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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

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The spring issue of *Teaching English with Technology* provides the teachers interested in educational applications of technology with a new set of ideas for classroom practice. This highly practical approach has become the landmark of the Journal – contrary to academic publications, characterized by experimentation, data, longitudinal studies, *Teaching English with Technology* has always been a forum for practitioners to exchange ideas. Thus, ready-made lesson plans, website reviews or tutorials are a regular feature of our publication and are always welcome for publication.

Similarly, even though the Journal originates in Poland and is published by IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) Poland Computer Special Interest Group, it has never been dominated by any localized view – on the contrary,

the publications of Polish researchers and teachers were balanced with contributions from all over the globe, providing a truly representative mix of problems and solutions.

These two tendencies are reflected in the current issue – thus, Thor May, a lecturer from Chungju National University, South Korea, in his article "Brief Thoughts about IT in Language Education", provides a truly impressive overview of the existing trends and opportunities offered by technology, dealing with even such obscure topics as the cyborg teacher or talk bots.

In the Internet Lesson Plans section, Ewa Krzywicka-Dzioch, a practising secondary school teacher from Ostrow Lubelski, Poland, gives the ready-made lesson outline in which the structure of a role-play and architecture-oriented websites are used to develop both Web searching skills and language proficiency of students.

On a different note, though also ESP-related, the website review of "Law for Kids" website, written by Maria Victoria Fernandez from Universidade de Vigo (Spain), shows how appealing language materials can be used to introduce even beginning students to the topic of law.

"Writing with Technology", the final contribution in the issue, is written by Lindsay Clandfield, an ELT materials writer. Using his current experience of writing a coursebook, the author shows a few tricks of the trade that prove immensely useful in the process of creating classroom materials.

It is hoped that this mix of ideas and views will stimulate the readers to their own endeavours.

I wish you good reading.

ARTICLE

BRIEF THOUGHTS ABOUT IT IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION
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Information Technology in language teaching probably began with papyrus. It has attracted admirers and detractors ever since. This paper takes a slightly irreverent look at current IT, as well as its actual and potential uses in foreign and second language education. The power of commerce in IT development has always been a prime motivator, so the analysis here recognizes the essential economic context, with the resulting effects on language learning. This short paper is a fairly crude attempt to discuss some of the elements in the commercial-IT-language teaching and learning mix, together with a few irreverent observations on the alchemy: past, present and possible future.

By aptitude and self-selection, the readers of *Teaching English with Technology* are likely to be people drawn to the candy-shop of emerging technologies. They may also be impatient with the endless social obsessions of the chattering classes. By aptitude and self-selection, most language teachers tend to be repelled by new technologies, and drawn to the close personal involvements implicit in good teaching. Business professionals may have trouble really understanding either the technologists or the teachers. This clash of cultures certainly leads to a loss all round.

1. Is language teaching necessary?

Language teaching and the products it gives rise to (schools, books etc), are probably the world's oldest confidence trick scams. The dropout rate in American foreign language courses can be up to 95%. (Asher 2003). What other profession or business could tolerate that kind of failure level?

Where useful language learning is achieved, it is often by no means clear what contribution 'good' or 'bad' teaching makes, nor what 'good' or 'bad' resources really contribute. A percentage of learners in almost any human activity drop out, and only a limited number ever become true masters. Thus there is a kind of selective funnel. The problem with language education in institutional settings is that the funnel is shallow (initiates are lost quickly, although school systems may artificially retain failures 'in storage') and those who finally squeeze through are few. The characteristics of this learning funnel are too complex to explore in depth here, but we can note in passing that objectives (e.g. accuracy Vs fluency), and techniques or methods which are congenial to advanced learners (and/or the kinds of learners who progress to that stage) are not necessarily appropriate for the mass of learners who first enter the field.

Similarly, the mix of technologies which can be usefully applied to language learning and teaching may well vary at different stages of the process. This is an issue which seems to have received too little attention.

There are also more general critical factors in language learning success. The main ones are a) motivation, b) consistency of effort, c) a real domain for using the new language, d) immediate, genuine 'reward' for communicative success, and e) competition for the students' time & attention.

2. Geniuses, ordinary teachers, and machines

I have only ever met a few truly gifted language teachers (I don't count myself in that elite). What they seemed to share was a charisma and uncanny empathy with each student - the kind of magic that would motivate people to do anything for them - combined with a wisdom in offering just that information to a student which he or she could absorb in their present state of understanding. Such skills will always be rare (e.g. see Bhargava 2004), and no mass education system can depend on them.

What merely mortal teachers CAN do is minimize the disincentives to learning found in most large institutions, and be very cunning about competing for the attention of our distracted students, in and out of the classroom.

Any kind of technology used in language teaching is subject to the same iron laws of success as a human teacher. It will succeed to the extent that -

1. attention is captured and held
2. content is memorable
3. students feel that technology and content are useful and adapted to their needs

4. systems are flexible enough to be modified
5. content and technology are physically accessible on demand
6. students feel strongly motivated to access it regularly
7. the technology and content comes at a price which the market can bear

The failures of the **Audiolingual Movement** a generation ago can be traced to a violation of these principles. Nowadays, of course, there are now good and bad audiolingual courses, either of which may be used smartly or foolishly; (the good, such as Pimsleur courses, are very good).

The purpose of this little paper is not to discredit technology, but to gently remind us of the effects that technology can have. Even where technology uptake seems to succeed, the Law of Unintended Consequences can spring surprises in language teaching and learning. There are twenty-four hours in a day, and considerably fewer in a language classroom. We can easily spend an hour fiddling with some clunky video display when the same hour given to conversation would have been immensely more beneficial.

That's not all. Lawrence McCluskey (1994) slyly introduces McCluskey's Corollary to Gresham's Law: "Lower-order thought processes drive higher-order thought processes out of circulation;" (Gresham's Law is the dictum that bad money drives out good). Thus half the population, for example, can no longer do a simple multiplication because calculators are ubiquitous. When it comes to language education, we have to think carefully about whether a bit of technology in the long run will add to language skills, or amputate them.

The learner always comes first. Tools can change, but learner psychology will not change (though it may be subverted). Nor will many teachers change easily. Most language teachers, and a high percentage of students, are more or less technological imbeciles. Many even have trouble working a tape recorder efficiently (teachers and students). New technologies must therefore be idiot-proof, or at least care needs to taken in skilling teachers in such technology (e.g. Nellen 2001). This is one argument for making the maximum use of existing, familiar technologies like TVs and mobile phones.

3. So what can we do with Information Technology in language learning education?
The current concept of IT embraces widely divergent technologies, although the links amongst them are becoming more fluid. As a language teacher I have frankly found much past CALL programming and so-called language learning software to be disappointing. It has barely touched upon the complexities of language acquisition, and the black magic which a skilled teacher must bring to bear.

However, there is hope. Although the techno-phobic are often claimed to be alienated by technologies (Santana 1997, Robertson 2003), the rejection is usually related to user-complexity rather than technology *per se*. Few of these technophobes seem bothered by telephones, for example. Much of this paper is a catalogue of how all folk, whatever their talents, are being drawn into technology through language (a phenomena of immense underlying complexity itself). Language is pre-eminently about social exchange, and new technologies are helping that social exchange immensely. For example, the Internet is more than a database; it is a meeting place, a forum and a pulpit.

Those elements in IT most useful in education are likely to grow from an innovative marriage of the old and the new, as well as a close partnership of the mutually impatient teaching and technology cultures already alluded to. The next section therefore examines some of the technology menu on offer for language teaching. It is not exhaustive. Readers are invited to challenge the comments below, and perhaps note serious omissions.

4. The Technology Menu for Language Teaching

4.1. The mediation of technology

The mere presence of a piece of technology has the power to alter the relationship between teacher and student (Riddle & Dabhagh 1999). In language learning, this may force many teachers to assume the role of 'craft advisors'.

