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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

by **Jarek Krajka**

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The current issue of *Teaching English with Technology* reflects the diversity of the use of computers in the foreign language teaching and learning process, also in different educational contexts. For a teacher who is well-aware of the teaching goals and whose expectations towards computers are precisely specified, technology can provide a means of facilitating the process, adding a new dimension to it or making possible the impossible. This is true about all the educational contexts and levels, ranging from elementary to advanced, kindergarten to university.

In order to prove that statement right, it is recommended to take an in-depth look at the contents of this issue of *Teaching English with Technology – A Journal for Teachers of English*. As usual, it covers a wide range of views on the usage of technology to support learning, looking at the phenomenon from different angles and for different purposes. Thus, the Article section features the contribution by Susan Esnawy, from American University in Cairo, Egypt, who presents how CMC tools can be successfully implemented to support a F2F writing course. After describing the framework of the course, the author expands on how the technological component was utilized to facilitate the process, analyzing the ups and downs of the project.

A similar idea is continued in the paper of James Thomas from Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, "Using Computers in Correcting Written Work", which makes an extremely informative and thorough presentation of software and Web services that can enhance the process of computerized marking. It is beyond the question that the tools described in the paper will greatly facilitate the work of the teacher to a large extent.

The Internet Lesson Plans section contains two scenarios by Dorota Kunstler, working at Gimnazjum nr 2 in Ustron near Cieszyn, Poland, "The Largest Dolphins Are Orcas!" and "Visit Popular London Attractions Today!" and a lesson plan entitled "Going Places" by Ewa

Krzywicka-Dzioch from Zespol Szkol, Ostrow Lubelski, Poland. The two authors relate their lesson plans to the reality of lower secondary schools (gimnazjum) and low language level (pre-intermediate). It is interesting that the authors manage to refute the popular opinion that the Internet can only be used with really advanced students so that they can understand and digest the linguistic content of many authentic sites.

The final contribution in this issue is a paper by Kate Fazekas, Gábor Dénes College, Budapest, Hungary. The author takes up the issue of online reading development and provides both theoretical background and practical lesson scenarios. Keeping in mind the fact that the use of technology during lessons requires certain amount of "computer" English, the author provides us with a plethora of ideas for passing on that important knowledge.

It is hoped that the articles outlined above will constitute food for thought for the Journal readers and will inspire them to their own technology-supported educational endeavours.

I wish you good reading.

ARTICLES

COMBINING IN-CLASS AND ONLINE IN EAP WRITING [1]

by **Susan Esnawy**

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This paper presents an example of using CMC tools to support a face-to-face EAP writing course for graduate students. It describes the course, in-class activities, and the online component which was an integral part of the course. Students' reactions to the course and ways for expanding the online component are also presented, as well as examples of the teacher's guidelines and a student's corrected essay.

Introduction

What can a teacher do when s/he has to teach a writing class but with limited in-class time and several writing assignments? The administration also requires that each student have a portfolio that includes his corrected essays and drafts. Computer mediated communication (CMC) tools come to the rescue of such a teacher.

With the spread in the use of the Internet, the use of CMC in ESL and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes has increased (Warschauer, 2004). Combining the use of both face-to-face with online instruction, which is known as blended learning (Marsh, 2001; Smith,

2001), has been implemented in many ESL classes, and especially in writing classes in different settings and for different purposes (Warschauer, 2004, 2002). The different forms of interaction provided by blended learning facilitate student–student and student–teacher communication, support the classroom, and enhance learning.

The purpose here is to show how using both in-class and CMC instruction was applied in an EAP graduate writing course.

Description of the course

This academic writing class is the first in a series of two courses whose aim is to help graduate EAP students improve their academic writing skills so that they can do graduate studies in English. Students enrol in this class either with a TOEFL score of 535-549 or 202-212 and a TWE score of 4, or after taking one or two courses in an Intensive English Program to improve their level of proficiency in English. This course's objective is to teach students to write an academic essay. The second course teaches them research paper writing. Each of these classes meets once a week for 90 minutes during a regular 14-week semester. This course is also offered in the summer semester, which is seven weeks, and meets once a week for three hours, as was the case with this group.

In-class instruction

Since the allotted time was very short, class instruction was devoted to developing writing skills. Students were introduced to the patterns of organization in English rhetoric, e.g., illustration, cause and effect/problem-solution, analysis, and argumentation. This involved outlining and analyzing essays, and exercises in writing thesis statements and paragraph structure, i.e., main and supporting ideas. Grammar-for-writing exercises were also done in class. Besides, students were taught how to cite sources in their writing and to avoid plagiarism.

