

More homework please! Investigating the use of ICT as an effective, motivating and stimulating homework tool in Modern Foreign Languages

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ABSTRACT

Although the significant contribution that ICT can make to the development of all four language skills and the raising of pupil attainment has been well documented, in reality student progress is still all too often impeded by inadequate ICT provision. This paper reports on a practitioner research project which investigated whether ICT can be used as an effective, stimulating and motivational homework tool in modern foreign languages (MFL), thereby circumventing the problem of access to the IT suite during the school day. The background to the research is described followed by an account of the project's implementation. The study was carried out with two groups of Year 7 students (a French class and a German class) within a large 11-18 comprehensive school in Sussex during 2003. In the first phase of the project students were given a variety of homework tasks to complete online which they subsequently emailed to their teacher. The second phase involved the launching of a language forum to which students contributed and where they posted their homework. This paper details the execution of these phases and then proceeds to evaluate the findings from the three forms of data which were collected: questionnaires, pupil commentaries and the teacher's field notes. The data suggests that students were highly motivated by the project and that it promoted learner autonomy as well as a more positive approach to foreign language learning. In particular, the response to the forum indicates that the use of ICT in MFL can stimulate pupils' interest in one another and contribute to peer learning, while decreasing students' reliance on the teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Language learning is an act of creativity, imagination, exploration, expression, construction and profound social and cultural collaboration. If we use computers to fully humanize and enhance this act, rather than to try to automate it, we can help bring out the best that human and machine have to offer. (Warschauer, 1996)

Over the past decade ICT has revolutionised teaching and learning in secondary schools. However, much of the focus has been on improving students' IT literacy within specific IT lessons or through cross-curricular projects in school. While it is evident that students' skills in new technologies have advanced significantly as a consequence, the opportunities afforded for employing these skills tend to be highly inconsistent across the curriculum. Although there is a general perception that the benefits of computer mediated

communication are manifold, the reality in many MFL departments is that ICT is not being integrated into daily lesson planning. This fact is borne out by the findings of the government's ImpaCT2 report (Harrison et al, 2002) which reveals that MFL, together with maths, had the lowest usage of the internet at key stage 4. The results of their questionnaire regarding pupils' use of ICT in non-core subjects confirm that 40% of students never use ICT in MFL lessons and only 0.83% use ICT in MFL lessons every week. This can be attributed to any number of factors, the most significant of which include adequate training for staff, the improvement of ICT provision for staff and pupils, as well as sufficient access to existing technology within schools. This paper describes an attempt to address the latter by exploring the possibility of using ICT for homework purposes in MFL.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The motivation for this project germinated from three distinct and fairly commonplace difficulties I have encountered in my teaching, the first one being the lack of scope in using the IT facilities in school, for my subject area at least. According to BECTa

ICT has the potential to make a significant contribution to the teaching of MFL by: developing and improving all four language skills; enhancing pupils' language learning skills; helping to develop independent learning skills; providing different levels of support to match different pupils' language learning skills; communicating with people in the target language; accessing a range of resources in the target language and identifying with the people of target language communities and countries; providing a flexible and time-saving resource; allowing teachers to respond to different stages in a pupil's writing.
(<http://www.becta.org.uk/corporate/corporate.cfm?section=1&id=2111>)

Yet for many teachers the exploitation of these very real benefits and the embedding of ICT in the MFL curriculum are not feasible when accessing the IT suites in school still poses such a logistical problem.

The setting of meaningful, yet interesting homework with limited resources constituted the second reason for seeking an alternative way that students could get involved online in MFL. In the school I worked in, students were not permitted to take textbooks home and teachers were allocated a quota of one hundred photocopies per month which, in effect, equates to one photocopy per three students a month. This necessarily begs the question as to how to set motivating homework in MFL in the absence of textbooks or worksheets.

In choosing to work with two groups of Year 7 students (a French class of 29 students and a German class of 28) within a large 11-18 comprehensive school in East Sussex I also wanted to consider whether the use of ICT in this way could promote a more positive attitude towards language learning, as I felt that languages did not have a particularly high profile in the school and this was being further exacerbated by the lack of resources.

Therefore, it was hoped that by investigating students' e-learning in MFL from a slightly different perspective, namely by exploring the extent to which homework in MFL can be an online, more autonomous, student-led learning experience, this would have the dual effect of increasing students' exposure to ICT for MFL purposes and espousing a more positive outlook with regard to foreign language learning while concomitantly offering a workable solution to the difficulties experienced in gaining adequate access to the ICT suites at school.

