



Get your students to talk with the speaking practice app

CASE STUDY

Derry Township School District Public Schools World Languages Department



Derry Township School District (DTSD) is a school district located in central Pennsylvania.

The district's World Language program allows students to take French and Spanish starting in the 6th grade. In each program, students can take level 1 to 5, with AP classes included.

Extempore at Derry Township

The 2020-2021 school year was the first year in which DTSD implemented the Extempore platform. After desiring a platform that could assist with hybrid and asynchronous speaking assessments, the district, which incorporates a 1:1 iPad program, was able to seamlessly introduce the Extempore platform at the beginning of the school year. This pilot program commenced as part of a larger initiative to evaluate various digital language lab platforms for designing and administering activities and assessments both in and out of the classroom, as well as semester exams and placement tests. Since its introduction, Extempore has now seen widespread usage throughout the high school.

"[Students] got used to speaking more frequently."

At DTSD, Extempore saw high levels of usage in the Spanish 4 courses, whose teachers primarily leveraged the platform for practice and summative assessments. Moreover, attracted by the ability to elicit spontaneous response, instructors created assessments with timers for both prompts and responses, and students were able to adjust accordingly to these demands. Based on the overwhelmingly positive piloting experience, the DTSD language department looks forward to continuing with Extempore during the 2021–2022 school year.

Extempore Activities

In courses ranging from level 1 through AP®, teachers at DTSD have adopted, adapted, and created a wide range of activities and assessments which take full advantage of all of Extempore's features. One of the language instructors explained that, as they developed familiarity with the platform, "things were, much, much easier." The platform also provided instructors with a tool to save time: instructors "definitely did more summative assessments this year than they had in the past." The limitless opportunities for customizing language practice and assessments provide teachers and students with an invaluable tool in Extempore, while at the same time keeping things fresh for teachers and students.

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One student, in a course review, remarked “We need to do more Extempore.”

Because DTSD has a 1:1 iPad program, the rollout process was extraordinarily simple, particularly when compared to running and maintaining a physical language lab. All teachers in the department have individual instructor accounts, and all students sign in via Google single sign-on to both create and access their student accounts. This means that there are no passwords to create, remember, or recover, making for a user-friendly experience for teachers and instructors.

“[Extempore] support was speedy.”

Future Development Plans

As teachers continue to try out new and different ways of using Extempore for individual activities and assessments, they will also focus their efforts on becoming more adept at using the platform for synchronous group activities and assessments, from spontaneous speaking practice and listening comprehension exercises to practice and review for new vocabulary and grammar. After initial practice with Extempore this year, AP® teachers are especially eager to make full use of the platform in preparation for next year’s exams.

Student Perception of Extempore

In survey data collected from the high school, students lauded the Extempore platform and their experience using it during the pilot. One teacher recalled that students, after an initial learning curve “had very few questions and [felt] it was super user-friendly.” Students of lower confidence levels “were” able to more comfortably demonstrate their skills with Extempore.” Echoing the sentiments of other instructors, another instructor added that students grew more comfortable speaking as they continued using Extempore throughout the year.

Future Development Requests

DTSD is excited to continue to use Extempore next year and beyond. Teachers and students look forward to seeing improved methods of providing feedback and increased available content for instructors to import directly into their accounts.