Writing assignments

For this course, students were required to write three essays, with three drafts per essay, and sit for two essay exams. The second and third drafts of each essay were graded. Each writing assignment focused on a theme and a pattern of organization: an argumentation essay on a gender issue, a problem-solution essay on urbanization and unplanned settlements, and an analytical essay on the digital divide. For each assignment, students first read an article, and for one assignment they also watched a documentary film, and then responded in writing to (i.e. critiqued) what they read, and watched, in class. Next, they discussed the article in class with the teacher as a facilitator. Then, they were given the writing prompt whose topic was related to the article, but not focused on it, so that it served as a source of information. Each assignment was discussed in class before students wrote at home. The teacher had conferences on the essays with the students on the day the class met. Students also, in pairs, reviewed each other's essays and received peer feedback. After that, they wrote the next draft. Due to the limited time available and using the process approach to writing, a tight schedule for the due dates of essays and drafts was set, in which some of the drafts overlapped, which was a burden for the students and the teacher (see [Appendix A](#)).

Technological component

Access to the Internet and few technical skills are required. All that is needed is knowing how to: use email and having an email account, attach files to and download them from a message, and use the Internet and search engines.

Email was used for teacher-student and student-student communication. Students wrote at home and submitted their essays by email to the teacher who printed and corrected them, then returned them to the students on the day the class met. The teacher responded to students' queries and sometimes sent them guidelines for writing using email (see [Appendix B](#)). Thus, during the week, the teacher and students communicated by email. Students also exchanged email messages in which they discussed issues raised in the classroom, related to the reading passages, and peer taught each other.

Students were given, and encouraged to use, web sites of some universities, such as the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>, and the Guide to Grammar and Writing, <http://webster.comnet.edu/grammar/index.htm>, as an extra resource that is available to them outside the classroom for looking up information and further practice. Students accessed the OWL and looked under the "General Writing Concerns" at such pages as "Argumentative Writing Fallacies" and "Reaching Logical Conclusions", and "The Paragraph;" under "Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling," students read the explanation of certain points, did the exercises and corrected them, (e.g. "Improving Sentence Clarity" and "Tense Consistency"). They consulted the "Research and Documenting Sources" pages for information on citing sources and the APA Style format. They accessed the Guide to Grammar and Writing for the latter as well and other relevant pages, e.g., "Maintaining Objectivity" and "Avoiding Plagiarism." Under "Principles of Composition", they looked at the different composition patterns, and at "Getting Started Outlining" and "Paragraph Development and Topic Sentences". They used the "Index" page of the Guide to find grammar points, power point presentations, and exercises, such as the "Run-on Sentences, Comma Splices" exercises. As regards information for writing, they used the Internet to find other articles on the writing topic, which was optional.

The teacher had to correct an essay on the computer and send back the corrected version by email to the student; to satisfy the administration, the teacher printed the two versions and put them in the student's portfolio. The teacher used "Tracking Changes," from the "Tools" menu in MS Word, which allows the use of a different colour in adding comments, to highlight the changes made, and draws a line in the margin next to the line where the comments are inserted. The teacher also used very clear symbols and brackets so that her comments on the essay would stand out and be very clear even when a black and white printer was used (see [Appendix C](#)).

This made the teacher think of the possibility of expanding the online component by doing the same with all essays. Due dates need not be a week apart, since the students would not need to wait until the class meets to get their corrected drafts. In this way, they would receive feedback faster and the schedule would not be as tight, which would reduce the load on both the students and the teacher. Student essays could also be posted online, or simply students can send them to other students by email, and so they could review and receive feedback on them outside class, which would reduce the class time devoted to peer review of essays.

Student feedback and achievement

In evaluating the technological component of the course—email and the Internet, all students highly praised the use of email for submitting their essays and communicating with the teacher and each other, and said that it was a great method that helped them a lot, especially that they all had demanding full time jobs. When asked, they welcomed the idea of receiving their corrected essays by email, just like the teacher did with the one student mentioned above. This student highly praised this method and said that he wished it had been used all along. However, he cautioned that without easy access to the Internet, it would have been difficult. It should be noted that access to the Internet outside the university was all through dial-up connections.

Students' achievement was a source of their pride and satisfaction. They became more independent learners and their writing skills improved remarkably. Since the teacher was only a guide/facilitator, they depended on themselves in almost all tasks: discussing articles and writing prompts, using the Internet to find articles, looking up information on writing, whenever they had questions, and doing grammar exercises online to improve their grammar. The quality of their essays and drafts improved gradually, which was reflected in their grades on the drafts of each essay and their final exam essay.

Conclusion

Combining in-class and online instruction is beneficial for the students. The inclusion of the online component here supported the class and allowed effective use of class time, which enhanced learning. Students enjoyed the benefit of interacting with the teacher and other students both in-class and out of class. Hence, the use of computers and the Internet in ESL/EAP classes, whether as an out-of-class resource or for student-teacher or student–student communication, should be encouraged.