The project consisted of two main phases. The first phase was more prescriptive and involved students completing very specific activities on a number of designated language sites and then emailing their homework to me. The second stage of the project entailed the creation of an online private language forum for participating students. This was designed as a space where they could share their experiences and knowledge, seek solutions to any problems encountered as well as being the area where they posted their homework. Students' responses to this online forum were a further element I wished to evaluate in undertaking this practitioner research project. In acting as an e-facilitator on the forum I would enable students to experiment with new ways of communicating and collaborating with each other online.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Since September 2004 it is no longer a statutory requirement that all students study a modern foreign language at Key Stage 4. Instead, MFL has become one of the entitlement areas that all schools must offer within their Key Stage 4 curriculum. If a student now opts to study a foreign language it will be "an informed personal choice, not an obligation" (QCA, 2004). This policy change is considered by many as tangible evidence of the failure of the National Curriculum in MFL. In examining the shortcomings of the National Curriculum model for modern foreign languages, Mitchell (2003) argues that it is poorly informed by current research-based theory of the nature of classroom-based interlanguage development. However, notwithstanding the widely held deficiencies of the National Curriculum in MFL, this change in government strategy has far-reaching repercussions for the study of languages in the UK and can only serve to weaken further its already vulnerable status within the secondary curriculum. The problematic nature of student motivation and attainment in MFL is a broader and more long-standing issue and one which can be widely evidenced and which has been well documented. For example, Saunders (1998) examined the crisis faced by MFL and Williams et al (2002) emphasised the motivational drop as pupils get older as well as the striking gender difference, with boys being less inclined to make an effort at what they consider to be tedious. Stables and Wikeley (1999) investigated the negative attitude towards language learning in school and students' lack of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation and their findings mirror those of a comparable study carried out by Stables and Harvey in 1984, which predates the National Curriculum. The broader scope of the Nuffield Inquiry (2000) highlighted similar trends in language teaching and learning in the UK, including declining numbers of A level candidates and undergraduates and a shortage of language teachers. Given the weight of evidence which points to the problems regarding

the mode of delivery of the National Curriculum in MFL and the disaffected attitude pupils display towards this subject it is highly desirable that the potential of new technologies to render languages more appealing to students be exploited to the full. Recommendation 13 of the Nuffield report is “move technology from the margins to the core of language learning”, a consideration which is central to this paper and one which must be fully backed by all and not just a minority of MFL departments at secondary level.

It is widely held that the use of computers offers key benefits with regard to language acquisition and improving student perception of FL learning. Pawling (1999) investigated the use of CD-ROMs and how they can promote vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation and independent learning. A generalisation can be made with regard to the positive attitude that students display towards using computers for writing, reading and communication in the language classroom. This positive perception of computers is influenced by the benefits of computer-mediated communication, the feeling of personal empowerment, the enhancement of learning opportunities and the reduction in teacher control (Kelm, 1992; Warschauer, 1996; Kern, 1995; Sullivan and Pratt, 1996; Chun, 1994; Blake, 2000). The use of computer mediated communication constitutes a powerful vehicle for students to share and construct knowledge while assuming more autonomy and initiative. Several studies have illustrated the benefits of CMC over regular face-to-face classroom activities viz. increased and more equal participation (Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Chun, 1994; Blake, 2000; Sullivan and Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1996), less teacher-centred (Kern, 1995; Sullivan and Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1996) more open-ended discussions, more candidness and honesty among participants, and more positive attitudes (Kelm, 1992; Beauvois, 1994). Leh (1999), Singhal (1997) and Fisher, Evans and Esch (2004) have investigated the beneficial impact of using email to communicate with native speakers. The latter chose as their focus the potential of email to promote learner autonomy and intercultural understanding. However, given the many recognised advantages of using ICT in the study of MFL it is clearly not being integrated effectively into the curriculum. The use of email to bridge the home and school environments is under-exploited (Comber et al, 2002; Pachler and Redondo, 2005) and, to refer once again to strand 1 of the ImpaCT2 report, ICT is never used in 40% of foreign language lessons and only in 5% of cases is it used most weeks. Furthermore, all too frequently the tasks that students are required to perform using ICT are not challenging or stimulating enough. Mumtaz (2001) has commented on the limitations of using computers simply as a word-processing tool and how boring this can be for students. Instead, teachers need to “challenge the children by using computer games in the classroom that promote exploratory learning, problem-solving skills, thinking skills, memory, perseverance, imagination, collaboration, and team work” (Mumtaz, 2001). With the advent of increasingly sophisticated software and websites dedicated to the study of MFL this should, in theory, be attainable with greater ease and to greater effect. For it is estimated on the results of the ImpaCT2 report that high ICT use in modern foreign languages can help to raise performance by the equivalent of 0.82 of a GCSE grade (Harrison et al, 2002). For teachers this necessitates reflecting on current practice and exploring more creative uses of ICT within and beyond the classroom, and this brings with it obvious time and training implications.

