CLASSROOM SPACES AND TECHNOLOGY. OPTIMISING THE USE OF IPADS WITH YOUNG LEARNERS. A CASE STUDY FROM A COMMUNITY SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN CLASS

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of case study involving a kindergarten class at a Community school in Sydney, Australia. The paper highlights the way in which classroom spaces impacted upon the practices of the teacher and the collaborative nature of the work of the students while using IPad apps aimed at developing their home language. The paper closely examines the use of space and the transformation of space as the teacher moves from phase to phase in the lesson. The careful constitution of spaces within the classroom was found to be a crucial element in terms of promoting the children’s interaction with the IPads and with each other in their home language.

The community school that took part in this study operates on a Saturday morning and for these students, this represents their only contact with formal instruction in their home language. Home language maintenance remains a vital issue for multicultural and multilingual societies such as Australia and the potential value of tablet technologies has been widely recognised by teachers and researchers.

The data collected for this study includes observational data, interviews with teachers and parents and evaluation of the app used in the classroom. The collaborative talk around the apps and the movement of children in the classroom spaces constituted by teacher and students is also considered in detail.

Keywords: IPads, Tablets, Language Development, Community Language, Space.