SVETIMŲJŲ KALBŲ STUDIJOS/ STUDIES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Online Technology in the Australian Language Classroom

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Abstract. Technology has long held significant promise as an aid to language teachers and computer literacy is a key objective in many curricula. In Australia, however, the use of online technology in schools is quite new and language teachers are still coming to terms with the possibilities of the new tools and resources available. This paper reports on a recent survey of the use of online teaching in Australian schools which found that even teachers nominated for their use of technology and enthusiastic about its potential are still only occasional users. The major issues influencing these teachers include ease of access and the need for technical and pedagogic support in order to go beyond replicating traditional classroom practices to realise the potential of the new learning opportunities created by interactive technology.

Introduction

This paper presents the results with regard to online teaching in language classes of a broader investigation (Cooper et al. 2001) undertaken on behalf of the Schools Online Curriculum Content Initiative (SOCCI), a collaborative program designed to develop and share online resources around Australia in the areas of literacy, mathematics/numeracy and science as well as LOTE (languages other than English). The study was undertaken by a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the Queensland University of Technology and was designed to provide input to a five-year Initiative aiming to create a pool of high quality, digital "learning objects" for use with Australian students.

Background to the study

In an increasingly globally interdependent world, proficiency in a second language and the ability to function interculturally are important assets, even necessities, if citizens are to take an active role in the economic and political development of their region or indeed be effective in the new world of work. This has meant new expectations in terms of proficiency outcomes in language programs. In Australia, the importance of second language skills has been recognised at the policy level by the inclusion of languages other than English as one of eight national key learning areas (MCEETYA, 1989 & 1999). Teaching for even modest proficiency, however, requires time and considerable exposure to the language (Crawford, 1999; Marinova-Todd et al., 2000). Teachers and students must engage as frequently as possible in real dialogue, in tasks which engage them actively in language use as a means of dealing with their world. This requires creating contexts in which students, irrespective of where they live, "communicate by engaging in purposeful and active use of language in tasks which contribute to [their] understanding of a range of issues and concepts, and which involve negotiation and socialisation with peers" (QSCC, 1998:5). Optimal language learning environments, in other words, need to provide learners with opportunities to interact and negotiate meaning in authentic tasks and interact in the target language with an authentic audience (Egbert, Chao & Hanson-Smith, 1999). In learning contexts such as schools where learners often have little face-to-face contact with speakers of the target language, technology can support the achievement of such environments and provide access not only to information and up-to-date cultural resources but also to other users of the language. Computer-mediated communication means learners anywhere can become "world communicators" (Gonząlez-Bueno, 1998:55), active and creative users of their second language rather than eavesdroppers on its use by others.

The literature suggests that access and cost are key issues in online teaching. Producing and maintaining access to user-friendly, language-rich, cross-platform programs is expensive and time-consuming (Cho, 2001). For non-Roman script languages there is the additional challenge of ensuring technical compatibility (Kern, 2000). Cost perhaps explains the increasing commercialisation of the Internet with signs that, in the future, the Web may eventually "split into quality sites for which users have to pay and free sites which are of poor quality" (Felix, 2001:189). The diversity of resources available already raises problems of quantity, quality and cultural authenticity (Kern, 2000) with teachers and learners needing to develop a critical stance to their selection and interpretation of online materials. This is particularly important with school-based learners who need access to resources that support in-class learning and are age-appropriate. Sites designed for adult native speakers may be too difficult for such learners (Hackett, 1996) unless tasks are carefully adapted to ensure success (Furstenberg, 1997).

Location, amount and availability of equipment will greatly affect the way technology is used (Furstenberg, 1997). Options will be influenced, for example, by whether online teaching occurs in the regular language classroom or in a computer laboratory and whether each student has access to a computer or must share a screen with others. Similarly, materials designed for self-access mode will be different from those designed for use by students working collaboratively in class with a teacher.