Turning to home use of ICT in MFL, an equally disquieting trend was unearthed in the report: 48.48% of pupils never used ICT for MFL purposes at home and 0% of pupils did so every week (Harrison et al, 2002). Pupils tend to perceive the use of computer technology at school very differently to its usage at home. Strand 2 of the ImpaCT2 report focused on pupils' and teachers' perceptions of ICT in the home, school and community and found that for most pupils the amount of time spent on ICT at home greatly exceeds the time spent on ICT at school (Somekh et al, 2002). Furthermore, pupils were found to be discriminating in their use of the internet, which is enabling them to develop skills and literacies in networked ICT, confidence in its use and a range of online and communication skills. Another key finding of the study was that pupils' perceptions of what learning is are shaped by their experience in school settings. They associate 'learning' with school-related use and typically describe all ICT use at home as 'games', even though much learning is occurring through their use of ICT for leisure pursuits (Somekh et al, 2002). Mumtaz (2001) concurred with the conclusion that students enjoyed home rather than school computer use and that, for both males and females, the most popular home computer activity was to play games. Furthermore, it was discovered that although the students felt equally confident in using computers at home and at school, having access to a computer at home lowered computer anxiety for many students. However, few schools and teachers have yet been able to integrate pupils' home use of ICT with their school use (Cox et al, 2004). It would also seem that, for many students, their competence in ICT is far more advanced than the tasks they are required to perform. It is imperative that MFL teachers take students' prior knowledge and facility with technology into account and exploit it as a means for developing language acquisition. Cox et al (2004) suggest that teachers found that pupils' home use of computers could supplement their use in school, particularly when they could not access computers outside lessons at school, which is one key rationale behind this study. In discussing the benefits of using ICT in the home they mention how "pupils can share ideas and discuss homework tasks with their peers and also their teachers via email, chat rooms and websites, which may usefully challenge their own understanding". However, this does not appear to be happening on a regular basis for homework in modern foreign languages. This potential for capitalising on students' positive attitude towards computer technology to strengthen the home-school connection is largely underutilised in this subject. Therefore, this practitioner research project attempted to address some of the issues outlined here, namely the effective use of ICT at home for MFL purposes, the setting of stimulating and motivational ICT activities to promote a more positive attitude towards modern foreign languages and the use of a forum to foster collaborative learning.

METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Websites and forum details

The project ran for 6 weeks in total and was implemented with two Year 7 classes (one French group of 29 students and one German group of 28 students). Before commencing the project it was necessary to assess how many pupils would not have access to a

computer at home and explore alternative possibilities for getting online (for example, use PCs in the library at break or lunchtime, buddy up with a friend who had internet access, arrange for students to use my laptop at a convenient time). As this was their first year of foreign language learning, much emphasis is placed on vocabulary acquisition and extension as well as on recognising and producing short phrases or sentences and it was according to these criteria that the websites used in this project were selected. Furthermore, it was felt that students would find these sites engaging, easy to navigate and would therefore be more capable of completing the tasks for homework.

*Chez mimi*¹: This is a Channel 4 website offering a wide range of interactive activities in French, which are divided up according to topic. Students can collect tokens according to their score which adds a fun element of competition to the learning process. There are three levels for each game which makes this website very useful for differentiation purposes.

*Hennings Haus*²: This is the German equivalent of *Chez mimi*.

*Educationcity*³: I subscribed to a free trial on this website for the duration of the project. While this site is visually attractive, some students found navigation of the site confusing and I felt it did not sufficiently challenge the more able pupils.

*Quia*⁴: This is a very popular American website which offers activities in a wide variety of curriculum areas. For languages it is most useful for reinforcing and extending vocabulary and structures. It is also possible for teachers to create and submit their own activities including flash cards, matching games, multiple choice quizzes, concentration (memory) activities, word search puzzles, hangman, and challenge boards. Since the project was carried out, it has become necessary to subscribe to this site.

