SWOT ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN EAL CLASS FOR ADULTS (A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE)

VICTESOL SYMPOSIUM 2019

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT DIGITAL LITERACY IN EAL?

Some of the most common challenges we have in EAL classrooms are:

- Socio-economic backgrounds
- Literacy levels
- Mixed Age
- Previous education
- Trauma
- Mixed level classes

What is SWOT analysis?

- **SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.**

- **Strengths and Weaknesses are internal factors such as available resources.**

- **Opportunities and Threats are external factors which could be potential resources.**

Strengths

- Learners have their own learning process. Teachers cannot cater to them individually. However, computers can make learning experience more personal. (Riasati et al., 2012)
- Focusing on just one learning style is not good enough. (Brown, 2003)

Learning styles:

- Visual , Kinaesthetic/Tactile and Auditory it can be challenging to come up with an activity that can engage all kinds of learners.
- For an example : www.Learningchocolate.com
- Websites like these give ready activities that can be used by teachers. It can be beneficial to learners of all different types of learning styles.

Image source: www.learningchocolate.com

Image source: www.learningchocolate.com

5 senses

Image source: www.learningchocolate.com

Virtual Classes

- Learners can become more active in their own learning process through blended learning. (Ramanair and Sagat, 2007)

- If you work for an employer that does not have Moodle or other platforms you can use Edmodo or Seesaw that provide you these platforms for free!
- It is easier to keep in touch with learners, upload activities and keep track of their progress.