Note

1. Another version of this paper was presented at the *WorldCALL 2003* conference, thanks to the Research and Conference Grants Program at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

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Appendix A

Assignment Schedule

Session & Date	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	In-Class Essay
1. Wed., June 5th	Intro. to course + writing process; response to article			
Sun. June 9 th	Draft 1 due			
2. Mon., June 10th	Peer Review of D1 + Teacher feedback			
Sun. June 16 th	Draft 2 due			
3. Mon., June 17th	Teacher feedback	Response to Article & video		
Sun. June 23 rd	Draft 3 due	Draft 1 due		
4. Mon., June 24th	Teacher feedback	Peer review of D1 + Teach. feedback		

Sun. June 30 th		Draft 2 due		
5. Mon., July 1st		Teacher feedback	Response to article	
Sun. July 7 th		Draft 3 due	Draft 1 due	
6. Mon., July 8th		Teacher feedback	Peer Review of D1 + Teach. feedback	In-Class Pre- Final Essay
Sun. July 14 th			Draft 2 due	
7. Mon., July 15th			Teacher feedback on Pre-Final & D2	In-Class outline of an Essay
Wed. July 17 th			Draft 3 due	
Sun. July 21st				FINAL EXAM

*The work week at the university is Sunday through Thursday.

Appendix B

(These guidelines were sent by the Teacher to the students via email, after they discussed the article and writing prompt in class, as further reminder of the writing process; more details were included here in response to some students' questions.)

For Essay 2 draft 1

Assignment: Many developing countries are facing "a surge of urbanization." What are some strategies people in your country could use in dealing with this trend?

Steps in the Writing Process

1. After reading the article, define the problem of urbanization briefly and clearly.
2. Using the article, list different facets or aspects of the problem.
3. Watch a video about community projects in Cairo and note details in case you want to use them as support in the essay.

4. Write a response to the video and the article.
5. List possible solutions to each of the aspects of the problem that you listed at first. Find examples from the video or the article to use as support.

(Brainstorming) Be creative in looking for solutions. Think about: what individuals, communities and governments can do; moving to other areas—desert (?); building codes and specifications that need to be followed, but were not in building houses in slums. These are just a few ideas—I am sure you can come up with other better ideas.
6. Outline: Select three solutions that you can expand on and develop in your essay, and start writing an outline; incorporate the three solutions into a clear thesis statement that answers the question.
7. In your essay, first define the problem and show how it is relevant to your country. Then suggest strategies to solve it with three clear controlling ideas in your thesis. In three body paragraphs, state your strategies and explain/expand on those as solutions. Give sufficient reasons and examples to illustrate why your strategy would be effective. End with a strong recommendation to your audience.
8. If you use any quotations from the article, be sure to put them in quotation marks and cite the source in your writing; be sure to also cite your source for any ideas you use from the article or the film.
9. Proofread your essay carefully for grammar (fragments, comma splices, and run-ons), vocabulary and mechanics' mistakes.
10. Submit your essay.

Appendix C

Essay 3 Draft 2 of Student 1, Sum. '02.

Assignment: The spread and availability of technology is an issue in many countries in today's increasingly wired world. Using your country as an example, analyze the obstacles to the spread of information and communication technology. You should discuss each element of your analysis thoroughly.

[[PLEASE READ CAREFULLY—my comments are in italics & in between double brackets]]

[[art.]] Digital divide

Outline:

I. Introduction:

- A. New technology in developed countries

- B. New technology in developing countries
- C. In Egypt

Thesis: These obstacles are the educational system, the government *[[see Intro]]* .dealing with investment in this field and the infrastructure in Egypt.

II. Educational system

- A. Schools
- B. Universities
- C. Research

III. The government dealing with investment in this field

- A. Unpredictable economy
- B. Taxes
- C. Copyright laws

IV. Infrastructure

- A. Electricity
- B. Telephone networks

V. Conclusion

- A. Restating the thesis
- B. Importance of solving these problems.

------(page break here and essay starts on the next page)

Communication and information *[[WO]]* technology is now an important basis of the economy of many developed countries. Millions of dollars are now invested in this new field. For example, Microsoft, which is now one of the largest companies in the world *n [[sp]]* this field, has a capital that exceeds a hundred thousand million dollars *[[source of info. Please!]]*. The USA's economy depends mainly on companies like Microsoft, Sun and AT&T which are all working in the field of communication and information technology *[[WO, please correct all through]]*. *[[space]]* On the other hand, developing countries have not benefit *[[WF]]* from this new technology until now. A new gap appears now between developed countries *[[unnecessary w.]]* and developing countries due to this new technology. Egypt, as a developing country, faces this problem. Many efforts *[[?? W.Choice—rephrase]]* are needed *n [[sp]]* Egypt to reduce this technological gap. However, these efforts are faced with very strong obstacles. These obstacles are the educational system, the government *[[poss. + ? +prep.]]* dealing with investment in this field and the infrastructure in Egypt.

