Cognitive and Social Constructivism, Language Learning, and Innovative Technologies & Social Media

- Technology has changed the way society communicates and accesses information, which has also influenced how we learn.

- Technology promotes active engagement and encourages people to work in groups, provides opportunities for feedback, and connects people who are knowledgeable in a host of different areas.

- Even the term "social media" suggests constructivist implications.

- Traditional teaching was lecture-based and teacher-centered. Innovative technologies promote group interactions, more project-based teaching, and an emphasis on visual and verbal thinking.
Our Bottom Line Challenge

- If we believe in the educational premise of social and cognitive constructivism, and if we believe in the capacity of innovative technologies to enhance social interactions, how do we tap into this when using innovative technologies for language teaching, without getting lost or sidetracked by the technology?
Our Basic Answer

- Focus our language learning on the principles of language acquisition and not on the technology.

- Technology does not replace effort, focus, dedication, and study but when these characteristics are present, technology helps our learning to be more effective.
Example 1: Conversa Brasileira

Use of Video - Student Discussion Comments and Questions

http://coerll.utexas.edu/brazilpod/cob/
Example 2: Brazil Pod - Facebook

BrazilPod Facebook Homepage
https://www.facebook.com/utbrazilpod
**Example 3:**

**Phonetics - Wiki**

Practical Phonetics - Spanish Wiki

http://practicalphonetics.wikispaces.com
Example 4:

É isso aí - Blog

http://kelmbrazil.wordpress.com
Example 5: Executive Interviews - Content

Cultural Interviews w/ Chinese-Speaking Executives

http://www.laits.utexas.edu/orkelm/chinese/index.html
Technology and Social Media have changed the way that we communicate in society. As related to language learning, many of these communication and interaction changes coincide well with the tenants of social and cognitive constructivism. If we can take advantage of these features, and combine them with “old-fashioned-hard-nosed-get-down-and-dirty-stick-it-to-ya” study, learners of foreign language will be more successful and more efficient.
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References