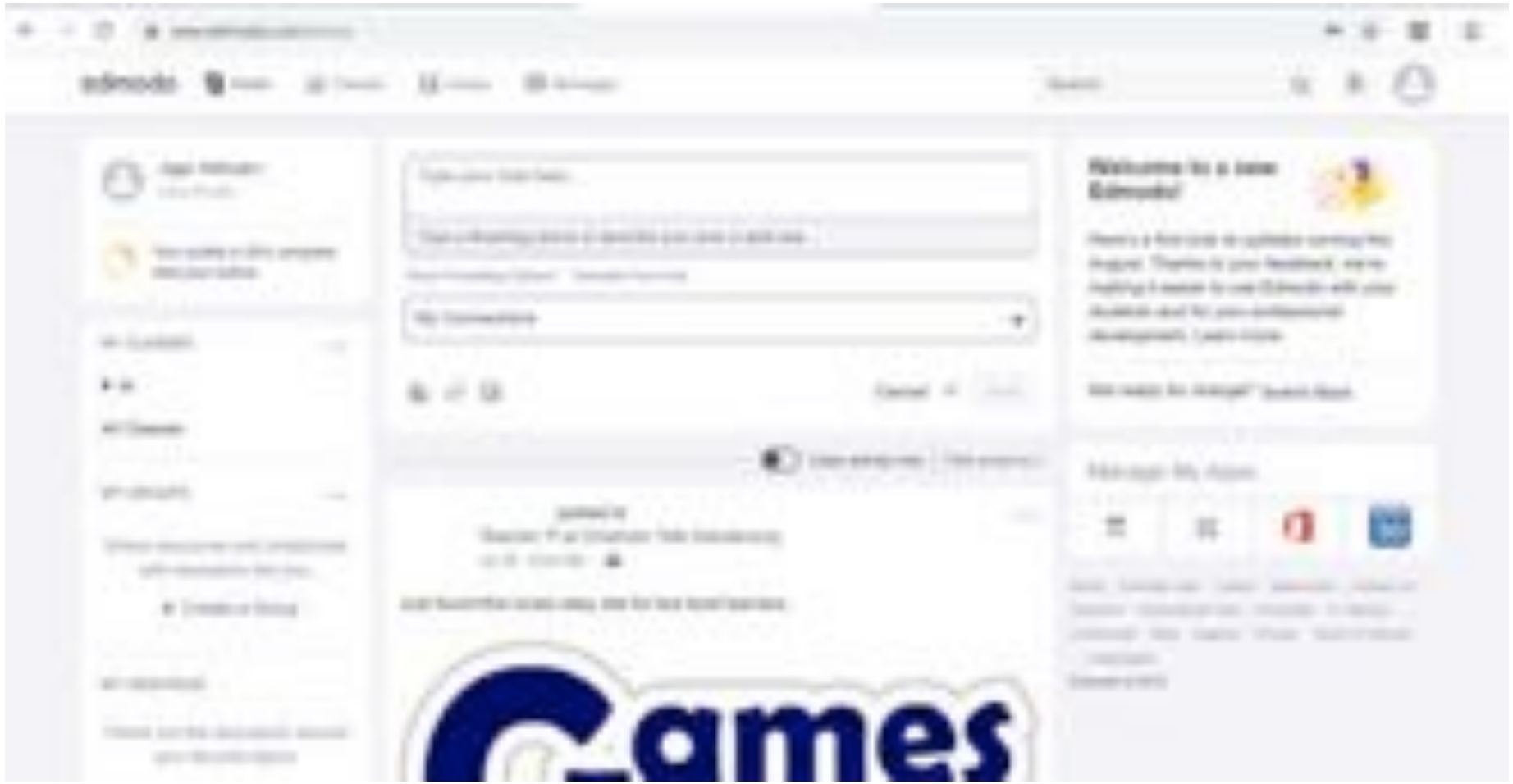


Image source: www.Edmodo.com

Image source: www.edmodo.com

Strengths

- Social media gives more naturalistic setting to a learner to learn a second language and provides with more resources online. (Alnujaidi, 2017)
- Ready resources: www.behindthenews.com , www.abc.net.au/btn , www.englishwsheets.com, www.fuse.education.vic.gov.au, etc.
- They have same topic activities for different level learners.
- Saves us energy, time and provides with larger pool of resources.
- www.Youtube.com: plenty of videos available, news apps and quiz apps like Kahoot!

Digital natives and Digital immigrants

Digital Immigrants

- Adopters of the web technologies
- Prefer to talk in person
- Logical learners
- Focusing on one task at a time
- Prefer to have interaction with one or few people rather than many
- Get info from traditional news sites

Digital Natives

- Born during or after the digital age
- Always on, attached to a phone or other device
- Intuitive learners
- Multitask and rapidly task-switch
- Extremely social
- Multimedia oriented

Unplag.com

Image source: https://unicheck.com/blog/digital-immigrants-vs-digital-natives

Weaknesses

- There are other factors that can affect learning process like mixed learning age, education level and motivation. (Brown, 2003)
- It is argued that Millennials and the following generations are digital natives.
- However, not everyone agrees that all Millennials are digital natives as not all of them were exposed to the digital world at the same time and did not have same access to digital resources as others.
- People born between 1980 to 2000 are generally referred to as being Millennials.

Generation	Birth Years
Generation Z	2000s to today
Millennials	1980—2000s
Generation X	1960s—1980s
Baby Boomers	1946—1964
Silent Generation	1928—1945
Greatest Generation	Before 1928

Weaknesses

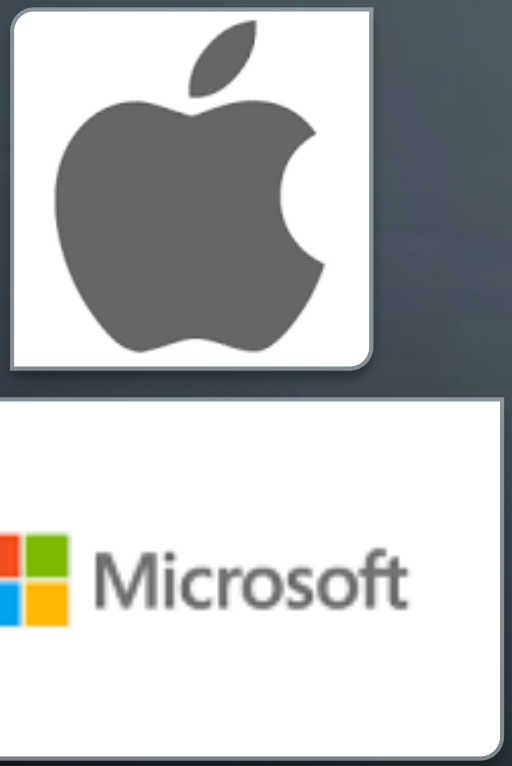
- Therefore digital literacy adds a whole new dynamic.
- With a mixed age group class we have both, Digital natives and Digital immigrants in our classrooms.
- Makes it difficult for us to cater activities to both.

So, we don’t just end up teaching a new language (technology) but, we might end up teaching a language that we ourselves are not fluent at

Weaknesses

- Other than that a lot of research has shown that a teacher's role in a classroom has significantly changed due to technology.
- Learning process has become more learner centric and teachers now have lesser control over classroom than before. (Mollaei and Riasati, 2013)
- With search engines at their finger tips it's common to be challenged in the classroom.

Another big challenge



- Different operating systems and software Microsoft Vs Apple.
- Different phones systems Android Vs iPhone.
- If a leaner is digital immigrant, it can be challenging to get them accustomed to different systems of phones and computers.
- Some teachers and students claim to be technophobic or avoid using technology because it seems to be difficult and time consuming. (Ramanair and Sagat, 2007)

Weaknesses

Online tools and resources

Online translators:

- Assessing can become especially challenging if we are not highly familiar with our learners and their skills.
- A lot of leaners these days use online translators like Google to complete their assessments.
- It hinders their growth and actual evaluation of their skills.