Historically there has been a vital difference between most language teachers and traditional craft teachers. Language teachers have been easily drawn into meta-talk, for example about grammar, which merely baffled students. The language teacher would set up an artificial exchange of language symbols with the student, often using an abstract or remote topic as reference. The language teacher retained control of this language game, both defining the symbolic rules, and allowing or forbidding their use.

By contrast, the relationship between the craft teacher and his student has always been mediated by the object being crafted. The crafted object forces the teacher into the role of advisor, and his advice is powerfully constrained by the practical presence of that object. Some classroom teachers have discovered that by encouraging students to interact around the physical presence of a computer, it can become rather like the craft object of artisans, a focus for practicality. This may well enhance language learning. Carla Meskill, Jonathan Mossop, and Richard Bates (2000), exploring the use of Electronic Texts in ESL Classrooms , give a good example of one such occurrence. Situating students 'virtually' in a shared homepage or blog is an extension of this concept. Of course, teachers will often feel threatened by just

such a role displacement ([Kirkup](#) 2001). Indeed, sometimes teachers may not be needed at all, as in [Mitra's](#) Hole-in-the-Wall experiments .

Intelligent students may prefer private, self-directed activity for language learning. Such people have always made use of books and diaries. New technology offers them many more opportunities. For example, the blog may replace the diary, as in the Korean nurse, Broca's Diary online.

4.2. The cyborg teacher

The science fiction cyborg is a mixture human and machine components. Future language teachers may well act like cyborgs in marrying their own abilities with a variety of technologies. Maybe they do already ([Voithofer](#) 1999, Virtual Human website). Thus it will be increasingly easy to deal with students who are displaced in space and/or time. Writing has given us that ability for centuries, but **the Internet, telephony** (Gaskell 2004), **video telephony** initially using webcams (WELL Project), even **3-D holography** (now being developed commercially, and for telephones too) will give the process dramatic immediacy. With immediacy comes the chance to boost motivation. For example, **skin-sensors** may well be able to transmit the emotional reactions of students in another country and culture, even where language fails (the Sensor Web). Wisely used, that could be a powerful tool.

4.3. Internet teaching

There are already numerous initiatives underway to coach students in language over the Internet (see [Omniglot](#) links; LanguageCourse.net ; WorldWideLearn.com). These range from dealing with entire classes to one on one tuition. The Internet is such a multi-faceted and enabling technology that it has created a whole new internationalised culture. This in itself provides an added set of reasons for becoming multilingual. The effect will only accelerate as broadband becomes the norm, access prices fall, and mobile usage spreads.

4.4. Databases

At its simplest, the Internet is a huge database**,** accessed directly to known nodes, or through remarkable search engines like [Google](#). Individuals and institutions have used it extensively to store, organize and present an endless range of information on language learning and language teaching. Thus anyone with good Internet access who intends to learn a language can use resources which were unthinkable even a decade ago (e.g. Languages-on-the-web.com). The quality varies widely, and the cost ranges from free to commercially prohibitive. Now information access is often less a supply problem than a **user problem** of available time, skills, initiative and intelligence.

4.5. Learning Management Systems

Almost all educational institutions now have some kind of Internet presence. For a diminishing few it is merely an electronic advertisement. Others would not exist without it, and offer the full range of Internet learning technologies and resources. Most now use an online Learning Management System (LMS) to organize and present content (Boettcher 2003; Hall 2003). There is a vigorous contest here between commercial products like Blackboard and open access, sometimes free, systems such as Moodle. The best of these LMS systems encourage both simultaneous and asynchronous interaction between students and teachers by creating an online workspace. Again the full potential is often inhibited by staff or students who are unskilled or even allergic to making use of technology.

4.6. E-mail

E-mail is a related but different technology to the Internet. Although it lacks a glamour image, the user-simplicity of e-mail gives it useful pedagogical potential; (for example, see Gonglewski et. al. 2001). The same goes for mobile phone text messaging, which is likely to converge more and more with e-mail. However, the downside is what we are all familiar with, namely the commercial nightmare of spam. However, a range of international publications like newspapers are now also available via this medium, usually for free, while there are thousands of **list-servers** to keep special interest groups informed (e.g see the University of Oregon English Mailing Lists).

E-mail's use as a language learning medium has been slower to develop, although a large amount of unstructured communication takes place amongst **pen-friends** etc.(Mylanguageexchange.com). Since e-mail is both asynchronous and simple, it does offer certain teaching advantages (and limitations). **Voice e-mail programs** have been available for quite a while (e.g. Bonzi Voice Email) and should offer special opportunities for language exchanges.

4.7. Asynchronous voice communication

An emerging technology which could have a profound effect on the use of the Internet for language teaching is asynchronous voice communication. That is, the spoken message is stored for later access by a receiver. An online limitation of existing voice mail has been the large amounts of electronic memory and bandwith devoured by even digital sound. However, the Wimba Company has integrated asynchronous voice communication with an LMS in a way that is proving extremely popular with harried lecturers and students. Now the public domain LMS, Moodle, is researching a similar system.

Behind the scenes, a lot of work is being done on Voice XML (Dahl 2005, Marchand 2005) to drive technologies like this. For most people voice is both quicker and less intimidating than print, but up to now online chat has required both parties to be simultaneously available.

4.8. Synchronous communication

This is challenging for the language learner, but also far more 'real' than asynchronous messages for most users. Attempts have already been made to harness **Internet chat** in learning environments (Almeida d'Eça 2002).

4.9. Mobile phones

These are now ubiquitous and have an ever multiplying repertoire of functions. It would be foolhardy to ignore a language medium as powerful as this. My students can use them for dictionary lookups, as a database, for web access, games, text-messaging, and videos, as well as chatter. This urge to chatter says something profound about the nature of the human cognitive language machine. Students may turn up to class without an exercise book or pen, but never without the mobile phone. With the spread of mobile phones, **telephone tutoring** has become almost normal in many language teaching environments (for example, babilnet.com). One American company claims to automatically assess a speaker's accent by telephone (AmericanAccent.com).

4.10. SMS text messaging

Another obvious medium for language teaching which commerce has begun to recognize (Guardian Newspaper story 2005). However, a problem with all of these attempts (as with ordinary teaching) is that the services of skilled tutors are comparatively rare and expensive. Can the tutors be replaced?

4.11. Call centers

Some low wage countries, especially India, now employ thousands of call-centre staff fluent in English to service clients in English speaking countries like the United States and Australia. It is conceivable that an elite of such Indian call-centre staff could be trained to tutor English in other countries, using the same kind of intercontinental line-leasing arrangements as existing call-centres. One can envisage all kinds of problems in getting this business up and running (not least the training costs), but it seems possible in principle. However, many normal call centre staff in India are already finding the pressure of having split cultural personalities debilitating (CNETAsia 2003). The communicative intentions of, say, a twenty-year old female student in Shanghai and a 40 year old male Indian teacher in Hyderabad will easily go astray.

4.12. Computer voice recognition

A kind of holy grail for the IT industry. There has been some progress with native-speaker voices in controlled contexts (e.g. software like Dragon Voice). However, uncontrolled computer voice recognition for non-native speakers in a language learning context seems to be well over the horizon. Bear in mind that cross cultural communication (indeed much in-country communication too) is not merely the recognition of phonemes (difficult enough) but involves a constant clash of cultural presuppositions which require sophisticated choices for a human being (let alone a computer) to decode. These limitations have not discouraged a number of CALL specialists from predicting uses for voice recognition software in language learning (Wachowicz and Scott 1999).

4.13. Talk bots

In the 1960s artificial intelligence researchers were amazed to discover that some psychiatric patients preferred to 'talk' to a computer program called Eliza. Eliza, written in the Lisp programming language, was an assembly of non-committal recorded comments and questions, triggered by key words in the patients' typed sentences. In fact Eliza mimicked the mirroring behaviour beloved of live psychiatrists, but patients felt safer with the machine since it was non-judgemental.

