Contents:

"How to Produce and Integrate Audio Material for Language Learning on the Web"

"International Conference on Computers in Education (ICCE 2002)"

Subscription Information and Call for Submissions

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

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After the May issue of *Teaching English with Technology* devoted exclusively to electronic dictionaries and various aspects of using these in teaching and learning English, we have the pleasure of providing our readers with the new issue of the Journal covering a wide range of topics and not grouped around one central theme.

As you have surely noticed, the Journal started appearing in a somewhat changed frequency - it has turned out that publishing a new issue every two months, as was the case with the previous nine issues, was slightly too ambitious a task, and it has been decided to publish the Journal quarterly, in January, April, July and October, rather than bi-monthly. It is hoped that due to that measure the readers will get materials of even better quality than before.

This issue of the Journal contains slight column changes. One is the fact that "Software Review" column has been renamed "Software" simply, in order not to limit its scope to reviews only, but to encompass also studies on the use of software in language teaching, as well as other materials on computer programs in ELT. You are heartily invited to contribute to that old/new column. Another slight change is the one from "Website Reviews" to "On the Web", so that it might be possible to publish also materials of different kinds, grouped around the Internet for teaching and learning purposes. It is our belief that thanks to these modifications the Journal will provide a greater variety of publications to satisfy our readers' expectations.

As usually, you are all invited to contribute to the Journal in the sections already existing, but also, more importantly, to suggest new ways of its development, such as adding new sections, covering new areas, focusing on some selected problems in thematic issues of the Journal. We want to stress the fact that *Teaching English with Technology* is made FOR the English language teaching community, and the editors are ready to consider all suggestions working towards the improvement of the Journal.

The original intention of the Journal editorial team was to make *Teaching English with Technology* the place to publish works of teachers and students. It is still so, and reviewers try to develop contributors' writing by giving helpful advice and highlighting some areas to work on. Thus, academic teachers teaching CALL to students are asked to encourage them to submit their works to TEwT.

The current issue of the Journal provides a fairly wide perspective of CALL issues. The article "Web-Based Project Learning and EFL Learners - A Chinese Example" by Peiya Gu addresses the question of whether Web-based project learning can enhance students' motivation, improve their learning performance and initiate their active roles in electronic literacy development. The study is based in a Chinese EFL context, but the methods used by the author will be certainly applicable in other environments as well.

William Shakespeare and his works are a great theme for English lessons, and this powerful influence is exploited by Iwona Filip in her "World Wide William - A Shakespeare Project". This is a series of lessons focusing on different aspects of the Bard's life and works, and students are engaged in a variety of activities using different Shakespearean websites and online dictionaries. Another text in the Internet Lesson Plans section, "Finding Proverbs on the Web" by Shiao-Chuan Kung, is intended to familiarise EFL students with some proverbs in the English language, as well as to show them how to work on their own on self-study quizzes websites.

In A Word from a Techie, the humble undersigned, Jarek Krajka, addresses the issue of computerised marking of students' written assignments. The author looks at the problem from two points of view - one of a dedicated software called *Markin*, the other involving the use of a widely available word processor. As usual, the paper is a step-by-step instruction on how to use the two programs in marking student work on the computer.

On the Web section features a review of *Hot English Magazine* written by Guo Shesen. The author looks at the website from the general point of view, making an overview with a special focus on such issues as accuracy, authority, currency, objectivity, content; from a learner's point of view (Learner Fit) and a teacher's perspective (Teacher Fit). The review concludes with an example classroom activity using *Hot English Magazine*, whose aim is to build word power and reading comprehension.

The slightly changed "Software" section (previously "Software Review") contains a short article by Hee-Jung Jung entitled "Uses of Educational Software by ESL Parents in the United States". The author presents the results of a small-scale study trying to discover how parents examined teach their children English at home and what materials they use, as well as to check whether ESL parents get any benefits by working with such software for teaching their children English and how they use them.

Finally, the Journal includes a report from IVth International Conference *Media and Education in the Time of Integration* combined with the Poznan International Fair and announcements of a few international conferences and workshops.

I wish you good reading.

ARTICLES

WEB-BASED PROJECT LEARNING AND EFL LEARNERS:

A CHINESE EXAMPLE [1]

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Abstract

This paper addresses the question of whether Web-based project learning can enhance EFL learners' motivation, improve their learning performance and initiate their active roles in electronic literacy development in a Chinese EFL context. Case study of a cross-cultural collaborative online writing project conducted in the fall semester of 1999 between 20 Chinese students at Suzhou University and 28 American students at Southern Polytechnic State University of Georgia forms the basis for discussion. Supported by descriptive data, the writer concludes that web-based learning projects do have potential in motivating EFL learners and bringing about positive learning effects, but the key still lies in how they are managed and supported by learners, teachers and administrators at all levels.

Introduction

According to the Semiannual Survey Report (CNNIC, Jan 2002), China's Internet users have soared to 33.7 million from 22.5 million a year ago. This fast growth has not only brought about sweeping changes to many facets of life but has also posed new challenges to China's university graduates as job hunters. More and more enterprises, especially foreign invested ones, require applicants to have both adequate English proficiency as is usually demonstrated by passing the national College English Tests (CET-4 and/or CET-6), and a new literacy termed "electronic literacy" (Shetzer, Warschauer, 2000). This mainly involves the ability to use computers and the Internet for on-line information search and electronic communication. The urgent need to prepare students for these future challenges has made it a priority to incorporate technology into university English teaching programs.

However, our short history of using computers in second and foreign language instruction has taught us that machines themselves do little to initiate learning. The power of the machine lies in how well it gets used and integrated into the daily classroom activities so as to bring about active thinking and action with language being both a tool and the target of the activity (Meskill, 1999). This kind of integrated teaching demands new ways of organizing the classroom. One effective way seems to be project-oriented learning (e.g. Stoller, 1997), which satisfies a basic condition for language acquisition: social interaction. It is now widely agreed

among educators and psychologists that students learn best when they carry out meaningful tasks and solve meaningful problems in an environment that reflects their own personal interests as well as the multiple purposes to which their knowledge will be put in the future (Collins, Brown, Newman, 1989).

Recent research suggests web-based project learning, with student involvement in authentic challenging tasks as its core, have potential in enhancing learner motivation, improving learning performance and prompting positive changes in their roles in learning (e.g., Means, Olson, 1995; Debski, 2000; Warschauer et al, 2000). One large-scale survey study on motivational aspects of using computers for writing and communication found three common factors of student motivation, labeled communication, empowerment, and learning effects (Warschauer, 1996). This finding was supported by other researchers (e.g., Barson, Frommer, Schwartz, 1993; Brown, 1986; Thorn, 1997). As for the effects on students' learning performance, those most widely reported include facilitating authentic and purposeful communication, improving students' awareness of readers and fostering learners' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (e.g., Chun, 1994; Feldman, 1995; Soh, Soon, 1991). Also reported by studies are changes in student roles such as from diligent acquirers of knowledge to responsible and creative agents taking over responsibility for the outcome of the course (e.g., Barson, Debski, 1996; Levy, 1997). Meanwhile, the very complexity of the project encourages students to become more open-minded, cooperative partners playing multiple roles in electronic literacy development (Warschauer et al., 2000).

In China, realizing the urgent need to help students develop the new literacy skills, an increasing number of college English teachers have started to integrate technology in their language teaching programs (e.g., Liu et al., 1998; Wen, Song, 1999; Zhao, 1999). A pilot study of a group of English majors in Suzhou University involved in the "Cities' Project" for international student communication, identified the potential of networking activities in optimising Chinese EFL learning environment from various aspects (see Gu, Xu, 1998).

However, the campaign to promote the new literacy development is by no means easy because of various economic, socio-cultural and educational factors. The high cost of hardware, software, connection charges, plus technical glitches like machine breakdowns and slow transmission speed make it a formidable task to implement web-based project learning in a Chinese EFL classroom. The campaign is also slowed down by unfavourable educational factors, such as rigid curricula, exam-oriented teaching approach, and teachers' lack of training in both computer literacy and project-oriented language teaching methodology. This situation is further complicated by people's attitudes of resistance and indifference, which can be attributed to traditional cultural values such as personal modesty, self-discipline and obedience to authority. A discouraging fact is little recognition or appreciation is given to electronic literacy advocates for their tremendous effort and contributions, although calls for ELT reform have been always appeared as headlines in the public media. Besides, as Chinese teachers and students have long been accustomed to the "spoon-fed" methods, many may feel uncomfortable with "student-centered" approaches such as project-oriented learning (Lynch, 2000). Thus, up till now the CALL research effort in China is mainly focused on the effects *of technology*, such as multimedia language learning software (e.g., Jia, 1999), while little understanding has been obtained toward the effects *with technology*, such as the effects of web-based learning projects. Therefore, whether the advocated merits of web-based project learning approach can shed light on Chinese EFL learners still remain questionable.

In an effort to get some insights into the complex realities, particularly Chinese EFL learners' perceptions of web-based language learning projects and the possible impacts on their learning process and product, a case study of a cross-cultural collaborative online writing project was conducted in the fall semester of 1999 at Suzhou University. The study aims to answer the following two questions:

> RQ1. How do the participants perceive their experience of web-based project learning?

> RQ2. What impacts do the cross-cultural collaborative online writing projects exert on learners' motivation, writing performance and roles in learning?

The Case Study

Participants

The participants of this study were 20 Chinese college students enrolled in a cross-cultural online writing project in collaboration with 28 American junior college students taking a selective course on Technical Communication. The Chinese participants were selected from a large group of interested sophomore and junior students from different schools of Suzhou University (SU), based on their English proficiency and computer literacy in addition to an entry interview. A student demographic survey (Appendix A) shows these participants had an average of eight years of English learning experience. All of them had taken Band-4 of the national College English Test (CET-4) [2] and the majority passed it with high scores. Three students even passed CET-6. In addition, all the participants had passed the provincial computer proficiency test and thus had some basic computer skills and a fair typing ability. Five participants had computers at home, but none of them had previous experience in web-based project learning, collaborative writing or direct contact with English speaking people online. An entry interview revealed that many students were drawn to this project by virtue of their personal interest in both English communication and computer skills. Others recognized international cross-cultural interactions as crucial to their broader professional and academic goals.

The setting and procedures

The project was conducted in a multimedia language lab in the School of Foreign Languages in the fall semester of 1999. There were 25 Pentium 100MHz PCs linked together to form an intranet that enabled an in-class email exchange, and also connected to the Internet via the campus network. However, due to cost concern and slow transmission, students' free access to the Internet was limited to about 2 hours a week, but they could access the computers and visit those selected websites in the public folder on the intranet during regular office hours in the daytime and twice a week in the evenings.

The cross-cultural technical writing project was initiated by Professor C. Barnum at Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU), Georgia, USA, based on her email communication with the writer and another teacher in Suzhou University. The purpose of this collaborative project was to provide the participants with an opportunity to practice authentic technical writing skills through project-oriented distance collaboration with their would-be business partners. Like their Chinese partners, 28 American participants were from different schools and majoring in different subjects other than language arts. The participants on both sides shared a

similar requirement that they work in groups to conduct a series of investigations into the business opportunities or culture topics in China or in America. The final group product would be a research report to be presented orally in class in the form of webpages or PowerPoint slides to be shared with their partners on the other side. Two teachers from the College English Department of Suzhou University and two graduate students majoring in CALL research volunteered as facilitators (each acted as a tutor for 1-2 groups), with one teacher as the major contact person on China's side regarding project management. Chinese students and their facilitators met in the lab every Wednesday afternoon, two hours each. Mini-lectures on computer basics, technical writing and cross-cultural communication were given whenever necessary throughout the semester. The writer acted both as a researcher and a project consultant, helping with the project design, management and evaluation.

The collaborative writing project was divided into three stages: Preparation (two weeks), Collaboration (eight weeks), Presentation and evaluation (two weeks). In the Preparation stage, a short training was conducted regarding the project aims, email techniques and collaboration logistics. Chinese participants were divided into five groups of four based on their project interests. These groups were then paired with their American partners with similar or different research interests following their preferences. See Table 1 below:

Table 1: Collaborative Writing Project Topics

	SU at Suzhou, China	SPSU at Georgia, USA
	Chinese silk pajamas exhibition in Georgia	Marketing prospect of computer accessories in Suzhou
	Marketing strategies of Suzhou freshwater pearls in Georgia	Import plan for Suzhou silk products
	Chinese restaurant in Georgia for food culture exchange	A study of China's market needs for new-brand bicycles
	A study of American cultural values	Feasibility study of introducing Chinese snacks to Georgia
	A comparative study of Chinese and American campus life	Promotion strategies of new-model mobile phones in Suzhou

For convenience, Chinese students named their five groups as "Pajamas", "Pearl", "Restaurant", "Culture" and "Campus Life", while the Americans named theirs as "Silk", "Computer Accessories", "Bicycle", "Chinese Snacks" and "Mobile Phones". This paper reports research results about the participants on China's side only.

Collaboration started right after each group decided on their topics. The students were guided to communicate with their American partners via email, from self-introductions to gathering and providing information for their own projects and those of their American partners. They researched their own topics in a step-by-step manner. They analyzed their tasks, distributed roles to each member, then carried out the investigation with the help of their American partners. They visited libraries, surfed the Net, evaluated the information collected and held intra-group and inter-group discussions on issues of common interest. They also helped each other in preparing research reports and in constructing webpages or PowerPoint slides for final presentations.

The presentation week is the climax of the whole project. The open-house multimedia presentation attracted a full room of over a hundred of teachers and students on campus. The best projects were selected and uploaded to the SudaCALL website.[3] Evaluation was held the following week. All Chinese participants did self-assessment with checklists designed earlier for identifying new literacy skills learned through project work. Group comments were given to each member on their project participation, collaboration and contribution. Then a class discussion was held on overall gains and lessons to be learned.

Data collection and analysis

As major effects of this project-oriented approach is to be seen in its long-term efficacy, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected with the knowledge and permission of all the participants through surveys, participant observation, open-ended interviews, analysis of participants' email messages and other electronic texts.

Surveys

Student information was collected twice through the student demographic survey (Appendix A) in the beginning of the project and part two of an end-of-project CALL survey (Appendix B: Background information). Both asked questions related to student self-reported English learning efforts and self-rated computer skills. The results were collected and compared to see the students' skill development and behavior changes (see Table 5 in the "Findings" section). As two students were unable to take the CALL survey, only results of both surveys about the 18 students are presented here to make the analysis consistent.

Part one of the CALL Survey was made up of 35 items to be answered on a five-point Likert scale, with 5 being the highest score. Among them, five questions were designed to elicit the students' general perceptions of the whole project (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q32, Q35). The remaining 30 questions were designed on the basis of the three documented effects of CALL projects on learner motivation, learning performance and their roles in learning as was discussed above. However, "writing performance" was used instead of "learning performance" as this project focuses specifically on writing. For convenience of observation and analysis, the three major effect constructs were further developed into 8 sub-constructs: (1) communication; (2) empowerment; (3) learning effect; (4) general writing behaviours; (5) information processing; (6) cross-cultural communication; (7) collaboration; (8) learner autonomy. The first three are motivational factors, the fourth to the sixth for writing performance, and the last two for roles in learning.

