

How to squeeze 1,000 native English speakers into a classroom

45 mins

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Abstract 50-60 words

This session will show how it's possible to bring live native English speakers into classrooms around the world through the use of VoIP software such as Skype. Practical tips on how best to manage the technology will be explained, followed by demonstrations of live listening and live calls made by students. Help prepare your learners for the real world!

Summary 200-250 words

The session will focus on how VoIP software such as Skype can help bring live native English speakers into classrooms around the world. This relatively recent advance in technology means that teachers can now make, broadcast and record telephone calls for use in the classroom. The technology is very young and the potential for how it can be used as a classroom tool has yet to be fully explored. Firstly, the session will give practical tips and advice on how to install, configure and manage the software, all of which is free and available for public use (NB I am not affiliated to any of these organisations). Secondly, the session will look at how live listening activities can be used to help students prepare for real life exposure to native English speakers. For example, a live call will be made during the session to National Rail Enquiries, and then activities on how to use this in class will be presented and discussed. Next, examples of the type of calls students can make themselves will be shown and audio examples of student calls will be played. It will be discussed how meaningful and authentic speaking activities such as this can be beneficial to learning. In addition, the range of language analysis post-call will be examined and evaluated. Finally, privacy and ethical issues will be discussed including comments from call centre managers I have contacted about this activity. Handouts and links to further resources will be given to all participants.