

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## Why use ICT? - The Otago Girls' ICT Experience

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Why use ICT in the languages classroom? I almost don't think this question needs to be answered anymore, but if it does, ICT provides authentic and modern resources and anyway your students already live in a digital environment. If we're going to make languages relevant we need to show and use what's out there and what they know.

The use of ICT in the languages classroom has taken a huge leap forward at Otago Girls' over the last two years. This has largely been due to access to our own languages computer pod. This room is timetabled exclusively for languages classes and has been out-fitted with a data projector and smartboard. We added speakers and a docking port to the set-up and we were away. The pod is split during lessons with students working on our languages CD roms which are loaded on the network or active on the dozens of language specific websites we have linked in our school intranet.

We also subscribed to the website Linguascope.com which has a range of curriculum activities in French, German and Spanish which are accessible by students at home as well as at school.

We have also done our first tests with language classes in the use of the "Moodle". This is basically a school intranet site which is accessible by students both in school and at home. The difference between this and the normal intranet site is that the individual teacher can place his or her courses on this site for viewing by all students in the class. The weekly format can include topic, achievement objectives etc and can include activities, links to websites and files available at school, resource files, audio files and basically anything else that can be loaded on the school network can be made available to students at home and in class. Students also have the ability to upload homework, publish questions and answers and take part in online quizzes etc. The moodle shows both students and parents what is being taught at school. Best of all it's free and with

competent support people behind you at school, easily set-up.

The biggest help for ICT though and probably the most effective and frankly cost-effective thing we've done is put a data projector in each language teacher's classroom. This means all resources (both video or audio) are available to all students in all classes. So here's the recipe to have ICT working well in your languages classroom:

1. Buy a data projector for each languages classroom.
2. Link it to your Ministry-funded lap-top.
3. Get a wireless network so you don't have cabling to your network.
4. Put everything from flashcards to notes to audio and video files on your network (buy a server!)
5. Download a freeware audio recorder.
6. Subscribe to linguascope.com or other internet-based resources (CD-Roms get old and unusable within five years)
7. Buy or download freeware for smartboard software. (you can still use a word document beamed onto your whiteboard if you can't get this.)
8. Buy \$20 Warehouse speakers for sound
9. Buy a wireless keyboard and mouse (ca.\$100) to pass around the class
10. Last but not least; write ICT into your scheme and have computer use and all your other technology elements written into your unit plans. Don't forget it's another tool just like a whiteboard marker - Just way more powerful and way more interesting.

These are just a few ideas. If you'd like to contact us here at OGs for more information, mail me at [chris.durrant@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:chris.durrant@otagogirls.school.nz)

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