(Methods). It was suggested that students should be supported in exploring their own personal learning styles, which could take the form of multiple intelligence tests, learner training, study skill development and cognitive or metacognitive strategies. This could help refine the most suitable apps for them to use. It was also stressed that learners should explore collaborative methods of study and also be prepared to teach each other.

Finally the E (Evaluation) stage was explained. This stage requires the students to evaluate on the success of their methods and apps at achieving their linguistic goals. A number of methods of evaluation were considered such as self-reflection, oral reports, an E-Portfolio, a reflection diary, questionnaire or app quizzes.

Conclusion

The presentation concluded with the claim that the iPad has exciting potential as an autonomous learning tool due to the ubiquitous access and range of multimodal functions and applications the device offers. The researcher suggested teachers can support learners developing greater autonomy by using the GAME plan process to help ensure they carefully consider their goals, the applications they use, their methods of study, and finally evaluate and reflect on their success.

Q and A

The audience raised some interesting points in the Q and A session. One teacher described their experience of using iPads at their university and the difficulty in finding collaborative apps. This led to a brief review of apps previously mentioned to identify those that students could work on simultaneously such as Popplet. Another teacher was interested in discussing the evaluation stage in greater detail, and the potential difficulty or reluctance of students to sufficiently reflect. Overall, it was made clear that this was a new process yet to be trialed and the researcher would welcome any feedback on how the stages could best be implemented.

References


Bio:
Peter Harrold is an English lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan. His research interests include teaching English for Academic Purposes, technology and learning, and extensive reading.

From Paper to Pixels: Design and delivery of online language courses

Dubhgan Hinchey, John Blake and William Holden

Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology

The English program at the Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology was revised in 2012. Initially, a needs/means analysis (Brown 1995) was carried out to determine learning objectives for postgraduate science and engineering students. The analysis revealed three dissimilar groups, namely: Japanese students in need of remedial English instruction, Japanese students with goals to present or publish in English in Japan, and international students writing and publishing in English for an overseas audience. In order to satisfy the needs of the groups, three courses in a paperless, foundation level English language program were developed: a self-access course, an oral/listening course and an academic reading course. The challenge was to create
content for online courses, starting from scratch. The initial deficiency in digital content was solved three ways. First, two subscription services iKnow! (spaced repetition software), EnglishCentral (corpus-based pronunciation software) and MoodleReader provided content for the self-access course. Second, video clips of authentic speech were carefully selected for an oral/listening course. Third, the content creation of the academic reading course relied heavily on the input of the first cohort of students.

**Integrating existing services**

The open source content management system (CMS) Moodle was chosen as the main platform for the online courses due to its ability to host a local installation of the MoodleReader Module, the authors’ familiarity with the Moodle platform, and the support available from the Moodle Association of Japan. The CMS became the platform to integrate the software and service listed in Table 1 into the self-access course.

Because student progress tracking is a feature of iKnow!, EnglishCentral and MoodleReader, students no longer needed to provide paper evidence of independent study completed outside of class. A common characteristic of Table 1 software is that web-based reports for teachers can be downloaded and easily imported into Excel. iKnow! and EnglishCentral’s academic discount made these services’ costs comparable to that of providing textbooks, with the added bonus of access to multimodal content (Gee, 2007 p.110). Moreover, students were able to study level-appropriate material at their own pace.

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<th>iKnow!</th>
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<td><strong>Real-time reports</strong></td>
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Table 1: Summary of the software or services used to kickstart going paperless.

(1) Mobile apps in development

**Harnessing authentic materials**

The oral/listening course was developed in tandem with the instructors who taught it. Sharing information on a Google doc. facilitated vertical and horizontal integration of content. After a scope and sequence was complete, videos were examined, discussed, and adopted or dismissed.

Each unit included two video clips: a short introductory clip, and a longer, slightly more difficult clip. Clips were between 1 and 4 minutes in length. Difficulty was assessed holistically; factors considered were: length, accent, rate of speech, lexical density and syntactic complexity.

Video clips featuring authentic speech in a variety of native and non-native accents were sourced online, and quizzes based on them written. Clips featured both language students and native-English speakers engaged in communicative situations our students were likely to encounter.

Transcription and editing of the video clips was outsourced, and the transcriptions used to develop course material. Quiz items were written that encouraged students to develop and use specific cognitive strategies, such as: goal setting, activating background knowledge, prediction, paying selective attention, note-taking, guessing, and using inference and deduction.

Students were introduced to the video and quiz questions during class; the instructor led them to approach the task using the appropriate listening strategies. Students then completed the viewing/listening tasks, and one follow-up attempt outside class. Quizzes were open for 72-hours to encourage regular study.

**Organizing student-led content development**

The academic reading course required students to upload entries to a Moodle glossary. Some students were able to produce excellent glossaries, comprehension questions and summaries for their classmates in spite of vague or ambiguous instructions. However, to reduce the amount of time re-explaining and revising materials, it is worth spending a significant amount of time preparing the students by providing clear examples of the work expected.

It could also be helpful to show examples of what not to produce to new students. Working through an example, and getting the students to agree on clear guidelines also has the added advantage of securing some degree of buy-in from the students. To reduce the time spent formatting the materials, the usage of prepared e-templates is suggested so that the materials produced are more likely to adhere to the provided template.

Using the student-produced work in subsequent
sessions helps to motivate them to produce better quality materials and gives them a sense of satisfaction. There will be mistakes in the materials, but after using the materials for the first time, these can be identified and corrected. The guidelines below were used to enable students to produce individualized materials for their academic reading course.

Guidelines for materials development

1. Provide clear examples
2. Work through examples in class time
3. Write clear guidelines
4. Distribute teacher-created templates online
5. Use newly-created materials immediately
6. Improve materials for following cohorts

Conclusion

We suggest that other, similar programs would benefit from having a member of faculty become a certified Moodle Course Creator, who might then serve as a resource for others. Going paperless may initially seem daunting, but there are a number of advantages; we have found that this approach has enabled us to: specify learning objectives relevant to our students’ needs; use authentic content; provides greater interest and motivation; write material & quiz items that address the specific needs/lacks/wants of our students; provide students 24/7 access to materials via pc, tablet or smart phone; set a steady, reasonable learning pace that encourages regular study; easily revise, update and introduce new course material; revise quiz items based on analysis of student performance; maintain and share student progress profiles in real time; and provide immediate feedback to students on their progress. Finally, you can see how other programs have gone paperless by visiting <hub.moodlejapan.org> and downloading one of the many courses available there.

References


Bios:

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