A number of more sophisticated "chatter-bots" have since been developed. The enthusiasts for this technology see chatter-bots as a way to encourage language fluency without the expense of hiring tutors (Andreas Lund's links, the A.L.I.C.E. website).

4.14. Disguise

Experienced teachers know that students are often greatly assisted if they can be persuaded to adopt another persona in the learning process. It seems to free them from the inhibitions of their normal personality. The oldest, and still one of the most effective tools in this game are **puppets** (Özdeniz 2001). Drama, dance, songs etc. are other manifestations. Now the Internet has given us whole new worlds, literally, where people adopt personas of choice. Simple pseudonyms are the norm in online forums and chat exactly for the purpose of unfettered expression.

Elaborate "**avatars**" are purchased for many **interactive games**, and players may become immersed in them for weeks at a time. There is an obvious opening here for teaching (Sheth 2003), including language teaching/learning.

Success in constructing an interactive game medium for language teaching on a mass scale would require genuine talent (of the order that goes into feature film productions), and the developmental costs could be high. However, given the right environment there is scope here for a real teaching revolution.

Early hosts to the emergence of avatars in language learning were **MOO**s (Multiple Object-Oriented multi-user environments). These virtual worlds may be entirely text-based or supported by an actual online 3D visual space. As with novels versus video, text-based MOOs are imagination-rich and sites such as Schmooze University attract a dedicated clientele.

4.15. Video gaming

When it comes to capturing the attention of the video generation, **video parlour games** (and their computerized relatives) are fierce competitors. In South Korea everyone under twenty seems to spend a large part of their lives in these places.

We are not going to beat the video parlours, but we might subvert some of them. It would take great cunning. Wrestling with the inflections of a foreign tongue has not given past generations the thrill that kids get from blowing electronic heads off. As with computer gaming, this is a subversion requiring real talent and creativity, genuine empathy for the clients, and probably high development costs. Again though, the payoff could be impressive, especially if "educational game parlours" were staffed by competent tutor-advisors.

Video gaming for pedagogy is attracting increasing attention (Academic-Gamers.org ; Foreman 2004; The Learning Games Initiative; The Serious Games Initiative… and others).

4.16. Simulators

These have been around for a long while now, but are usually restricted to training high level professionals like aircraft pilots and (increasingly) doctors. Flight simulators have been partly mimicked by computer game programs. The line between traditional training simulators and online gaming is rapidly blurring, and there is evidence that very young children in some countries are becoming thoroughly familiar with virtual environments (Gilbert 2004).

There is no reason that training simulators cannot have voice accompaniment, thus combining skill training with language training. For certain kinds of students this is the only sort of language training that will ever work. The TPR (Total Physical Response) method of language teaching exploits the fact that many people are tactile and motor learners, learning by doing. One can envisage "talking tools" simulators in virtual environments. For example, as a mechanics trainee tightens a (virtual) nut it could squeak "hey! too hard!" and sheer off. The language simulator concept has now apparently been sold to the US military (Johnson 2004, Mankin 2004, Mote 2004).

Speech can be used in three ways in simulated environments : i) to comment on a performed action; ii) simultaneous with an action; iii) to warn or instruct before an action, and hence anticipate consequences. The third option might be the most powerful in language teaching.

The drawback to simulated environments in language teaching is that, at least at present, they require expensive software and hardware which is not available to large numbers of people - and certainly not in countries like China, with its estimated 300 million ESL speakers/learners (Brown 2005).

4.17. Television

Certain consumer electronic items are so widespread in the population that is seems almost perverse to ignore them as teaching tools. Television has spawned TV Universities, and large numbers of language courses.

Many national broadcasters worldwide have run TV English courses for years, as well as courses in their own languages. Two hundred and fifty million Chinese are estimated to be learning English on TV (Kitao 2004). The best of these programs sometimes feature presenters and styles that become nationally famous. The worst are mere camera shots of talking heads.

A limitation of even the best TV is inflexibility and inability to offer student feedback. Broadband cable TV offers some scope to remedy this, although TV production is an expensive business.

4.18. MP3 player/recorders

These devices are natural language learning tools. I hardly use a tape recorder for language learning myself anymore. It is so much more convenient to convert the language tapes and audio CDs to MP3 (observing copyright). The player is small, with a built-in microphone, can be carried in the pocket and uploads and downloads to a computer instantly.

The MP3 medium is slowly being accepted by L2 course providers (e.g. see the VOA Special English Assistant). Only inertia and fear of piracy in established publishing companies can be stopping them from offering downloadable MP3 language learning material. The piracy concern is legitimate, but not beatable now or in the future. Probably the only way around it is to keep offering added value (new content) from a paid source.

4.19. PDAs and Memory Cards

Some companies such as Pimsleur are trying a copy-protection solution by packing language courses onto PDA-type memory cards. Accessible by PDAs, some portable phones and cheap card readers, these cards are both portable and versatile.

For a certain age and income group **PDAs** also offer an obvious channel for language learning content. This is especially true of devices like the Sony Clie which has multimedia capabilities. As with MP3 players, PDAs are carried around, offering instant access in quiet moments for busy people. Something to watch is that languages like those in the Middle East

and East Asia have special fonts which only some PDAs can handle. In South Korea at least mobile phones first squeezed out PDAs, but are now morphing into PDAs themselves.

5 How do IT learning technologies spread?

5.1. Institutional Markets

IT learning technologies may spread through traditional educational institutions and teachers. This is a captive market. A drawback is that competition against existing educational mediums (teachers, books, language labs etc.) is rarely welcomed and may be actively suppressed.

Institutional purchasing choices tend to be conservative, using corporate or public rather than personal funds. On the other hand, when purchases are made, they are often of high monetary value. Large corporations like Apple and Microsoft have actively given away products to schools to help language teaching etc., with an obvious commercial intention to create long-term dependence on their proprietary formats.

5.2. Piggybacking

IT learning technologies may piggyback on existing consumer markets for music, games, videos etc., or even packaged food. This is truly mass marketing, though not always commercially welcome (e.g. **peer-to-peer networking**; Hoffman 2002).

In the past educational piggybacking of this kind has sometimes conveyed a strong flavour of propaganda or central planning. For example, Singapore and China have both been venues where Big Brother teaches the masses some brand of "virtue". The Singapore government deliberately broadcast radio and TV in standard Chinese, although most original residents spoke south-eastern Chinese languages. Naturally there is always a degree of resistance and distaste for propaganda. This unfortunate legacy may have to be overcome if language teaching is to be piggybacked extensively on existing media.

A special case of piggybacking is the religious market. Both historically and currently much of the most energetic language propagation has been to advance one creed or another. Whatever the virtues of these religions, their agents and their resources continue to play a significant role in spreading both literacy and knowledge about the world's languages. Best known perhaps is SIL, the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

5.3. Newly created markets

IT learning technologies may develop unique channels of consumer access. This is not easy, but it has been done in other fields. For example, personal computing software has created its own market (there was no such market when I went to school in the 1950s and 1960s).

The key to rapid, wide acceptance is usually an open architecture and 'giveaway' policy. The idea is that when demand becomes intense, added value can be offered at a premium price. The shareware computer industry runs on this principle. The risk is that if a product becomes too successful, not only will it attract a host of imitators, but it may be swallowed whole by a monster like Microsoft. Thus, Netscape essentially made web surfing available to the Internet public (Brian Wilson), but was then buried through ruthless business practices by Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

Electronic bilingual dictionaries are a contrary example of highly proprietary and expensive language products (e.g. Ectaco.com) which have gradually spread amongst customers with a pressing need - notably tertiary students in non-English speaking countries.

6. Are There New Business Openings In "IT for Language Teaching" ?

6.1. Parallel development

Many of the technologies referred to in this paper have developed in parallel in both commercial and not-for-profit environments (see GNU Categories "shareware"). This pattern is a characteristic of products with a high intellectual property component, and often reflects competing ideologies.

