

Video Conferencing in the Classroom

Communications Technology across the Curriculum

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Introduction

Video conferencing is - quite simply - a vehicle for interactive communication. Like all good ideas, it is very straightforward. It enables one set of people to see and hear people in a different location. It brings the world into the classroom, enabling pupils to speak directly to their peers and to experts in other places around the world. When used effectively the technology becomes invisible and provides a powerful learning experience. Through videoconferencing, pupils improve their speaking and listening skills and their presentation skills as they work with different audiences in different locations.

This publication gives you the information you need to enable you to start using video conferencing in your own classroom. As well as information about the technology itself, there are ideas about how to use it in each curriculum area.

Geography classes can ask others, "What is it like where you live?" They can discover and explore similarities and differences between geographical locations at home and abroad. Your pupils become the "experts" as they share their knowledge and understanding of their region with other pupils, or present their GCSE English oral talk to students in another part of the countryor the world.

Don't be surprised when previously disillusioned children become motivated, when a link to a French or German school adds value to your MFL programme and when seeing artefacts from museums and talking to experts create deeper levels of understanding; and don't be surprised when pupils ask pertinent questions of eminent professors or other experts and when your classes' knowledge and awareness about other cultures and nations increase as they speak to them face to face.

Enthusiastic and motivated teachers and their school partners have developed all kinds of exciting projects using video conferencing as a communications resource in the classroom. Like all technologies, though, it is fairly useless without effective teaching. This guide provides teachers with practical examples which other teachers have found work!

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This publication is part of the DfES "Video Conferencing in the Classroom Project" which aims to disseminate information and good practice through direct practical support to individual teachers in their classrooms, professional development, the museums and galleries programme and the online resource for teachers www.global-leap.com.

