

Trainee teachers' perceptions of the use of digital technology in the languages classroom Linda Fisher

Trainee teachers are in a unique situation when it comes to learning about ICT and its uses in the MFL classroom. The summary below is structured around the trainees' initial thoughts about ICT and its potential for language teaching, the influence of the subject culture in moving their thinking and practice on ICT, the trainees' developing understanding of the 'fit' of ICT with MFL pedagogy, their uses of ICT for personal learning, cautions about the use of ICT and their thinking on its future use. All prior experiences will have contributed to the formation of beliefs about the value of ICT as a possible teaching tool for MFL, and these in turn influence the willingness to incorporate ICT into classroom practice, the speed of this incorporation and the variety of teaching approaches to digital technology adopted. For the cohort of trainees under the spotlight here, this meant demonstrating for example that they know how to use ICT effectively, both to teach their subject and to support their wider professional (TTA, 2003; 9) and that they use ICT effectively in their teaching (TTA, 2003; 13). These measures can be seen as government trying to ensure that new teachers leave training courses digitally proficient by requiring that all trainee teachers engage with it. Making trainees gain certain technical understandings and competences (the skills test), and guaranteeing they have experience of using it in their work in the classroom (the QTS standards), is a way of spreading more use of ICT into schools, with trainees potentially functioning as agents of change within subject departments. Neither qualified teachers nor trainees, therefore, have free rein to decide whether ICT is a suitable fit for their pedagogy, as they are required to incorporate it. In addition, trainee teachers must demonstrate knowledge and competence in ICT in order to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Semi-structured interviews were conducted lasting around 40 minutes each, with questions on the following areas: how trainees felt about ICT and its affordances for Foreign Language Learning with Digital Technology on beginning the course; how this developed over the year; how they had used digital technology for languages teaching and learning; any cautions about its use; projections for future use. Despite the internet's appearance only in the mid-1990s, and relatively few Trainee Teachers' Perceptions of Digital Technology resources in schools until the massive government investment in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the general demographic of trainees (mode age 25 for the cohort under discussion) means that they are likely to have encountered some teaching with ICT during their own languages education. They will have had experiences involving ICT that will have given them a view as to the extent of potential efficacy in the classroom: were they themselves taught languages using ICT, and did they consider this useful? She was mainly influenced by her aunt, a science teacher who was sceptical about ICT, and who had an IWB in her classroom, but was unable to use it. Gemma's beliefs about the dubious value of digital technology in the classroom were further reinforced during the very first week of the course, which was spent observing in a primary school. Increased exposure to ICT in practice (for example the modeling of teaching using ICT that trainees observe)? Claire described coming from a learning background where there was no ICT in the classroom at all, and could never imagine herself using it in Trainee Teachers' Perceptions of Digital Technology her own teaching, which links back to L

or the ideas of teachers teaching how they were taught: I think it's part of this watching – TV culture, and they know a lot more technology than I know. And they've been brought upon it. In the classroom, pupils receive a recording of roles or something, then you can do peer assessment. What does this mean for trainees? Perceptions of digital literate teachers felt they could avoid using ICTs. As in the previous section, where trainees were at home or unable to use ICT..... They have been tried together in the world.