The responses to the first part of the CALL survey were calculated to get an overall mean for all students and all 35 questions. The mean score on a five-point Likert scale on each question for 18 students was calculated and compared with a hypothesized mean of 3 (representing a neutral score) using two-tailed t-tests. The significant level was set at $p < .05$ (see the full results in Appendix B). Next, in order to further see the relationship between the students' perceptions of the CALL project and the three major effect constructs, a correlation analysis was also conducted.

Participant observation

Throughout the project, the writer visited the class frequently and maintained individual email contact with both facilitators and students. The nature of the writer's participation varied. I

helped the students with their questions and discussed suggestions with facilitators. I also took extensive field notes about what I observed in and outside class. Facilitators kept observation notes too. All these were collected with explicit knowledge and permission of people involved.

Open-ended interviews

Open-ended interviews were conducted in various forms throughout the semester based on the major effect constructs we wanted to cover. Discussion was encouraged to learn about the issues considered important by the students. At the end of the project, five open-ended interview questions (Appendix C) were emailed to all students to gain further insights of their project experience. Each student responded by an email message.

Student writings

The students were required to save all their writings in the public folder on the intranet as well as on their floppy disks, including their journals, reports and email correspondences with group members, teachers and their American partners. These were collected at the end of the semester.

The analysis of the qualitative data was an ongoing process and followed several steps. For my initial analysis, I grouped the data representing the different sources first and then reduced the data by coding them by the three above-mentioned major effect constructs based on my research reviews. I wrote extensive notes justifying my coding decisions and documenting any emerging data that could help describe and explain student perceptions of their project-oriented language learning with technology (RQ1). Every time a new theme was revealed, I would go back to the full data set and sort all my notes to enrich the interpretation of the identified impacts on student motivation, writing performance and their roles in learning (RQ2). In my analysis, I extensively drew on my own observations made as the project consultant. Sometimes I would seek additional feedback from facilitators and students by email or personal talks. While reflecting on the background of this project, some new themes emerged regarding some practical and organizational factors that either facilitated or constrained the implementation, which are discussed under the heading "Implications".

Findings

The survey data shows that the overall mean score for 18 students on all questions in part two of the CALL survey was 4.015. Among the individual questions, the most positive response, at a mean of 4.667, was given to Q3 and Q5. Next highest were Q25, Q27, Q22 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Questions with the highest mean scores

Survey Questions	Mean
Q3. The project is not worth the time spent because it can not help me pass CET-6.	4.667*
Q5. I enjoy using the computer to communicate in English with people around the world.	4.667
Q25. I help to decide on topics for discussion and writing.	4.500
Q27. My opinions and suggestions were often neglected.	4.444*
Q22. It is rather difficult for me to clear the misunderstandings caused by cultural differences.	4.444*

* The mean scores marked with * are reverse coded.

To understand the impacts of the web-based learning project on the students' motivation, performance and roles in study, the average means and standard deviations (SD) of the three sub-constructs were calculated and listed in Table 3. The highest two are given to "communication" and "cross-cultural communication", which interestingly echoes the students' initial interest voiced unanimously in the entry interview. The lowest one is for "information processing", although it is still above the neutral score of 3.

Table 3: Overall means and standard deviations of main constructs and their components

Constructs	Sub-constructs	Survey Qs	Mean SD
Motivational aspects	Communication	4, 5, 7, 8	4.245 .827
	Empowerment	6, 13, 34	4.111 .633
	Learning effect	9, 14, 33	4.093 .768
Writing performance	General writing behaviours	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 31	4.040 .666
	Information processing	10, 11, 12, 13	3.750 .752
	Cross-cultural communication	20,21, 22, 23	4.153 .552
Roles in learning	Collaboration	27, 28, 29, 30	4.028 .709
	Autonomy	24, 25, 26	4.024 .560

In examining the relationship between students' general perceptions and three major constructs, significant correlations (see Table 4 below) were found, which agree with our belief that the students' positive perceptions of the project directly lead to their active participation in their language learning activities. This also indicates that it is of great

importance for students to psychologically accept a new pedagogical approach before it can be implemented successfully.

Table 4: General perceptions correlated with three major effect constructs

Three major effect constructs	Correlation with general perceptions
Motivation	.862*
Writing performance	.614*
Roles in learning	.753*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results for the student demographic survey and part two of the CALL survey were compared to see the students' behavior changes (see the results in Table 5 below). The comparison indicates an obvious improvement in the students' familiarity with technology and frequency of writing in English after the project. Not only do more students write journals and letters in English more frequently, but also their typing skills are obviously improved, and they tend to apply word processors, email, the Net more often than before. It is argued that the more the target skills get practiced, the greater the chance of improvement.

Table 5: Self-reported computer skills and writing practice

Typing	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	11/0	6/8	1/8	0/2
	Never	A little	A lot	
Word	3/0	15/8	0/10	
Email	9/0	7/0	2/18	
The Web	11/0	5/14	2/4	
	Never	A few times per month	Often	Very often
Journal	14/0	3/10	1/5	0/3
Letter	9/3	9/11	0/3	0/1

Note. The number on both sides of "/" refer to the number of students made the choice before and after the project respectively.

By the end of the project, all the student writings, including their email exchanges, research drafts, reports, and presentation files were collected and calculated for the quantity of their

language input and output. In the Collaboration period alone, every participant sent and received 2-3 messages weekly. On average, each group sent and received 24 emails with about 5, 152 words to and from their American partners, in addition to 15 emails with 4,218 words on average for intra-group discussions. Their weekly progress reports and final research reports showed their group efforts in technical writing with 5,291 words on average. Compared with the average assignment of about three 150-word essays in one semester for their peers outside this project, the production level of these non-English majors is considered high. The improved sense of audience, richness in content and genres is more encouraging, which will be discussed in the following section.

Discussion

General perceptions

The results of the CALL survey support the view that students in general have positive perceptions of their web-based project work experience. One could argue that the higher-than-neutral means are meaningless, since students might tend to answer positively on any survey. Yet this argument is undermined by the fact that even in those questions that were reverse coded students indicated a positive attitude toward their project learning experience. Typical is the case for Q3 ("The project is not worth the time spent on because it cannot help me achieve high score in CET-6"), which yields the highest mean of 4.667 among all 35 items. Together with other above-neutral high means for the related questions, the result indicates the students' strong belief in the long-term benefits of the web-based learning project and their changing attitude toward the traditional way of learning with a textbook, as was shown by the mean of 3.389 for Q2. The "Culture" group, for example, regarded this way of learning as being "more enjoyable and more rewarding than traditional teaching methods", which is also confirmed by the high mean of 4.278 for Q32, Q35 (4.278) and Q1 (4.056). This is supported by our daily observations that most participants treasured the opportunity to step away from their rigid classroom routine and move into this more flexible learning environment. It is also exemplified by responses to the first interview question, such as the following one:

In our normal English classes, teachers just give the lessons and we students only sit there to take some notes and do exercises. Then a class will be over. It is rather dull. Now it's different. There's a real task for us to drain our brains. It offers us a good chance to learn what we want to learn. So we feel responsible and interested in the project. (Ann, "Pearl" group)

Motivational effects

The participants' favorable perceptions of the web-based project work had exerted positive effects on their learning. The most obvious effect was an increase in motivation. However, it did not come from the novelty of computers alone, but from authentic and purposeful communication, sense of power and achievement gained through working with computers.

Among the eight effect constructs, Communication generated the highest mean of 4.245, which is echoed by one of the two highest means for Q5 ("I enjoy using the computer to communicate in English with people around the world") and other high means for the related questions. Students showed great enthusiasm toward authentic and purposeful long-distance cross-cultural communication. As Zhi from the "Campus Life" group wrote in her interim report, "I always long for opportunities to communicate with foreigners, however, the chances are rare in my daily life. In this project, my dream came true". The challenging group tasks

played a key role in attaching a real purpose for students" communication. They motivated students to demonstrate their "group wisdom" through in-depth studies. Wu from the "Pajama" group commented, "the tasks offered much room for us to exert our potential ability and creativity". Besides, computer networks made it less threatening for people to contact and give opinions. With the aid of computers, the students had more time to think, more ways to revise their writing and more chances to interact with a variety of audience. Obviously, this pressure-plus-pleasure atmosphere enhanced student enjoyment of, interest in, and attention to the communication activities.

High motivation became the major driving force to make the participants ready to spare much time and energy on the collaborative project. For example, to help their American partners with their research on promoting new-model mobile phones in Suzhou, the "Campus Life" group conducted a comprehensive market survey and reported back detailed information such as the price range for various foreign products, customer needs and even Chinese culture preferences to the lucky number of "8" and "6" (see Appendix D: Sample One). Similarly, the "Restaurant" group provided their American partners with 15 pieces of detailed advice to help with their study of China's market needs for new-brand bicycles. As Doris, their group leader reported, "Frances and James searched as much information as they could find, considered all related factors, discussed with each other and eventually came up with the appropriate answers. We are glad that our American friends are satisfied with our replies."

The empowering nature of the project really pushed our students to work with more engagement and responsibility. For example, to simulate a Chinese silk pajamas exhibition in Georgia, the "Pajamas" group set up their virtual company and named it *Silklis Co. Ltd.* Each member assumed a position as President, Vice President (VP) Marketing, VP Advertisement, VP Management. They collected information from their American partners about preferences of their target consumers to color, style and price. Then they designed their own products in three series, Clouds, Dragon and Paradise, with rich patterns showing the beauty of Chinese arts and also their understanding of the tastes of American people in different age, gender and economic conditions. They even worked out all the details for their three-day exhibition in Georgia, such as their TV show and the rent for their 1,600-square-meter exhibition hall! Liu, majoring in International Laws, wrote "It was challenging to be a market manager. I learned to communicate with my boss, to conduct marketing research. I feel like being a real businesswoman!".

Positive learning effects gained in the project further strengthened the students' self-esteem and autonomy. They were "learning by doing" and felt very proud of their achievement in computer skills, English writing and business knowledge. The following reflections are just among many:

> Experience is the best teacher. Actually it is. Since I am majoring in Chinese Literature, doing business is fresh to me. During the three months' course, I have been working while studying. Before this project, I have never written an email to anyone, now I can write to my American partners whenever I wish. Before I knew nothing of how to run a company, now at least I know how to made advertisements of products. Before I think doing business is merely doing business, now I know that it is related to a lot of fields such as culture, psychology, aesthetics, etc. I feel what I gained is more than what I expected. (Darrance, "Pajamas" group)

> I'm lucky to be a member of our project…, I think I've been making rapid progress in many aspects. It goes without saying that excellent skills of operating computers and a good grasp of English language are among the most essential abilities for we modern youngsters in the

changing world. This project provides us with a precious opportunity to learn more in the two fields. (Doris, "Restaurant" group)

The high means for Q13 (4.111), Q14 (4.222), Q 34 (4.167) and Q 33 (4.111) also clearly indicate their sense of accomplishment and confidence in applying new literacy skills to real problem-solving outside of campus. As Zhu from the "Pearl" group wrote, "We learned much about marketing, advertisements, tariff and international law. I think if we will do business in the future, our practice in the project will benefit us a lot".

Improved writing performance

"In this project, what I gained most is I improved my business writing ability. At first I don't know what I should say, and I can't find many word to write and I had difficulty in communicating with my American friends. Now I am fell [feeling] freer when I write to them." (Jim, "Pajamas" group)

Most of our participants had had little training in English writing, let alone technical writing. If they had some training at all, that was usually putting on paper grammatically correct sentences in the form of translation. Although some participants learned about essay writing in order to pass the CET-4, their attention was paid only to the basic structure and accuracy rather than using the language for genuine communicative purposes. It was found that this CALL project has brought changes to the nature of the students' writing with respect to purpose, audience, genres and medium; and thus corresponding changes were observed in their writing behaviors, especially in their sense of audience, increased language exposure and output, new skills in information-processing and cross-cultural communication.

Sense of audience

With a real goal and a genuine task to write for an actual audience, the students were found actively putting their minds together in their project design and product construction. They showed more creativity, better presentation skills and improved thoughtfulness about the needs and interests of their target audience. The above-mentioned "Campus Life" group's long survey report to their American partners about the mobile phone market in Suzhou is a good example. Students' improved sense of readers is also echoed by the high mean of 3.944 for Q19.

Another example. At first the "Pajamas" group took it for granted that the American partners knew some popular Chinese terms, such as the PC trademark *Legend*. After getting the responses, they learned that writing such terms without an explanation might hinder their communication. Since then they always analyzed the audience and the purpose for each of their email correspondence or report. As Xu wrote in her interim report: "Now I begin to be conscious of who I'm writing to and how what I'm writing will be reacted to". Such awareness of readers is regarded as an important skill and it is believed that students' increased consideration of readers can enhance the power of their writing (Means, Olson, 1995).

In a traditional writing class, students always feel afraid and inferior for they tend to assume that their audience is the teacher, who usually knows far more and who usually pays more attention to students' grammatical errors (Shi, 1999). Therefore they write with fear. Now with a real and varied audience in this project, many participants reported: "I'm not afraid of writing anymore, sometimes even eager to write down what I'm thinking about" (Francis),

"I'm actually writing or typing my thoughts out faster and smoother" (Darrance). They even believed this project had "enhanced the clarity and creativity" in their writing, as was seen by the high mean of 4.385 for Q31.

Language exposure and output

While completing all kinds of tasks, students expanded their language exposure through a variety of sources, such as the Web, the teacher, group and classroom discussion. Email correspondence, in particular, facilitated their language acquisition. It is observed that the students enjoyed picking up language and other skills while communicating with their more proficient American partners. As Wu from the "Pajamas" group put it:

> It is really fascinating working with my partners. I have learned a lot that can never be learned through books. What's more, I'm in a lower grade, which means I have less experience than my partners. So surely, I can absorb fresh ideas, knowledge and experience from them. This project is absolutely good for me, I think.

One interesting example is at one point some idiomatic expressions were found appearing simultaneously in several students' email messages, such as "land a job" and "have a good day and keep smiling". When traced back to the sources, they were all found from their American partners. The language learned in this meaningful context tends to be candid and heartfelt, as is illustrated below:

> The e-mails from American friends are especially helpful for me to grasp new words, because they are rich in vivid words and phrases. By reading them and meeting them so often, I got to understand them without checking the dictionary and even got to use them properly. (Zhi, "Campus Life" group)

> When I first encountered the word *terrific* while reading a mail from my American friend, I thought the word was of the same meaning as *terrible*. However, the mail showed that he was excited. Then I looked it up in my electronic dictionary and found the exact meaning of the word. It is really *terrific* to grasp vocabulary in this way! (Zhu, "Pearl" group)

Parallel to this language exposure and acquisition is the increased language output. Several students declared that their writing quantity in the project was much more than what they had done in the past two or three years of college study. Our statistics show every participant wrote over 5,000 words on average throughout the semester, which is almost ten times more than their campus peers not in this project. And every group produced a research report of over 3,000 words, which "…is something I never dreamed we could do it and what we feel most proud of!", as Miss Wu put it.

One would argue that increased language output does not necessarily mean the actual improvement of writing quality or writing skills. Yet this argument is weakened by the fact that the student use of new genres and rich content in their accumulated electronic texts does demonstrate expanded writing abilities that go far beyond the measurability of any standardized writing test. In addition to email messages for various formal and informal communication purposes, they learned to construct multimedia presentations, of which they had no experience before. They also practiced all kinds of technical writing skills, such as survey, marketing plan, advertisement, work report and memorandum. They even designed trademarks, catalogues and advertisement for their virtual companies. Their writings went far beyond simple chatting, and either illustrated their final solutions to the problems under study or elaborated on their insights into the socio-cultural differences between the two peoples.