The tension engendered by such competition can be healthy, and in practice there is a good deal of cross-fertilization. We see this very clearly in the Open Source Software Movement, with derivative commercial developments such as the various flavours of Linux often spinning off at a later stage.

6.2. Commercial entry points

It is also clear that technology related to natural language learning may range from the very simple (a pen and paper) to the very complex (such as computer simulated environments for language learning). This implies many entry points from a commercial point of view.

6.3. Supply and demand

We know that people have learned languages from time immemorial. We know that snake oil merchants have marketed instant fixes for language learning from time immemorial, and that many continue to make a tidy living out of it. There will always be business openings for "IT in language teaching", but we would be credulous to expect a magic bullet anytime soon.

6.4. Change and transition

The IT revolution is not done. Within a decade all human knowledge will be storable in a tiny space; holographic technologies may be the best current hope(e.g. see CollossalStorage.net). Millions, maybe billions of people will be reading "online" daily, but

online will not be staring at an electron gun. The industry prophets say we will be reading flexible stuff that looks rather like today's newspaper (PC Magazine 2005)....

In other words, whatever is begun now must be recognized as transitional, and designed for rapid change. However, human beings within a given generation are not particularly adaptable.

6.5. Resistance to change

Whenever a business, a school, a factory is founded, a new generation learns new things. Then they become comfortable, develop a daily routine, and their priorities naturally enough revolve around bringing up their own families. What this means is that institutions automatically ossify and resist change, ignore new opportunities and actively seek to undermine competition. Indeed, in any hierarchical institution managers at every level will mostly exclude individuals and ideas which represent a threat to their own mediocrity (Peter 1993) .

Luckily, the individualized and non-hierarchical nature of the Internet may short-circuit some conservative rigidities in the evolution of IT for language teaching. However, this paper began by highlighting a cultural divide between the techno-literate and the world of language teachers. This cultural difference needs constant attention or introduced teaching technologies will founder.

6.6. A business models for technology – the foundation

For an entrepreneur who is serious about combining an element of Information Technology with language teaching into a viable business, there are sure to be lots of openings. However, with the preceding paragraph in mind, it is usually wise for both financial and intellectual adventurers not to trade all commitment into a single basket.

Models for the successful introduction of technology will vary both according to accepted behaviour patterns in host cultures, and the state of economic and social development where they are tried. Capital markets vary too. In the Third World, direct venture capital may be hard to come by (Subbiah Arunachalam 2005 **)**

One successful business strategy in many fields has been to establish some kind of **foundation** which keeps a certain distance from individual projects, and can therefore maintain perspective. Some foundations are also government or NGO-aid based.

Many possible projects in the IT-Education area will have serious development costs. The foundation model is one way to spread risks. It can be a medium to redirect part of the cash flow from successful initiatives into more experimental options which show promise but need a longer lead in.

Foundations can sometimes give respectability to change and innovation in cultures where individual initiative is traditionally unwelcome. Ironically perhaps, the most dynamic foundations are often driven by outstanding individuals. Plain folk prefer to wait for their white knight: the Bill Gates syndrome.

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The British National Centre for Learning Languages "http://www.cilt.org.uk/" has a useful page of links at Linguanet "http://www.linguanet.org.uk/websites/wwwteach.htm" into the whole issue of Internet and e-mail language learning.

Broca's Blog "http://freefeel.org/wiki/DiaryOfBrocaMarch2005" – a Korean nurse refines her English by keeping a diary in her second language online

CAL "http://www.cal.org/" Centre for Applied Linguistics, Washington DC

CALICO Journal "http://calico.org/journalarticles.html" (Computer Assisted Learning instruction Consortium)- Texas State University - a good collection of articles on CALL. Papers from 1983 to 2000 are viewable online; later material requires a subscription

CALICO Review "http://calico.org/CALICO_Review/" - Reviews of CALL language learning programs on the market, sorted by language

CALL on The Web "http://edvista.com/claire/call.html" - links by Claire Badin Siskin

ColossalStorage.net "http://colossalstorage.net/colossal5.htm" – a website promoting optical holographic memory storage.

COMFM "http://www.comfm.com/live/tv/" - live TV on the Internet from every continent, multiple languages

Course Website (CMS) Programs "http://www.excite.co.uk/directory/Reference/Education/Instructional_Technology/Higher_Education/Course_Website_Software" - listing by Excite Search Engine

Digital Games Research Association "http://www.digra.org/"

English for Everybody "http://www.english-online.org.uk/games/gamezone2.htm" - some free online language learning games

English Raven website The Audiolingual Method "http://www.englishraven.com/method_audioling.html" - this is a useful summary of this method's characteristics

Example Blog - Two Authors (teacher and shared student account)

"http://exampleblog.teacherhosting.com/blog3/" at Teacherhosting.com "http://teacherhosting.com/" (a commercial site)

Glenweb.org "http://www.glenweb.org/" – example of a shared student website

LanguageCourse.net "http://www.languagecourse.net/online-language-course/english-language-course.php3" – rating of online language courses

Language Learning Technology Journal "http://llt.msu.edu/" - all articles available online

Languages-on-the-web.com "http://languages-on-the-web.com/" – a large number of links and resources for online language learning

Learning Games Initiative "http://www.mesmernet.org/lgi/" – University of Arizona – a forum "to examine computer games (arcade, console, PC, and handheld) in order to better understand their cultural and pedagogical import..

Learning Languages "http://www.micheloud.com/FXM/LA/index.htm" - Micheloud's homepage on how to learn any language

LRNJ (Slime Forest Adventure) "http://lrnj.com/" - A free role-playing game for learning Japanese

Mylanguageexchange.com "http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/" – Penpals for language learning via e-mail

Omniglot "http://www.omniglot.com/links/courses.htm" – links to online language courses

Online Learning Update "http://people.uis.edu/rschr1/onlinelearning/archive/2004_06_20_archive.html" University of Illinois at Springfield - online learning news and research

PimsleurDirect.com "http://www.pimsleurdirect.com/" – packing audiolingual courses onto PDA-type memory chips

Refdesk.com "http://www.refdesk.com/paper.html" – listing of online newspapers worldwide

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The Serious Games Initiative "http://www.seriousgames.org/" – "uses for games in exploring management and leadership challenges facing the public sector.."

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Sensor Web "http://www.geoplace.com/gw/2003/0309/0309swb.asp" – stitching the earth and humans together with sensors

Summer Institute of Linguistics "http://www.sil.org/" a faith-based organization (Christian) which has accumulated huge resources on the world's languages

University of Oregon English Mailing Lists "http://babel.uoregon.edu/yamada/lists/english.html" - an example of list servers dedicated to Second Language SIGs (special interest groups)

Virtual Human Web Resources "http://www.ordinarymagic.com/v-people/Webresources.html" - links to many forms of the emerging bionic man

VOA Special English Assistant "http://www.bitday.com/bitdaystudio/" – downloadable MP3 English learning from the Voice of America, via BitDay Studio

VoiceXML Review "http://www.voicexmlreview.org/" – a journal of ongoing VoiceXML research, and its applications

WELL Project "http://www.well.ac.uk/wellproj/index.html" (Web Enhanced Language Learning) - to promote wider awareness and more effective use of the World Wide Web for Modern Languages teaching across Higher Education (HE) in the United Kingdom (UK)

WorldWideLearn.com "http://www.worldwidelearn.com/language-courses/index.html" – directory of online language courses (and other online courses too).

Thor May has been teaching English to non-native speakers, and lecturing linguistics, since 1976. This work has taken him to seven countries in Oceania and East Asia, mostly with tertiary students, but with a couple of detours to teach secondary students and young children. He has trained teachers in Australia, Fiji and South Korea. At the moment he is teaching in Chungju National University, South Korea.