Plagiarism

- It has become very easy for learners to copy and paste work from online resources.
- However, if you do not have access to software like Turnitin, there are free online plagiarism check websites available.

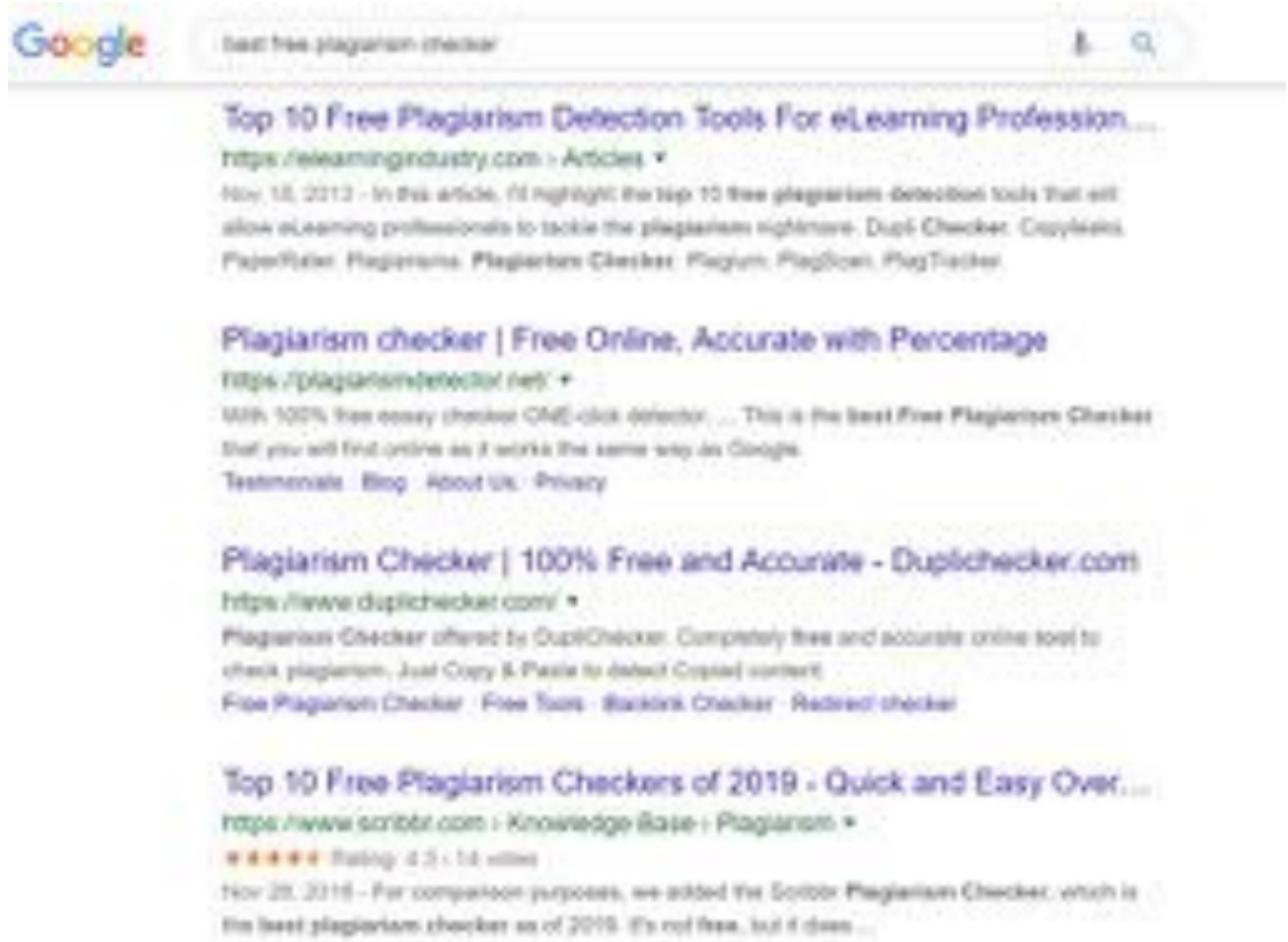


Image source: www.google.com

Image source: www.plagiarismdetector.net

Cardboard

Opportunities

Virtual reality:

- Google and a lot of other developers are developing VR content and creating 3D apps.