The Egyptian educational system is one of the main obstacles to the spread of communication and information technology in Egypt. Starting from *[[sp.+ prep.]]* schools, students do not learn how to use computers in schools. Some schools even do not *[[WO]]* have computer laboratories. These schools can not prepare the new generations of the society for the new technology. This problem is due to financial limitations in schools. Moreover, the number of students in classes is very high. For example, if there is a class that includes more than 70 students, it is very difficult to set up a computer laboratory for them. *[[consider re-arranging or changing sentence structure]] [[spacing]]* On the other hand, students in universities have access to larger computer and communication *[[pl]]* laboratories. However, universities in Egypt have *[[W.Choice]]* very old courses *[[prep]]* compared *[[WF]]* with universities in the developed countries. Some engineering faculties *[[WO]] – [[punc.]]* do not even have a department of computer and communication *[[WO? pl? isn't it called "Computer Science Dept."??]]*. For example, the faculty of engineering at Cairo university *[[caps]]*, which is one of the largest universities in Egypt, did not have a department of computer engineering *[[see above re comp. sci. dept]]* until only several years ago. Another very important point is that research and development in communication and information technology *[[WO]]* in Egyptian universities is not well planned. Many universities in Egypt do not have research teams or research projects. Researchers are working *[[Tense]]* individually *[[punc.]]* which results in very weak achievements. Furthermore, companies that may benefit from *[[it do not support the research]] [[WO]]*. This missing support is the only way to benefit from the research *[[done where?]]* in practical applications *[[where? Clarify]]*.

In addition to the educational system, the government's *[[?+ prep.]]* dealing with investment in the communication and information technology do *[[SVA]]* not support the spread of this new technology. The Egyptian economy *[[W.Choice]]* is unpredictable for investors. Changes in laws may appear suddenly causing *[[prep. ?]]* serious effects on *[[W.Choice, or rephrase]]* the Egyptian economy and on companies. *[[log. Seq.??]]* This was very clear in the Egyptian revolution in 1952 and also during the wars in 1967 and 1973. During these years, *[[spacing]]* investment in Egypt was badly affected by *[[art.]]* decisions of the government. Nowadays, Investors *[[X caps]]* are afraid of more wars and political problems, especially in the Middle East which has many problems that have not been solved yet. Moreover, taxes in Egypt are higher than taxes in many other countries like India *[[?, clarify + source]]*. Therefore, if an international company wants to open a branch in a developing country, it will choose a country with less taxes and cheaper *[[human power]]* *[[one word + WF]]*. However, Egypt does not have these advantages compared to *[[rephrase]]* other developing countries. Another very important problem is that the government does not apply strict laws to protect copyrights of software programs. Many Egyptian software users use illegal copies of software programs. Although laws to protect copyrights exist, they are not applied *[[W.Choice]] – [[punc.]]* in many areas in Egypt. As a result, the Egyptian market is not attractive to the investors in the field of software production *[[punc.]]* which is a main problem facing the spread of the communication and information technology in Egypt.

[[transition needed here + W.Choice because it is a 3rd point—rephrase]] Another obstacle to the spread of communication and information technology in Egypt is that the infrastructure in Egypt is not prepared. – *[[punc.]]* communication and information technology needs a good infrastructure. Unfortunately, Egypt's infrastructure needs more development to be prepared for the new technology. Electricity is an essential resource for any development in many fields including the field of communication and information technology. Unfortunately, some areas in Egypt did not have electricity until *[[art]]* few years ago *[[I know this is true, but you need a source of info. here.]]*. Moreover, the stations that provide many areas with electricity are old and not reliable. This is a serious problem that faces any company *[[punc.]]* especially in the field of communication and information technology. For example, setting up a company for software development in an area where electricity is not stable is a waste of time and money. In addition to electricity, telephone networks play a very important role in the development in the field of communication and information technology. Powerful telephone connections are essential in any company working in that field. For example, if a company that provide *[[SVA]]* customers with Internet connections does not have- reliable telephone lines, it will not be able to provide this service to customers. *[[what else? The company can have good tel. lines, but how about the different regions of Egypt??]]*

In conclusion, the educational system, government *[[?+ prep.]]* dealing with investment in the field of communication and information technology, infrastructure *[[what about it?]]* are the main obstacles to the spread of this new technology in Egypt. The government and people should work hard to overcome these obstacles. *[[suggestions for what they can do?]]* This is a very important step to have a strong economy in a world that depends mainly on this new technology. *[[reconsider this last sent. You need to say something about the gap here]]*

Please proofread.

CONTENT: Good analysis of obstacles. Some clarification of ideas needed in BP2 & 3. Conclusion needs some addition. Several points need citation of source of info., even though sometimes the info. is general.

ORGANIZATION: log. sequencing in BP2; transition needed at beginning of BP3.

VOCAB.: some W.Choice and form

LANGUAGE USE: prep., poss., WO, number, SVA, articles

MECHANICS: sp., caps, punc., spacing (throughout should be 2 spaces after end of sentence, and only 1 after a comma).

