 343). A study on the implementation of IWB in the primary classroom showed a dominance of drill activities rather than interaction and communication (Whyte et al. 2014). Learners therefore need open communicative tasks in which they have the possibility to make choices in terms of language and content. Cutrim Schmid & Whyte (2018) report that students’ speech production increased when the children spontaneously talked about the content of their lunch boxes without prior rehearsal in contrast to the previous exchange that had been mainly scripted. Learner-centeredness is another task feature that influences students’ performance. Dausend & Nickel (2017) show how the integration of digital media can support individualized learning. While producing their own ending for the story of the “Ugly Duckling” with the App *Puppet Pals*, different groups of learners make use of the affordances of the application and structure the work process differently, according to their interests and their competence level.

Task Demand and Support:

Primary school children are not only beginning language learners, they are also still beginning technology users and differ from their older peers in their cognitive and emotional skills. The question of appropriate support is therefore vital. Although children are often called “digital natives”, their lack of familiarity with particular hard- and software can frequently be time-consuming and calls for a lot of help. A challenge is for example that most learners do not regularly write on a keyboard so that the writing process can be quite time-consuming. The portability of mobile devices makes it easier for children to help each other (Alhinty 2015: 27).

technical support

Similarly, live communication situations pose specific demands on young learners. They require spontaneous speech production and communication strategies. Children have little control over the situation. Research shows that high levels of teacher mediation are often necessary: “Pupils were guided throughout the exchanges by gesture and verbally, and teachers tended to repeat pupils’ utterances, ratify their actions and supply missing opening and closing routines” (Cutrim Schmid & Whyte 2015: 248). For teachers, it seems challenging to help students keep up the conversation and still not to dominate too much and thereby prevent learner-learner interaction: “An important challenge with YELLS is thus the balance between adequate linguistic and emotional support, on the one hand, and space to create on the other” (Whyte & Cutrim Schmid 2018: 349).

linguistic support

Another aspect regarding task demand is the cognitive (over)load that some applications place on learners. Whereas students frequently seem to benefit from multimedia features and are, for example, able to connect written text, pictures and sound to make meaning from a story app (Brunsmeier & Kolb 2017, 2018), too much different input can also exceed their capacity to process the different types of information. Especially interactive features can interfere with the understanding of the story content and disturb the reading process (Takacs et al. 2015). Task support is needed that focuses children’s attention on the plot and prevents them from engaging too much in interactions with the device, especially if the interactions are only superficial and do not contribute to text comprehension.

cognitive support

The different digital media provide varying opportunities for foreign language learning in the primary EFL classroom and need to be carefully selected. The following table (Table 1) sums up the language learning possibilities explained in the text:

selecting digital media

Aims	Tools and Applications
Providing authentic communication opportunities	Recording and telecollaboration software, Web 2.0, blogs, emails
Reading and creating multimodal texts	Story apps, digital storytelling (e.g. <i>Book Creator</i> , <i>VoiceThread</i> , <i>PicKids</i>)
Supporting cultural learning	Telecollaboration projects, internet research, videos

Providing individual language support	Online dictionaries, spell checker, audio pens (e.g. <i>TING</i>)
Developing language awareness	Multilingual digital stories and websites
Developing language learning strategies	Online dictionaries, audio pens, mind-maps (e.g. <i>Popplet</i>), collaborative online tools (e.g. <i>Padlet</i> , <i>Etherpad</i>)

Table 1: Checklist - Selecting digital media

Conclusion

Summary

The omnipresence of media in primary school children’s lives, media literacy as a competence in curricula, and the chances digital media bring for the language classroom call for their integration into primary English as a foreign language teaching. Their potential for the primary English classroom can be characterized as follows:

Digital media:

- ▶ foster product-orientation through easy-to-use multi-media applications which allow for products that focus on oral language and are appealing despite a limited proportion of language,
- ▶ facilitate intercultural contact and provide authentic communicative situations,
- ▶ simplify the sharing and publishing of linguistic products which fosters motivation and meaningfulness,
- ▶ allow for providing a diversity of material which promotes individualized and autonomous learning,
- ▶ can help create links between children’s learning inside and outside the classroom and integrate their multilingual competences,
- ▶ provide opportunities to reflect on media use and elements of media design which can initiate media literacy.

Challenges lie in the so far poor equipment of most primary schools, the design of communicative, learner-centered tasks that make the most of the applications’ potential and the provision of appropriate support.

Follow-up and Reflection: Tasks and Questions

- ▶ Prepare a short presentation for a parents’ evening in which you explain to the audience why you, as a primary school teacher, would like to integrate digital media into your teaching.

- ▶ List the challenges and the opportunities for some of the activities described in this chapter. Which ones do you consider most worthwhile implementing in the primary EFL classroom?
- ▶ Choose a video clip or a website directed at children. Develop an activity that analyzes its design and reflect on the effects that it could have on the target audience, suitable for a primary school context.

Commented Suggestions for Further Reading

Whyte, Shona & Cutrim Schmid, Euline (2018). *Classroom Technology for Young Learners*. In: Garton, Sue & Copland, Fiona (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Teaching English to Young Learners*. London: Routledge, 338–355.

- ▶ Provides a comprehensive overview of research on digital media in primary EFL and discusses major challenges.

Kolb, Annika & Raith, Thomas (2018). Digital literacy im Englischunterricht der Grundschule. In: Brandt, Birgit & Dausend, Henriette (eds.). *Digitales Lernen in der Grundschule. Fachliche Lernprozesse anregen*. Münster: Waxmann, 37–52.

- ▶ Explains primary school children’s media use and the challenges this brings about and outlines the need for the development of digital literacy in primary EFL, based on two classroom examples.

Holberg, Stefanie & Kapsalis, Anna (2019). Digitale Medien im Englischunterricht. Tech Tools for Teaching. *Grundschule Englisch* 66 (supplement).

- ▶ This booklet gives a wealth of examples on how the six dimensions of digital competence spelled out by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) in their strategy “Education in the Digital World” can be developed in primary EFL.

Cutrim Schmid, Euline & Whyte, Shona (2015). Teaching Young Learners with Technology. In: Bland, Janice (ed.). *Teaching English to Young Learners. Critical Issues in Language Teaching with 3–12 Year Olds*. London: Bloomsbury, 239–259.

- ▶ The article describes a telecollaboration project using an Interactive Whiteboard and presents research findings.

Brunsmeyer, Sonja & Kolb, Annika (2017). Picturebooks Go Digital – The Potential of Story Apps for the Primary EFL Classroom. *CLELE – Children’s Literature in Language Education* 5: 1. [Online: <http://clejournal.org/article-1-picturebooks-go-digital/>, last access 12 September 2020]

- ▶ Based on the results of an action-research project, this paper explores the benefits of story apps for the primary EFL classroom and presents criteria for the selection of appropriate story apps for extensive reading settings.

Rau, Natalie (2009). A Teddy Bear Project – Ein Klassenkorrespondenzprojekt im Fremdsprachenunterricht. *Forum Sprache* 1: 1, 88–108.

- ▶ Outlines both theoretical and practical aspects of pen pal projects and gives examples for a possible project structure, topics and materials.