



Mentoring Investigation Report

A mentoring partnership to use and evaluate new technologies in teaching, learning and assessing Indonesian

<p>Background information</p> <p>Mentor teacher(s) name: <i>Rebecca Gregory</i></p> <p>Mentee teacher(s) name: <i>Amy Collins</i></p> <p>School: <i>Braemar College and St James College, VIC</i></p> <p>Language: <i>Indonesian</i></p> <p>Year level: <i>9</i></p>
<p>School or class context</p> <p>St James College, Bentleigh East is a Regional Catholic Boys' College offering tuition to students from Year 7 to 10. Last year, Amy wanted to focus on incorporating a variety of activities into her Indonesian classes, including reading, writing, speaking, listening and 'authentic' use of the language. However, this term sees the introduction of the iPad into all year 9 classes.</p> <p>At my school, Braemar College, students also use iPads in class, so we have decided to centre our mentoring activities around varying classroom activities using the iPad.</p> <p>Amy particularly wants to focus on looking for apps that can be used every day and for assessment purposes. She was also interested in investigating the use of rubrics to encourage the best language use when doing assessed learning activities.</p>
<p>Goals of mentoring program</p> <p>For the MoRe LEAPS project, my mentee and I will focus on 'Language Pedagogy'. In particular, the use and evaluation of new technologies in teaching, learning and assessment.</p> <p>As the mentor, and also the one with more experience in using iPads in the classroom, I can share with Amy some of the successes and frustrations I have had in setting up activities in the Indonesian classroom when using iPads. As most of my classes are small, they are a good place to try out new technologies. As we know, technology is always being updated and new apps are available every day, so our investigation will be more of a co-investigation. We will design iPad-centred learning activities together, trial these in our respective classrooms, and share our evaluations.</p> <p>The aim was to develop a bank of learning activities using the iPad that engage, support and extend students in their learning of Indonesian and where possible provide an authentic language learning experience for them. Working on this project as a partnership was also intended to allow us to compare and critique materials, apps and uses of technology in the classroom, while also considering ways of enhancing our pedagogy.</p>

Design	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking at the Year 9 syllabus for term 3, select apps or iPad based activities that could be used throughout the unit. These should include some formative and summative assessment activities. 2. Plan a selection of activities and how we aim to implement them. 3. Design rubrics where necessary 4. Develop a table which lists the activities, the aims for each activity and then an evaluation section. 5. After trialling the activities in class, evaluate each one. 6. Regularly share and compare our experiences. 7. Discuss how certain activities might be used better in a different way or not at all. 	
Implementation	
<p>Rebecca to visit Amy's school. Attend one or two of her classes and then spend the afternoon planning our iPad activities for term 3. This occurred on Friday June 22nd, the last day of term 2.</p> <p>July – numerous emails exchanging and sharing activities and plans for our Year 9 units.</p> <p>August – shared experiences via email.</p> <p>September – shared reflections of apps via email Also tried in vain to organise another school visit within the last three weeks of term 3 but it was just impossible.</p> <p>October – final face-to-face catch up to think about how we could improve on our practice</p>	<p>On this day I gained more of an understanding about Amy's context. The school and classrooms appeared quite well set up for the iPads, but the students did not have theirs yet. I need to keep in mind that she only has short lessons and all boys!</p> <p>We discussed apps that we had tried personally and ones that had been recommended to us. A focus was on the independence of students to use the app and the ease with which completed work could be shared with the teacher and or fellow students.</p> <p>It took us a while to get going trialling our activities as school life took over. Amy had creative arts week and I had Year 9 city week which disrupted our classes and it took a few weeks before we were able to actually use the iPads in class, as well as share our experiences!</p> <p>These reflections focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our favourite app, which really engaged students, in a competitive environment with instant feedback. - Effectiveness of group work and set up of classroom - Purpose and how to extend students <p>These reflections focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to manage noise levels when a large class are recording their voices - Amount of time and effort to prepare versus amount of learning/engagement achieved. Could another method (non-iPad?) be more effective? - Are students engaged with the 'novelty' or the actual learning activity? Strategies to work with this. <p>For example:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short timeline (count-down clock) to keep students on task - Discard apps that take too much teacher time, try to work mainly with apps that allow students to create - Ask for headphones with microphones as a class set or on student booklist next year and try to do recording outside or book a big space
<p>Data gathered</p>	
<p>Amy and I kept in touch via email and facebook about how we were going. We completed the 'Apps Reflection' document over the term, with our reflections about the apps and things we could do differently next time. We also had two face-to-face meetings throughout the project.</p> <p>See apps and reflections document</p>	<p>It has been great to work with Amy, and the days we spent together were useful and reassuring I think for both of us to know that someone else is having the same issues. As far as a mentoring relationship goes, it has been useful but I think working with a mentor or mentee who is in the same school where possible would be more effective. This is due to the simple fact that time is just so tight. With iPads, there may be an opportunity for a mentoring relationship between a language and non-language teacher.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	
<p>Outcomes for increasing knowledge and improving classroom practices to improve student learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The best apps are those that do something we couldn't do before we had iPads - The importance of trialling and planning how students might use the app, problems they might encounter and if producing a piece of work provide a sample piece for students - The app must engage students and encourage them to use the language (not just a game, with language on the side) - Always have back up plans in case the app crashes, internet stops working or a student doesn't have their iPad in class or the necessary app downloaded <p>Overall, we have reached our aim which was to work together to create a number of learning activities to be shared for our common unit of work. Also, to come up with a list of apps which are useful when planned for and used appropriately in the classroom or by students at home.</p> <p>Outcomes for building capacity for mentoring and reflective practices in teaching and learning languages.</p> <p>I have learnt a lot about contextualising reflection of practice, by considering what we already know about language learning theory, and then how we do or do not use it.</p> <p>In fact we often are quite aware of current language learning theory but do not implement it for whatever reason. This provides a starting point for thinking about our practice and identifying areas to improve.</p> <p>In this project, we thought about what is engaging and what is real language learning. We considered rote learning versus communicating to convey a message. These were the main areas we focussed on and considered how we could use the iPads in a way that was engaging as well as using them either in activities that required real communication or aided students in preparing for real communication.</p>	