INTERNET LESSON PLANS

THE GREATEST OF THE GREAT

by Ewa Krzywicka-Dzioch

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Time: 90 minutes

Level: pre-intermediate- intermediate

Aims:

1. to practise searching information on the website and scanning it
2. to find out about the greatest buildings in the world
3. to extend and practise vocabulary related to buildings
4. to describe and discuss the greatest world architecture

Technical requirements:

One computer with Internet connection per 1-2 students, PowerPoint software, multimedia projector desirable.

Anticipated problems:

Ss may have some problems with the authentic language which may be a discouraging factor. Some students may be less confident while presenting their findings to the teacher.

Procedure:

Pre-stage activities (8-10 mins)

- Ask Ss if they have ever seen a building that made a great impression on them. Elicit the details, e.g.: location, historical background, appearance, function, etc.

- Ask Ss to tell the class about some impressive buildings they have seen on television, newspapers or in other sources.

While-stage activities (45 mins)

- The teacher divides the Ss into groups of 3 and informs them about their task which is set in the following context:

  - Ss are aliens. They come from a distant planet called Zing. Their civilization has recently discovered the Earth and their ruler has found out that the inhabitants of the blue planet build amazing structures in which they live or do their business. He wishes to build a replica of the most magnificent building humans ever erected. He sends his spies to the Earth to investigate the most famous ones.

- Each team of spies will consist of three specialists (a historian, an environmentalist and an architect) who will investigate three different aspects of a building: its

historical background, location and design. The teacher assigns roles within the groups. Architects will investigate the construction system, environmentalists will find out about the location and the climate of the place, historians will gather information on the epoch, style of the building and its historical significance

- Ss are referred to one of the following websites:

http://www.greatbuildings.com - a leading architecture site where they can find information and pictures of thousands of buildings. It enables searching by name, architect or place. The search returns basic information about the building, pictures as well as comments and additional links to other pages. There is also a list of most visited buildings which may suggest the most popular ones

http://www.architecture.about.com, - provides links to great buildings, allows search by designer, location, building type, historic period, building name

http://www.rateitall.com/t-1041-greatbuildings-of-the-world.aspx - this page allows you to view ratings and reviews for Great Buildings of the World.

It is advisable for the teacher to show students how to navigate the websites.

- Each group chooses five great buildings and the specialists investigate their areas.
- Once they have collected their data, they discuss to order their constructions from the least to the most recommendable. Each specialist will try to stress the importance of their areas in the rating. The teacher goes round, monitors their work and helps if necessary
- Ss prepare a PowerPoint presentation with pictures and brief information about the buildings they have agreed on.

Post-stage activity (35 mins)

- The groups of spies present their findings to their monarch (teacher) trying to convince him that they are the ones who accomplished their task best and His/Her Highness should choose one of their constructions to be built on their planet. Ss should be prepared that they can be asked additional questions in case they left out important information.

- Ss are given evaluation sheets where they complete the self-assessment column. The other column is completed by the teacher and then the grades are given.
- The teacher asks Ss to share their impressions of the task, e.g.: how difficult it was for them, if they would rather take a different role performed by their teammates, which part of the task was the most difficult or if it was easy to reach a consensus. Ss also discuss which factors determine the impression a building makes on people.
- For Ss who became interested in architecture and wish to know how to make a career of an architect, the teacher can recommend to visit a professional site run by The Royal Institute of British Architects, namely www.architecture.com.
- The teacher gives Ss a list of words for describing a building and asks them to organize them into four groups, then using the websites they worked on or the words they remember, try to add more vocabulary to each category. If short of time, the exercise can be set as homework

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spire•marble•skyscraper•masonry•medieval•temple•concrete•high-tech
modern•dome•steel•villa•facade•ancient Roman•elevation•cathedral

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STUDENT EVALUATION SHEET

	Self-Assessment	Teacher Assessment
Research		
Did you conduct a thorough search for information?		
Did you effectively complete all parts of the project?		
Cooperation		
Did you work cooperatively with other members of your team?		
Did you fulfill your duties and shared		

equally?		
Did you take active part in discussion trying to put forward your point of view?		
PowerPoint Presentation		
Did your presentation contain all the necessary details and pictures?		
Was it visually attractive?		
Oral Presentation		
Was your presentation well-organized and coherent?		
Were you informative as well as persuasive?		
Were you able to answer your teacher's additional questions?		
Total Possible Points		

Rate each category according to the following scale:

3 points - your work meets the criteria without any shortcomings

2 points - your work meets the standards but leaves significant room for improvement

1 point – your attempts to meet the requirements were often unsuccessful but with the help of your team you managed to accomplish the task

0 points - your work needs to be redone

Now add your points and your teacher's points, divide them by two and work out your total score:

29-30-excellent, 27-28-very good, 23-26-good, 17-22-satisfactory, 12-16 –poor, below 12- unsatisfactory

ON THE WEB

LAW FOR KIDS (http://www.lawforkids.org/)

Reviewed by **María Victoria Fernández**

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Site URL: http://www.lawforkids.org/

Language: English/Spanish

Introduction

"Law for Kids" is the name of a website, which was born as a project of the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education and with funding from the Arizona Supreme Court. Its main aim is to familiarize kids with law, by offering them, among other things, stories about legal issues, toons, law docs, laws, games, links, and the possibility of posting comments and asking questions. This website has been chosen because, apart from having a very attractive outline especially for young people, it contains a lot of information regarding

legal issues and students can learn a lot of the legal English language by browsing its webpages.

Description

The different sections on the site are labelled as "LFK Home", "Speak up!" , "Stories", "Toons", "Laws", "Justice for all", "Law docs", "Change it!", "Games" and "Links".

In the *LFK Home section* you can see everything this website is going to offer you.

In the *Speak up! section* you can find 5 records grouped into the topic of "arrested", 1 record into the topic of "curfew", 109 records grouped into the topic of "driving", 114 records grouped into the topic of "family", 67 records grouped into the topic of "illegal substances", 257 records grouped into the topic of "other", 83 records grouped into the topic of "school", 1 record into the topic of "sexual assault and misconduct", 3 records grouped into the topic of "trouble", 63 records grouped into the topic of "violence" and 25 records grouped into the topic of "work and employment".

In this section students can browse questions about the different topics and read the corresponding answers (there is a special link to the latest questions). At the same time, they are given the possibility of posting and reading comments. They are also offered several links to read about the specific topics, such as links to related laws and to related stories (if available).

In the *Stories section* students can read and listen to stories that deal with legal issues. There is a special link to the latest stories. Story topics are classified into "driving", "illegal substances", "other", "sexual assault and misconduct", "trouble", "vandalism and property damage" and "violence". Students are also given the possibility of posting and reading comments. As in the previous section, there are links that allow the student to read more about the topic chosen and also links to related laws and to related "Speak up!" questions (if available).

In the *Toons section* toons are grouped into key areas of the law, classified into "arrested" (3 records), "driving" (7 records), "family" (1 record), "illegal substances" (4 records), "other"

(5 records), "school" (8 records), "trouble" (6 records), "violence" (6 records) and "work and employment" (1 record). Some of the cartoons are animated (the student can listen to what the different characters are saying) but some are strip. There is a special link to the latest toons.

Students can also post and read comments. As in the previous sections, there are links that enable learners to read more about the topic chosen and also links to related laws, "Speak up!" questions and stories (if available).

In the *Laws section* students can browse laws classified according to the topics of "arrested" (6 records), "curfew" (1 record), "driving" (9 records), "family" (2 records), "illegal substances" (7 records), "new laws" (3 records), "other" (3 records), "school" (1 record), "trouble" (8 records), "violence" (5 records). There is a special link to the latest laws.

Students can post and read comments. As in the previous sections, there are links to read more about the topic chosen and also links to related "Speak up!" questions and related stories (if available).

In the *Justice for All section* students can follow Jay, a resident at the South East Facility Juvenile Detention Centre in Mesa, Arizona. On each page, when they click on the listen icon, they will be able to listen to Jay talking about the different areas of the Detention Facility. They can read at the same time what they are listening to, and also write a letter to Jay letting him know their feelings about life in detention.

