Digitalising the Instruction: Between Technology Integration and Instrumental Use

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Abstract : The relentless pace of technology development in the last two decades has pervaded much of the recent educational discourse on a nation-wide scale. The rippling echoes of the buzz that account for the myriad of advantages the new technologies bring to the pedagogical activity has inevitably transcended from the western world to the Algerian educational contexts. Attempts have been made by Algerian practitioners to heed this digital advancement and push their instructional practices forward. However, due to the still largely existing first-order barriers as exemplified in the forms of deficient institutional infrastructure and unavailability of sufficient digital materials, the results of those attempts have polarised the views of Algerian academics regarding technology integration within higher education context. Hence, this study aims at measuring the possibility of integrating technology in our classrooms in a way that conforms to the philosophy of hybrid education. It also attempts to re-consider teachers' understanding of technology integration in our context. Furthermore, the purpose of this research is also to reveal the level of teachers' awareness regarding the distinction between technology integration and instrumental use. In view of the nature of these aims, a mixed-methods mode of investigation has been adopted to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from different perspectives. The data collection tools comprise of an observation as well as students' and teachers' questionnaires. The findings show that despite the fact that the examined context is not without its technological limitations, technology integration can be successfully incorporated contingent on teachers' level of knowledge and agency. Technology integration in Algerian universities does not proceed as the bedrock theory of it entails due to issues within teachers' general understanding of utilizing technology in class. It seems that technology is a means to an end, depending on the teachers who make use of it in order to deliver lessons (PowerPoint presentation) and issue commands (Facebook posting). Teachers' ability to clearly discern between integrating technology in their practices versus employing it as an instrument of instruction needs further consideration in order to establish a solid understanding of technology integration within higher education context.

Keywords : technology integration, hybrid education, teachers' understanding, teachers' awareness, instrumental use
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