APPENDIX: PORTFOLIO EXCERPTS

- Our unit plan with apps and activities listed
- Apps and reflections
- Final reflections about one successful app and one difficult to use app

Outline of activities for unit *Ayo ke restoran*

Name of app	Use	Responsibility
Use quizlet app	Images of Indonesian dishes, names and descriptions To be used as flashcards and quizlet lists	Amy
Use photobabble	Using same images, students provide an oral or written description	Students in class
Use socrative app	Socrative multiple choice quiz based on phrases for ordering food Socrative short answer quiz based on phrases for ordering food	Rebecca
Use make dice app	Provide students with a range of adjective and question words as well as the Indonesian dishes. Students create their own dice using this app, and roll the virtual dice and then create a sentence or question using the words that appear.	Students in class
Cut up reading activity (not app)	Give each student a piece of card, they find their group by matching the picture on their card. Piece together, flip over and complete reading activity on reverse.	Rebecca.
Strip Designer	Students create a comic about visiting a restaurant.	Rebecca to send rubric to Amy.

Apps and reflections

App	Use	Reflection
Morfo	<i>General Conversation – students take pictures of themselves and record an introductory monologue</i>	<i>Worked well – some were concerned with playing around with the ‘funny’ settings rather than focusing on the task itself. Again, difficult for all students to record at the same time. Headphone mic may be more effective?</i>
Talking Tom	Oral conversations (used with year 7 students)	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students like to use it (for a limited time) • Good for individual work • Good for encouraging spoken language practice • Can email Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can get boring
Puppet Pals	Oral conversations (used with year 7 students)	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students like to use it (for a limited time) • Good for pair work • Good for encouraging spoken language practice

	<i>General conversation – one character asking the questions and the other answering</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can export to youtube(?) <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters and use can get boring • If it is too long, it needs to be broken into two parts to email <p><i>Worked well, I think would be more effective with year 7s? directors pass could be a good addition to the apps list to extend the uses/applications of app</i></p>
Make dice	Used with year 9s, food item (in Indonesian) and a verb (in English), student makes a sentence or question that would be used in a restaurant. <i>Sentence/question creation</i> <i>Numbers</i>	We have only done this as a group so far, students are yet to download onto their iPads. It was a good activity but only lasted about 5 mins. <i>With more structure and grammar knowledge, I think this would work better. Currently, year 9 ability to construct sentences on their own is limited to subject/verb/object.</i> <i>Numbers worked well.</i> <i>Would like to play with this more.</i>
Socrative	Used with year 9s, working individually (only 10 students anyway) <i>Quizzes</i>	Worked really well, they love space race and then we did the same activity again but I showed the live results after each answer was submitted. It was a bit slow doing it that way, but good for them to see the answers and we could talk about them. <i>Love this app! Very impressed with applications across subjects and topics. Need to use other modes (teacher led especially) space race works extremely well</i>
Photobabble	<i>Explaining pictures</i>	<i>Used for sickness topic (describing medicine packets and what symptoms they can help) and restaurant topic (describing Indonesian dishes). User friendly app</i>
iTalk	Create voice recordings and share	I haven't used this one yet but seems to be the best of the ones I have compared it with. Things to consider when choosing a FREE recording app: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How big the file is • What size file you can email • Does the app allow email sharing? • How many recordings can you make before you need to pay?
Hokusai		
Posterous	<i>Place to store voice recordings</i>	<i>Yet to use.</i>
Cinch	<i>Closed Down???</i>	<i>The idea is great, not sure about its application in class. Time consuming producing recordings for student use and even less practical for students to record their voice in class. 25 students talking at once equals a very loud classroom!</i>
Storykit	Create a storybook using images, drawing and text. Also has a recording function	I have not yet used this app, but found a few problems with it. Positives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can share the story using a link. • The story is saved somewhere in cyberspace, which means you are not trying to send a large file. • Can be opened on iPad or computer. Negatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sound function doesn't work once sent. • Once sent, the layout is not in a book format – less attractive