Despite some inter-language characteristics, those writings obviously showed joint painstaking efforts in the revision regarding grammar, diction and tone. This again confirms the view that writing competence develops not through accretion of small chunks of knowledge, but through immersion in the experience of inquiring, reflecting and writing about issues and ideas (Palmquist et al., 1998).

Information processing

It is now widely accepted that the active processing of information is of vital importance for the development of advanced skills of comprehension, composition, reasoning and experimentation (Collins, Brown, Newman, 1989). The ability to elicit, evaluate, interpret, analyze and present information has become critical to success in today's information-rich society. Backed by this constructivist view, the web-based learning project provided opportunities for the participants to practice various information processing skills in the meaningful contexts. However, this brand new active learning skill proved very demanding on the Chinese participants who tended to believe whatever is stated in books or online. This accounts for the lowest mean (3.750) for this sub-construct of Information Processing. Traditional cultural values, such as "obedience to authority", was reflected by their "take-for-granted" attitude in the data analysis period. As one student reported, "We usually take for granted the information from American partners, for they're native speakers."

Nevertheless, some improvement was observed, especially in the ability of asking for information, as shown by the high mean of 4.111 for Q13. Right after selecting topics deemed "pursuit-worthy", all groups set out collecting relevant information. They visited libraries, searched the Net, but most data came from their American partners. In the process they found their partners' responses largely depended on the clarity of their messages asking for information. So they spent a lot of time discussing how to ask good questions. Zhu from the "Pearl" group described:

> We made our investigation mainly by asking questions to the American partners. After we got their feedback I found that our original plan was too simple and abstract. There are too many questions but I know they can't answer all of them. So we pick up the questions concerning the most important market information and try to ask them in a clearer way. This way we got valuable results.

Another example is the "Restaurant" group's well-designed "Poll" distributed to their potential American customers. Their good "to-the-point" questions elicited quite some useful responses, such as one below:

> Here're some answers to your questions:
>
> 1. Americans eat in a hurry. Everything must be quick and convenient.
> 2. There are many Chinese restaurants in Atlanta. To give your Chinese restaurant in Atlanta an advantage would be to serve your food hot and spicy.
> 3. You can set up your restaurant near a mall. The shopping malls provide a lot of foot traffic. There will be a lot of potential customers in and around malls.
>
> (Evans & Lynn, personal communication, November 4, 1999)

With all the rich data collected, this group finally completed an effective research report as was viewed by their American partners. Their web pages with vivid illustrations for each type of Chinese food and interesting background introductions to Chinese food culture attracted

comments as "I like your Oriental Food Garden…made me mouth-watering", "If there's really such a Chinese restaurant in Georgia, I'm sure the first to go." However, when reflecting on the page-making process, the students realized the distracting effect of the fancy multimedia tools online and the importance of more attention to content.

During the process the students believed that they practiced their critical thinking and problem-solving skills too, which was shown by the high mean (4.333) for Q12 (This project encourages me to think and investigate more before writing." Again Zhu's report is typical:

> I could not understand why the pearl market is not very competitive while there is a large group of consumers. I had discussed it with many people who gave me various answers. For example, Dream considered it possible because of the antidumping policy of the American customs. While Alfred gave me another suspicion that maybe the Americans are not very interested in pearls which seems a little bit too 'cheap' to the ladies. I have sent more questions to our partners to find more satisfying answers.

This shows the thinking and intra-group discussion process the student went over before making inter-group inquiries to the American partners. In fact, the authentic, complex tasks stimulated active learning. The students explored ideas and bodies of knowledge, not in order to pass some test but to understand the phenomena more deeply and search for information they need for the project.

Cross-cultural communication

Just as they expected, the students' frequent interactions with American partners have promoted their critical awareness of cultural differences and improved their understanding of writing as a social and collaborative act. This is confirmed by the second highest mean (4.153) for this sub-construct. The students learned from their American partners much cultural knowledge such as American holidays, education system and so on. An email from Jared to the "Culture" group is a good example. In his message, Jared not only introduced Americans' values and beliefs in liberty and individualism, but also drew Chinese students' attention to the pluralism of American culture and offered good advice (see Appendix D: Sample Two).

As the students learned more about the cultural differences, they tried to handle them properly in their daily communication with their partners. For example, when Mei from the "Culture" group was drafting a message on family structure, she wrote, "I think the old people *should* [italics added] live with one of their sons or daughters, or they will feel lonely." As it was first shared with her facilitator and group members, this view was immediately caught attention and an in-class discussion was held. They realized that this kind of assertion might cause cultural conflicts and that they should respect others' way of life and social practices. From then on, all the students in the class paid closer attention to the cultural differences, and became more culture sensitive in their daily communications. For example, as the "Restaurant" group learned that in the United States there was usually some reward for answering a survey, they included such a statement: "In return, you will have twenty percent off if we have the great honor to serve you in the first month of our *Oriental Food Garden*." In today's society where global communication increases at an accelerated rate, such cultural awareness and command of some strategies to tackle cultural differences are invaluable (Sayer, 1993).

As a result, the students' increased awareness of potential readers, cultural differences and the importance of information processing lent them more chances to write effectively in English. Considering their increased writing speed, enlarged vocabulary, expanded genres and presentation skills, it can be generally believed that the students' writing performance has improved, though further studies need to be conducted for more evidences and new evaluation procedures have to be devised for capturing the complex writing competencies developed in project-oriented CALL activities.

Changed roles in learning

It was observed that in this networked learning environment where students were busy working on their own project, the teacher's role underwent a significant shift from a knowledge giver to a facilitator. The students took over the responsibility for their own learning and for producing finished products that meet high standards. Thus, they became more active and autonomous learners. This was seen in their daily performances as well as by the third highest mean (4.500) for Q25 ("I help to decide on topics for discussion and writing") and the other high means for the related questions. Just as Lu put it, "We have a sense of authority in the project because it is we who decided the topics and subtopics and planned how to carry out the whole project."

What is more, the very complexity of the tasks seemed to have led the participants to collaborative work, resulting in greater emphasis on teamwork and collaboration skills. It was frequently observed in the student email exchanges that after one student contributed an idea, others commented on it and offered some new opinions. In so doing, the students actually collaborated to bring thought-structures into being through online writing. Typical is the working style described below:

> Whenever I have any suggestion about the project, I e-mail it to Jim, our group leader first. After he has read it, he will decide whether it is useful or not. If it is, he will e-mail the idea to everyone and we will have a discussion about it. Then he will give each of us some task around the idea considering our individual abilities. This kind of group work is effective and helps us a lot. (Liu, "Pajamas" group)

In fact the supportive network helped the emergence of a learning community in which the teacher was not the only source of knowledge. Students learned from each other, shared what they knew and worked together toward their common goals. Collaboration, not competition, and communication, not isolation, was set as the tone from the start of the project. The report from "Restaurant" group is an example:

> We four, Sonja, Frances, James and I didn't know each other before, but these days we have been getting along well with each other. We divided the tasks but we are a union. If one is in trouble, others will doubtlessly give their hands.… For a university student, one of the most essential qualities is the ability to know how to be a part of a union. That means to work with others both at home and abroad. I think this "Business Writing" project has helped us a lot in this aspect.

Also in the process the students learned to bring out everyone's potential to the fullest and making everyone an indispensable contributor. A good example is all the students in their groups either took specific positions in their virtual companies, such as president, marketing manager, advertising manager and so on, or each researched a subtopic to be merged into their final group product. One of the highest voices from the interview data is their satisfaction with cooperation and collaboration. Some claimed, "team spirit was one of the main rewards

of participating in this project" (Harry). American students' help was highly appreciated by the students too, because "they not only provided a large amount of important information, but also set us good working and language models. For example, they first emailed us their questionnaire. We just followed their example." (Anne)

However, our further analysis generated different opinions on collaboration from students on both sides. For example, several American students expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of immediate response from their Chinese partners, while the latter complained about the lack of interest of their American partners in sharing their project work. The data reveals several causes of the problem. The most obvious one is Chinese students' limited access to the Internet. It also has to do with different class schedules and opposite time zones which made "immediate response" very difficult. Another finding is although most Chinese students were eager to communicate with American partners, their lower level of language proficiency and inadequate cultural knowledge often became obstacles to their effective communication. This affected the enthusiasm of American participants to engage in more detailed discussion with their Chinese partners (Barnum, personal communication, January 16, 2000). It also explains low interest on both sides in continued personal communication after the project. As Vicky, one of the facilitators reported:

> A large number of them believe the personal "bond" in the project has not been fully developed…. They gave the American students high comments…unanimous in believing that they wouldn't have done their projects so well without the help of the American students, but they feel that they don't have much to share with the American students when the project is over."

Although opinions varied, it is possible to extract several factors that seem to have positively affected the student attitudes, learning performances and roles. Firstly, the students viewed their group projects as personally meaningful. Secondly, they appreciated new computer-assisted learning environment which are not available in their normal classrooms. Thirdly, they perceived English and information technology as a new and inseparable means to achieve success in their future career and personal development. "Dual benefits" were reported as the greatest motivator.

Implications and conclusion

Project-oriented learning with authentic and challenging tasks as its core is not a totally new idea. It certainly also applies to language and writing classes which is taught without wired computers. However, there are several additional themes on this point that emerge from our observations and data analysis. First of all, CALL researches (e.g., Debski, 2000) indicate that technology can be a double-edged sword in project-oriented classes. A wired computer helps bring the outside world into the classroom by providing an easier access to a vast amount of authentic material and by allowing opportunities for authentic communication and publishing. But without proper guidance, it can also be an amazing distraction. For example, some students under study were so thrilled by the fancy tools for designing web pages that they tended to spend too much time on the appearance of the pages. On such occasions, the teacher needs to emphasize what matters more is their content. Furthermore, students should be guided to use a full range of medium-appropriate rhetorical styles incorporating texts and graphics to present the information effectively. Similarly, email has its own particular rhetorical features, and students should be guided to learn and practice those features as well (Warschauer, 1999).

Secondly, project-oriented work prompts changes in teacher and student roles, whether it is supported by computers or not. However, computers are highly compatible with this change (Means, Olson, 1995). On the one hand, they facilitate students' autonomous learning by allowing many more students to actively process information than teacher-led lessons; on the other hand, they support teachers' coaching role by providing a readily viewable display of students' work and the capability for the students and teacher to jointly generate, try out and evaluate alternative approaches. But this optimal use of computers will not come by itself. It depends on conditions such as computer literacy level of the users and their beliefs about their roles in learning and teaching. This means this project might not work at all with a different group. Besides, as project work usually spills over boundaries of time and space, it highlighted the importance of availability of wired computers and adequate technical support. This might explain, for example, the strong complaints from both Chinese and American participants about the limit of Internet access and the lack of immediate responses. Consequently, this project brought about several new computer classrooms in some schools and the expansion of the multimedia language lab in the School of Foreign Languages in Suzhou University.

Thirdly, due to substantial workload attached to this project-oriented collaborative writing project, the ways in which the student efforts are recognized would affect their attitudes to the project. Similarly, project work demands more time and commitment of the teacher, so how administrators and colleagues judge the project value would affect teachers' enthusiasm about their future implementations. All this might account for the end-of-semester frustration (coupled with the overall satisfaction with the group products), as much of the efforts was not recognized by academic credits for the participants, nor by any form for the facilitators.

Obviously, the support structure should be built top down from the state policy makers to educational administrators at various levels covering project fund, teacher training and curriculum assessment. Effective guidelines should be formulated for properly evaluating and rewarding those whose contributions advance our understanding of the field (CALICO, 2001).

To conclude, this case study supports the proposition that web-based project learning has the potential in motivating Chinese EFL learners, improving their writing performance and initiating their active roles in the "new literacy" development. However, as the report draws heavily from interpretive data, it does not claim much generalizability. The goal here is to attempt to describe the project process, product and student experiences in this particular Chinese EFL learning context. The results presented in this paper attempt to stimulate thinking by more experienced CALL researchers into how a more appropriate application of project-oriented CALL might be gradually incorporated into university English teaching programs in developing countries such as China, and how such efforts could be better assessed and appreciated. In particular, I should point out several constraints about this study. First, only a small number of Chinese EFL colleges students were involved in this project. And the fact that they were selected for their enthusiasm, higher level of computer literacy and English proficiency suggests difficulties for a normal college English class to achieve the similar effect. Secondly, this project puts an important focus on technical writing. Those with an emphasis on academic writing or oral communication skills might face different challenges for learning with technology. Thirdly, the writer's first experience of playing a double role of a researcher and project consultant leaves the results open for question and further study.

Despite these limitations, it is the writer's hope that issues raised in this study (in particular the urgent need for electronic literacy and project-oriented approaches that help shape its

development) will likely be applicable to other students facing the same challenges of global English and information technology. An optimal EFL learning environment enhanced by web-based project learning is something not imaginable in a traditional setting. However, this is not to say that all Chinese EFL learning needs to be, or should be web-based or project-oriented. Rather, I emphasize project work because I see it as an essential part of the thinking behind our language teaching reform in today's China. Just as we should not throw out the baby together with the bath water, we need not stop conducting language skills practice while trying to make the classroom more stimulating, student-centered places for language learning and the new literacy development.

Notes

1. Acknowledgement: This research was supported in part by a grant from the Ministry of Education in China. I would like to thank Professor Carol M. Barnum for her guidance of the project, Li Xiangyi, Zhu Minhua, Jin Lin and Chen Gao for assistance, and Mark Warschauer and Nick Noakes for helpful comments on the draft of the paper.

2. College English Test (CET) has been administrated as a national English test given by the Ministry of Education since 1987. Every year, more than 2 million Chinese college students take CET. It consists of two proficiency tests namely CET-4 and CET-6, with the latter compared to the highest level of a Japanese national English test named STEP-1 (Society for Testing English Proficiency) (See Yang, Weir, 1998: 151-162).

3. SudaCALL website (http://call.suda.edu.cn/stuprojects/index.htm) with 8 sections of learning and teaching resources based on Suzhou University campus network, is created and maintained by a core of teachers and students interested in CALL.

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Appendix A: Student Demographic Survey

Your name: _____ Age: _____

Your sex: _____ Years of learning English in school: ____

Do you have a computer at home?_____

If yes, when did you buy it and what was your initial purpose of buying it?

Please rate your typing ability: Poor____ Fair ____Good ____ Very good ____

I have taken some courses about computers. (Y/N)_____

I have got the Computer Proficiency Test Certificate for C-1 _____C-2_____

How you ever used a computer to do the following things?

Word processing: a lot____ a little ____ never ____

Sending Email: a lot____ a little ____ never____

Surfing World Wide Web: a lot ____ a little ___ never ____

How often do you write the following things in English?

Journal/Diary:

Very often___ Often___ A few times/month_____ Never____

Letters to your friends and/or family:

Very often___ Often___ A few times/month_____ Never____

English grade: In CET-4____ In CET-6 ____

What draws you to this project and what do you expect to learn from it?

_____

Appendix B: Student CALL Survey*

Part I: Please choose a number (1-5) on the right margin to indicate your true feeling and opinions about the statement on the left. Thanks for your cooperation.