Image source: www.google.com

Phone applications

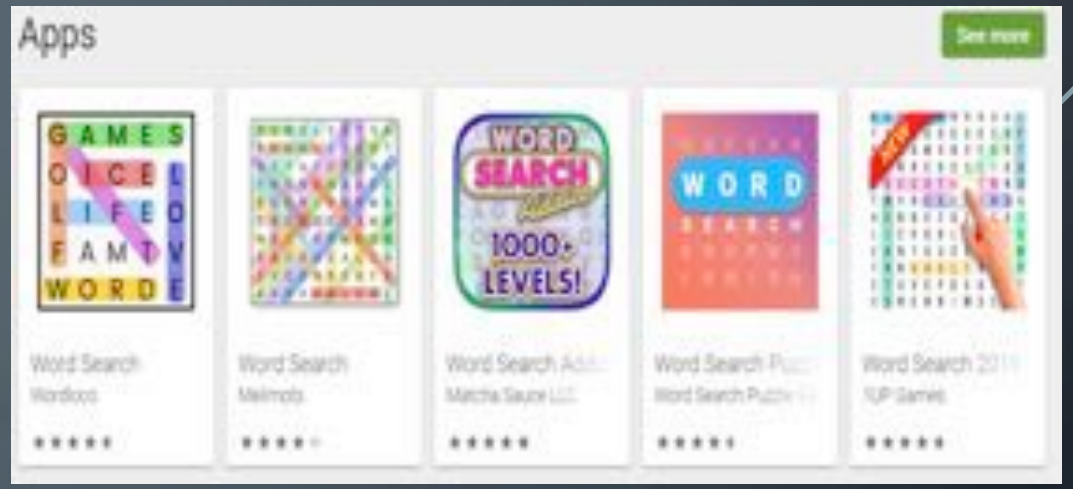
- They can be a great learning tool. Different games and educational apps are out there.

- It is an important tool for busy people. Especially with adult learners that have other responsibilities and are not full-time students. They can keep learning in different environments like on the bus, train, etc. (Ally et al., 2007)

Image source: www.play.google.com

- Social media gives more naturalistic setting to a learner to learn a second language and provides with more resources online. (Alnujaidi, 2017)

- Linking their knowledge to what they already know can make learning easier and more effective (Tour, 2019)



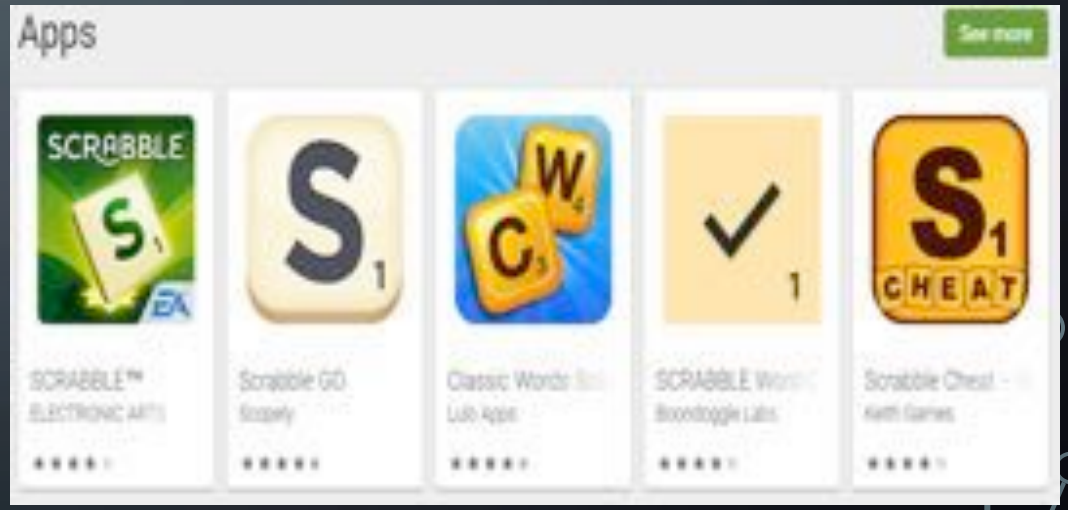


Image source: www.play.google.com

Threats

- Most of the time digital literacy taught in the class room does not go beyond basic operational skills. (Tour, 2019)
- A lot of focus has been put on what to use in classroom rather than how to implement it effectively in teaching practices. (Tour, 2019)

Image source: www.Chisholm.edu.au

- Teachers are not given proper training or sometimes they are not given enough time to incorporate computers properly into their teaching routine. (Riasati et al., 2012)

- Teachers need to have positive learning experiences, teacher's confidence on how to use computers can affect teacher training programs. (Mollaei and Riasati, 2013)

