

## Technology for Teaching

### *4 Great Tech Tools to Support Students' Independent Practice*

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We spend hours planning engaging and meaningful lessons to do everything possible to assist in students' learning. Using the resources available, we craft activities for our students to practice speaking, listening, reading and writing.

What about when they are at home? What free or low cost resources are available to students?



[DuoLingo](#) is one of the best free apps that is available across platforms. You can find it as a Google app, in the iTunes App Store and Google Play store. The typical US foreign languages (German, Spanish, French) have courses along with others widely spoken in Europe and other parts of the world: Dutch (Netherlands), Italian, Portuguese, Danish, and Irish.

**Duolingo** is based on the latest trend of gamification of curriculum. Assuming that students willingly play games over and over until they have mastered a level so they can advance to the next, Duolingo encourages constant practice and rewards students with points for streaks of consecutive days played. Speaking, listening and translation are tested through fun activities. Instant feedback on incorrect answers keeps students from reinforcing poor habits or misunderstanding.



Another great tool for student independent practice is [Brainscape](#). Teachers can create a set of flashcards and share with students or allow students to collaboratively create a class set. If you wish, you can purchase a Premium Set.

Once the flashcards are created, share the URL with students or add students yourself. This program, based on cognitive research, utilizes targeted repetition of missed material on the flashcards. **Brainscape** allows teachers to monitor students' progress and time spent studying the cards so that you can help steer individual students to strategies that work for them.



[Byki Express](#) is the free (AKA "lite") version of [Transparent Language](#).

Many languages are offered with this program and students can upgrade to [Byki Deluxe](#) if they have mastered the free version or prefer to be challenged with more extensive content.

Benefits of **Byki Express** are that students hear the language from native speakers, learn language in useful phrases, read and write phrases to improve long-term learning, and track their progress.



If your students are older and want to connect with a native speaker while learning the language, [Busuu](#) may be for them. In addition to Spanish, French, German, and English, **Busuu** has other languages not as widely served by technology available such as Japanese, Chinese, Turkish, Italian, Polish, and Arabic. This is truly exciting

for students who desire to learn a language not offered at their schools.

**Busuu** is crowdsource powered and so students can make one-to-one connections while language experts create the content in the courses. Apps are free and available both through Apple and Google Play.

Naturally, the resources you provide your students are meaningful, but allowing students to choose options to practice on their own encourages their dedication to learning the language as well as letting them target the resource that supports their learning styles.