In the *Law Docs section* students have access to the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Amendments, the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers and more law documents.

In the *Change it! section*, because the American system of government allows citizens and their representatives to change the law and create new laws through a legislative process, even though students may not be old enough to vote, they are still able to share their opinions with elected officials who make and change Arizona laws.

In the *Games section* students can play different games such as "A day in the life of Tommy", the "LawForKids.org Quiz" (an interesting quiz on legal issues), "8-Ball", "Checkers", "Jigsaw", "Tic Tac Toe" and "Tiler".

Its worth commenting on the game "A day in the life of Tommy", where the student has to play the role of Tommy, who is an "average school kid who comes across some tough situations where he faces decisions about breaking the law". After each situation, the student will have to choose what Tommy should do (one choice being against the law, and the other one being legal). If the student answers incorrectly, s/he will be given information on the law. If the answer is right, s/he will continue to the next situation. If the student answers correctly all the ten situations, s/he will be even given a certificate that s/he can print out.

In the *Links section* you can find a list of telephone hotline numbers, many interesting different links for kids, parents and teachers, law links and the "out of AZ section".

Evaluation

Accuracy

Considering the authority of the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education (AZFLSE) and, on the other hand, the funding from the Arizona Supreme Court, it is a fact that materials are accurate and interesting. There are neither grammatical nor spelling errors found.

Authority

As already mentioned, the site is authored by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education (AZFLSE), which is a non-profit corporation that serves as a statewide non-profit organization and operates exclusively for charitable and educational purposes. According to the aim mentioned in the "About Page", its mission is to improve Arizona's legal system through programs that promote equal access to justice, strengthen the legal system and build public understanding of the law.

Currency

The site was originally launched in 1998. Some sections are regularly updated, though others are updated only occasionally. Anyway, teachers can join the Teacher Update Email list to

get weekly updates about Law-Related Education and new resources posted to *LawForKids.org*. Contributions provided by users are also added on a regular basis.

Objectivity

The goal of the site is clearly stated in the "About Page": "The Site was created by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education with the specific goal of educating Arizona's youth, their parents, communities and schools to increase their knowledge about youth laws and to encourage law-abiding behavior". Educational contents, rich in information, definitely achieves the aim claimed.

Style and Functionality

The layout of the content is well-organized. It has highly intuitive navigation bars both at the top and the bottom. Links to other sections are also included on each page. There is also a pull down left-side menu which provides access to all subsections. Elements can be loaded quickly. Pages are not overloaded and fonts allow a perfect level of readability. The site is very easy to navigate and its graphic design highly appealing.

These facts, together with the interesting learning materials, encourage visitors to work on the site.

Learner fit

Learners can use this site for self-study. Most materials focus on reading, but students can also listen to stories or watch toons or videos which deal with legal issues. They can share their own stories, post and read comments and ask questions. In the Justice for All section they can follow Jay, a resident at the South East Facility Juvenile Detention Centre in Mesa (Arizona), and they can even write to Jay letting him know their feelings about life in detention. It is worth commenting on the Change it! section, where students can share their opinions with elected officials who make laws.

This site offers plenty of motivating language activities, allowing students to learn while amusing themselves. Activities are self-correcting so students can try them as many times as they want to. It is worth mentioning again the possibility of asynchronous interaction to foster real language practice.

Although this website is dedicated mainly to teaching children about the law, it was created with the specific goal of educating not only Arizona's youth, but also their parents, communities and schools to increase their knowledge about youth laws and to encourage law-abiding behaviour. So, most learning materials are not marked, which is not considered to be a serious drawback, since each learner can try by him/herself which activities suit him/her best.

Teacher Fit

Though mainly suitable for self-study, most activities may be carried out in the classroom using the website as a source of materials and/or support. Apart from reading activities, the site can be used for listening activities, since it provides audio and video recordings. Teachers can use the materials for speaking activities such as debates, role-plays or mock trials and for writing activities such as writing stories, posting comments or asking questions, to cite some examples.

Furthermore, the site contains 600 downloadable lessons and Mock Trials from the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education which can be used in the classroom. They are classified according to several categories and have been written by different authors. Teachers can also have access to the specific LawForKids.org lessons.

Even though this website is intended mainly for kids, one can find here very interesting links that can be useful for any beginner, no matter how old s/he is. One should keep in mind the important fact that LE (Legal English) classes are usually mixed-ability ones, and student language levels may range from "beginner" to "advanced". On this website students can have access to very simple legal language (see game "A day in the life of Tommy"), but also to more advanced legal language (see the section on Law Docs or some specific lesson plans).

Apart from the search engine, it is also worth mentioning the availability of an online dictionary, as well as a Spanish version of this website.

Recommendation

This website is recommended because of the appropriate and highly motivating materials. The language is easy enough to be comprehended by beginners and students are allowed to post and read personal comments on the contents of any of the website sections, something which fosters real language practice. On the other hand, the site provides special pages for teachers, giving them very interesting ideas and additional resources. It is also very important that you can use the site for any kind of language activities, as it contains audio and video recordings.

To sum up, this website is highly recommended, though I would include some kind of synchronous interaction.

A WORD FROM A TECHIE

WRITING WITH TECHNOLOGY

by **Lindsay Clandfield**

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I remember as a child listening to my father write various articles that he was writing for his work at the university. The click clack of the typewriter, the bottle of Tipp Ex and the endless supply of little index cards (all organised into attractive little plastic boxes), the letraset, these were all a part of the process. The working space needed for this covered my father's desk, and would often spread onto the floor into piles all around. My brother and I were forbidden to touch any of the piles of papers that dotted the office floor (where we sometimes liked to play) so as not to disorganise things.

Now, almost thirty years later, I am working on a book of my own. It's a coursebook for English language learners. I still manage to have piles of paper all around me, but gone are the days of patiently weaving a piece of paper onto the typewriter, setting up the margins and having the TippEx constantly at hand. Most of my work, no I'd say almost all of my work is in my laptop computer. The space required can in fact now be reduced to my knees under extreme circumstances.

Writing a coursebook is a long process, and involves several people. Aside from myself, the writer, there are at least two editors, somebody responsible for illustrations, another person

responsible for picture research (the photos), and the designers. Not to mention the actors and sound technicians who have to record the audio material. I haven't finished the book yet, and there will be probably more people involved before the whole thing arrives finally on the bookshelves.

The purpose of this brief article is to describe some of the technology tools that I use in the initial creation of material.

The nuts and bolts of writing

The most obvious tool of course is the word processor. I am not that adventurous with my word processor, although I have found that with practice I can now do most things without needing to use a mouse. The shortcuts on a wordprocessor will be different according to what language you are using (for example, to make the text **bold** I type Control+B on my English word programme, but on a Spanish programme it's Control+N) but it's very useful to know them as it speeds things up immensely.

Finding shortcuts

If you are using Microsoft Word, you can find keyboard shortcuts in the following way:

1. Click on Help menu and select Microsoft Word Help. Or press F1.

2. Search using the word 'keyboard shortcuts'.

3. Click on 'Quick Reference to some common shortcut keys'.

Some of the common English shortcuts I use with text are:

Shift+arrows – to select text a letter at a time

Control+Shift+arrows – to select text a word at a time

Control+X – to cut text

Control+V – to paste text

Control+Z – to undo something I've done

Control+B for **bold** text

Control+I for *italics*

Control+U for <u>underline</u>

Saving work is incredibly important when writing. I have had two or three sickening moments when I thought I had lost something. Even backups on CDROM make me nervous now, but I have found a wonderful Internet site to store things. It's called Yahoo Briefcase and if you are already a Yahoo mail user then you have it free. Basically it's a storage space - you can upload documents there and leave them. Then you can go and download them from the site into any computer, anywhere. I think I have draft versions of two books in my virtual briefcase, and always use it now as a backup.