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree

1. This project has helped develop my comprehensive competence. (4.056**)
2. In the project, I often get confused about what to do next and prefer to have some clearly stated learning materials like a text book. (3.389**)
3. The project is not worth the time spent on because it can not help me achieve high score in CET-6. (4.667 when reverse coded)
4. The task that our group works on has increased my interest in communicating in English. (4.200**)
5. I enjoy using the computer to communicate in English with people around the world. (4.667**)
6. I am afraid that I can not express myself clearly in my email writing. (4.056 when reverse coded)
7. I feel more confident and comfortable to join discussion via computer. (4.111**)
8. Discussing my ideas and writings with others on line is an enjoyable experience. (4.000**)
9. I am proud of what our group has achieved. (3.944**)
10. I have improved my skills in inquiring information in the project. (3.667**)
11. After some information being collected, I often think whether it is reliable and acceptable. (2.889)
12. This project encourages me to think and investigate more before writing. (4.333**)
13. I now know better about how to effectively ask for information. (4.111**)
14. Email communication in the project has enabled me to write faster. (4.222**)
15. While writing, I try to organize my thoughts in an orderly way and write them down as clearly as possible. (4.167**)
16. I tend to do more editing of my writings in the project. (3.944**)
17. Comments from my classmates are very helpful for improving my writings. (3.500**)
18. I pay more attention to grammar than to content while writing in the project. (4.389 when reverse coded)
19. Through this project, I become more aware of my potential readers. (3.944**)
20. While writing, I always keep the cultural differences in mind. (3.778**)
21. The email communication has promoted my confidence in communicating with people from different cultures. (4.111**)
22. It is rather difficult for me to clear the misunderstandings caused by cultural differences. (4.444 when reverse coded)
23. The email communication with foreign partners has improved my understanding of other cultures. (4.278**)
24. I have given more responsibility for my own learning. (4.222**)
25. I help to decide on topics for discussion and writing. (4.500**)
26. I can do what suits my own way of learning. (3.500**)
27. My opinions and suggestions were often neglected. (4.444 when reverse coded)
28. I feel I am part of what is going on in the group. (3.778**)
29. I trust American partners to act responsibly. (3.500**)
30. I trust group members to act responsibly. (4.389**)
31. The computer-assisted writing project has enhanced the clarity and creativity in my English writings. (4.385**)
32. The project provides an effective way to learn English. (4.278**)
33. I feel more confident to use language to solve similar problems in daily life. (4.111**)
34. Learning to write with a computer gives me a feeling of accomplishment. (4.167**)
35. I enjoy this writing project. (4.278**)

* Means of responses are listed in parentheses.

* * Significantly better than a hypothetically neutral score of 3 at p<.05

Part II: Background information

Do you have a computer at home now? _____

If yes, when did you buy it and what was the initial purpose for you to buy it?

Please rate your present typing ability:

Poor____ Fair ___Good _____Very good ____

How often did you use a computer to do the following things in the project?

Word Processing: a lot____ a little ____ never ____

Sending Email: a lot____ a little ____ never____

Surfing World Wide Web: a lot ____ a little ___ never ____

How often do you write the following things in English?

Journal/Diary

Very often___ Often___ A few times/month_____ Never____

Letters to your friends and/or family:

Very often___ Often___ A few times/month_____ Never____

Do you want to keep such writing habits? Y/N____

Appendix C: End-of-Project Interview Questions

1. What have you learned most from the project? How is this experience different from that in a traditional classroom?
2. What are some difficulties or problems did you have in doing your project? Who and what helped you solve the problems?
3. How did you organize the work in your group? Are you satisfied with the cooperation within your own group and collaboration with your American partners? Explain.
4. In what way do you think technology helps or hinders your project-oriented writing and communication activities?
5. If you have a chance to participate in a similar project, what would you suggest for improvement?

Appendix D: Student Email Samples

Sample One: Outgoing message (From the "Campus Life" group in Suzhou to their American partner "Mobile Phone" group in Georgia, USA)

To: Stephanie

From: Lu Lihong

Cc: s7104016@suda.edu.cn, s8090053@suda.edu.cn, 97c3046@suda.edu.cn

Sent: Thursday, December 16, 1999 08:03:02 PM

Subject: A survey report

Hi, Stephanie. I am so surprised and glad to hear from you so soon. We are allowed not only on Wed. afternoon but also in the evening to use computer lab. I will check my e-mail box more often than before.

Yesterday, Zhi Xinglei and I went to the downtown to do a survey on its mobile phone market. We visited China Telecommunications and many other companies. We got a lot of information about it. Here is our report:

A LARGE MARKET

China has a population of 1.2 billion, but only 20 million have mobile phones. With the improvement of living conditions, I believe there will be more and more people who can afford it. Suzhou's China Telecommunications Company has 200 new users per month.

PRODUCT AND PRICE

There are many foreign producers in the Chinese mobile phone

market. Motorola, Nokie and Ericsson are famous trademarks. Here is a list in the order of Make, Country, Model, Price (RMB). Due to limit of space, the writer cut short the long list of foreign products in the original message.:

Motorola, America, variety, 1000 ~ 6000

Nokia, Finland, variety, 1000 ~ 6000

[…]

CUSTOMERS AND THEIR REQUIREMENT

In china, most of those who have mobile phones are adults from 20 to 30 years old. Many young people want very much to have one but they haven't enough money. There are few students who have them on campus. When customers select a mobile phone, they will first consider its

appearance. They want it to be smaller and more beautiful. Most of them select the color of black. This is maybe because of their ages. And black is a staid color. Then they will consider its quality of communication and the time of electricity using. (Mobile phones need charging, don't they?)

SECOND-HAND MOBILE PHONES

Some people buy secondhand mobile phones if they have not enough money, because their price is always within RMB1000. Some secondhand goods are old models but are not used before, such as model 87c. Its original price is about RMB1500, but now is sold at only RMB800.

OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

In China, if you want to use a mobile phone, you have to apply a number from a certain mobile phone service net and need to pay much money including money paid for a number. The average expense is RMB790. But if the number is bad (for example, the number includes "4" , which is regarded to be able to bring bad luck to the owner), you only need to pay RMB340. If the number is better, such as those including "8","6", you need to pay more than RMB790. The highest expense is more than RMB4000.

Chinese mobile phone is charged at both ends. You will pay 5 mao (*one yuan has ten mao*) per minute if you have short distance call, and pay 1.2 yuan if you have a long distance call.

This is the result of our investigation. Do you have any other questions or something puzzled? Please let me know. And I also want to know something about American mobile phone. Would you please tell me?

Best wishes,

Lu Lihong (from the "Campus Life" group)

Sample Two: Incoming message(From the "Snacks" group in Georgia to their Chinese partner "Culture" group in Suzhou, China)

From: Jared <sawb@iname.com>

To: Jessie <97c5025@suda.edu.cn>

Cc: <sloyd1125@aol.com>; <judidark@aol.com>; <kelisbutterfly@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 1999 2:37 AM

Subject: American Culture

Dear Jessie:

First please accept my apologies for the delay in sending this letter. This is but one of the many projects I am working on right now. I am very busy, but I am managing to hold things together okay. I hope everything is going well with you.

As luck would have it, today is one of our American holidays. This one doesn't have a large celebration with it, but it is important nonetheless. Today is Columbus Day, marking this discovery of North America in the year 1492 CE by Christopher Columbus. Incidentally, the discovery was an accident. He was searching for a faster way to East Asia. As you are aware, it is a long way from here to your home in East Asia.

I believe you will find your study of American Culture and values very interesting. *The United States has a rich heritage, and borrows much from different cultures. One of the things you may not be aware of is that while Americans share many social and cultural traditions and values, much of our traditions and values vary from person to person. Our beliefs and values are shaped by our families, popular culture, ethnic heritage, and individual personality* [italics added].

Because there are so many values and beliefs in America, I have asked each of my group members to take a few moments to respond to some of your questions. This will allow you broader insight into our culture and lives. Keep in mind, however, that these are still but a few of the many ideologies, beliefs, values, and traditions that make up American society.

I would like to share some of my values and beliefs with you. *Our country and government was founded on the idea of liberty* [italics added]. Liberty is the idea that people should be free to live their lives completely as they choose so long as they do not harm the rights of another person.
As I said before, there are many beliefs. In America, we usually place these beliefs on a scale from left to right. On the left, there is complete security. The government makes all decisions on the assumption that the government will do what is fair and right for all. On the right is complete freedom. There is no government influence at all.
The idea of liberty is closer to the right. Those who believe in liberty believe that there should be government, but they believe the major purpose of government is secure the rights of all people. This prevents a majority

majority, but it protects minorities.

I believe strongly in the idea of liberty. I believe our country has been successful because of its people, not its government. I believe that when you give ordinary people the power to make their own decisions, they can do great things. I think capitalism has allowed our people to prosper. I think our freedom of speech and expression has allowed us to engage in meaningful debate that solves many of our problems. I believe that citizens who are allowed to own and use firearms has prevented aggression from those who seek to take our freedom away.

Again, these are just some of my political values. There are a great many who share my beliefs, and many who do not. However, in our society we are allowed to engage in debate on all of these ideas, therefore we can solve our problems using the collective wisdom of our people. I have many views on many issues, and I will share with you on anything that you wish. Ask me questions and I will answer.

While politics are important to Americans, we also have other values and beliefs. Many of these are spiritual. Many of our holidays and traditional celebrations reflect different spiritual beliefs. While these celebrations are common to many, each family and person has their own uniqueness to add to the festivity.

We also have celebrations unique to our country. There is our Independence Day which marks the anniversary of our declaring independence from Great Britain. There are days like Memorial Day where we honor our fallen soldiers who died preserving our liberty. In fact, we have more holidays than I can count right here, so again, feel free to ask more questions.

Just remember our culture is based on the individual[italics added]. We do many things the same as a people, but we believe in the value of a person. Every person is not the same, but just as important. We do not always agree (even with our politicians. . . our President, for instance, I think is a complete idiot who has greatly damaged our society), but we still manage to prosper.

I hope I have helped a little with what you wanted. If you have any questions about what I said or additional questions please feel free to ask. This assignment is so exciting to me I will be glad to help you in any way possible.

Sincerely,
Jared (from the "Snacks" group)

INTERNET LESSON PLANS

WORLD WIDE WILLIAM – A SHAKESPEARE PROJECT

by Iwona Filip

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Introduction

This project may last 3 lessons 45 minutes each or twice as long. It depends on the complexity and the length of the exercises students are given. Its main goal is to raise students' interest in the Anglo-Saxon culture. What you need is Shakespeare URLs, CD-ROM or online dictionaries, worksheets (which may be prepared traditionally in paper or as computer documents) with questions about Shakespeare, his epoch, life and works. After completing the project teachers can check their students' knowledge on the subject by asking them to do a Shakespeare quiz at http://absoluteshakespeare.com/trivia/quiz/quiz.htm, http://www.shakespeare-online.com/quiz/ or http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/quiz/bioquiz.htm.

Lesson 1

Surfing for Shakespeare

Level: intermediate and above

Time: two 45-minute lessons

Aims:

- to obtain information about Shakespeare's life, works and epoch
- to practise selecting information and note taking

Pre-stage activity

Warm up

Write *William Shakespeare* on the board and ask students about any associations with this name. Put their ideas on the board. They will probably be familiar with *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet*, or *Shakespeare in Love* as the titles of well-known films. Elicit terms connected with theatre and literature such as: *drama, comedy, tragedy, playwright, acting, scene, play, plot, protagonist, narrator,* etc. or names of Shakespeare's plays, names of characters from his plays or names of places like *Stratford- upon- Avon* or *the Globe*. Tell your students that they are starting a project on Shakespeare and their task will be to find specific information about Shakespeare's life and his works on the Internet. Go through this stage quickly.

While-stage activity

Objective1

Write on the board the topics which particular groups are going to work on (alternatively you can have them prepared beforehand and use an overhead projector or an interactive board) e.g.

1. Biography & Epoch – group A
2. Shakespeare's works – group B
3. Shakespeare in translation + Shakespeare & the cinema – group C

Students are given worksheets on which they should write down the answers clearly because after they finish they will be asked to swap their information with the other groups. Each member of the group needs to have their own answers!!! Assign a time limit. Divide the class into groups. Choose a time keeper in each group. Distribute the handouts or ask students to open the computer documents. Students turn on the computers and work on their questions. Suggested addresses for specific groups:

group **A**

www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/, http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/timeline/timeline.htm, www.shakespeare-online.com, www.elizabethi.org/elizabethiprofile, www.biography.com www.royal.gov.uk, www.bartleby.com

The questions may cover important dates in Shakespeare's life, his family, birthplace, his stay in London, his contemporaries, Elizabeth I, the Tudor Dynasty, Renaissance theatre, literature etc.

Sample worksheet

William Shakespeare – **Worksheet A** student's name_____

Go to one of the following addresses and answer the questions.

www.shakespeare-online.com, http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/timeline/timeline.htm, http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/ShakespeareBiog.html, http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/Globe.html

His biography

1. What nationality was Shakespeare? _____
2. When and where was he born? _____
   _____
3. When and where did he die? _____
4. Where did he live? _____
5. What was his father's name? _____
6. What was his mother's name? _____
   _____
7. Did he have any brothers or sisters? _____
8. What sort of education did he have? _____
9. What was his wife's name and where did she live? _____
10. How many children did they have and what were their names? _____
11. What did he do for a living, what was his job? _____
    _____
12. What was *the Globe*? _____
    _____
13. When was it built? _____

His Epoch

Go to the following web sites: www.elizabethi.org/elizabethiprofile,
http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/introelizperiod.html

Answer the following questions.

1. Which British monarch ruled at the time of Shakespeare? _____
2. What nationality was she? _____
3. What was her full name? _____
   _____
4. When was she born and when did she die? _____
5. What was her father's name? _____
   _____
6. What was her mother's name? _____
   _____
7. Was she married? _____
8. What was Shakespeare's relationship with her? _____
   _____
9. What are the two names of Shakespeare's times?
10. a) E_____ _____

    b) R_____

group **B**

http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/, www.shakespeare-online.com,
http://absoluteshakespeare.com/index.htm,
http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Library/SLT/ideas/ideassubj.html,
http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/shakespeare.html

Students may be asked to divide Shakespeare's plays into tragedies, comedies, histories, or write down the titles of all Shakespeare's plays. The questions may relate to the ideas e.g. Supernatural, such themes in his works as love, revenge, or specific characters from his plays. Students can be enquired about Shakespeare's poetry like sonnets or poems.

Sample worksheet

William Shakespeare – **Worksheet B** Student's name_____

Go to one of these addresses and write down titles of Shakespeare's plays.

http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/ (bottom page chart), www.shakespeare-online.com, http://absoluteshakespeare.com/index.htm

His plays

Tragedies **title of play**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Comedies **title of play**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Histories title of play

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

His Sonnets

Go to http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Troy/4081/Sonnets.html and answer the following questions.