*Linguascope*⁵: Formerly <http://www.bonjour.org.uk> and its German counterpart <http://www.hallo.org.uk>. These website have also since become subscription-based but it is possible to do so using Curriculum Online e-learning credits. This is an extremely useful website for Key Stages 3 & 4: vocabulary, together with the correct pronunciation, is presented under topic areas and is then reinforced through different activities including hangman, noughts and crosses, labelling pictures, matching pairs. Worksheets can be completed to consolidate language learned. This website is also particularly useful for reading and writing practice for every ability level.

A Modern Foreign Languages online forum was set up for the purposes of the project at <http://www.mirandanet.ac.uk/phorum/list.php?f=12>. For security reasons this was a private forum and therefore can only be accessed by participating students with a valid username and password. However, an excerpt from the forum can be viewed in Note 6⁶.

Monitoring the response

Three forms of data collection were used to evaluate the project:

- questionnaires on the e-learning project. These were to be completed online at the end of the project;
- collecting pupil commentaries to identify their overall perspective on the e-learning project in general and the language forum in particular. These were based on prompted, written questions and were completed online during lesson time (see Appendix 1); and
- field notes keeping a detailed log of the project's progress and my on-going observations.

Implementation strategies

First phase:

Prior to commencing the project I set up an email address which was dedicated specifically to the project. Pupils were instructed to send their homework and any problems they encountered to this address. At this stage I acted as trouble-shooter for any technical / language problems which students experienced. This phase lasted three weeks during which time I also ascertained student interest in the idea of a language forum.

Initially, the homework tasks set were of a very specific nature and I gave very detailed information about each link e.g. pupils were told to go onto a certain website and complete certain games and/or activities and then to email their answers to me.

I was struck by the ease with which the vast majority of pupils seemed to engage with the technology. Moreover, I had anticipated a greater degree of difficulty with regard to internet access than was actually the case. Of the five students (out of 59) who I had to chase up for homework, four were often late in producing homework and needed much prompting, which led me to question whether their lack of homework was entirely due to gaining online access.

One technical problem which we did encounter at the start was with the Educationcity website; I had subscribed to a free trial on this site and therefore students needed a username and password to access the games and activities. I gave these out in a lesson but a number of students either misplaced their sheet or did not know where to enter the details on the website (it was not self-evident). Several of the emails I received related to these difficulties but once I had replied to the individuals in question they managed to login and succeeded in doing the homework. In the next lesson I demonstrated how to do it, using my laptop in the classroom, for those who were still not sure.

I found that monitoring homework was not a problem as it was easy to keep track of emails received but admittedly I was more lenient in granting extensions for completing homework as I felt that some students had genuine excuses (such as their internet connection temporarily not working etc.).

As students gained in confidence and competence the homework tasks became more open-ended e.g. they were given a choice of activity or website and then had to email me

a review of a certain game or language site and at least two new words in the target language which they had learnt.

The emails served a dual function in that they allowed me to monitor and assess pupil homework and learning as well as providing valuable data for evaluating the project.

Second phase:

The next phase of the project involved the launching of the online languages forum. This was hosted by MirandaNet and was designed to extend online dialogue beyond that of teacher and student so that pupils could communicate online not only with those in their class but also with students in the other language group. My role was essentially one of moderator. The positive response to the forum was beyond what I could have hoped for: there were 235 posts in all (not including those which had, for various reasons, been deleted) and the excitement and enthusiasm that it generated is, in my opinion, immeasurable.

We had an initial lesson in the IT room to introduce pupils to the forum and establish a code of conduct: of the 50 respondents in the questionnaire only 8 had previously been on a forum. Pupils were given definite guidelines regarding netiquette and relevance of posts and were warned that any inappropriate messages would be deleted. From this point students were no longer to email me but rather to post their messages and homework on the forum. Moreover, students were encouraged to try to help each other with any problems encountered (see Note 6 for sample of postings). This second phase lasted just under three weeks.

Conclusion:

At the end of project another lesson was spent in the IT room to complete the questionnaire and this was followed-up in the classroom with the pupil commentaries (see Tables 1, 2 and Appendix 1).

EVALUATION OF DATA

Online Questionnaire

Out of a total of 57 participants in the project I succeeded in obtaining a completed questionnaire from 50 of these students (the remaining students were either out on a school trip, on holiday or absent due to illness). The e-learning questionnaire was to be filled in during lesson time.

My initial intention was that it should be completed online and almost two-thirds of students succeeded in doing this. However, the remaining students could not access the shared curriculum area on the school network where the questionnaire was located and therefore had to resort to filling it in manually. There were ten questions in total, nine of which involved a multiple choice style answer.