Another issue discussed in the literature is the level of interactivity (Felix, 1998). Low interactivity is represented by early CALL (computer-assisted language learning) programs which provided "unlimited drill, practice, tutorial explanation, and corrective feedback" (Kern & Warschauer, 2000:13) but no real interaction. Medium level interactivity, on the other hand, has tended to shift agency to the learner who now controls the computer rather than being controlled by it. Such medium-level interactivity gives access to sophisticated, multimedia resources which are richer and more varied than traditional classroom fare and allow students to work at their own pace and follow pathways dictated by personal interest or learning needs. More recently high interactivity has shifted emphasis from the learners' interaction *with* the computer to interaction *via* the computer. From this perspective the computer has become a tool the principal role of which is to "provide alternative contexts for social interactions; to facilitate access to existing discourse communities and the creation of new ones" (Kern & Warschauer, 2000:13). In high interactivity tasks learners "are engaged in true to life social interactions in which they are expressing their own personalities and beliefs in a completely authentic environment" (Felix, 1998:7). Such interactions thus potentially provide input, output and an opportunity for focus on form through negotiation of meaning (see, for example, Long & Robinson, 1998; Swain 2000; Chapelle 2001). This virtual interaction is also consistent with a sociocultural view of learning as the dialogic construction of knowledge (Wells, 1999) and so can contribute to inquiry-oriented curricula and task-based learning (Willis, 1998; Foster, 1999). Technology, in other words, offers considerable promise to language teachers by building goal-driven learning environments in which "learning will be regarded as acquisition of language content through purposeful and reflective participation in social action, for example in collaborative creation of multimedia documents, rather than as acquisition of artificially selected language skills through repetition and usage in decontextualised or artificially contextualised settings" (Debski, 1997:47).

Methodology

The SOCCI study employed a mixed-method design comprising quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative component was an online self-report survey of teachers in 88 schools across seven states and territories designed to assess current and preferred uses of online technology. The qualitative component comprised semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The 85 teachers involved at this stage were purposefully selected because they were currently engaged in using online

resources in their teaching. Schools were encouraged to include reluctant technology users but for LOTE this proved difficult as language teachers often work alone and so the selection of a committed user did not provide access to a nonuser. The observations focused on both the extent and type of online curriculum material used and the teachers' classroom practices with respect to this material.

The statistical package SPSS (V10) was used to analyse the responses to the survey with tests of significance used to determine statistically significant differences between actual and preferred responses. The qualitative data (transcripts of interviews, observation protocols) were collated and summarized to give a rich description of each teacher and to identify emerging issues.

Results and discussion

The survey data indicated that the teachers in all curriculum groups were significantly less satisfied with their schools' hardware, software and support for the effective use of online resources than they would like to be and would prefer somewhat enhanced access to online resources for themselves and their students although this enhanced access would not lead to frequent or very frequent use for most of the proposed applications or pedagogical reasons. These teachers, in other words, mostly opted to use online technology "sometimes", suggesting they do not see it playing a pivotal role in their classroom practice. This may be because they perceive current support (both pedagogical and technical) to be inadequate. These findings are consistent with the high levels of frustration with technological problems reported by Felix (2001) in a study of school-age language learners.

Twenty-six language teachers responded to the online survey, representing 9.4% of the 276 respondents. Eighteen language teachers were interviewed (21% of the total sample). This group included six survey respondents and was made up of teachers of Chinese (5), Indonesian (4), Japanese; (4), German (3), Italian (1) and Spanish (1). The majority (16) were secondary teachers with only two teaching at the primary level. These teachers were from 13 different schools (8 secondary; 3 primary & secondary; 2 primary). Women (14) clearly outnumbered men (4) (78% of the language teachers compared with 65% of the sample as the whole). The survey respondents covered the same six languages with the addition of French. Again the majority (15) were secondary teachers with a further six working at both levels and five working in primary schools only.

The main results presented in this paper draw on the qualitative data as these provide a richer picture of why teachers responded to the survey as they did. Interestingly there was considerable commonality in the positions taken by teachers across the four curriculum areas.