1.What is a Shakespearean sonnet?_____

_____

_____

_____   _____

2.How does it rhyme?_____

3. How many lines does it have?_____

4. What is iambic pentameter?_____

5. What is the rhyming couplet?_____

6. What is a sonnet usually about?_____

7. How many sonnets did Shakespeare write?_____

8. Choose a sonnet and recognise its characteristic features; write a number of the sonnet you analysed. _____

Other poetry

Go to www.ludweb.com/poetry/, http://absoluteshakespeare.com/index.htm and write down the titles of the poems.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

group **C**

http://web.pertus.com.pl/~mysza/hamlet/index.html,
http://www.medianet.com.pl/~kubik/paszkeng.htm, http://wiem.onet.pl/wiem/0075a0.html
http://wiem.onet.pl/wiem/0074fe.html, http://www.ifb.com.pl/yennefer/szekspir/dziela.html
The above addresses deal with Polish translations as the project was originally designed for Polish students. They may be asked to note down the names of Polish translators and find out more information about the most famous ones e.g. Stanislaw Baranczak, Jozef Paszkowski, Maciej Slomczynski. Students can look for the Polish titles of Shakespeare's plays.

Sample worksheet

William Shakespeare -Worksheet C student's name_____

Shakespeare in translation

Go to http://web.pertus.com.pl/~mysza/hamlet/index.html and find names of Polish translators

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Go to http://www.medianet.com.pl/~kubik/paszkeng.htm,
http://wiem.onet.pl/wiem/0075a0.html, http://wiem.onet.pl/wiem/0074fe.html and answer the
following questions:

1. When was J. Paszkowski born and when did he die?_____
2. When was M. Slomczynski born and did he die? _____
3. When was S. Baranczak born? _____
4. Which famous American university does Baranczak work at?

   _____

Go to http://www.ifb.com.pl/yennefer/szekspir/dziela.html and find Polish titles for:

1. *All's Well That Ends Well* _____

2. *The Tempest* _____

3. *The Comedy of Errors* _____

4. *The Winter's Tale* _____

5.*The Taming of the Shrew* _____

6. *Pericles Prince of Tyre* _____

7. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* _____

8. *Measure for Measure* _____

9. *Love's Labour's Lost* _____

10. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* _____

11. *Twelfth Night* _____

12. *The Merchant of Venice* _____

13. *As You Like It* _____

14. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* _____

15. *Much Ado About Nothing* _____

As far as films based on Shakespeare's plays are concerned students go to
http://absoluteshakespeare.com/trivia/films/films.htm and note: year of production, names of
directors, actors, the earliest film, the latest film etc.

Sample worksheet

William Shakespeare – **Worksheet C**

Shakespeare and the cinema

Go to http://absoluteshakespeare.com/trivia/films/films.htm and fill in the chart.

title of play and/or title of film	year of production	director	famous actors

Find the earliest adaptation (1929) and the latest one (2000).

1._____

2._____

Objective 2

Create new groups in which there will be at least one member from the previous groups.
Students swap their information taking turns. Emphasise the importance of taking notes.

Post-stage activity

Objective 3

To check if they swapped the information ask random students any questions from the worksheets. Ask student A a question from worksheet B etc. To check correct pronunciation of names, places, or titles of plays let the students read them aloud.

Objective 4

Students reflect on the lesson. Suggested questions: Have you learned anything new about Shakespeare? Which fact surprised you most? Which item was the most interesting for you? Which of Shakespeare's plays would you like to read or watch? Would you like to live in Shakespeare's times? Did you enjoy the lesson?

Lesson 2

Translating Shakespeare's plays

Level: upper-intermediate and above

Time: one or two 45 minute lessons

Aim: to practice translating English classics from English into Polish

Pre-stage activity

Original texts of Shakespeare's plays online (it would be convenient to have the extracts for the translation chosen beforehand), famous writers' translations online, CD-ROM or online dictionaries will be useful.

Objective 1

Just to remind some basic information on Shakespeare's translations, revise briefly students' knowledge from the *Surfing for Shakespeare* lesson (the titles of translated plays, names of translators, etc.)

While-stage activity

Objective 2

Students translate extracts from Shakespeare's plays. Having done this, they compare their peer translations. Next their works are compared to the versions of the renowned authors.

Suggested addresses that can be used:

www.m-w.com - the Internet dictionary, http://web.pertus.com.pl/~mysza/hamlet/index.html, http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/, www.shakespeare-online.com, http://absoluteshakespeare.com/index.htm

Post-stage activity

Objective 3

Students choose the best peer translations. The translations can be published in a school magazine, or alternatively their works can be printed out and the copies can be displayed on the boards in your school.

Lesson 3

Writing a sonnet

Level: upper-intermediate and above

Time: one or two 45 minute lessons

Aims:

- to enhance students' creativeness
- to work towards understanding poetry

Pre-stage activity

Shakespeare URLs will be needed to find texts of his sonnets and some theory on a sonnet structure. CD-ROM or online dictionaries will be useful. Ask students if they like poetry and what their favourite poets or poems are. Tell them that they are going to read and write sonnets during this lesson.

While-stage activity

Objective 1

Divide your students into pairs. Provide them with questions concerning structure and themes of Shakespearean sonnets e.g. How many sonnets did he write? What are they about? How does a sonnet rhyme? How many lines are there in a sonnet? What is iambic pentameter? etc. Suggested addresses: http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Troy/4081/Sonnets.html, www.m-w.com – online dictionary

Objective 2

Choose one of Shakespeare's sonnets e.g. the one numbered 18 and analyse it with the whole class. Students try to find all characteristic features of a Shakespearean sonnet.

Objective 3

Students work in pairs or individually - let them choose this time! Tell them that they are supposed to write a Shakespearean sonnet now.

Post-stage activity

Objective 4

Students read their sonnets aloud. Put the sonnets on their class or school websites, publish them in a school magazine, or alternatively print them out and display the copies on the boards in your school.

Extra ideas

As a follow up to this project you can take your students on a virtual tour of *the Globe* at http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/home.htm. A lot of information about the past and the present of *the Globe* can be found there. Educational and distance learning links offer useful material for Internet lessons. It is also possible to study the historical background of Shakespeare's times thoroughly. Many valuable items about the Tudor Dynasty can be found at www.royal.gov.uk. The reign and life of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I would be worth exploring. Additionally numerous facts concerning well known institutions and places e.g. Royal Palaces are accessible at http://www.hrp.org.uk/webcode/home.asp. If your students are interested in religion and would like to learn about the Church of England, they should go to http://www.england.anglican.org. You may also prepare a lesson about famous historical figures and events of the period e.g. the six wives of Henry the VIII, Bloody Mary, Sir Francis Drake, etc. based on the following website: http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/histevents.html.

On the whole, the Internet is packed with Shakespeare items. Teachers who are enthusiastic about the Bard can create thousands of wonderful Internet lessons. For the ideas and materials to be used in their classes they may consult *Mr William Shakespeare and the Internet* http://daphne.palomar.edu/shakespeare/, which is a great source for links to Internet Shakespeare sites.

FINDING PROVERBS ON THE WEB

by Shiao-Chuan Kung

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Introduction

Proverbs represent the collected wisdom of a nation. They are one of the most colorful aspects of a culture. For the student of a foreign language, comparing the proverbs of the target culture and one's own is a worthwhile if not enlightening experience. This lesson seeks to familiarize ESL/EFL students with some proverbs in the English language as well as to introduce students to two advertisement-free websites designed for them. These two web sites, *Interesting Things for ESL Students* (http://www.manythings.org) and *Activities for ESL Students* (http://a4esl.org/), contain interactive grammar and vocabulary quizzes, word games, and sentence puzzles. They also have collections of proverbs, slang expressions, and other study materials. Both sites are well-organized, optimized for speed, and free of advertising. The webpages are pleasing to the eye and the information easy to find. Teachers can integrate the materials at these sites into a curriculum or recommend them to students for use for studying on their own.

Level: intermediate

Time: 2 hours

Materials: computers with a Web browser and Internet access. Depending on the number of computers available and the size of the class, students can work individually or in teams of two or three.

Procedure

1. Introduce the lesson by asking the students to complete the proverb "You can't tell a book by its…" If the students do not know the answer, encourage them to come up with some reasonable guesses. Possible answers for this proverb could be "title" or "author" or "color." Point out that in this example the missing word has to be a noun.
2. Give half the class worksheet A and the other half worksheet B. (This will prevent the entire class from accessing the same webpages at the same time when they are online.)
3. Ask students to analyze the part of speech of the missing words and to fill in the blanks with plausible, creative guesses. Allow 15 minutes for students to share their predictions.

4. Have the students launch their web browsers and point to the web site http://www.manythings.org/proverbs/.
5. Demonstrate how to locate the answer to "You can't tell a book by its…" (The proverbs are organized in alphabetical order at the site.)
6. While the students complete the assignment, circulate around the classroom commenting on the students' guesses and addressing technical difficulties.
7. Allow 10 minutes for students who completed worksheet A to share their answers with students who worked on version B.
8. Ask students to check their knowledge of proverbs by doing the online quiz at http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/quizzes/js/ck/ma-proverbs.html.
9. As a follow-up activity or homework, ask students to write a story illustrating a proverb of their choice. They should not include the proverb so that after sharing it with a fellow classmate or the entire class, the other student/s can guess which proverb the author meant.

Proverbs A

Use the information on the website http://www.manythings.org/proverbs to complete the following proverbs

1. All is fair in love and _____.
2. A/an _____ a day keeps the doctor away.
3. April showers brings May _____.
4. Blood is thicker than _____.
5. Don't count your chickens before they are _____.
6. Don't go near the water until you learn to _____.
7. Don't put all your eggs in one _____.
8. Early to bed and early to bed, make a man healthy, wealthy and _____.
9. Every picture tells a _____.
10. It is no use crying over spilt _____.

Find a proverb that conveys the same idea as a proverb in your native language. Explain the similarities and differences between the proverb in English and in your mother tongue.

_____

_____

_____

Proverbs B

Use the information on the website http://www.manythings.org/proverbs to complete the following proverbs

1. Keep your mouth shut and your _____ open.
2. Look before you _____.
3. Make _____ while the sun shines.
4. No pain, no _____.
5. Out of sight, out of _____.
6. The early bird catches the _____.
7. The grass is always greener on the other side of the _____.
8. There are two sides to every _____.
9. Too many cooks spoil the _____.
10. When in Rome, do as the _____ do.

Find a proverb that conveys the same idea as a proverb in your native language. Explain the similarities and differences between the proverb in English and in your mother tongue.

_____

_____

_____

Answers

worksheet A	worksheet B
1. war 2. apple 3. flowers 4. water 5. hatched 6. swim 7. basket 8. wise 9. story 10. milk	1. ears 2. leap 3. hay 4. gain 5. mind 6. worm 7. fence 8. question 9. broth 10. Romans

A WORD FROM A TECHIE

CORRECTING STUDENT WORK WITH THE COMPUTER

- USING DEDICATED SOFTWARE AND A WORD PROCESSOR

by Jarek Krajka

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Introduction

In the previous issues of *Teaching English with Technology* there has been a number of articles and lesson plans where teachers introduced word-processing in language instruction, encouraging their students to create electronic documents and submit them for correction. In such a case, it seems justified to respond to the electronic document in the electronic format, that is present students with their works marked on the computer.

As Holmes (1996) claims, there are numerous advantages of computerised work correction over traditional marking practices, such as: there are clear and colourful annotations with always having enough space, the system forces the teacher to make a conscious attempt at consistency in diagnosing and classifying errors, the system is much faster to work with, the essays can be easily archived and quickly retrieved, both in the original and the marked form, and receiving electronically-marked document encourages the editing process so that students correct their works directly on the screen.

When talking about computerised marking, there are various approaches to be adopted, also on various levels of computer competence. As the Journal is not intended for computer specialists but language teachers, I will present the simplest (though not the least sophisticated) solutions, only alerting readers of more complex possibilities. In this case, I will present two options: using a dedicated computer program, namely *Markin* created by Martin Holmes; and exploiting the possibilities of a word-processor. My presentation will refer to Microsoft Word, which is the program I use, but the solutions presented can be found also in other word processors. Finally, it needs to be stressed that my presentation here does not serve any commercial purposes, and I am not in any way affiliated with any of the companies mentioned.

USING *MARKIN* IN COMPUTERISED ERROR CORRECTION

General Information

Markin is the educational program used for marking student work on the computer, developed by Creative Technology and Martin Holmes, and available on the Web at www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/. Marking a piece of work involves importing the student's text, either by opening a document file (RTF or TXT), then marking the text using annotations, comments, feedback and grades; finally exporting the marked work in a format suitable for a student (as an HTML file for old-version browsers; as an DHTML file for versions 4 and higher; as an RTF or TXT document). The program allows also making comprehensive statistics of errors, both from a single document and from multiple files. Among other advanced options enabled by *Markin* are adding Web links and frequently used pieces of text when marking, auto-marking (automatic search for and correction of other instances of the same error in a current document), translation (translating the user interface into students' native language).

Marking Students' Works

After having imported a text, either by copying and pasting or importing a word-processor file, the teacher can add annotations marking specific errors using a pre-defined set of buttons. For example, on seeing a spelling error, the teacher clicks on a "Spl" button, which means underlining a highlighted word and adding a "Spl" superscript abbreviation right after it. In this way, the teacher can quickly mark different errors, also using auto-marking option. Annotations can be positive and negative, with the former being for instance "Good", "Yes", "Excellent" or "Well-constructed sentence", and they can be assigned different values to mark the importance of errors in relation to others.

Another feature that can be used by the teacher is adding comments, when the teacher wants to be more detailed about some error, or wants to give a hint on how to correct it. Comments are endnotes marked with numbers in the text and added after the whole text.

To sum up the corrected work, the teacher can add two kinds of feedback after the whole corrected piece, where they can evaluate the student's performance in a current piece of writing. Usually one feedback refers to language performance, while the other to the content, both colour coded to be distinguishable.

Finally, the teacher can add a grade, being either a number, a percentage, or a description, to be displayed after the whole piece. Click here http://www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/features.htm to go to the *Markin* website and see a sample Markin screen with different kinds of marks.

After having marked an essay, it is exported either as a word-processor file (RTF or TXT) or as a website (HTML or DHTML) and the teacher can see the output right away. In order to deliver the marked work to the student, the file can be attached to an email message and sent to the student or uploaded to a class website and the teacher can just give the URL to go to. The latter way of delivery is also useful when the teacher wants to give whole-class feedback on some common mistakes or use some work as a model for classroom instruction.

Making the Most of the Program

The program is equipped with a "Bookmark" option, making it possible to insert bookmarks in the text to quickly find selected parts of it. Also, one can create a key to annotations, exportable as an HTML file, so that students can view it while correcting the marked work. Furthermore, the program enables the user to create a database of useful links (either introduced manually or imported from Internet browser's favourites or bookmarks files), which can be inserted in the corrected work so that a student can get online help when revising. That is especially useful if the teacher wants to relate students to some work already done on the class website or to grammar instruction. Another way of facilitating the teacher's work with the program is a database of commonly-used text, where some frequent feedback comments can be introduced and later on quickly retrieved, largely reducing the time of correction in case of similar errors.

Customising *Markin*

The program is worth recommending mostly because it allows to be customised to fit the teacher's needs. First of all, it is possible to change the program's interface to a native language one, which can be downloaded from the manufacturer's website (at the moment there is a Danish language interface available only, but it is hoped that in the future the users of *Markin* will contribute other language versions as well) or translated on one's own. Probably the biggest advantage of the program is the flexibility in the work with buttons. It is possible to add, delete or edit the buttons already existing, and the teacher can also create their own button sets to fit the needs of the class. The program is also flexible as for changing the output, customising captions for buttons and headings, altering the environment, choosing buttons to appear on the toolbar. Finally, the teacher can set their own preferences as for colours of comments, commented text, errors, praise, annotated text, bookmarks, feedbacks and grade. It is especially important to set the colours and use them consistently so that students can intuitively see their performance.

