

USING COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Access to computers in the classroom is increasing daily. In many areas, elementary level students are introduced to the Internet, word processing, and other computer programs. Technology can serve as a valuable tool in meeting the educational needs of students. In Spanish class, technology can assist the teacher, expand the curriculum, and open many doors to Latin American and Spanish culture. Here are some ideas on how to incorporate computer technology into your Spanish class.

Word Processing. Many new word-processing programs have a language option. Go to “Tools,” then “Language,” then “Set Language.” Choose one of the forms of Spanish available. Teach students to use grammar and spell check in Spanish as they type and print work they have written or work the teacher has chosen. For higher level classes, the teacher may even wish to use the “translation” option in order to instruct students in its proper application.

The Internet. Needless to say, the Internet offers nearly limitless options in the world-language classroom. Here are just a few to get you started:

1. Use “Yahoo en español,” “Google,” or another search engine to find material in Spanish. Everything from newspapers to jokes is available.
2. Visit museums in Spanish-speaking countries and museums in other countries that house art by Latin American and Spanish artists.
3. Take a virtual tour of ancient ruins cited in the cultural sections of *¡Viva el español!*
4. Listen to music in Spanish or radio broadcasts from Spanish-speaking countries.
5. Read authentic literature. Use a current online dictionary or translation system to assist students.
6. Create word games using an online program.
7. Plan trips or create projects after accessing cultural information about a specific country.

Multimedia Presentation Programs. These programs provide an opportunity for students and the teacher to collect information and share it with other students in the class in an attractive, interesting manner. A multimedia presentation can be as simple as a series of written slides or as advanced as slides with pictures, animation, or even sound bites or video clips. Stories can be written and shared electronically as well.

Clip Art. Many pictures are readily available in word-processing programs without cost or on the Internet for a nominal fee. Students can illustrate their vocabulary, dialogues, or stories.

Publishing Programs. The latest publishing programs make it much easier to produce a class newspaper or bulletin in Spanish.