A number of key issues emerged both from the survey and from interviews and observations. These included access, ease of use and the need for professional development. For the language teachers a further issue was the use of the target language, particularly for those teaching non-Roman script languages or less common community languages.

Access and ease of use

The majority of teachers reported having access to computing facilities and the Internet at home and described themselves as at least "quite confident" in their use. Only one reported having received computer training in her preservice teacher education while the remainder were equally divided between those who were self-trained and those who had learned through inservice sessions. Several commented that access from home is essential – "three-quarters of the potential use is there". They found working with technology very time-consuming, with teachers at school having neither the time nor the necessary peace of mind to familiarise themselves with possibilities or to prepare online materials. One teacher even felt that such exploratory work was not an appropriate use of work time, with teachers at school needing to do "school things".

One in two also reported having ready access to networked computers for lesson use at school with over 60% of survey respondents judging these reliable, well-maintained and user-friendly. There was less satisfaction with availability for student use and, particularly, speed of response. One interviewee, for example, commented that Internet access was still "enormously slow" when more than four or five machines were being used simultaneously. Several others commented on slow download times influencing their decision not to use online resources, as well as being an issue for students in remote areas. As with the respondents as a whole, satisfaction with support was lower with just over one in three judging it as appropriate to their needs. As one survey respondent commented, using technology requires teachers to know what to do when things go wrong and many do not have such knowledge. Another's advice to a teacher thinking of embarking on online teaching would be to "make sure you have access to a good, patient technician".

Use by classroom teachers

Despite their level of access and confidence, few respondents reported high levels of use with their students. Despite being nominated as technology users, many of the interviewees saw themselves as novices. One reason for this was the limited access to computers for language classes. Several interviewees commented that they would use the technology more frequently were it not for the fierce competition for access to computers in schools and the lack of technical support. As occasional users language teachers often find computer laboratories permanently booked by colleagues in IT and other areas. One school with specialist language computer facilities, however, reported only about 30 per cent usage. This was partly because the teachers were still becoming familiar with what they could do online and partly because of the discouraging impact of high levels of technical difficulties when the facilities were first introduced. Other schools reported they lacked the technical support needed to make full use of resources already available. One teacher, for example, commented how difficult it was to get help when the school's one IT teacher was already responsible for 42 networked computers "in his spare time" and could take weeks to respond to a reported malfunction. Such

difficulties set up a vicious circle. There is no budget for resources or technical support. As a result, teachers do not use the limited resources already available. This lack of use is then taken as a sign that resources/support are not required.

Most of the schools visited had computer laboratories. This means that each learner has his/her own screen and the teacher is not trying to engage in split teaching and can work as a trouble shooter. Secondary teachers appear less comfortable with rotations than primary teachers, and class size also becomes an issue if access is limited to a small number of computers, as does supervision if the computers are in a different room. Several interviewees felt that their use of computers would be more flexible if they had access in the classroom and could use them as required rather than having to wait for access to a laboratory. Classroom-based computers would also enable teachers to allow better access for students who do not have computers at home and so are potentially disadvantaged if online materials are integrated into the normal language program. One teacher also commented on the problem of dealing with learners who prefer to do online work from home where resources are often more up-to-date than those at school.

The survey and interview data suggested that teachers are attracted to higher interactivity uses in which the computer serves as a tool rather than a tutor and students are active agents with a real influence over the outcomes of the tasks they undertake. The survey indicated that the most frequently used resources were search engines and email. Even here, however, fewer than half the language respondents claimed to use these resources frequently. Fewer still (just over a third) reported frequent use of online curriculum resources to provide specific tools such as dictionaries or script programs, or to prepare and present teacher-designed instructional materials. Several interviewees suggested that the latter are often printed out rather than being used online. This avoids having to book online access for students but means, of course, that learners miss the "added value" technology can provide through such factors as richer and more complex information environments, on-going feedback, and choice of pathways or assistance.