Comments: Better. Please make the necessary changes in the final draft.

INTERNET LESSON PLANS

THE LARGEST DOLPHINS ARE ORCAS!

by **Dorota Kunstler**

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Topic: The Largest Dolphins Are Orcas!

School: Junior secondary school (Gimnazjum)

Level: Pre-Intermediate

Time: 45 minutes

Aims:

- to find out specific information about different animals of the world.
- to practise reading for specific information.
- to work on vocabulary connected with the animal world.
- to learn how to write a postcard to friends.

Preparation:

- The teacher checks sites for animals given below, to see if they are still available.

- The teacher goes to the sites of online dictionaries (www.dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org>, www.yourdictionary.com) to see which is the most comprehensible and the easiest for students to understand the definitions.
- The teacher may also provide bilingual dictionaries online. Here are some for Polish students (e.g. www.slowniki.onet.pl, <http://slownik.angielski.edu.pl/slownik/>, www.ling.pl, www.multislownik.pl)

Assumptions: Students know basic information on animals such as kind of food they eat, places they live in, which family they belong to etc.

Anticipated problems & possible solutions:

The website should be checked by the teacher before the lesson. In case it is under construction or not available the teacher may use a following site:

www.kidsplanet.org/factsheets/map.html.

If most of students have got no Internet friends (e-pals) the teacher can give their e-mail address to students and they can send electronic postcards to the teacher. This exercise can be also done as homework if there is not enough time during the lesson and students have got an easy access to the Internet after the lessons.

Materials: English-Polish dictionaries

Procedure:

I. Pre-stage

- 1) The teacher says: Write a list of words you associate with the following animals; an orca (killer whale), a cheetah, a tiger, a dolphin and a panda.
- 2) Students report back and they are given the sites of online dictionaries they can find useful later during the lesson (the addresses are given above).

II. While-stage

- 1) The teacher tells the students to enter www.nationalgeographic.com/kids
- 2) Students select Creature Feature in the left column. Then they can choose different wild animals in the right column.
- 3) The teacher divides the class in 5 groups of 2-3 students. Each group is given a different animal to work on. The animals are: an orca (killer whale), a cheetah, a tiger, a bottlenose dolphin and a panda (giant panda). Each group is to give the following information concerning their assigned animal.

A/ The weight of the average animal –

B/ The places the animal lives in (you can go back to the **map** to check) –

C/ The names of food they eat -

D/ Two interesting facts about the animal -

4) Students write the answers in their notebooks then report back giving the lacking information to the other groups. When the exercise is finished each student has got complete information on 5 different animals in their notebooks

5) Students are given phrases that may be used while writing a holiday postcard (e.g.

With love,

Here I am at last!

Dear Jack,

P.S. How are you doing on your holiday?

Mark

I'm sitting on the beach and watching seagulls flying in the sky now.

Please drop a line.

Australia is really beautiful.

Mandy is sleeping in her room.

Wish you were here.)

They put the phrases in the correct order to make a postcard and report back.

III. Post-stage

1) The teacher tells students to select any two animals they like and write postcards to their friend or friends while watching their favourite animal in the wild. They need to click the animal in the right column again on www.nationalgeographic.com/kids and then click the postcard. The teacher assists students during the task.

VISIT POPULAR LONDON ATTRACTIONS TODAY!

by **Dorota Kunstler**

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Topic: Visit Popular London Attractions Today!

School: Junior secondary school (Gimnazjum)

Level: Pre-Intermediate

Time: 45 minutes

Aims:

- to find out more information about popular attractions of London
- to practise making questions in Present Simple and Present Continuous tenses
- to practise reading for a communicative task
- to describe past events

Preparations

The teacher checks sites for London given below to see if they are still accessible.

- The teacher goes to the sites of online dictionaries (www.dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org>, www.yourdictionary.com) to see which is the most comprehensible and the easiest for students to understand for definitions.
- The teacher may also provide bilingual dictionaries online. Here are some for Polish students (e.g. www.slowniki.onet.pl, <http://slownik.angielski.edu.pl/slownik/>, www.ling.pl, www.multislownik.pl)

Assumptions: Students have basic knowledge of English history, know the names of main museums and places of interest in London.

Anticipated problems & possible solutions: The website www.londontown.com should be checked by the teacher before the lesson. In case it is under construction or not available the teacher may direct students to the following one:

www.travelbritain.com/london/tourism/sites/attractions_index.html. In case students do not have enough time to write the report of the most exciting day in the class they do it as a homework assignment.

I Pre-stage

- 1) The teacher asks one volunteer student to stand in front of the class.
- 2) They choose a famous London attraction not telling the rest of the class which one it is.

- 3) The rest fire questions at them trying to find out the name of the attraction. The volunteer student can only give 'Yes' or 'No' answer.
- 4) A person who gives the right answer gets 5 or a plus from the teacher.

