ICT and the Contemporary Language Educator

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Abstract

Education is rapidly evolving in the digital age. The way that we teach is changing by necessity and design, and innovative teaching and methodologies are essential. An arsenal of digital tools is literally at our fingertips and educators must tackle the latest technology and digital learning opportunities as quickly as they emerge, to stay current with their students, if nothing else. This presentation addresses teaching strategies for Information Communications Technology (ICT) that incorporates:

1. mobile learning devices, i.e. smart phones
2. laptops and tablets
3. rapidly deployed software and "apps"
4. gaming systems
5. social media

Teaching strategies including communication and collaboration strongly impact learning. Data gathering, simplified interfaces, and an emphasis on analytics are essential as we prioritize learning initiatives and outcomes for students. Disparities in the availability and access of technology for students as well as varying ability levels can result in challenges for educators. In fact, it is not unusual for tech-savvy students to have greater expertise than their teachers resulting in shared learning between teacher and student. ICT assumes a significant role leading and supporting educational endeavors of the future. No longer is learning restricted to the classroom or library and educators must strive for a balance between paper and digital. It extends among and beyond the school to educational settings allowing online collaboration that is increasing opportunities for continuous learning, in and out of the classroom. E-learning has become a key focus in classroom-based language learning. Free and open access to materials on the web and via social media continue to drive ICT uses in learning environments, especially those related to language. Now it is the responsibility of educators to adopt and adapt to the widespread benefits and tools to increase the value of incorporating technology in the education of our students. By encouraging students to power-up and celebrate the numerous opportunities afforded by taking advantage of integrating ICT into innovative language learning, exponential growth can take place.