Despite their interest in interactivity, the teachers are not yet making a great deal of use of some of the more interactive possibilities of the technology emphasised in the literature. Almost three-quarters of the survey respondents, for example, reported that their students never use chatrooms or listservs or take part in simulations, and almost two-thirds said they never use online curriculum resources to facilitate peer tutoring, collaborative learning or group work. Fifty per cent or more of the language respondents likewise reported their students never engage in webquests or virtual tours, or use online curriculum resources either to solve authentic problems or to communicate information and publish their work for others to inspect or use. Only three of the classroom teachers interviewed reported using technology with their students at least once a week. Other classroom teachers reported occasional use, for example, once or twice a term. Such findings are consistent with the outcomes of Hoven &

Crawford's investigation (2001) into the potential for computer-mediated interaction between school students in Indonesia and Australia which established that, while teachers were keen to use technology and had many of the resources they needed to do so, there was little evidence that they were actually taking advantage of these tools. Technology clearly "can enable new opportunities for learning" (O'Hagan, 1999:3) but its presence does not necessarily mean such learning will occur.

Even when teachers reported regular use this was not necessarily with all classes, as teachers may not use online resources with difficult or large classes, or senior students who have examinations to prepare. Online teaching is seen to require a certain level of learner autonomy and so may be less effective with some groups. One teacher explained, for example, that she was developing her skills with a given class because she knew they were "very understanding, very patient". Such comments confirm that, for these teachers, the technology has yet to become "normalised" as one resource among many which they can use when appropriate to achieve the goals of their language program. This sense that technology-enhanced instruction is additional, rather than integral, to the curriculum process was echoed by at least two other interviewees. They both commented that they did not use computers or the Internet with senior classes because the program was already crowded and they did not feel that these students could afford to have teachers experimenting with technology. Valuable class time, in other words, should be used for face-to-face interaction which these teachers saw as more effective and, therefore, a priority.

Use in distance education

Six of the interviewees were working in distance education contexts in three states. For these teachers technology in some form is an integral part of their working lives and the means by which they are able to contact their students. Even in these contexts, however, student access was an issue. One teacher, for example, reported that a successful trial of online teaching using NetMeeting had not continued because even school-based students did not have access to compatible computers or the two phone lines that made the program most effective. This school is successfully using a videoconferencing program to allow teachers to work with small class groups in schools for whom no local teacher is available. The teachers involved both commented, however, on the difficulty caused by the audio time lag. This problem has resulted in at least one of their colleagues opting to use teleconferencing (rather than videoconferencing) because of the greater immediacy and intimacy this provides. In another state, a similar use of videoconferencing brings language programs to remote schools. The teacher working with students in this program reported the video sessions were effective with small groups but became unwieldy with larger classes. A factor discouraging teacher use of online resources in one distance education school was the presence in classes of students with limited or no access to computers. Equity for this group means online teaching can only be used to supplement more traditional distance education formats. Teachers wanting to develop online resources are obliged

to prepare alternative paper-based materials both as a fallback in case of technological problems and to ensure equity for all students. For a busy teacher this double workload can be a strong disincentive. One of the primary school teachers reported using videoconferencing in a pilot program to include students from a neighbouring school in her face-to-face class. While student responses were largely positive, she found preparation time plus the need to prepare for technological malfunctions extremely stressful and, when interviewed, was not using online technology at all, even in her face-to-face classes.

In another state, distance education teachers already use NetMeeting and include teacher-prepared online activities but these were described as "fairly vanilla" (i.e. bland, not fancy) because teachers are still developing their skills and finding out what is possible. They simply do not have the time or funding for fancier solutions and, in any case, are likely to find these incompatible with the equipment students are using in schools. The technology therefore remains a constraint with many options too slow or too unreliable to be used effectively. As one teacher commented, she and her colleagues are still trying to get the technology to make possible what teachers achieve in face-to-face classes. They are unlikely to exploit the real potential of the technology more creatively until their skills develop and bandwidth and school access improve. At the moment, classes tend to be built around a textbook or print resources because, for the high stakes senior classes taught at this school, the current online technology is not deemed sufficiently reliable. An example of such difficulties came from a teacher in a receiving site who complained that the teacher-developed online worksheets often fail to print out in full. Her preference, therefore, is for traditional print materials which ensure all students have equal and accurate access both at school and at home.