Using Yahoo Briefcase

1. Go to briefcase.yahoo.com in your Internet browser (you don't need to type www at the beginning)

2. If you have Yahoo mail, then click on the 'sign in' button. You will sign in just like you sign in to your mail. If you don't have Yahoo mail, you will have to get a Yahoo ID to use the briefcase. Click on the Sign Me Up link for new users. It's free and Yahoo are very good about spam.

3. Once you have a briefcase (i.e. you have a Yahoo ID and have signed in) click on Add Files. You will have to create a folder (e.g. Exam Classes). Then you can add files in the same way you would attach a document to an email.

4. You have the option of sharing folders with other people. On the welcome page, click on Share Files and follow the instructions to make the files visible.

Topics and material

One of the most difficult things in writing material is to find an interesting text or angle on a topic. This is where the Internet becomes an extremely useful, even indispensable tool. It would be hard here to say which links are the best for finding ideas, it's really a question of what you're looking for. One site which is probably among the most popular, a good starting point, is the BBC website, www.bbc.co.uk, simply because you can find something on almost anything in there.

I also regularly consult the free online encyclopaedia Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.com) for information about topics. It's really an extraordinary site. It has over a million entries (Britannica has 75000 entries). Anyone can contribute to Wikipedia, and anyone can edit it. It's self-policing – meaning that offensive or inaccurate material tends to be removed very quickly. The only problem is that it is not authoritative and probably never will be. But the quantity of information is huge. As a teacher, I have used the short texts from Wikipedia with students.

Another favourite website I use to get ideas or look for interesting data is NationMaster (www.nationmaster.com). It's a compilation of data from such sources as the CIA World Factbook, United Nations, World Health Organization, World Bank, World Resources Institute, UNESCO, UNICEF and OECD. Unlike Wikipedia, this site is authoritative. Using a simple form, you can generate maps and graphs on all kinds of statistics, from number of English speakers to amount of beer consumed per capita to average age that people get married or have children.

Using Nationmaster

1. Go to the site www.nationmaster.com

2. If you just want to browse around, look at the Top Graphs on the left hand side of the page.

3. If you want to make your own graph or chart, look at the 'Make your own chart' box at the top of the main webpage.

4. Select the areas you want details for from the drop-down menu (you can select all European countries, African countries, Asian countries etc. or all the countries in the world)

5. Choose how many countries you want to compare from the "Compare" menu (top 5, top 10, top 100…you can also select bottom 10, bottom 5…)

6. Select the category from the category menu (agriculture, lifestyle, crime, food)

7. Finally, select the specific statistic from the statistic menu and click on the grey button Generate Stat.

For example, I followed the above procedure to find out the average number of 13-year-old students in a classroom around the world. Here's the top five.

Definition: The average number of 13-year-old students per class.

1.Japan 35.5 students

2.Hong Kong 31.9 students

3.Colombia   30.5 students

4.Greece 24.8 students

5.Thailand 23.8 students

Weighted Average 31.12 students

Source: "Efficiency and Equity in Schools around the World" by Eric A. Hanushek and Javier A. Luque, April 2002.

Language work

Most dictionaries now come with a CDROM. This is an excellent addition to any writer's or teacher's computer. I have the Macmillan English Dictionary on CDROM. With this dictionary you can get not only definitions, but illustrations, pronunciation (British and American) and study sheets. I use it mostly to help me write definitions or find alternative ways of explaining words. The site www.answers.com is another dictionary resource I use online sometimes. On Answers.com you type in a word and the website will come up with definitions from other dictionaries.

I am currently writing material for lower level learners. Another author tipped me to a great site for measuring text difficulty, called Vocabulary Profiler (http://132.208.224.131/vp/). Vocabulary Profiler is a site created by Tom Cobb from the University of Quebec. What it does is "break texts down into frequency categories, as determined by the frequency of words in the language at large". I paste a text into the profiler, and it does the following:

1) tells me how many words the text has

2) tells me how many different words the text has

3) divides the words into first and second thousand most frequent words in English, academic words, and the remainder 'offlist.'

If for example, over 80% of my text is in the top 1000 words, then there's a good chance it's not too difficult for the level I am writing for. If my text has only 50% of the top 1000 words in it, then it might be too difficult.

Using Vocabulary profiler

1. Go to the vocabulary profiler website http://132.208.224.131/vp/ .

2. Click on the link VP English (on the left hand side)

3. Type or paste the text you want the Vocabulary profiler to look at into the yellow box.

4. If you have a very large text, you can upload it to Vocabulary Profiler. This is Input Method B, at instructions are at the bottom of the same page.

5. Click on the grey Submit button at the bottom of the page.

Corpus data is also useful. I find that my most common use of corpus data is to check a hunch I have about language. After a period of time unavailable, the Collins Cobuild site is finally back up and working. If you enter a word or combination of words into the search engine, the site will grind through the 56 million word corpus and give you examples of that language (in concordance lines, see example below). The Collins site also allows you to search for collocation, which is extremely useful too. The Collins Corpus sampler and Collocation finder is free at http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx.

Here are example concordance lines for writing:

storage. Ideal for card games or letter **writing**, it is sure to
A full list of winners will be obtainable by **writing** to Hush
the past, my friends could have won creative **writing** awards for
in his much vaunted work. Painting and **writing** is Alexander's
Carroll is one of the most arresting authors **writing** today, and
Guyana. [p] American man, hobbies reading, **writing** and movies.

and opted for relative sanity as one half of a **writing** team with

I would also recommend people to read bad **writing**, or

as they listened attentively had Marvell **writing** an ode in his

and retrieval system, without permission in **writing** from the

painted in different colours. For a few weeks **writing** with a pencil

of what I have learned.' Joni's purpose in **writing** the book was

made to a social worker which recorded in **writing** and placed in

that means a whopping mistake in your **writing** is invisible

fiction completing the domination of genre **writing**. With the top

s accident and emergency trainees association, **writing** in the British

AN obsessed fan faces up to 35 years jail for **writing** obscene

And here are the five most common collocations the site gave me for the word "writing".

Collocate	Corpus Freq	Joint Freq	Significance
reading	4974	265	16.018238
about	106379	356	14.059650
in	765730	1118	13.905865
and	1129483	1490	13.646050
book	11372	155	11.670908

Conclusion

A friend of mine and I once had a conversation about whether or not we could still write without the use of our computers and the internet. We thought we probably could, but nowhere near as fast or easily. That has been the benefit of technology on the writing process,

but also its curse. Editors and publishers now expect material much quicker. Deadlines are getting shorter and shorter, and the whole time process of producing something like a coursebook has probably been halved (or more) in the last ten years. And in this article I haven't even touched on material produced on the Internet. Maybe in thirty years time my son will be writing an article like this and saying "to think that my father made something that was printed on paper – how old fashioned"!

Lindsay Clandfield is a teacher, trainer and materials writer based in Spain. He is currently writing a course book for Macmillan called Straightforward Elementary. He is a main author on the website Onestopenglish and does teacher training for Oxford TEFL Barcelona.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF FUTURE EVENTS

JALTCALL 2005 CONFERENCE

"GLOCALIZATION THROUGH CALL: BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER"

Ritsumeikan University, Shiga, Japan,

June 3-5, 2005

http://jaltcall.org/conferences/call2005/

The JALTCALL 2005 Conference focuses on the social dimension of CALL at local and global levels, as represented by the term "glocalization." The conference organising committee is specifically seeking submissions in the following areas:

- Using CALL to encourage communication between learners at the local level
- Using CALL to encourage communication between learners globally
- Collaborative CALL research projects
- Collaborative CALL learning projects
- Local-scale CALL projects with international objectives

Submissions that do not deal directly with the conference theme are also most welcome, provided they demonstrate a sufficient level of innovation, quality of research, or suggestions

for improvement of the field. CALL researchers from all continents and from all CALL-related disciplines are invited to submit applications.

Plenary Speakers: Uschi Felix Director, Research Centre for New Media in Language Learning Monash University, Australia; Hayo Reinders Director, English Language Self Access Centre University of Auckland, New Zealand; Yukio Takefuta Professor Emeritus, Chiba University Bunkyo Gakuin University, Japan.

