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INCREASING AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES THROUGH INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

From the early days of the language lab a half century ago, the language teaching profession has always been on the leading edge of applying technology to education. . The energy and intelligence students invest in these new technologies is much too valuable for the language-teaching profession to ignore. Keeping language, communication and culture in accordance with existing national standards for foreign language learning, foreign language teachers are continuously looking for better ways of getting authentic materials and providing teaching strategy which could improve their students' knowledge and skills in these targeted fields. Clearly, target language communication and cultures are easily accessible through current and emerging technologies, and information about using these technologies is readily available online.

As the Internet has transformed communication all over the world, it is natural that it should play a very essential role in the classroom. The instant worldwide connections provided by Internet have changed the way the people consider the communications, information and running the business. Although the Internet applications are simply computer programs using the Internet as means of interaction we view them as an extension of the real world. We can share all sorts of the things with the world, get authentic materials from any distant resource and interact with people from different countries that could hardly be imagined a few decades ago.

How can the Internet enhance classroom experience? In addition to the original Internet applications, like FTP for moving files between computers and Telnet for logging into distant computers, the wide range of features and media (text, image, sound, video and multimedia) supported by the Internet programs makes them powerful addition to the teaching technique.

A number of Internet applications can be used to enrich the foreign language lessons and create the atmosphere, where all needs and demands could be met. Such applications as electronic mail, lists, journals, World Wide Web, search engines, remote access to libraries and databases, streaming audio and video, audio and video conferencing, different chat programs, web course management have become a common thing nowadays.

To integrate these tools into the curriculum in a pedagogically sound and meaningful way foreign language teaches should motivate students for using it not only for entertainment but as means of self-improvement as well. The intrepid and creative teacher will venture into this virtual realm, find authentic resources, and use them to make the second language classroom a marvelous place to learn and enjoy the process of education.