Teacher development

Compatibility with the school program was a key concern of teachers when discussing the sorts of online materials to which they would like an access. Teachers commented, for example, that different state education departments specify different content and that this makes sharing resources nationally difficult. This supports Cho's comment that CALL does not appeal to the majority of teachers fundamentally because externally developed programs "tend not to be highly compatible with their own courses, in either content or methodology" (Cho, 2001:66-67). Interviewees agreed that attractive online resources would need to be adaptable to allow choices about how they were to be used. A single site, for example, can be used for a number of different pedagogical purposes and a resource bank would need to reflect this possibility while also ensuring teachers have access to suggestions for use from the creator of the site. As with materials they develop themselves, teachers want to be able to maintain, modify and update online resources so they fit the local program and the needs of a given group of students.

Despite being selected as advanced users of technology, several of the interviewees commented on their own lack of skill and the difficulty of finding the necessary time and

energy to develop greater expertise. As one commented, the introduction of technology almost certainly has to be accompanied by teacher upskilling if it is to lead to improved outcomes. A colleague elsewhere, however, commented that she does not have time to use her current skills let alone to develop more. Interviewees felt that levels of use depend very much on how much time individual teachers are willing to spend at home exploring what is available and working out how best to use this with students. One teacher, for example, commented that she could not have spent the hours she currently devotes to developing online resources earlier in her career when she had a young family to care for. Because of the time required she also feels she cannot demand casual members of her staff take the plunge into using technology. Another teacher charged with encouraging use of online resources in her school commented that "most language teachers really don't have a clue about what they want" because they are not familiar enough with the options or what it would take to produce and use such materials effectively. In her area this is exacerbated by the often marginal, part-time status of language teachers who have little time, therefore, to develop skills in this area. Without considerable pedagogical and technical support, in other words, online resources may remain relatively marginal, something that some students do in their own time or as an alternative to more traditional technology (blackboard, pen and paper).

Most interviewees were eager to improve their online skills provided such professional development opportunities were hands-on and voluntary. Several commented, for example, that workshops were ineffective unless teachers could make immediate use of their new skills - "if you don't use it, you lose it". For this reason school-based inservice was particularly appreciated. Not only does it usually focus on resources available in the school but the presenter is then on hand to mentor colleagues as they try out their new skills. Another proposal for professional development was the use of an interactive online format over several weeks. This would allow teachers to take away ideas, try them out in class and then come back online to discuss implications and implementation issues with colleagues and "experts". A further suggestion for professional development was the inclusion of interactive teacher advice with various online resources in which the underlying pedagogy of the tasks is made explicit. Teachers could use this information in pedagogical decision making and as a basis for investigating alternative ways of using these resources.

Given their quite limited levels of use, it is not surprising that few interviewees felt using technology has, to date, improved learner proficiency or led to major changes to their own teaching approach. Several saw technology expanding their repertoire and insisted that it should only be used for activities which could not be done as well or better in a traditional classroom or via a textbook. One teacher, for example, reported online grammar exercises offer a number of potential advantages. Students work at their own pace and receive instant feedback as required. The increasingly interactive nature of the support materials also seems to mean that learners have more hooks on

which to peg their new knowledge than is possible with the more static classroom materials. Observation in this teacher's class, however, showed many students were still struggling with the technology so that more time was spent on the mechanics of gaining access and downloading material than on actually doing the tasks proposed. Like all innovations, change involves costs in terms of efficiency.