II While-stage

1) The teacher tells students about three people who are going for a three-day trip to London. They have got 3 full days in London and they want to visit popular London attractions. The people enjoy doing different things and have got different interests.

Here are the three people and their preferences:

- Jack - interested in history, geography, English lifestyle, famous people, likes taking photos
- Mary - loves animals, biology, staying outdoors, painting pictures
- Nick - likes tennis and all kinds of sports, interested in explorations of the world and wildlife

However, they have got a few things in common:

- a) the amount of money to spend while in London – £100 each
- b) a return ticket and hotel with full board already paid
- c) they want to spend **only one day together** doing something interesting

2) The teacher divides the class into 5 groups of 2-3 students.

3) Students go to: www.londontown.com .

4) Each group is to make three separate schedules of the stay in London for 3 people during 3 days. Students are to include attractions visited by each of the young people according to their interests and how much money they paid. Students should remember each of the three

people has only £100 to spend and that Jack, Mary and Nick are going to spend only one of the days together.

3) Students report back, then decide which of the 3 schedules is the best and which one they would choose for themselves as a group.

III Post-stage

1) The teacher reads a short description of a day spent in London written in present tenses (e.g. It is 2 p.m. and I'm watching an interesting exhibition in National Gallery.) The teacher reads sentence by sentence and different students are to change the sentences (saying them out loud) into past tenses. The above sentence is going to be – 'It was 2 p.m. and I was watching an interesting exhibition in National Gallery.'

2) Students choose one of the people visiting London and they write a report of the most exciting day spent there using past tenses.

3) Students report back and then choose the most exciting description.

GOING PLACES

by Ewa Krzywicka-Dzioch

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Introduction

Although the usefulness of the Internet materials for English teaching is beyond all dispute, the overwhelming amount of information and the difficulty of the authentic language may appear to be discouraging for students at an early stage of learning. It is not easy to find a website that would offer simple language, brief information and be attractive for teenage learners in terms of its subject. When I encountered www.virtualtourist.com/vt/ website I came up with the idea of a lesson for pre-intermediate students based on this website.

VirtualTourist is driven by its members, people from many countries who share interests and experiences to help each other to travel smarter. It delivers valuable and interesting information about places you may want to visit, you can find photographs, comments, detailed tips, reviews, forum as well as create your own web page and share your pictures and tips with friends and fellow travellers. The website looks professional, is well-organized and easy to search. The English used by its members seems to be quite simple and without obvious errors.

My intention was to find material for a 45-minute lesson as it is often the case that teachers have no time or possibility for 2-hour lesson in the computer lab. The lesson has been thought as a follow-up stage for further practice of 1st conditional inspired by Opportunities pre-intermediate, Module 5, lesson 19.

Aims:

- to practise searching information on the website and scanning it
- to revise vocabulary related to tourism
- to find out about interesting places to visit
- to practise the use of 1st conditional
- to practise writing an informal letter/e-mail

Technical requirements:

One computer with Internet connection per 1-2 students, word processor, multimedia projector desirable.

Anticipated problems:

Ss may get lost on the webpage if they click the wrong links or do not listen to the teacher's instructions. Also, the language of the website may be too difficult to some of them.

Pre-stage activities (7-8 mins)

1. Ask Ss which country and which particular places they would like to visit if they could go anywhere in the world. Tell them to give reasons for their choice. Before you ask some of them to speak in front of the group allow them to practise in pairs.
2. Ask Ss what things they would have to consider if they were planning a weekend trip. Try to elicit such as accommodation, food, transport, places to visit, things to pack, dangers, etc.
3. Ask Ss where they can get information that could help them to plan their trip. Ss may point at travel agencies, media advertisements, the Internet. Tell them about the site they are going to search.(see introduction)

While-stage activities (25 mins)

1. Ss type the website address: www.virtualtourist.com/vt/
2. Ss choose a place to visit from the drop-down list on the right of the map. If the destination they would like to visit is not on the list, they may type the name of the place into the search box or click the continent on the map and the list of countries that will lead to most popular places will appear. Because such searching is very time-consuming, it is better to encourage Ss to choose a place available from the list.
3. Ss complete the [worksheet](#) (see below) with the following table by clicking a few options in the Show Me check box:

Place:.....	Name	Why?/Why not?
1. Hotels&Accommodation	Jan III Sobieski	huge buffet, great choice of food

2. Must See Activities	1. <i>Palace of Science and Culture.....</i> 2. 3.	<i>the most beautiful panoramic view of the city</i>
3. Restaurants		
4. Tourists traps		
5. Things to pack		

When Ss click one of the options, they are linked with a page where they can find lots of reviews and tips from tourists who have already visited the places. After scrolling down they will see a list of the most reviewed places. Ask them to choose any of them at random as their names will not be probably meaningful to them. The task requires scanning the text for finding some information, e.g. why it is useful or not worth visiting the place. If a multimedia projector is available the teacher can show the stages of work to Ss so that they save more time for practice.