Availability of the Program

Markin is available as shareware - the demo version can be downloaded at www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/download.htm. The downloaded file of around 1.6 MB is fully functional, the teacher can import texts, mark them, export, and the only limitation is that this demo version works only on short texts, and to use the program with the longer ones it must be registered after having made a payment of £20 for a single user license. For more details on different pricing versions as well as education licensing, go to http://www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/pricing.htm and http://www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/education_site.htm. Because of the full functionality of the program in its demo version, the fact that the output of the program is platform-independent (a document file or webpage file), and because it is not necessary for a student to have the program to open a marked essay, it seems that teachers could be encouraged to go to the website and try the program for themselves.

USING A WORD PROCESSOR IN COMPUTERIS ED ERROR CORRECTION

General Remarks

The major thing which needs to be taken into consideration is the word-processor version used. In comparison with using *Markin* to correct essays, which produces output in platform-independent format (RTF, TXT, HTML), using a word-processor requires the same program

and the same version on the part of the teacher and the students, otherwise students will not be able to open a marked essay or see all the corrections made. Thus, it seems that this method of computerised marking is advisable in classes where students use computers at schools or where there is the possibility to standardise the type and version of word-processor.

The Inventory of Tools

As was said in the introduction to this article, computerised marking can be done with various methods on various levels of computer expertise. It is also the case with using a word processor, and the simplest way of marking students' works is using the tools available in a word processor. Some of them are:

- Using font formatting to show an error: font face, font size, font colour, font style (italics, bold, bold italics), underlining style and colour - highlight a word or a piece of text, then click "Format", "Font" and check a relevant box, then click OK
- Using font effects to show an error: underlining, strikethrough, superscript, subscript, small caps, shading, text animations - highlight a word or a piece of text, then click "Format", "Font", "Text Effects" tab, choose a required effect by checking it, then click OK
- Using spellchecking to spot spelling mistakes - highlight a piece of text, then click "Tools", "Language", "Select language", choose the target language, click OK, then press F7 to run spellchecking
- Using "Find" function to find next instances of the same error - highlight a word or a piece of text, copy it by clicking "Edit", "Copy", then click "Edit", "Find", paste the word by clicking Ctrl+V in the "Find What" field, then click OK
- Using "Reviewing" function to record all changes made by the teacher; deleted words are marked with an annotation, added words are in red, a student can go from one change to the other and either accept or reject it - click on "View", "Toolbars", "Reviewing" to enable a Reviewing toolbar, then "Tools", "Track Changes" to enable the feature
- Inserting text comments to give students hints on how to correct errors - click on "View", "Toolbars", "Reviewing" to enable a Reviewing toolbar, then click "Insert New Comment" icon
- Inserting voice comments, where a teacher can give voice comments to be played by a student while working with the text - click on a drop-down menu next to the "Insert New Comment" icon, choose "Voice Comment", press "Record" button, then "Stop"
- Inserting endnotes, with comments or hints displayed at the end of the document as well as in the text proper after having moved the mouse pointer to the footnote number in the text - click on "Insert", then "Reference", then "Endnote"
- Saving versions, where each subsequent version of the document can be saved and retrieved, so that the teacher can compare the original and the corrected version to make sure that the student did make the changes suggested - click on "File", then "Versions", "Save Now", add a comment (e.g., "This is the original version of the submitted essay"), then click OK. Save each version in such a way, then you can retrieve it by clicking "File", "Versions", highlighting the required version and clicking "Open"
- Adding error correction comments can be facilitated by inserting AutoText sentences, so that the teacher does not have to type the same sentences again and again - to introduce autotext, highlight a piece of text, then click "Insert", "AutoText", "New",

then press OK. To insert an autotext sentence, click "Insert", "AutoText" and choose the required sentence

- Inserting audio files, either recorded by the teacher or some other files, which can be hints for students on which word to use - click "Insert", "File", then select the desired file from the disc and "Insert"
- Inserting images, so that a student can use the word presented in the picture instead of a highlighted word - click "Insert", "Picture", "ClipArt" or "From File" or "From Scanner", choose the image file and click "Insert"
- Inserting bookmarks; when the same comment refers to a number of mistakes, the comment can be bookmarked and all mistakes can be linked to it - put the cursor in the place of a bookmark, click "Insert", "Bookmark", type the name of the bookmark, click "Add". Then highlight a piece of text to link the error to the comment, click "Insert", "Hyperlink", "Bookmark", choose the name of the bookmark and highlight it, then click OK twice
- Inserting hyperlinks to reference sources on the Web or on the hard disc, so that students can go to a dictionary, a grammar compendium or an encyclopedia - highlight a word or a piece of text, click "Insert", "Hyperlink", choose one of the websites used currently ("Browsed Pages"), one of the recently opened files ("Recent Files"), a file in the current folder ("Current Folder") or a website (type the URL in the box)

Using Macro Tools

The procedures given above are fairly simple and no programming knowledge is necessary to use them. However, there can be more complex methods of computerised error correction given by a word-processor. It is possible to create a macrostructure, which will execute the instructions specified (e.g., write "Spell" in red 10-point Bookman Old Style superscript font to indicate a spelling mistake). For the convenience of use, a number of macros can be collected into a toolbar, which can be activated from the "View", "Toolbars" menu. It is beyond the scope of the present article to explain the procedure of creating such a toolbar, but the readers might try the Marking Toolbar created by Martin Holmes (to be downloaded at http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Holmes-ComputerMarking/wordmark.zip). The downloaded package contains the instructions on how to make the toolbar file the part of the Normal template, so that it can be used in any file opened in the word-processor.

Correcting Students' Works in a Word-Processor

As it can be seen from the above presentation, there is a wide range of tools that can be used in computerised marking. The teacher should consider them all and adopt a consistent procedure, using different solutions for different categories of mistakes and different procedures. It is important that students learn, remember and have the key to annotations at hand: that red coding means a mistake, green coding means praise, an endnote is what gives general feedback while a footnote is used to give a hint. In such a case the visual side conveys some message on the student's performance, and students learn consistency in classifying errors. The advantage of using a word-processor in error correction is that students learn the details of the program they will surely use in the future at work.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that computerised marking is definitely unavoidable when using computers and the Internet in the teaching process. The present paper focused on two

solutions, with the two programs (*Markin* and *Microsoft Word*) serving as examples, but in fact they could be replaced by many others of the same kind. The idea of the author was to show how writing error correction can be largely facilitated with electronic methods, and to encourage even computer beginners to implement such computerised marking methods.

Reference

Holmes, M. (1996) "Markin Student Work on the Computer". *The Internet TESL Journal*, vol. II, no. 9, September 1996, http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Articles/Holmes-ComputerMarking/

ON THE WEB

HOT ENGLISH MAGAZINE

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Overview

Hot English Magazine is a very interesting and funny magazine geared to enthuse learners and help them enjoy learning English. The magazine was created with the original idea of improving readers' English in an efficient and fun way, bringing forward both formal and colloquial language. It is useful for studies and business, and to learn about the culture and countries that speak English. The link above is the site address of its online version which consists of the magazine content from all magazines. Web recordings are available for all the articles.

Accuracy

The learning materials provided at the site are accurate and interesting. They are selected are mainly from English-speaking countries and sure to be loved by learners. For example, the four reading pieces in the "Learning Section" of the latest issue are respectively concerned with the backgrounds of England, Canada and the United States. We can infer from the contents and insights of writings that the sources must be from highly competent and successful English writers. There are neither spelling nor grammatical mistakes found. In the page of "Teacher's Notes" we can find some other linked references such as English Jet and

Mansion English, which are all about English learning and test resources and are certainly strong support for and valuable supplement to the rationale of the site.

Authority

The site is authored by Hot English Publishing which is a company based in Spain that provides high-quality English language learning content using a humorous approach and focusing on the way that native speakers really speak. According to the aim mentioned in the "About Page", the author makes learning and practising English fun and useful. Apart from the interesting, funny feature of the materials provided, distinguishing *Hot English Magazine* from most English websites, it also focuses on the way people really speak, and even look at the colloquial language that others don't tell you about as well as business English or any other important area of the English language, such as functional language slang etc. On this site we can also practise listening, do exercises and play games.

Currency

The site was originally written in March 2001. As it is a magazine, the content is updated every month - with 30 new articles and 15 new recordings, together with more exercises. In addition, there are over 300 articles in the archive. To see an index of the pages and some of the content click on the link that says "See content" on the right of the page. The information provided is current enough to give learning an amusing purpose. For example, when the film *Tomb Raider* was just being talked heatedly by people, a special article accompanied by the hot picture of Lara was contributed to the "Culture" section which consists mainly of book reviews, films, music and travelling.

Objectivity

The two versions of paper and Web-based magazine are designed to, as stated, make learning and practising English fun and useful. The motive for the site is mixed. The site provides all the features of the magazine and restricts full access to the content to visitors. However, the unregistered guest can still appreciate most of the content as they are often updated for attraction of more visitors - more subscribers. From this point of view it is promotional as well as commercial. When we read the content and do exercises and play games provided on the site we really learn and enjoy the materials with a laugh and have feelings of satisfaction and superiority. We are aware that the latest and the most fashionable recreations are so written in letters and expressed in the English culture. So, it is also informative and recreational as well as educational. I think the contents in all sections of the site comply with the aim claimed.

Content

The site is intended for English learners and especially those who like to learn the language in an interesting, relaxing and recreational way. This creative idea of building a website for language learning deserves encouragement and support as it is distinguished from most English websites in the fact that learners' interests are emphasized, which are of course intrinsic motivation.

The content is composed of sections of Learning, Culture, Humor, Slang, Business, Listening, Games and Cafe. Each section is subdivided when going deeper. For example, in the Learning

section we can find four short and quite interesting pieces with separate cartoon characters or pictures which are also consistent with the theme of fun. Together with the lines of each topic are the question links which will activate related page with various activities embedded for understanding definitions of the passage. When you have finished the exercises you may click an answer link that will open in a new page for check. The articles selected by the author are short, interesting, true or funny stories and topics which facilitate effective and fast reading. In the latest issue there is an article entitled *Those Bloody Brits – Betting*. There are only 620 words but you will interestingly have an overview of British attitude to betting. You will know some important aspects about the British betting such as its history, prohibition, prize and etc. Similarly, other sections serve to meet this requirement. So, the content attracts readers with its brevity and interest.

The content of the site is very easily accessed. The page elements and items in all sections can be fully loaded quickly. No special requirements of software or browser are claimed. The layout of the content is quite well-organized and impressive. Images for the structure and the reading text are all viewable and well suited. The background color matches the fonts and structure beautifully. The highly intuitive navigation bars are arranged at the top and bottom for easy access to respective sections. Each page contains sufficient amount of information and is not overloaded. Links to other sections are all included on each succeeding page. The information flows logically from reading to understanding and then to exercise or test in all sections. Learners will be tempted to go deeper after browsing some introductory materials. Even the welcome page of the site is very hot. In a word, the user-friendly and visual-appealing interface as well as the interesting learning materials engage the viewer.

Learner Fit

The learner will be at once familiar with the teaching plan and procedures as presented by the site as they are the same as those in the traditional classroom. The reading materials are accompanied with notes of difficult words, definitions of some background knowledge, understanding exercises in forms of multiple choices or filling blanks, writing and etc. These learning modes facilitate the learners' quick involvement in the process of learning in addition to the unique content of the site and characteristics of hypertext triggered by a finger flip.

The disadvantage of the site is that the author does not provide the difficulty degree identification for learning materials. It seems in the latest issue the materials are for intermediate or above level. The learning materials in all sections should be marked for beginners or the advanced so that learners can locate directly and conveniently their materials which easily arouse their interest because of appropriateness, which will further improve the level of motivation.

Teacher Fit

As stated, the materials are correct in terms of facts, grammar and spelling. They are consistent with the textbook both in syntax and in semantics. The site can merge smoothly in the teaching plans. It is a good choice for the variety, interest and creative idea of learning English it offers. Moreover, it is easy to incorporate the materials into curriculum or to use them for pastime as a learning supplement. Students can be assigned to read the materials in the classroom or lab or at home. It can also be used for language assessment and vocabulary building.

Example activity:

Aims: Building word power and reading comprehension

Procedures:

1. Open title page of either Learning section or Culture section and ask all the students to read the introductions to the articles and the pictures.
2. Get the students into groups according to the number of articles in Learning or Culture and give students assignment to read the article of their own group within set time.
3. Open the question window for each article and ask the students to do all the exercises in that page, including word exercise and choices and etc.
4. Ask them to read again their article and redo Step 3.
5. Open the answer window to each article and ask the students to correct their answers.
6. Ask the students in their group to discuss with each other what they know about the article and what new words they have learnt. Ask each group to select a spokesperson and an assistant for summing up the article of their group in the classroom.
7. Ask each spokesperson and assistant to make a loud speech in the classroom about the article of their group and the words they have learnt. The group that was the best in summing up what they have learnt are given the highest marks as extrinsic motivation.

USES OF EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE BY ESL PARENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Introduction

Children must be literate in both technology and English to survive in today's information society. An abundance of software is available for educational and recreational purposes. We get the software catalogs in our mailboxes, bookstores, toy stores, or supermarkets. "Sometimes it's packaged in cereal boxes and downloaded from the Internet. Every year, every month, every day there's more" (Stearns, 2001: 1). Children's software with colorful packages, exciting titles, and appealing graphics is everywhere.

Stearns (2001) emphasizes the fact that there are programs that open the door to exploration and discovery - software that encourages children to think, create, learn and communicate. But there is no research that would prove that all these software resources are beneficial to English as a Second Language (ESL) parents and children and whether they have access to these resources for teaching their children English at home. It is believed that some ESL parents use educational software for either educational or recreational purposes, but it is difficult to discover how they teach their children English at home and what materials they use. It is also useful to examine whether ESL parents get any benefits by working with such software for teaching their children English and how they use them. For the study, the data collection was based on five face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions and more flexibility depending on the interviewee's situation. To analyze the data, I isolated 5 different themes from the interview data: teaching materials, teaching methods, materials selecting methods, conflicting views of educational technologies and suggestions.

Based on the interviews, this study will attempt to formulate the suggestions about the educational software from ESL parents directly.

Conceptual Context

Unfortunately, there is little research about the use of educational software by ESL parents. So in this paper, the meaning about the general use of educational software, which is the learning materials, lack of computer knowledge and guidelines for selecting educational software are used.

Materials

Kitao (1997) provided the views of materials and selecting materials by emphasizing that materials control and help learning and teaching. Materials include textbooks, video and audiotapes, computer software, and visual aids. Many teachers and parents rely heavily on them, and the materials control the content, methods, and procedures of teaching and learning. Kitao (1997) noted that the choice of deductive vs. inductive learning, the role of memorization, the engagement of creativity and problem solving, production vs. reception, and the order in which materials are presented are all influenced by them. The author made good points for selecting the materials, especially for ESL children. In materials, English should be correct, natural, recent, and standard. Since students' vocabulary is limited, the vocabulary in materials should be comprehensible enough to enable students to understand the texts and deduce unfamiliar expressions.

