Bringing about technology integration in instruction in higher education: A systemic approach to change

The integration of emerging technologies in foreign language instruction needs to be regarded as implementing a change in the educational setting and planned by taking a systemic view. This paper describes, from the perspective of faculty development, the planning and executing of the change.

Administrators, often, seem to believe that if they supply the technology, and urge faculty to attend technology workshops, technology integration will follow effortlessly. Investing millions of dollars in equipment or in language labs is not going to bring about the use of technology in teaching. Faculty need to be supported in this process in a systemic way. In this paper the various activities that contribute to bringing about the integration of technology by faculty are outlined.

As the Director of a foreign language technology center at a large university the author is currently engaged in planning and implementing the use of innovative technologies in foreign language instruction. These include the creation of online content, communication and assessment units, creation of a virtual textbook, creation of authentic digital interviews, and use of pod casting and videoconferencing technologies. However, a few years back there was very little use of emerging technologies in instruction at the author’s institution. Over the last five years there has been a significant increase in the use of emerging technologies in foreign language instruction; a change has occurred.

In this paper a framework based on change management for implementing and managing technology integration initiatives will be described. Using specific examples from the author’s institution the five steps involved in implementing change will be described: motivating change, creating a vision, developing political support for change, managing the transition and sustaining momentum.