- Once completed the table Ss make sentences in 1st conditional on their worksheets using the collected information according to given patterns, e.g.: *If you stay in Jan III Sobieski, you'll have great choice of food in the hotel buffet. If you want to see the most beautiful panoramic view of Warsaw, visit the Palace of Culture and Science.*

Post-stage activity (12 mins)

- Ask Ss to write a letter or an e-mail to their pen pal who is going to visit a place they have already been to. They are expected to advice on a weekend trip using as many conditional sentences as they can. The letter can be typed in the word processor and sent to the teacher's e-mail account as an attachment. If you are short of time, set the task as a home assignment.

GOING PLACES - STUDENT WORKSHEET

I. Type in the following URL: www.virtualtourist.com/vt/, choose a place you would like to visit from the checks box, read one or more reviews and complete the table:

Place:.....	Name	Why?/Why not?
1. Hotels & Accommodation		

2. Must See Activities	1. 2..... 3.	
3. Restaurant		
4. Tourists traps		
5. Things to pack		

II. Using the information from the table write 6-8 sentences in your notebook according to the following patterns:

1. If you **(Present Simple)**....., you **(will +verb)**.....
2. You **(will+verb)**if**(Present Simple)**.....
3. If you **(Present Simple)**....., ...**(infinitive)**
4. **(infinitive)**....., if ...**(Present Simple)**.....

Example: If you visit Poland in winter, take warm clothes with you.

III. You have received an e-mail from your pen pal who wants to go for a weekend trip to a place you have been to recently. Recommend to him/her the interesting places to visit and give advice on accommodation, food, etc. Use as many conditional sentences as you can.

SOFTWARE

USING COMPUTERS IN CORRECTING WRITTEN WORK

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Introduction

Computers assist and automate many aspects of our lives and enable things that are barely possible, if at all, without them. Many forms of writing are undertaken on computers since word processing programmes allow editing and formatting, typing shortcuts, spelling and grammar checking, storing different versions, adding pictures, footnotes, hyperlinks within the same document and to the internet, as well as working online with someone at a remote computer. Collaborative writing also takes place via email, chat and computer-mediated-communication facilities such as [Nicenet](#) and the [Tandem](#) project.

When a text is submitted for correction, whether for pedagogical or proofreading purposes, it may seem anachronistic for the author to print it out for the corrections to be made manually, especially given that the same corrections and the same comments are repeatedly made and the same reference resources recommended, often themselves hyperlinks (URLs).

On another front, there has also been a considerable amount of research and development in computational linguistics, and this has led to advances in human-machine communication, translation and speech recognition software, and new empirical findings about language itself, grammar, vocabulary and their interrelationships in particular. With the advent of

desktop computers, the backbone of this resource, the corpus, can be consulted by anyone correcting written work when they come across language that seems to deviate from normal usage. In fact, students involved in data-driven learning, as the pedagogical application of computational linguistics is known, make these observations themselves.

Whenever I give my teacher training seminar, [Using Computers in Correcting Written Work](#), the participants are often disappointed to find that technology is not going to automatically resolve the linguistic questions that linger over their students' language. This article follows on from [Krajka](#) (2002), in which he describes some of the useful tools available for correcting student work with the computer. I will refer to some of these tools, some linguistic resources that both teachers and students can use today, and how in the future these could be combined into powerful intelligent tools.

Some currently available resources

Word processors

Using a word processor to correct written work has a number of advantages. Microsoft Word (henceforth MSW), the word processor described in Krajka (2002), offers spelling and grammar checking both of which offer suggestions which can be accepted or rejected. The program is intelligent enough to recognize passives, *their are* is automatically corrected to *there are*, for example. The program offers a comma before *which* although a quick look at a concordancing program will show that this requirement is overstated. Back in MSW, the user can set the stylistic level, e.g., *casual*, *technical*, each of which makes different demands such as the use of contractions, and the very real problem of too many successive nouns. Such intelligence can be quite useful in bringing possible errors to a marker's attention. But a comprehensive list of errors in student writing is much longer than those offered by this grammar checker. As we shall see, such a list is not the best path to identifying deviations.

Another area of intelligence that some wordprocessors offer is basic text "Statistics and Readability" scores. This does not assist you in marking, but it evidences a computer's ability to perform basic statistical functions on a text as is pursued throughout this article. The Flesch Reading Ease (FRE) is a calculation based on the average sentence length and the

average word length in a text. The result is between 0 and 100, and the higher the score, the more readable the text is said to be. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level converts the number to an expression of U.S. grade-school level. At the [Juicy Studio](#) website, you can determine the FRE of a webpage by entering its URL. The statistics are explained in greater detail at [Plain Language](#). Click [here](#) to see a sample of these statistics in MSW.