A colleague in the same school commented that regular use of technology "would have to" change his approach but has no experience of what form such change would take. A teacher in another state shared this opinion: "Regular access to computers means we have access to a new tool and this inevitably changes the way we think and work". Others saw access as a necessary prerequisite to change but not sufficient to ensure it occurred without considerable support and time to develop new skills. A primary teacher was concerned that she needed to be more teacher-centred when her students were online just to keep everyone on task. A secondary teacher made a similar point about Year 8 classes needing to be very tightly scaffolded "or time gets away and children don't achieve the desired outcomes". Other colleagues, however, claimed they were drawn to online resources because of the potential for improved self-paced, multi-level teaching. Teachers in one school, for example, described the main benefit of using technology as being its impact on attitudes, motivation and student behaviour towards LOTE. With the huge range of options available on the Internet, "all kids are hooked in somewhere." With the current emphasis on computer literacy, technology use has also lifted the status of languages, putting them at the cutting edge and helping maintain student numbers even though languages are seen as a hard option. A colleague in a different state saw the Internet as invaluable because it provides instant, interactive communication with real people as well as a rich variety of easily accessible, up-to-date resources. Such learning experiences serve not only to make the language more realistic, but also provide direct contact with the target culture.

Several of the teachers interviewed also reported making use of the more interactive forms of technology such as email to encourage greater and more personal contact between students and teachers, particularly in distance education contexts but also within schools. Many of these contacts were through the medium of English, however, and so were not contributing to language development. One lesson observed did have students participating in an online chatroom with other learners of Chinese. The technology required use of pin yin (Roman script) and the group spent considerable time trying to trick the program into accepting English rather than pin yin. They were, nevertheless, using some Chinese in real time communication. Several interviewees also commented on the potential for these same interactive tools to be used for networking and resource sharing among teachers, particularly those who are isolated or working alone. Only one of the teachers, however, reported using electronic contact for personal language learning / maintenance.

There was some evidence that assessment may need to change to reflect the learning objectives made possible by

interactive technology if teachers and students are to accept its value in the program. One of the Chinese teachers, for example, decided to set an email task for assessment but ended up printing off an email form and having students write by hand because the syllabus requires hand-written Chinese script. His German colleague chose a similar procedure for her email assessment task because it was surer than depending on the technology and "less threatening" to both teacher and students. In a separate state a teacher was concerned that assessment online might be testing the students' technical skills rather than their language. As a teacher in a third state commented, with the current curriculum "an effective teacher doesn't need to use technology". Indeed, the decision to use it may actually disadvantage students because the skills developed are not required for the examinations.

The change in teaching approach associated with online technology also has implications for learners. One distance education teacher saw learner autonomy as a key, but often absent, factor influencing learners' ability to take advantage of online learning opportunities. A classroom teacher, on the other hand, suggested students have greater ownership of a screen than a piece of paper and so seem to work more independently than in face-to-face classes. As a colleague elsewhere commented, this means students are perhaps readier to take risks online that they would be under the direct scrutiny of classmates. A Chinese teacher, likewise, reported that his students responded very positively to the challenge of producing real materials for a real audience (the school and local cluster). This gave the students a reason to polish their work, thus making a "quite fantastic" difference to their attitude to the task.

Use of the target language

Another issue to arise was whether greater use of online resources would foster increased use of the target language by teachers and learners. The use of the target language is particularly an issue for teachers of script languages. Several commented that authentic Web sites were often much too complex for their learners, even if the school has programs which enable the characters to be read online or downloaded and printed for later reference. They suggested the need for "pre-digested" educational sites where use of the target script is supported where necessary and content is oriented to the needs and experience of Australian school students rather than adult native speakers. Such sites could then be used for net searches with a language focus not just a culture-through-English focus. Another teacher suggested the need for sites for less frequently taught languages. Students can often find cultural information in English but the teacher then has to develop strategies for using this for language development. In the classes observed, English was often used both to set up and complete the tasks. While the tasks themselves may have been informative and engaging, the extensive use of English reduced their capacity to contribute to language development. One teacher explained her choice of English in worksheets used with online resources in terms of time. Use of the target language would make the whole process too slow and might also exacerbate what a survey

