

The Kochi Kosen iPod Touch EFL Project: Fusing Methodologies to Optimize Learning

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Abstract

The Kochi Kosen iPod Touch EFL Project aims to provide the tools necessary to manage and provide diverse content and a variety of learning experiences to over one thousand learners of wide-ranging ability levels. A diverse selection of teaching methodologies is employed including comprehensible input, specific vocabulary study, task-based learning, and content-based study. These methodologies are used throughout classes and teachers and students are able to pursue topics and learning experiences appropriate to ultimately achieving optimal learning experiences.

This paper addresses several specific learning experiences and the tools needed to manage them. These experiences range from vocabulary learning, extensive reading, and content based learning to large tasks including student "companies" that have produced blogs, videos and software available in the real world, iCO CET 3300. The tools needed for implementing such ambitious projects include iOS client and server software. Tools addressing teacher and peer student assessment, student management, class planning, and feedback are important components of our system.

Large tasks, like group video production or student software development are divided into many smaller language tasks and involve a large amount of background information provided as content based teaching in the target language. These tasks and background content are designed to address the needs of learners having a wide range of skills. Basic skills are reviewed for students with low proficiency while advanced learners are challenged with more interesting tasks and encouraged to take on leadership roles within classes and groups.

Enabling large numbers of technology students to be fully engaged in EFL studies is a difficult and complicated challenge that can be met using the appropriate methods and tools. This project uses a heterogeneous selection of teaching methodologies to address a wide range of student interests, learning styles and ability levels. It provides the tools necessary to individually address student needs, student assessment, data collection and program validation.