Flexible ICT Options for Language Learning in Primary Education

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Abstract

Using technology for teaching and learning in the classroom doesn't seem to be so obvious and easy. Kennisnet[1], the Dutch research institute for ICT and learning, shows in her yearly monitor that although 80% of primary education classroom have a digital blackboard and every five students share a computer, its use stays rather limited. An important complain is that there is a lack of quality digital educational resources. Today's promises for ICT seem more down to earth and focused on results. Projects with titles that include `evidence based` demonstrate that, and teachers ask for it. ICT should be working, and should give a benefit, an extra. So, new flexible ICT options for language learning should be based on these principles as well. The new learning and teaching series of learning materials for Frisian Language in primary education are being developed according to a design research approach[2]. Primary school teachers are part of the team designing and testing the educational resources and digital environment. Based on (own and published) research findings design decisions towards where and how ICT will be used are made. An important principle is flexibility as is defined by De Boer and Collis[3], which focuses on the organization and the curriculum part of learning. ICT can play an important part in the specific design of the curriculum of a program, which may differ from school to school. Also, the way schools use different media may differ: some schools like books, some their digital blackboard, some their tablets and others the mix of it all. Another example is de use of specific language games that can be part of the curriculum, or not. Also, the way schools want to offer their students personal learning tracks for parts of the curriculum is a choice. Teachers and schools work together with language, educational and ICT specialist in the design of the (digital) learning and teaching environment. It offers teachers choices. ICT is used, but books and paper as well.Based on the needs and conditions of teachers a suitable design for their teaching. The goal of this project is to include ICT in an offer towards schools and teachers in such a way that ICT is used for the benefit of teaching and learning.

References

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