respondent saw as the students' sense of being "on their own" when working online. A colleague commented on the need to investigate more effective ways of providing bilingual support to help both students and teachers deal with the complexity of authentic materials. Access to online resources in which the target language is used extensively might also help break the classroom habit of using English as the main medium of instruction (see, for example, Crawford, 2001). This would appear to be another issue where flexibility may be required to meet the diverse needs of teachers and learners. More first language support, for example, might be needed in self-access materials than in teacher-mediated online work.

Conclusion

This study suggests that online teaching is still in its infancy for many of the Australian teachers interviewed even though they were selected because of their interest in and commitment to the use of technology to enhance their language classes. A key issue to emerge from both the online survey and from interviews and classroom observation was the need to help teachers gain regular and reliable access for themselves and their students so that over time familiarity and confidence can make using such resources an integral and creative part of the teachers' repertoire rather than a time-consuming and often peripheral activity unrelated to the real purposes of the face-to-face classroom or a make-do alternative for students who live in remote areas or are unable to attend school. The inclusion of languages in the Schools Online Curriculum Content Initiative is an excellent start in building this greater expertise and sharing the workload and expense involved in learning to make effective use of the new technologies. As schools develop better access and hardware options, the language teachers in this study suggested three types of support to improve the effectiveness with which they make use of computer-mediated communication to provide access to the world beyond the classroom and, indeed, beyond national boundaries. Firstly, they suggested that uptake of the technology in language classes will be enhanced if resources are developed by and for teachers and are kept flexible, adaptable and updatable to meet local conditions and state-based curriculum requirements. If teachers and students are to be users of the target language, they need user-friendly, step-by-step templates and other resource to assist in the development and publication of their own materials online. Secondly, teachers were concerned that all ready-made resources should exploit the dynamic and interactive nature of the medium and not simply digitalise static textbooks or reproduce online materials teachers can developthemselves by other means. These resources should lend themselves to generating interaction in class so that students have a purpose for their online work and can relate this to their in-class learning. The teachers were particularly interested in interactive reading and listening materials with visual and other support and which encourage choices and student responses. The third area of support concerned professional development with interviewees suggesting the SOCCI project should include an interactive site where teachers can exchange pedagogical

tips, share resources and give one another professional feedback. Such a site could also post advice on commercial resources and on solutions to technological problems.

Such pedagogical support seems as necessary as provision of technical infrastructure and resources as it is the teacher who is the crucial catalyst in the effective and efficient use of technology for educational purposes. "The technical glamour and potential of new technology are meaningless if teachers cannot use it to create sparks, to stimulate conjectures, in students (O'Hagen, 1999:4).

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Interneto panaudojimas mokant kalbų Australijoje

Santrauka

Interneto panaudojimas yra laikomas reikšminga priemone mokytojų darbe, o kompiuterinis raštingumas yra pagrindinis tikslas daugelyje mokyklos mokymo programų. Straipsnyje yra apžvelgiamas interneto panaudojimas mokant užsienio kalbų Australijos mokyklose. Taip pat aptariamos priežastys, trukdančios naudotis internetu ir analizuojami būdai, kaip paskatinti efektyviau bendradarbiauti naudojant kompiuterius. Internetas gali būti plačiai naudojamas mokyti klasėje ir distanciniu būdu. Siekiant patenkinti nutolusių regionų poreikius mokymuisi ir pakeisti tradicinį darbą klasėje, siūloma, kad mokytojų kuriamos programos būtų lanksčios, lengvai pritaikomos ir nuolat tobulinamos. Taip pat teigiama, kad, norint pasiekti edukacinių tikslų, pedagoginė mokytojų parama klasėje yra ne mažiau svarbi kaip ir aprūpinimas techninėmis priemonėmis bei resursais.

The author

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