

# Teaching with **digital tools**: a teacher's checklist

This checklist provides a brief guide on how to teach using digital technology to ensure effective learning. Based on the SLA (second language acquisition) principles, the guidelines focus on how digital tools can be used to improve the fluency, accuracy or complexity of learners' language, how they can be used to motivate learners, and how they can be used to develop learner autonomy.

## Improve cognition and proficiency

In order to develop language skills, learners need to be exposed to relevant and comprehensible input, build on existing knowledge and revisit language and concepts frequently. Use the below guidelines to support the intake and retention of language knowledge and skills using digital technology.

Guidelines	Using digital
Support learners by focusing their attention on new salient features of language in input material.	Many digital learning materials highlight new language features by underlining or using a different font to the rest of the text. Encourage learners to look for these and discuss why they're highlighted.
Use multimodal input in the presentation of new target language or concepts to support learners' comprehension, and give them choice over the type of media they engage with.	Use music videos, for example, which provide contextual clues such as gesture and intonation that aren't available in a written text.
Provide frequent opportunities for learners to revisit items previously learned in the course.	Unlike print materials in which learners may have already written their answers, digital practice tasks allow learners to repeat the task. Encourage learners to revisit tasks to help consolidate their learning.
Afford learners greater flexibility and choice in the combination of media – audio, image, video, text – that they use in the presentation and practice of language.	Encourage learners to use digital resources to create multimodal output, supporting written output with visuals or spoken output with video.
Provide different modes of feedback, i.e. in text and audio forms.	Create a video-capture of your screen as you annotate and record your feedback at the same time. Use digital programmes to generate charts or bars to signal learners' progress.



## Motivate your learners

Motivation plays a significant part in language learning. In order for learners to be engaged, they need to be invested in their learning and see the relevance, feel a sense of control, choice and achievement, be able to build social relations, and to enjoy the experience. Use the below guidelines to motivate to motivate learners through digital environments.

Guidelines	Using digital
Use materials which foster positive emotions by triggering feelings of happiness while engaging with content.	Encourage learners to engage with digital input materials that require them to interact with content by dragging or moving items, and include gamification elements such as point scoring.
Provide learners with opportunities to access learning materials relevant to their personal interests and context.	Allow learners source and access authentic reading, listening, and viewing materials online to practise receptive skills of reading and listening.
Select tasks that actively involve learners by requiring their input, interaction, or collaboration.	Consider setting up online collaborative projects with your learners and make use of multimedia content and the internet. Integrate activities into your lessons which utilise chat rooms and video conferencing platforms to allow learners to interact in real-time.
Feedback should be personalised for individual learners, and while automated feedback is valuable for evaluating linguistic accuracy, task achievement, content and organisation are better suited to human feedback.	As well as using automated feedback embedded within digital materials, make time in your lessons to offer learners personalised human feedback, either face-to-face or in digital written or audio files.
Consider the use of tasks with gamification elements and embedded feedback within a challenging game that offers some reward.	Use digital and online games with embedded automated feedback to support learners.



## Develop learner autonomy

The most successful language learners are those that have high levels of learner autonomy. This includes being able to plan their own learning, making effective use of learning strategies, and able to reflect, evaluate and understand next steps to take in order to improve. Use the below guidelines to foster to foster autonomy in learners.

Guidelines	Using digital
Help learners to employ effective learning strategies by providing guidance on organising their learning, including the use of study techniques and tools.	Help learners to set up an editable digital record in which to 'save' new language so that they can revisit it later. Ask learners to consider how input materials might best be exploited for further language focus and practice, both within the digital learning environment and in the classroom.
Help learners to employ effective learning strategies by signalling additional learning resources based on areas in which they need further practice.	Provide learners with links to dictionaries and other learning resources. Ensure that learners know where to find additional practice materials either within the learning environment or online.
Include reflective tasks in which learners are encouraged to think consciously about their learning, and utilise environments which allow learners to keep a record of their and their peers' contributions for future reflection and review.	Encourage learners to engage in reflection at the end of an online task, for example, in the form of questions about what they found easy or challenging, and how they felt the digital format impacted on their experience of completing the task.
Encourage learners to self-evaluate their approach to a task after having received feedback.	After receiving feedback on a task, encourage learners to use a digital portfolio to reflect on their approach to the tasks and consider what elements of their approach were/weren't effective for them.
Support learners to identify their own learning needs by signalling additional learning resources based on errors, e.g. if the learner makes spelling mistakes, instead of correcting, link them to a dictionary.	Ensure that learners know where to find further practice materials, and encourage them to reflect on their individual feedback to identify which resources are most relevant for their learning.