Lack of Computer Knowledge

Most teachers and parents in the U.S. believe that special computer software can help children learn to read and may entice them to read by colorful graphics, interactive games and virtually unlimited on-line resources ("Tips For Parents," 2001). In addition, two out of three children in the U.S. who have a computer at home use it to do homework, according to a study by NPD Online Research (Pastore, 1999). However, most parents are anxious about the lack of time and knowledge to help their children use computer (Pastore, 1999). "As parents do with television, children need parents to help them guide to use computer program. However, parents lack the confidence, skills, and resources to help their children" (Pastore, 1999: 2).

Guidelines for Selecting Software

<u>Content</u>

Bishop (2001) points out that software should help attain curriculum goals. For example, many educational publishers also publish software that are connected with the curriculum. Parents should beware of choosing software just because they are popular or hyped by the media. Sometimes, these programs are not intended for classroom or home use ("Educational Technology," 2001).

<u>Help in the Native Language</u>

Bishop (2001) stated that research in the field of language learning has found that even at the most advanced levels of English language development students benefit from assistance in their native language. This may help resolve issues of meaning or clarify instructions.

<u>True Educational Interactivity</u>

Immediate feedback for self-correction and practice or rewards for accuracy are essential for language learning. Programs that record a user's verbal responses and compare them to a native speaker's, or that use voice recognition, are very useful. Also, since repetition is a critical aspect of language learning, the software should make it more fun to repeat and practice by using varying examples, graphics, animations, and other exciting options.

<u>Ease of Use by Students</u>

Choosing software that is easy to use is an absolute necessity. So parents should be sure the program is easy enough for the child to use independently. For example, parents should be sure that the technical requirements on the software package match the computers they already have at home. ("Educational Technology," 2001). What is more, programs should feature clear buttons and commands, on-screen directions, and a user's guide (Stearns, 2001).

Age-appropriateness

Bradin (1999) notes that learners may not feel challenged by too simple language in the software while the beginning or intermediate students may be frustrated by very complex language with many unknown words. There are many language learning programs for younger children and adults learning English, but there are limited choices for middle and high school students with no knowledge of English. Parents should not insult the intelligence of a teenager with "baby" software just because he or she cannot speak English. Krashen (1985) pointed that the level of materials should be slightly more difficult than the students' current level of English proficiency so that the materials allow them to learn new grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural stereotypes such as a variety of physically different human characters in the videos or graphics can be included. Moreover, parents should make sure that the program represents not only a variety of cultures, but also a variety of economic settings. If all the situations are in upper-middle class settings, students of limited economic means may feel at a disadvantage..

Summary

Many researchers agreed that educational technology materials are important aspects of the teaching and learning process. Also, some articles pointed that parents don't have enough knowledge for computer and educational software. However, there are few articles that deal with how the educational software is used at home and what the parents' desires for the educational software are. It is widely emphasized that educational technology should be used but there is little attention devoted to the real consumers' opinions. Therefore, this study will focus on ESL parents and the uses of educational software at home.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

1. What kinds of teaching method and materials do ESL parents use to help their kids learn English?
2. What kind of educational software do they use to teach their children English at home?
3. How do they select and use educational software?
4. If they do not use any software, why don't they use it?
5. How is educational software helpful for children to learn English at home?
6. What are their suggestions or comments for educational software?

Methods

<u>Sampling</u>

I visited the international program office at a large university in the Pacific Northwest in the United States to find possible participants. I asked the international families who have ESL children and can communicate in English. I got permission from 5 out of 7 possible participants and made individual appointments.

All 5 subjects live in one local university area and at least one person from each couple attends graduate-level education. All subjects are from Asia; 2 Koreans, 2 Japanese, and 1 Chinese. Also, they are not able to speak English fluently. The age of their children ranges from 3 years to 10 years. All participants' children had little pre-knowledge of English in their native countries and have learned or are learning in America.

<u>Data Collection</u>

I conducted open-ended interviews and took field notes. Before the interview, I started with chitchat to break the ice instead of strictly interrogating the participants. I retold the purpose of my study very briefly and assured confidentiality to make the interviewee relax. I set the audio recorder to record the interview. During the interviews, I tried to encourage getting fuller descriptions from each interviewee. The lengths of interview vary from 30 minutes to 1 hour. After each interview, I transcribed it verbatim.

<u>Analysis Procedure</u>

I selected 5 different themes that I could see commonly in all interview data. These were teaching materials, teaching methods, materials selecting methods, the conflicted views of educational software, and suggestions or comments. I coded the data with colored pencils according to these 5 themes. After that I took all the "meaning units" with the same code and put themes together into excerpt files by cutting and pasting with the aid of a computer. I put all together into an overall coherent framework.

<u>Validity</u>

The sample of subjects for this study is biased because all interviewees come from one university area and are highly educated, so the results can be affected by the parents' educational background. This study is only based on 5 interviewees, so the results of study can be subjective and changed very easily. Even though little research is available in this area, it can provide some ideas for educational software and ESL parents. Furthermore, it will provide some recommendations for future research.

Analysis

<u>The Teaching Materials & Methods</u>

The 5 parents mentioned that schools (or childcare), television, books, toys and videos are their teaching materials in common. Additionally, two interviewees added English songs and three interviewees added software as materials.

Interviewees believe that their children learn English by playing with other American friends and teachers at school, while the school is a good place where children can practise listening

and speaking English because all interviewees use their native first language at home with their children. Two parents strongly believe that school is the best material to learn English for their children. But when I asked what materials or methods the teacher uses to teach English at school, they did not know at all or knew very roughly. From this I assumed a lack of communication with schools and teachers.

Books are also used to teach English at home. They usually buy simple picture books and read together with children. All interviewees read books together and explained the content in their mother tongue. Two interviewees mentioned selecting the books that have a lot of pictures or famous characters so that the children can imagine the content and do not get bored with the contents soon.

Two interviewees use songs. They listened to an English song, mostly cartoon songs or children's songs, in the car. One interviewee claimed that she did not play song in the car to teach English, but she believes that her child learns English songs because she follows the song sometimes. However, the parent is not sure whether the child understands the content of the songs. All interviewees also buy a lot of toys for fun rather than for teaching English. But they believe if English sound is played from the toys, it will be helpful for their children to learn the language unconsciously.

According to the interview, television and video are powerful tools to teach English at home. They believe that children learn English by watching films or programs on TV or video. The parents know that children understand and learn something in English by children's interaction or motion with TV characters. Children have their own favorite movies or programs and watch them over and over. They say what the characters say in the next scene, retell the story, or solve problems, learning all the English sentences and expressions. When children watch movies or TV programs, all interviewees just let them watch alone.

2 interviewees use software to teach their children English and one interviewee uses software as a computer game rather than teaching English. One interviewee mentioned the fact that the computer software are really good because children can really interact with animated characters at an appropriate learning level. When they use computer software, they play together at least a couple of times until their children feel comfortable to play alone. Interviewees commented:

> Seven out ten, I play together with them. My kids are not really good at computer because they are young. I just play with them. I turn on the computer and open the game and read through questions, and they just answer and I just click the answer for them. They just sit next to me and say this is right or wrong and I control the entire computer.

> When I started to use computer software for the first time, my son just watched what my husband and I was doing. We explained what it was going on and asked my kid to answer. As time went, he started to learn how to use the computer. After a couple of months, he used the computer alone. Of course, he didn't know why he needed to do that but he simply remembered the procedure to enjoy the software. Right now, he can set up the software alone and play alone. He is really good at it. So he learned English and computer together.

Methods of Selecting Software

Three out of five interviewees use computer software. They rely on their children's choice and a CD cover to select software. No one gets any help from experts or resources. One interviewee said that he asks American friends or international parents to select software

because he does not have any ideas about educational software, especially for beginner for English learning. Also, sometimes he shares the software with other international parents.

Another interviewee said that she buys the software that her son wants to buy or she sees the pictures on the cover and reads the review of the product on the backside of CD. Because she cannot get any detailed information about selecting software, she selects software based on characters, company, price, and her son's choice. Her son selects software based only on animation characters.

A third interviewee has long experience using software. He selects software based on his kid's choice. And he also looks at the CD cover to look for child appeal and interests - playful programs with appealing graphics, sound, music, animation, and a sense of humor. He commented,

> We saw the characters. If there are characters that my son likes, we select it because my son really enjoys when there are some characters he likes. So he keeps playing to see the characters even though he doesn't understand. And we saw the CD covers, so we can know what contents are, what my son can learn, and what the age levels are. But we don't want to buy just for educational purpose. It should be fun so my son can keep using the software. So I choose the software for educational purpose and fun. Nowadays, my son chooses what he wants. We always ask why he needs to buy this. So he can explain what will be good for him. If it is reasonable, we buy it.

Conflicting Views of Educational Software

All interviewees agree that software will be more fun than reading a picture book and it will be much easier to learn English. Children can also learn the basic computer operations such as how to use mouse, turn on the computer, and set up the software. They believe that software is interactive and fun. Children like programs because of characters, even though they sometimes do not know what is going on. Although they do not understand English, they keep watching because of characters and music.

One interviewee stated that educational software is really more effective than parents' teaching because parents are also international, so their pronunciation is really poor and English broken. Software uses standard American English, so it is a much better model for learning English than parents. Also he mentioned that software is very good for shy and inactive children. For example, one interviewee's son does not like to play outside and is very shy, so he believes that for his son, software is the best way to learn English.

On the other hand, one interviewee complained that computer software is very expensive and if he buys software and his kid does not like it, it is useless. While the parents can see the content of books before they buy, software is hard to know what kind product is because they cannot see inside and play before they buy. Also two interviewees do not know how to use the computer and have not felt any need to use it to teach their kids English. They believe that books, movies and TV are enough for their children. One interviewee said that they do not have to buy something to teach English because communication with friends is the best way to learn English. One interviewee complained about the quality of software, and she explained that children tried every possible answer but after several experiences, they memorized what happens and what they should push. And then they just follow their memory rather than make a conscious learning effort.

<u>Suggestions</u>

The parents had these suggestions about the educational software:

1. More detailed descriptions are necessary. The CD cover is not enough to decide for parents whether they should buy the program or not. Mostly the covers have some appealing fancy pictures, so children want to buy the software for the pictures rather than the content.
2. With the software, some supplement will be helpful (i.e. Alphabet cards or usage guidelines)
3. Educational aspect and parents' needs should be the first concern rather than commercial aims to sell.
4. The content of software should focus on the narrow area with some detail rather than broad areas.
5. Software designers should consult in-service ESL teachers while developing programs.
6. It would be helpful to see best selling lists or recommendation list for parents in the store. There is a book best selling list in the bookstore but no software best selling list in the software section.
7. Some community services will be helpful. Parents want to learn how to use the computer and what is available to teach their children English, math or science.
8. Parents should select programs that match their child's age and ability. Even though the appropriate age-level for the software is defined, it is different depending on the child's ability.

Conclusion

In the last decade, the number of K-12 classrooms using computers and software has risen steadily and most people have access to a computer at home. However, according to my interviews, ESL parents do not follow the current trend of educational software and do not get enough benefit to teach their children. As the importance of English has increased internationally, many foreign countries have invested huge sums of money in developing educational programs to teach English. Since many parents believe that their children must become literate in English to have a brighter future, they are willing to help their children to learn English. But according to my interviews, ESL parents still use traditional materials such as TV, video, book, songs and toys. Two out of five interviewees do not use computers at all because they do not know them and do not feel any need to use software to teach English at home. Also three interviewees who use software do not have concrete ideas about how to use software effectively and want to have more detailed guidelines. Moreover, they highly depend on their children's choice and a software cover to select software. It is suggested that software companies should consider some ways to inform the ESL parents about the available software. What is more, as one interviewee suggested, schools or communities should provide some computer sessions or discussions to share with teachers, software companies, or other parents what is available and how they can use software effectively.

As I mentioned, this study was based on the interviews with 5 ESL parents. For further research, including more subjects with various ethical, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds would be necessary. Also, an ESL interviewer will be useful to get fuller information during interviews because ESL participants might feel more comfortable.

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REPORTS FROM PAST EVENTS

IV INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE *MEDIA AND EDUCATION IN THE TIME OF INTEGRATION* **(MEDIA A EDUKACJA W DOBIE INTEGRACJI)**

Poznan, Poland

April 20-23, 2002

by Jarek Krajka

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The international conference "Media and Education" was organised under the honorary patronage of the Minister of National Education and Sport by Adam Mickiewicz University, University of Zielona Gora, Centre of Animation of Culture from Warsaw, Poznan International Fair, Polish Society of Technology and Electronic Media and eMPi[2] publishing house.

The central theme of the conference was the role of media and education in promoting the ideas of integration of Poland with the European Union. It is beyond doubt media have changed the modern education to a great extent, as well as have had enormous impact on the process of creation of a new labour market and social policy. At the same time, it is essential that society be educated in media, by making people more conscious about media and letting them create them.

The novelty of this year's conference was its electronic presence: the submitted papers, after having been accepted, were published on the conference website well in advance (see http://main.amu.edu.pl/~techedu/konferencja/ramka/ramka.html, with general information, programme of the conference, conference papers, a discussion forum and a picture gallery), and a discussion forum was set up to enable the exchange of views on the topics raised in them. In this way, the participants of the event could get to know beforehand the details of the papers, could reflect on the materials and formulate some questions or doubts to be clarified by the authors. However, due to a great number of papers, the presentations were given as little as 10 minutes time, which forced the presenters to outline just the main points without going into details. Also, all the conference presentations were published on a CD-ROM, which was given to every participant, while selected papers found their way to the conference proceedings in a traditional book format. Especially the CD-ROM version is worth

mentioning here, as it contains all papers in .pdf format, gives easy and quick access as well as enables efficient search. All papers are still up on the conference website at http://www.kmti.uz.zgora.pl/pages/media_index.htm, where they are indexed by author and by title, however, all in Polish.

The first day of the conference started with plenary lectures by Waclaw Strykowski ("Media and Media Education in the Creation of Contemporary Society"), Wojciech Cellary ("A Challenge for Education in the Global Information Society"), Tomasz Goban-Klas ("Education in the Face of the SMS Generation"), Zbigniew Kwieciński ("The Future of Education in a World with no Future"), Kazimierz Krzysztofek ("Media and European Integration: the Cultural Aspect"), Rowell Huesmann ("Screen Violence and Real Violence: Understanding the Link") and Robert Muffoletto ("Collaborative Learning, the Individual and the Internet"). The first day was devoted to plenary papers in the main theme of the conference (Media and Education in the Time of Integration), and participants were given a wide view of the matter.

The second day of the conference started with a plenary session on the same theme, and after that participants had the chance to attend presentations in three sections: Media in the Society of 21st Century, Media as a Stimulator of Change in Education and Media Education Issues. Debates in sections had a more informal atmosphere and allowed exchange of views between presenters and the audience, however, limited due to severe time constraints. The debates in sections continued on the third day of the conference, when presenters and participants were actively searching for solutions to problems connected with the role of media in the society and the media education. This day of the conference concluded with plenary sessions on the conference main theme, Media and Education in the Time of Integration, with the following papers: European Integration and the Changes in Polish Media Education by Bronislaw Siemieniecki and Academic Teachers' Telework in Informative Society by Kazimierz Wenta. These were followed by papers of section chairpeople, who tried to sum up the conference and provide a coherent view of the media education in Poland. After that, there was a general debate of the participants, which closed the conference.

