

TEACHER'S CORNER – SEPTEMBER 2015 TECHNOLOGY

Using technology in the classroom can leave a teacher unsure where to start. After all, the term *technology* can be used broadly to cover a wide range of materials. However, the simple definition of technology is *a tool used to achieve a goal*. Keep this in mind when bringing technology into the classroom; it should always help achieve a classroom goal.

This month we will examine four types of technology that can help achieve classroom goals. All of the tools examined this month are free to use and distribute. This means they can be installed on personal computers as well as classroom computers or, in the case of websites, contain resources that are free to use.

Each of the tools this month also serves to help explore different types of technology and understand how they function. When beginning with a new piece of technology, it is important to remember to allocate time to explore and essentially 'play with' the technology. Often teachers remark on the ease with which learners incorporate technology. This ease comes from a position of exploration and 'learning through failure' where, through trial and error, the technology is learned. With all of the tools discussed in the Teacher's Corner this month, take the time to explore and play with the technology in order to better understand how it functions.

Each week in this month's Teacher's Corner will provide an introduction to technological resources as well as a starting point from which to help achieve classroom goals. Here are the tools that will be introduced this month:

Hot Potatoes Software

This set of software tools allows for the creation of classroom activities. These activities can be enriched by the addition of images, audio, and video. In Week 1 of this month's Teacher's Corner, we will learn how to make a Hot Potatoes activity and learn the basics of HTML code to add multimedia.

Video Games

Video games can be a tremendous resource for the classroom when used effectively. Rather than having the students play alone, tap into the potential of videogames to generate discussion by having students play together. In Week 2, we will examine three videogames appropriate for the language classroom and highlight some activities to get the students talking.

Audacity Audio Recorder

Finding appropriate audio for the classroom can be challenging, so why not make your own? Audacity has an extensive array of features in an easy-to-learn format. In Week 3, we will highlight the biggest features of Audacity and how to use them to make audio journals and podcasts.

Open Source Resources

In Week 4, we will highlight some open source resources available online to teachers and students. These webpage-based resources use an open-source approach. This open-source approach makes the resources available free of charge and allows the materials to be distributed without violating copyright. The websites provide considerable resources that can be integrated into activities made with the other tools featured this month.