ANNUAL EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING (EADL) CONFERENCE

Institute of Marketing in Helsinki, Finland

June 16-18, 2005

http://www.eadl.org

The 2005 Conference of EADL will take place at the Institute of Marketing in Helsinki from 16 to 18 June. The conference theme will be "How to Gain Competitive Advantage in the Learning Industry". The Conference Programme will address new challenges presented by new training needs, new technologies, and new perspectives to interactiveness. It will also look into gaining competitive advantage through customer relations management.

EADL (the European Association for Distance Learning) is the European association of schools, institutions and individuals working in correspondence and distance education. With members from over 15 European countries, the Association is a representative forum for the exchange of information and ideas on current practice and developments in this expanding field of education and training. Nearly all member states of the European Community are represented in the EADL. But the EADL has also members in Iceland, Norway, Russia,

Switzerland and Turkey. With 4,000 different courses the members of the EADL work with more than one million students all over Europe.

Contact Information:

Henricus Verweijen Executive Director

Bastiengasse 41/1, A-1180 Vienna, Austria

+431 470 9192, +431 470 9192 (Fax)

EADLinfo@markinst.fi

ED-MEDIA 2005

Montreal, Canada

June 27-July 2, 2005

http://www.aace.org/conf/edmedia

ED-MEDIA - World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications is an international conference, organized by the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). This annual conference serves as a multi-disciplinary forum for the discussion and exchange of information on the research, development, and applications on all topics related to multimedia, hypermedia and telecommunications/distance education.

The scope of the conference includes, but is not limited to, the following major topics as they relate to the educational and developmental aspects of multimedia/hypermedia and telecommunications: Infrastructure, Tools & Content-Oriented Applications, New Roles of the Instructor & Learner, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI/CHI), Cases & Projects, Universal Web Accessibility, Indigenous Peoples & Technology

The Technical Program includes a wide range of interesting and useful activities designed to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information: Keynote Speakers, Invited Panels/Speakers, Papers, Panels, Video Festival, Student Panels, Posters/Demonstrations, Corporate Showcases & Demonstrations, Tutorials/Workshops, Roundtables, Symposia, SIGs (Special Interest Discussions).

Contact Information:

Gary Marks, AACE Executive Director

P.O. Box 3728, Norfolk, Virginia, U.S.A.- 23514

757-623-7588, 703-997-8760 (Fax)

conf@aace.org

IEEE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADVANCED LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES (ICALT 2005)

July 5-8, 2005

Kaohsiung, Taiwan

http://lttf.ieee.org, http://www.ask.iti.gr/icalt/2005/

Categories: Distance and web learning, Multimedia and hypermedia, Intelligent tutoring, Cooperative learning, E-books

Topics of interest include but not limited to:

- Adaptivity in Learning Systems
- Advanced uses of Multimedia and Hypermedia
- Architecture of Context Aware Learning Technology Systems
- Artificial Intelligence Tools for Contextual Learning
- Building Learning Communities, e.g. Staff Training
- Concretizing Technologies (e.g. Robotics) in Learning
- Educational Modelling Languages
- Educational Paradigms
- Information Retrieval and Visualization Methods for Learning
- Instructional Design Theories
- Interactive Learning Systems
- Learning Objects for Personalised Learning
- Media for Learning in Multicultural Settings
- Metadata for Learning Resources
- Mobile Learning Applications
- Participatory Simulations
- Pedagogical and Organisational Frameworks
- Peer-to-Peer Learning Applications
- Socially Intelligent Agents
- Technology-Facilitated Learning in Complex Domains
- Virtual Spaces for Learning Communities

The conference will bring together people who are working on the design, development, use and evaluation of technologies that will be the foundation of the next generation of e-learning systems and technology-enhanced learning environments.

We invite submission of papers reporting original academic or industrial research in the area of Advanced Learning Technologies. All papers will be peer-reviewed. Complete papers will be required for review process; only abstracts will not be sufficient.

Contact Information:

Dr. Kinshuk General Chair

Information Systems Department, Palmerston, North, New Zealand

+64 6 350 5799, +64 6 350 5725 (Fax)

kinshuk@ieee.org

FIRST VIRTUAL ELT CONFERENCE

July 4-10, 2005

http://www.fcsh.unl.pt/cv2005

First virtual ELT conference - the Future of Modern Languages Teaching - hosted entirely
on-line by the Department of Modern Languages, Cultures and Literatures, Universidade
Nova de Lisboa, Portugal, from 4-10 July 2005.
Participants log on from all over the world at their own location and in their own time and are
invited to comment on other papers submitted. This virtual conference is FREE.
Papers are welcomed within one or more of the following thematic categories: Education
Teaching of Modern Languages, Cultures and Literatures; Multiculturalism in Languages
Courses Classes; Internet for Modern Languages; Composition, Creative Writing and
Grammar; Teaching Foreign Languages; Teaching Cultural Studies; Teaching Foreign
Literatures; The Bologna Process and Modern Languages Courses.
For further details please see http://www.fcsh.unl.pt/cv2005.

21TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON DISTANCE TEACHING & LEARNING

August 3-5, 2005

University of Wisconsin,

Madison, WI, USA

http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference

The 21st Annual Conference offers a unique and exciting program, combining expertise with practical applications. This year's Seminars and Forums focus on instructional design and faculty support.

The aim of this annual conference is to foster effective distance learning applications through the sharing of new knowledge, skills, and developments among education and training professionals. The conference program will offer more than 150 concurrent sessions, workshops, advanced seminars, panels, keynotes, and course design showcases. The conference program and registration brochure will be available in early May.

Contact Information:

Kimary Peterson, Conference Manager

Madison, WI, U.S.A.-53706

608-265-4159, 608-265-7848 (Fax)

distel@education.wisc.edu

FLEAT 5

Brigham Young University,

Provo, Utah, USA

August 5-10, 2005

http://ce.byu.edu/cw/fleat5/

The Foreign Language Education and Technology Conference is sponsored by the International Association for Language Learning Technology (IALLT), and the Japan Association for Language Education and Technology (LET). Brigham Young University is pleased to be the host for the fifth in this series of jointly sponsored conferences dedicated to improving the understanding and implementation of technology in the study of languages.

For members of the International Association for Language Learning Technology, FLEAT 5 incorporates the program of the biennial IALLT conference.

For further information contact the Program Chair, Read Gilgen (read@lss.wisc.edu) University of Wisconsin-Madison, 608 262-1408.

2ND INTERNATIONAL ONLINE CONFERENCE ON SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH

September 16-18, 2005

http://www.readingmatrix.com/onlineconference/index.html

We invite you and your colleagues from around the globe to participate in the 2nd International Online Conference on Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Research to be held on September 16-18, 2005.

The basic aim of this conference is to provide a venue for educators, established scholars and graduate students to present work on a wide variety of pedagogical, theoretical and empirical issues as related to the multi-disciplinary field of second and foreign language teaching and research. This conference will also give you an opportunity to make global connections with people in your field.

For a list of possible conference topics visit http://www.readingmatrix.com/onlineconference/callforpapers.html. If you would like to participate as a presenter, please submit an abstract online at: http://www.readingmatrix.com/onlineconference/abstract.html

For more information visit http://www.readingmatrix.com/onlineconference/index.html.

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 (Articles, Lesson Plans, Software, On the Web)
- 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)
- Guo Shesen (Luoyang University, Henan, P.R China) – Editor (A Word from a Techie)

You can access 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 2005. Submission deadline for the next issue is September 1, 2005. Detailed submission guidelines can be downloaded from http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/guidelines.doc.

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 or articles pertaining to the use of software in language learning
- A Word from a Techie: discussions of applications of computer programmes 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 jarek.krajka@wp.pl, with the subject being "Journal Submission." Please specify in the letter what word-processing program 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.