The next day of the conference was devoted to visiting the exhibition of Poznan International Fair "Infosystem, Multimedia, Poligrafia", where the participants could get to know the state of the art of educational technology and develop useful contacts with hardware and sofware manufacturers.

On the whole, it must be said that the conference was a successful and interesting event, with a great variety of papers providing a deep view of the problems of media in education, not restricted to the Internet and computers only, but covering also other media and aspects. The undoubted strengths of it were the pre-conference publication of materials and online discussion on them, the publication of all presentations on a CD-ROM and selected papers in a book format, the combination of theoretical presentations and practical exhibition. However, it seems that 10 minutes given to presenters is definitely not enough to present even only the main points, let alone answering questions and clarifying doubts. Thus, it seems that in the future the organisers of the conference could consider devoting more time to each presenter, even if it means reducing the number of presentations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF FUTURE EVENTS

6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Barcelona, Spain

January 30 - February 1, 2003

http://www.upc.es/eupvg/cilfe6/index.htm

We are happy to inform you of the forthcoming 6th International Conference on Languages for Specific Purposes, organized by the English Division of Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya (UPC). The conference will be held at UPC-Vilanova i la Geltru (Barcelona, Spain) from 30th January to 1st February 2003. The theme of the conference is "The Role of Information Technology in LSP Research and Pedagogy".

Our aim is to gather as many specialists and researchers in LSP as possible in order to discuss current views, make contributions to the field, and open new debates about the role of information technology in LSP research and teaching. Participants are encouraged to present empirical or theoretical studies, as well as practical applications directly related to the theme of the conference.

Plenary speakers include: Deborah Healey (Oregon State University), Mike Scott (University of Liverpool), T.F. Johns (University of Birmingham), among other well-known scholars in the field.

Paper proposals consisting of a title, a 200-word abstract, and a 500-word summary should be submitted by 15th July 2002. Speakers will be allowed 25 minutes for their oral presentations and 10 minutes for discussion. Although the official language of the conference is English, papers can be submitted in another language (Spanish, Catalan, and French). All proposals will be reviewed by a scientific committee who will send a reasoned report on the relevance and quality of the proposal. After the conference, selected papers will be published.

For more information about the conference and submissions, please contact Antonia Soler at the following address: soler@fib.upc.es or

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WORLDCALL 2003

Alberta, Canada

May 7-10, 2003

http://worldcall.org

http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/worldcallcfp/

Following the success of WorldCALL I at Melbourne in 1998, we are looking forward to WorldCALL 2003 in Banff, Alberta, in the heart of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, May 7-10th 2003. Our Hosts are the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary.

WorldCALL is a little different from other CALL conferences you may have been to. How different? You can find out by going to: http://worldcall.org

The WorldCALL 2003 Conference theme is "CALL from the Margins". Full details for submitting proposals are at: http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/worldcallcfp/

Deadline is October 15, 2002. Presentations will be in either of Canada's two official languages, French or English.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Peter Liddell, Chair, WorldCALL Program Committee

Graham Davies President, WorldCALL

ITMELT 2003 Conference

Information Technology & Multimedia in English Language Teaching

Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Hong Kong

June 6-7, 2003

http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/conference/

ITMELT 2003 will be held on Friday 6 June & Saturday 7 June 2003. The first call for papers will go out in the summer of 2002. To join our mailing list for ITMELT 2003, please contact us at the e-mail and fax number or address given in the contact details below.

Conference Themes

The main themes, all in relation to ELT in secondary or tertiary learning environments, will be as follows. With reference to IT and multimedia in general, and with a specific focus on CALL, and web-based learning and teaching:

Main Theme

Computer-Enhanced Language Learning: secondary & tertiary environments, processes and products

Sub-themes:

- practical English language learning and teaching classroom applications
- IT-facilitated learning outside the classroom (i.e. distance and self-access learning)
- the development of multimedia English language learning environments in secondary schools
- teacher education issues
- computerised assessment and feedback
- integration of IT and multimedia into the ELT curriculum
- evaluation of IT and multimedia
- management of IT and multimedia for English language learning and teaching
- new directions

Plenary Speaker

Professor Carol Chapelle, Iowa State University

Featured Speakers

Dr Ken Beaty, City University of Hong Kong

Professor Thomas Cobb, Universite du Quebec a Montreal, Canada

Dr Robert Debski, University of Melbourne, Australia

Dr Debra Hoven, University of Queensland, Australia

Dr John Milton, HK University of Science and Technology

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DIGITAL DIVIDE AUS ETHISCHER SICHT

The *Digital Divide* from an Ethical Viewpoint

October 3-5, 2002

Tagungshaus St. Ulrich, Augsburg, Germany

http://www.capurro.de/augsburg2.htm

CALL FOR PAPERS

Societies in the 21st Century will be increasingly characterized by societal differentiation based on digital networks. The speed of these social and technological changes poses new political, economic, and cultural challenges both within developed countries and the so-called Third World.

The term digital divide is a label for a situation with explosive force. It refers, at first sight, to the technological gap between those who are networked and those who (for a variety of reasons) already are and most likely will remain excluded. Being online does not simply mean – as in the case of 20th Century mass media – to have access to a plenitude of broadcast stations, rather it implies the ability to participate actively in information and communication processes. In our globalized society, which is founded on information technology, communication is a decisive factor affecting the status of groups, individuals and of societies as a whole. Contrarily to what an idealistic discourse-ethics might suggest, communication is very likely to connect to power. Six percent of the world population are online and decide, based on their communicatively generated power, over the present and future living conditions of the remaining unconnected ninety-four percent. These simple figures exemplify the urgency of the problem addressed with the keyword digital divide.

The demarcation line between the information rich, i.e. the globalized rich with their power action, and the information poor, i.e. the involuntarily localized poor and powerless passives, runs to a large extent along the usual divisions between a 'first', a 'second', and a 'third' World. But it also concerns divisions within societies themselves and produces a historical new kind of transnational 'class structure'. There are several barriers that prevent active participation in the process of globalization, starting from the lack of technical infrastructure to ideological positions. While old power structures are trying to find a position within the changing environment, new ones are emerging simultaneously.

With the rise of new power structures the world shows hegemonic traits that correspond to the established ones. At the same time we can see that globalization on IT-basis offers new opportunities for the outcasts. Yet they can only profit from these opportunities if they can

appropriate these technologies. Even a local network may make it possible to overcome local passivity and evoke anti-hegemonic power within the global network. Strategies to promote such kind of opportunities for participation and appropriation are therefore rightly called empowerment.

Our symposium will deal with these and other urgent problems of the digital divide, particularly with the question of empowerment. The insight that the design of technical communication and information systems is always concerned with the shaping our social Being-in-the-world and its intertwine of power relations is not new. The reflection upon possible reasons for our preference of one development over the other is not trivial at all – and the word 'our' indicates that these are important ethical questions to be dealt with at this symposium. This does not only concerns the past ten years of the Internet but even more the developments beyond it, i.e. the coming times of ubiquitous computing, which again will meand inclusion for some people as much as exclusion for others.

We intend to address the following issues:

(a) To reflect upon the present situation of the digital divide from a cultural, philosophical, sociological, and political viewpoint. This may, for instance, concern cases of social marginalization, of global imperialism and exclusion, well as of relations between communicative power and its military use, which have become particularly apparent in the case of the Afghanistan war. Active anti-hegemonic participation in digital communication can be contrasted to passive and local subjugation, as in the case of surveillance.

(b) To analize concrete case studies of strategies for the production of anti-hegemonic communicative power and empowerment. This may concern NGO's activities and their self-legitimacy efforts, as well as empowerment projects such as the Knownet initiative or the simputer. Our aim is to explore to what extent these special cases can be generalized into overaraching structures, i.e. we want to analytically elucidate possible developments towards overcoming the digital divide and the basic problems related to such strategies. In light of this, we would finally like (c) to develop ethical guidelines for future IT-mediated interaction between the local and the global, as well as for strategies to overcome the digital divide.

We are warmly inviting all ICIE-members to participate actively in our symposium with online discussions. Short contributions will be posted on the web site of the symposium and can be sent to rafael@capurro.de

Thomas Hausmanninger, Rafael Capurro

HOW TO PRODUCE AND INTEGRATE AUDIO MATERIAL FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING ON THE WEB

London Guildhall University, London

November 23, 2002

Dr. Dominique Hemard & Steve Cushion from the Department of Language Studies who have developed a software package enabling teachers to author their own audio-based interactive web-based exercises which may be integrated into existing or planned web sites

Aims:

- To present this authoring tool, designed, developed and evaluated by the Department;
- To show how best to use it to create and integrate the spoken word into web-based interactive exercises within your own teaching and learning context.

Objectives:

By the end of the seminar, you should have acquired a working knowledge of the software, as well as a good grasp of its interactive potential to deliver on-line audio-based interactive learning material.

Who should attend:

Language teachers in secondary, further and higher education and anybody with an interest in Computer Assisted Language Learning. The emphasis on audio and the spoken word means that those who attended our seminar in January 2001 will find this workshop useful as it deals with very different material, however, no previous experience or knowledge is assumed.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMPUTERS IN EDUCATION (ICCE 2002)

Auckland, New Zealand

December 3-6, 2002

http://icce2002.massey.ac.nz

Organised by AACE-APC and Sponsored by College of Business, Massey University, New Zealand. The International Conference on Computers in Education (ICCE) series aims to foster the creation and dissemination of knowledge about the use of information technology in education throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Conference theme "Learning communities on the Internet - Pedagogy in implementation"

Introduction

The International Conference on Computers in Education (ICCE) series aims to foster the creation and dissemination of knowledge about the use of information technology in education throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Since 1995 the ICCE series has been organized by the Asia-Pacific Chapter of AACE (Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education). Subsequent ICCEs have been held in different Asian countries - Singapore

(1995), Malaysia (1997, held annually ever since), China (1998), Japan (1999), Taiwan (2000) and Korea (2001). ICCE 2002 will be held in Auckland, New Zealand.

Through ICCE 2002, New Zealand hopes to contribute enormously to the valuable experience of the ICCEs and hence to reinforce all the efforts to collaborate for the successful building of the new paradigm of education in the information society. Every effort will be made to make this a truly professional worldwide conference providing opportunities for discussion and dissemination of pertinent information in computers and education internationally. We invite you to ICCE 2002 New Zealand where you can view the 21st century through sharing ideas and prospects.

Conference Theme

"Learning communities on the Internet - Pedagogy in implementation"

Some years ago there was a movement in education towards learning alongside peers. The recent increase in accessibility to networks, whether global or local, has provided an enormous impetus to practice and research in which learners study and work together. However, many questions on the effectiveness and efficiency of such learning environments remain unanswered or at least have little empirical or theoretical evidence to provide beyond intuitive responses:

- learners naturally have many misconceptions; would peer learning simply spread such misconceptions?
- learning is personal; why should a colearner give better help than a professional tutor?
- Internet resources are general; don't learners need resources designed to meet their specific needs?
- learners' culture leads them to expect to be taught; why should they have to work more?
- tutors' culture leads them to expect to teach; why should they change that role?
- and many more....

ICCE 2002 invites submissions with a good theoretical base or formalism that present new, yet unpublished, solid achievements based on experiments, that come to answer concretely one or more of the questions above or can point to possible answers. Survey papers are also accepted, if they are well documented, make a contribution to the field, and reveal new aspects and perspectives, as well as future directions.

Topics of Interest

The topics of interest related to the conference theme include but are not limited to: Agents technology, Application of instructional design theories, Architecture of learning technology systems, Authoring tools, Best mix of face-to-face and e-interactions, Cognition and conceptual change, Collaborative learning/Groupware/Co-operative learning, Computer mediated communication, Country specific developments, Design principles, Distributed learning, Evaluation of impact, Evaluation of learning systems, Implementation experiences, Instructor networking, Integrated learning environments, Inter-and Intranet use in conventional universities, Internet based systems, Methodologies for system design, Networked social learning, Policies, ethics, standards, and legal issues, Research perspectives,

Teaching/learning strategies, Tutor role in virtual communities, Virtual lab/classroom/school, Virtual universities, WWW-based learning resources/tools.

Review process

All submissions will be reviewed by at least three reviewers. Accepted papers in all categories will be published in the proceedings.

Submissions

All submissions should be original research work not yet published or submitted anywhere else. The main text should be no less than 10 point font (preferably Times New Roman or Times), and the submissions should include an abstract of 100-150 words and author details. At this stage, no special formatting is required. Once the paper is accepted, authors will be asked to format the papers according to publisher's guidelines. Please use online submission form at http://icce2002.massey.ac.nz/icce2002_submission.html to submit your work. Submissions are invited in following categories: Full Papers, Short Papers, Posters, Tutorials, Workshops, Doctoral Student Consortium

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

"Teaching English with Technology" (ISSN 1642-1027) is a quarterly electronic journal published by IATEFL Poland Computer Special Interest Group. The journal deals mainly with issues of using computers, the Internet, computer software in teaching and learning languages.

The editorial board of "Teaching English with Technology":

- Jarek Krajka (Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland) – Editor-in-Chief (Lesson Plans, A Word from a Techie, Software Reviews)
- Jozsef Horvath (University of Pecs, Pecs, Hungary) – Editor (Articles, Book Reviews)
- Maria Jose Luzon de Marco (University of Zaragoza, Spain) – Editor (The Internet for ESP)

To subscribe to "Teaching English with Technology," write to: Jarek Krajka, Editor, at jkrajka@batory.plo.lublin.pl. In the Subject line, write: Subscription Request. You can also get the journal from the IATEFL Computer SIG website at this URL: http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/callnl.htm, where the past issues can also be accessed, downloadable as zipped .html or .pdf file.

The next issue of "Teaching English with Technology" will be published in October 2002. Submission deadline for the next issue is September 15, 2002.

We invite submissions covering the following categories:

- Article: articles describing classroom practice or discussions of work in progress, being of immediate relevance to teachers, or articles presenting case studies or work in progress

- The Internet for ESP: practical discussions of Web-based activities/classroom ideas for the ESP environment

- Lesson plan: plans of lessons done in the Internet or using computers, set in the reality of the education system, detailing the procedure, technical requirements, skills needed by students and teacher, together with URLs used in the lesson and any worksheets/checklists students are asked to complete

- On the Web: discussions of websites having potential for organising Internet lessons around them or relevant in some way to the field of English language teaching and learning

- Software: descriptions, evaluations and recommendations of widely available language learning software, studies relating to the use of software in language teaching

- A Word from a Techie: discussions of applications of computer programs to teaching English, outlining new possibilities given by software to the process of learning and teaching, explanations of technological issues

- Reports from Past Events: brief accounts of conferences, methodological workshops, commercial presentations, courses that relate to the field of using computer technology in teaching English

- Announcements of Future Events: as above, together with contact addresses

We invite also works published elsewhere, but please give precise reference.

Please forward the following details with each submission:

- author(s) full name(s) including title(s)

- job title(s)

- organization(s) full contact details of all authors including email address, postal address, telephone and fax numbers.

Submissions should be sent by email as attachments to the Editor, Jarek Krajka, at jkrajka@batory.plo.lublin.pl, with the subject being "Journal Submission." Please specify in the letter what word-processing programme you are using, and preferably send .rtf version as well. All submissions undergo the process of blind peer review and are returned to authors with suggestions for changes/corrections.

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