

A Case Study on Use of One-to-One Laptops in English as Second Language Classrooms *

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Abstract

One-to-one laptop programs, where each student has their own laptop to use in classroom, are becoming popular in schools especially in Australia and the United States. The purpose of the study was to contribute to the limited knowledgebase explaining the implementation of laptop programs specifically with English language learners. Four ESL classroom teachers, six ESL students, and three school administrators participated in individually conducted, semi-structured interviews. Additionally, a total of twelve observations were completed in four ESL classrooms. Data was interpreted through Grounded Theory and open-, axial-, and selective-coding was used for coding. Three themes emerged from data analysis. The first theme focused on explaining how teacher-laptops were used. Results indicated that use of teacher-laptops ranged from making instruction visual to playing music to create a soothing classroom environment. The second theme explained use of student-laptops and indicated that they were mainly used to develop English language skills and complete projects. The third and last theme portrayed some concerns teachers and students had about technical issues and overreliance on laptops impacting instruction and classroom culture unfavorably. Implications are discussed while reporting findings of the study. The study concludes with limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Ubiquitous computing; one-to-one laptop; English as a second language (ESL); English language learners (ELL).

* This study was part of a larger study investigating factors involved in establishing a one-to-one laptop program in an urban school with a focus on ESL students. The findings presented in this paper has not been reported or used in any research paper or conference.