



Asia capable teacher

Wollumbin High School NSW

Suzanne Lofts

As my school is located in a rural environment, there is little/no contact with native Korean speakers and hence no relevance for the students in learning the language. The use of connected classroom facilities, in particular, has provided an authentic learning experience for the students. It has also enabled interaction on a cultural level with the sharing of unique features from both cultures [Korean and Australian].

Suzanne Lofts, Wollumbin High School, NSW

Increased student motivation and engagement as a result of teachers using ICT in the language classroom were observed at Wollumbin High School, NSW. This observation is important given the rural context of the school, where students have little, if any contact, with native Korean speakers. Teacher, Suzanne Lofts, uses an extensive range of ICT tools in her classes to facilitate student learning:

In the first stages of language learning, when learning introductions, I use a combination of processes. First, a program called Audacity is used to record self-introductions. The students then create their own avatars (vokis) and insert their introductions onto this.

We have created a year blog (through blogED) on which the students post their introductions ... and these are then played for the class without student names necessarily being published. They love to see their creations on the interactive whiteboard and also often ask to redo these to fix their pronunciation. I also use the blog to post information, interesting videos and comments for students.

Students have been registered for Edmodo and this can be used for tests, assignment submissions, and communication. I post assignments on Storybird, which can be used for illustrated story writing, published in an online book form, and submitted for marking ... Animoto, Toondoo and Xtranormal are sites that can be used for video publication and language learning.

My classes are currently engaged in a number of connected classroom projects. I have established connected classroom contact with Glen Innes High, where the students are of an equivalent level in language learning. Students are introducing language concepts fortnightly to fellow students ...

I have also established connected classroom contact with two Korean schools, and the students from both schools are currently engaged in presenting set topics to each other. Due to language limitations these lessons involve PowerPoint slides presented by students from both countries. We have a fixed timetable, and these lessons are conducted fortnightly as well.

The school is part of an Australia-wide BRIDGE program — this is in its fledgling stages. Due to the new school year, this project has had to be restarted. Ten students in Korea have been matched with one of my classes, and they will correspond via the wiki, which has been established. These projects have also widened the technology use of students, as they use both still and video cameras to record a number of their topics. Consequently, they must develop editing skills using such sites as PhotoPeach.

Suzanne's motivation to use ICT in her classrooms stemmed from the installation of ICT facilities and tools as part of a school upgrade. She saw the opportunity to evolve her teaching practice to better engage students in their learning. Suzanne describes:

The resources provided enabled me to expand my teaching expertise and methods of teaching. I was also drawing on the fact that current students are 'digital natives' who are engaged by technology and am drawing on this to attempt to generate interest in future language learning within the school.

The use of ICT at Wollumbin has also coincided with the students' increased confidence to utilise Korean in their daily activities.

I have observed an increased interest in learning the spoken Korean language and also in using the written script. Students are using words in everyday activities. The use of ICT has enabled creative techniques for problem solving and enabled expression through a variety of activities. As part of their assessment, students present their lessons to the Koreans ...

As described by Suzanne, the key takeaway from Wollumbin is that ICT use in languages classrooms is a continually evolving process. Language teachers require ongoing professional learning to develop their capacity to use ICT meaningfully with their students. This, in turn, will facilitate a shift from ICT-based generic pedagogical skills to ICT-based subject-specific pedagogy (UNESCO, 2004, 2011).

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