Non-app activity

Cut-up	Used with 10 year 9s, so I only had two groups of 5.	I like this activity and the questions as it really focused on revising what they were doing, it extended them a little bit,
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restaurant conversation	(Each conversation cut into 5 pieces).	and they felt a sense of achievement at being able to read that extended piece of writing. Problems: I printed on an A4 sheet and the writing was quite small. Too small for a group of 5, four in each group may have been better, but even then could be difficult to read depending on the group. I would imagine in a bigger class, there would be quite a few students left out letting the others take over. I like the idea of students moving around the room to find their matching pictures, particularly with boys. An alternative could be having small pictures cut up separately, used only to form groups (of 3-4). Then give them the task sheet printed at A3 size.
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Assessment

App	Use	Reflection
Everlater	Write an online travel journal	Difficult to use. Great in theory and looked really good, but most students could not upload their work to be shared at the end of the task. Therefore I had to take screen shots of everyone's work. Luckily I had a class of only 6, it would have been a nightmare if there were more. I don't think I will bother using this again.
photocard	Write a personalised postcard	I used this with year 10 students, but I think it is useful for all students. Particularly for revision after the holidays. I got them to bring in a photo (on their iPad) to represent their holidays and then they wrote me a postcard about their holiday. Students who finished early also recorded their work to practise pronunciation.
Strip designer	<i>Comic strip restaurant conversation task</i>	<i>Loved the app! Great for the task easy to import and export. Many uses for other topics also.</i>
iMovie	To create a 'photostory'. Demonstrate pronunciation and fluency.	I have tried this activity with a number of different year levels and class sizes. Students like it because it is an engaging activity, they usually work on their own and like to share at the end. Positives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for pronunciation • Usually read written work • Could be shared with an Indonesian school (authentic purpose) Limitations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not really useful for an oral task, only the pronunciation • Difficult to share, only via youtube • Can be noisy with 30 students recording at once, take them outside and use headphones with a microphone!

Reflections on successful and less successful apps

Activities need to be a driver for students to use the language or engage with the learning process.

For example, Socrative is an interactive quiz application that allows teachers to create quizzes in either multiple choice, true or false, or short answer format. Students are motivated by the competitive aspect, as they compete against other students or groups in the class or against themselves to get a high score. The activity can be conducted in groups or individually and students learn through instant feedback and also delayed feedback if the teacher chooses to analyse the results with the group at a later time.

This activity is highly engaging for students who regularly ask to use the app, and it can help to improve their recall of vocabulary and use of correct sentence structure. We know that students need regular exposure to vocabulary and sentence structure and regular practice using them to be able to use them fluently. This activity provides an artificial environment for such practice and students don't seem to get bored due to the ability to change the content and the competitive nature of the activity.

In relation to our aims, this iPad activity was added to our list of useful apps to use in the classroom and incorporate as part of our usual learning and teaching. We did have a few problems with implementation which we reflected upon and changed for next time. Firstly, occasionally students don't have their iPads with them due to the device being out of battery or left at home, or the internet simply won't work for that student. The teacher must decide in advance whether the activity is a formal individual assessment (in which case use student pace mode) or whether it is formative assessment to see how the class is going in general (use space race or groups).

Another example was puppet pals. This app allows students to record a conversation. Students like the app at first but tend not to like using it a second time as it is repetitive and boring. Unfortunately the large size of the file makes it difficult for students to send to the teacher, making for a very disappointing scenario after a lot of hard work. It was possible in the end by splitting the file in half, but not ideal and a lot of time was spent on this sharing process. On the plus side, the fact that students have a conversation forces them to actually communicate by asking and answering questions. In my classroom they did not use notes but had to actually converse. Students did enjoy this aspect of the task and we were able to play some of them for the class which they liked.

For formative assessment we used Socrative and other recording apps and for summative assessment Amy used the Strip Designer app which was very successful.

Reflective summary

I would like to continue reflecting on my own assessment practices and improving my assessment by using the Standards and also *Teaching and Learning Language - A Guide*. These two resources have been helpful for me in refreshing and challenging my thoughts about assessment. Amy and I have both found that within our language departments, there are teachers who do not wish to change or update assessment practices, even though they are not congruent with any current theory.

Within my school, focuses on assessment and personalised learning are at the fore this coming year. I would like to use the idea of reflexive praxis to help in leading my fellow language teachers to revise our practices surrounding assessment.