Image source: https://giphy.com/gifs/stupid-uwQQ9DQuILFKM

Other factors to keep in mind

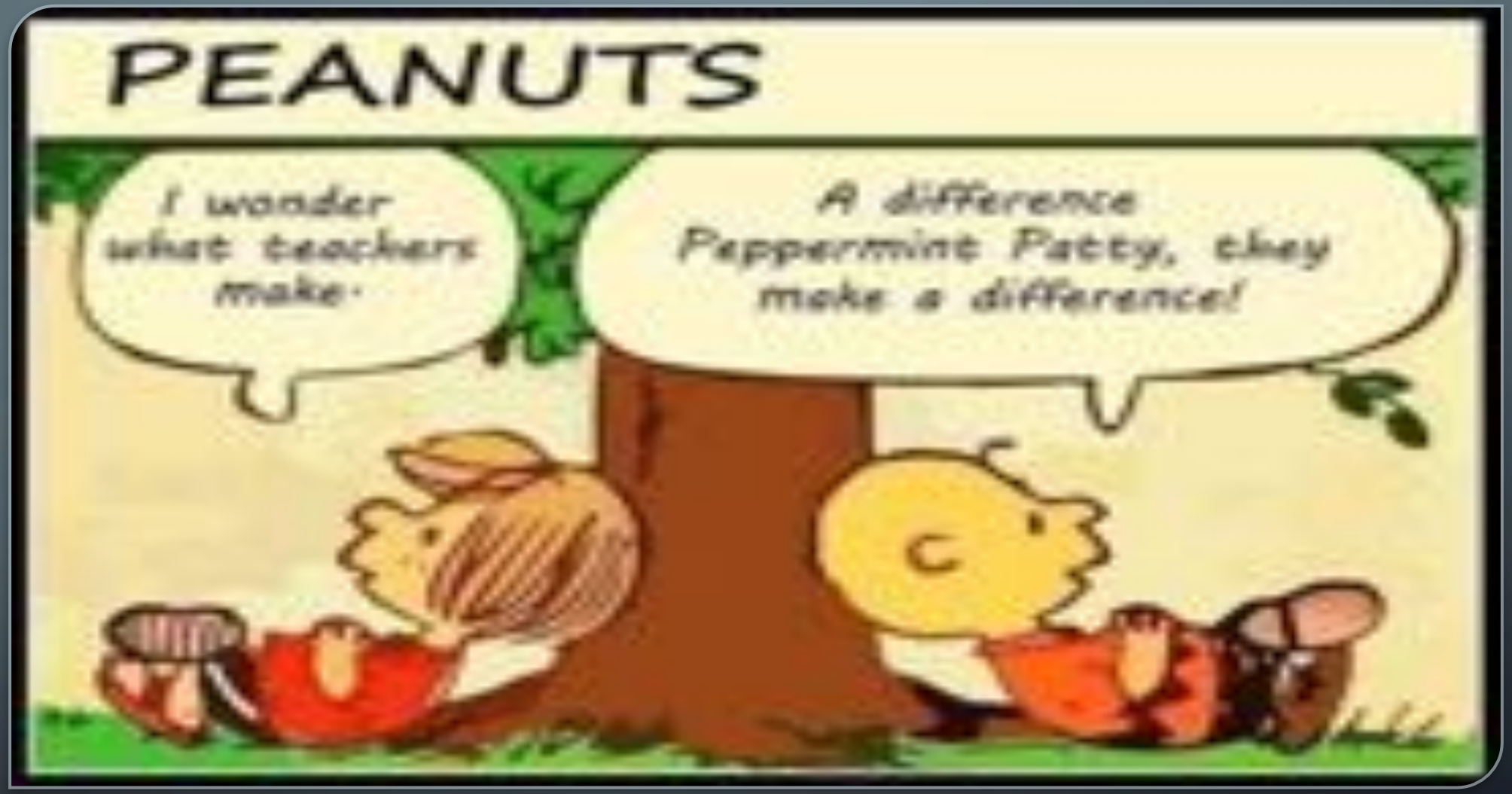
- Budget
- Management
- Policies
- Curriculum

Conclusion

- SWOT analysis shows that digital literacy in EAL classrooms can be challenging but has a lot of potential.
- Learners find conventional teaching methods boring. Computers have made language learning more fun and engaging. (Yunus et al., 2013)
- Digital component influences learners and teachers positively in the classroom. (Riasati et al., 2012)
- We have to carefully plan both online and offline activities. (Alpala and Flórez, 2011)

I know sometimes it feels like this…

Image source: The IT crowd



Thank you! ☺

Image source: Peanuts comics

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