Learning Intentions - Part 2

Which available technological tools will enhance or add value to this learning?

That seems like a simple question, but as you just saw in the Grecian urn article, it is not that simple. If your learning intentions are not solid enough, they can easily be swept away by the bells and whistles of flashy tech tools.

We should take a look at technological tools with innovative eyes:

How can technology help your project, your students, and their learning in a way that would be unthinkable without it?

Substitution is often a natural first step when integrating technology into the classroom. Replacing the TV and VCR with the interactive whiteboard and an online video service, or replacing pen and paper with a word processing software are examples of substitution that do not necessarily enhance learning.

Some might argue that learning how to use a word processor or even a certain tool within that processor is an added value and, just like what was mentioned in the Grecian urn article, if your learning intention is to have your students learn how to use a certain word processor to be better understood by their audience, well, that is just fine.

But technology can help us teach beyond what was previously possible, and herein lie all the possibilities… and fun!

Technology can easily substitute certain tools that make some aspects of our job easier. For example, auto-correcting quizzes! But technology can help us completely

redesign projects we've been doing for years to an extent that was still inconceivable not long ago.

Just imagine visiting Verona, the setting for Romeo and Juliet, in virtual reality and describing what you see to a partner. That kind of describing exercise was inconceivable not long ago, yet today, it is reality. A virtual one, but still!

Listening, viewing, reading authentic texts in ESL is something that we have all done as teachers, so let's use that as an example to see a possible evolution of this practice.

Having access to more devices per class means the task can be redesigned to have a variety of texts on the same topic but this time, using a variety of sources, be it audiovisual, written texts, clips and so on. And have students reinvest their understanding or performing different tasks using other available means.

As you can see, the question is not "*Which available tech tools will enhance or add value to the learning?*" but rather "*How can we use the tools we have at our school to enhance the learning of our students?*".

In the next module, we'll explore how to integrate technology into your teaching according to your learning intentions.