Analysis of Online Questionnaire

How much of the IT project did you enjoy?		
All of it	Some of it	None of it
33	17	0
Did the websites that we used help you improve your knowledge of a foreign language?		
Very much	A little	Not very much
20	28	2
Do you think the project made French/German more fun and interesting?		
Yes, definitely	A little bit	Not really
43	6	1
Would you ever go on these language websites again on your own (e.g. at the weekend, during the holidays...)?		
Yes I would	Maybe	No way
10	29	11
How easy was it to get online (to email, to do homework, to get onto the forum) at home?		
Easy	I had some problems	It didn't work for me
18	30	2
Had you ever been on a forum before this project?		
Yes	No	
8	42	
Did you improve your IT skills during the project?		
A lot	A little	Not at all
4	35	11
What did you think of the forum?		
Wicked	Quite good	Stupid
15	30	5
Did you find this work....		
Just about right	Too easy	Too hard
42	7	1
How do you feel about French/German now we have finished the project?		
<p>In the French group out of 23 replies 21 students said something positive about their foreign language in Q10 and only 2 said they felt the same.</p> <p>In the German group there were 27 questionnaire replies. Only 3 students said they felt the same or hadn't learnt much.</p>		

Table 1: Analysis of online questionnaire

Pupil Commentaries

The following are some extracts from student commentaries. These were completed online during lesson time at the conclusion of the project in order to examine their overall perspective on the e-learning project. These were based on prompted, written questions and were completed online during lesson time (see Appendix 1).

Pupil Commentaries (General)

- “This entire project has been cool!” (Nikki)
- “I feel better about French now I am more confident” (Jessica)
- “I learnt lots of new French words for example *harrison* is the word for hedgehog and the for walls is *le mur* also *porte* is the word for door (*sic*)” (Cameron)
- “I have learnt how to memorise French because I was having trouble learning it and then I went on one of the sites and it was really helpful (*sic*)”(Tom)
- “The games taught you French and were fun as well!”(Sophie W.)
- “It was very good as I took in information easily with no idea I had” (Louise)
- “I have learnt lots of new German words and phrases and got better at I.T. and had fun at the same time” (Cicely)
- “Following the instructions for the German homework was fun. You could say adventurous because we discovered different websites” (Ellie and Nia)

Table 2: Pupil commentaries (General comments pertaining to the project as a whole)

Pupil Commentaries (on the forum)

- “I think the forum was excellent (*sic*) I really enjoyed talking to everyone I would love to do it again. I found it very useful if you didn’t know how to do something you could just send a message and your friends get back to you” (Jennie)
- “It’s different because you can see what everyone’s said, instead of listening to one person you can get everyone’s views” (Kellie)
- “It was different talking online because you couldn’t see the expressions, or the tone of voice they made e.g. whether they were being sarcastic” (Chris)
- “On the phorum (*sic*) it was harder to explain yourself”(Kim)
- You have more time to think about things and it’s different and you can hide your identity if you wanted to” (Mattie)
- “It was fun on the forum to see what other people had learnt on the websites and what were their favourites” (Sophie M.)
- “I found it EXELENT (*sic*) and it was good it was private”(Ben)

Table 3: Pupil Commentaries (Comments pertaining to the forum in particular)

Field notes

My own observations during the project correlate strongly with the above findings. I felt that both phases of the project had a hugely beneficial influence on students’ attitude towards language learning. The online forum displayed several characteristics similar to adult forums: for example, some hurtful or offensive remarks were made, a couple of students tried to conceal their identity and send anonymous messages, and there was a need to remind participants to keep the discussion on-topic. However, when it was made clear to pupils that any irrelevant or inappropriate posts would be deleted from the forum this immediately rectified the situation. While there were no ‘lurkers’ as every student had to contribute and post his/her homework up, there was a varying degree of participation among students.

DISCUSSION: ICT AS A HOMEWORK TOOL IN MFL

I feel that the e-learning project not only met its stated aims but it surpassed them. It was indeed a voyage of discovery not just for the students but also for me, as teacher but especially as a learner opening, as it did, many new doors of enquiry. Using ICT as a homework tool is not only feasible in modern foreign languages but highly desirable. The positive change in students' attitude towards language learning was palpable in the classroom and is corroborated by the data collected. Out of the fifty students who completed the questionnaires not one responded by saying they didn't enjoy any part of the project and only one student felt the project had not made French or German more fun and interesting. Although much of the literature suggests that boys in particular are less motivated to learn a modern foreign language (see, for example, William et al, 2002; Stables and Wikeley, 1999). I found that they were very willing to engage with the technology and consequently their perception of MFL was enhanced. Promoting student autonomy and offering them a choice result in a higher level of pupil engagement and a sense of ownership and emancipation. That several students went onto the forum and other language sites of their own accord (i.e. in their own time when there was not a specific homework set) is a clear indicator of how motivating and stimulating this type of e-learning can be. Furthermore, I believe it has a beneficial effect on pupil confidence in general, and on quieter students in particular as they are more willing to participate online than in regular classroom activities. While this is consistent with much of the existing literature, it was apparent that the more vocal students still tended to create more volume online. Another interesting point to note is that our work online was very good for differentiation (by task, by outcome and by expectation) as students tended to select online homework activities which were appropriate for their level and which they knew they would succeed at. This observation is corroborated by Liu et al (2000). In their literature review of research on computer-based technology use in second language learning from 1990-2000 they cite "increased opportunities for individualised instruction leading to more attention to diverse students' needs" as one of the many advantages of CMC.

The response to the forum was most encouraging and the volume of posts together with the ease with which the vast majority of students engaged with the technology (only 8 out of the 50 respondents had previously been on a forum) were two very positive outcomes. The forum was instrumental in facilitating interaction both within and between the two languages classes and in raising the profile of languages, as well as providing me with valuable experience as a moderator. According to Warschauer (1997) this type of collaborative learning (many-to-many-communication) gives students the opportunity to "construct knowledge together by expressing themselves in print and then assessing, evaluating, comparing, and reflecting on their own views and those of others". Another significant benefit of the forum is that the discussion is less teacher-centred. However, there is a delicate balance between being too directive and omnipresent on the one hand and giving enough guidance on the other. In running a forum for this age group (11-12 year olds) it is imperative that the objectives are made very specific and concrete as there is a strong tendency to treat the forum as a chat room and therefore discussions could lack coherence. If I were to run another forum for this year group in the future I would give it

a tighter focus. Lamb and Fisher (1999), in their investigation of the use of the internet and the world cup to help students connect with language learning, came to a similar conclusion. Ultimately control of the topic and the netiquette of the learners must reside with the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the aims of the research project, the obvious conclusion is that computer-mediated communication reveals itself as a valid pedagogical tool for MFL – not just in the classroom but also at home - and that students react to it with enthusiasm and motivation, appreciating the opportunities for learner autonomy and peer interaction it affords. It is evident that significant advances continue to be made in the range of technologies available to schools and the home market, and that the percentage of students with a computer at home is rapidly increasing. The MFL curriculum needs to reflect these changes and exploit the formal/informal learning potential which is implicit in students' use of ICT at home. Lieu et al (2002) assert that the majority of the studies in the area of computer based technology in foreign language learning from 1990-2000 concentrate on the benefits and potential of using computers in the classroom. A change of focus is required toward examining how we can better integrate increasingly sophisticated technology into the language learning process in schools and at home. "Increased opportunities to engage in collaborative tasks online could provide a significant benefit in light of the arduous journey L2 learners must make toward the target language and the important role that input plays in this process." (Blake, 2000)

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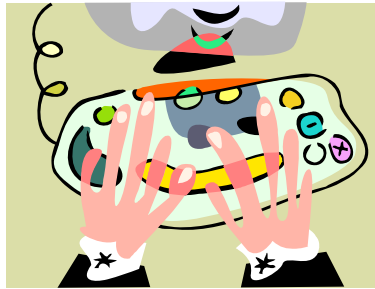
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Appendix 1

Prompt Questions about the Elearning Project



1. Say which were your favourite bits of the project.
2. What have you learnt?
3. Did you find it fun? WHY?
4. Did you learn / revise a lot of German / French?
5. Did you have any problems or difficulties during the project?
6. What did you think of the forum?
7. Why was it different to 'talk' online rather than face-to-face?



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NOTES

¹ Chez Mimi: http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/c4modernlanguages/mimi/main/french_main_menu.asp

² Hennings Haus:
http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/c4modernlanguages/henning/main/german_main_menu.asp

³ Educationcity: <http://www.educationcity.net>

⁴ Quia: <http://www.quia.com>

⁵ Linguascope: <http://www.linguascope.com>

⁶ Sample online forum: <http://www.mirandanet.ac.uk/ejournal/uploads/36/Discussion%20Forums.doc>