For marking purposes, "Track Changes" in MSW is often used. When "Track Changes" is turned on, the alternative wording which you type over text that is nominated for editing, appears beside the original which becomes crossed out. When texts are returned to their authors, both the original form and the suggestions can be seen. They can then choose whether or not to accept them. Students could blithely accept everything recommended without making any effort to understand the nature of the error or account for the correction. This is not sound pedagogical practice and "Track Changes" is more suited to proofreading.

Markin

A program called Markin (by Martin Holmes) has been created specifically for the purpose of correcting students' written work. Unlike Track Changes, this program does not encourage the marker to provide better alternatives, although they can be added as comments. Rather, when a teacher locates an error, clicking on an appropriate button (click [here](#) to see the default button set) will automatically insert a comment in the student's text, such as Missing Word, Word Order, Article. An example of the output-as-webpage can be seen [here](#). This requires that students discover their own solutions to the problems identified, edit their work and resubmit it. The pedagogical impact of this mode of returning written work to students is described by Chappelle (1998) thus:

When errors are recognized in comprehensible output, the process of the learner's self-correction is also believed to be beneficial particularly because the linguistic items for which self-correction occurs may be those for which learners' knowledge is fragile. ... Corrections can come from learners' own hypothesis testing, from their requests for assistance from others, or from explicit correction.

While on the topic of returning Markin texts to students, there are some practical issues to be taken into consideration. Markin does not provide the marker with any way of seeing what changes the student has made: you simply have to read the edited text as if for the first time.

A split screen that allowed several editions would be very helpful, especially in the context of process writing.

Daudin-Vigot makes the following comment to her students in [Making the Most of Markin Corrections](#) that "...the html version is interactive but not editable. This is why I'm also sending the rtf version for you to make the necessary corrections." Finally, to avoid confusion when students do submit written work, instructions also need to be given regarding consistent labelling of the work.

As can be seen at the end of the [output](#) the student receives, Markin creates a table summarising positive and negative comments. It is currently possible to get a batch of statistics on a group of texts, which is a useful diagnostic tool for teaching. The group, however, does not have to consist of different students – it can be the same student on different tasks which allows an individual's improvement to be statistically depicted. I suspect that a split-screen version of the program could make even more significant statements about improvement, especially on a single process-writing task.

Markin allows the user to create new buttons for automating positive and negative feedback and the set provided contains useful standard language errors from an analytical point of view. However it does not offer any holistic marking criteria such as Reader satisfaction, Quality of argument, Style appropriateness, as belong in "end comments". Such feedback is important for student development. Since software design influences how people interact with it, the adoption of a more sophisticated concept of marking could advance the way marking is undertaken. Global statistics and readability scores of a text may also be indicative of the overall sophistication of the writing.

MS Word and Markin offer facilities that are useful to either correcting or proofreading but not enough for dealing with both. The next section describes a program that potentially meets both requirements, but it too is not without its limitations.

Wincorr

A small program called [WinCorr](#) (Kukačka and Chalupský) has been created at the FI MU for the purpose of creating a corpus of errors that native speakers of Czech make in their

academic writing. It is not currently designed to meet a wide range of potential users and consequently does not offer a wide range of options. In fact, it only exists in a Czech form at the moment. Its existence, however, invites comparison in some respects.

Once a text is loaded into the edit frame, you choose to correct an error by selecting a word or phrase. You are then offered a general menu of error types: spelling and typing, morphology or syntax, semantic or lexical, stylistic or structural, unclassified. Click [here](#) to see some screen shots.

Clicking on the relevant one of these presents you with a submenu. For example, Stylistic errors include ambiguity, errors in reference and co-reference, repeated words. The long labels make it easier to use than Markin's three letter buttons. And the linguistically-based categories draw attention to more general language areas that need attention. At the bottom of the dialogue box, you can choose how the correction should be inserted, and you can include the correct form. When printing, you can choose between including the correction data or printing only the corrected form. This combines some of the advantages of MS Word's Track Changes and Markin's error indications.

However, Wincorr's printout with the correction data is not easy on the eye, and as with Markin, the program does not exploit any linguistic intelligence.

The remainder of this article concerns language per se and how computers are employed to deal with some aspects of it. It begins with a pedagogical classification of language that derives from the lexical approach (Lewis 1993) and then exemplifies public access to linguistic resources that can be used when correcting written work.

Three categories of language error

The following sentence appeared in a recently received email from one of my ex-students:

I am not very optimistic about teaching writing any more because I find it impossible to correct competently. ... one needs to be a native speaker or very good.

Like many such teachers, she is very good, and yet not confident in this area. In some cases, such doubts are well-founded, as even native speakers can be inclined to let things through

that are not quite right, often because the focus is on meaning rather than form: if the meaning is clear, it is *enough good. There is also the pedagogical consideration that too much “red pen” can be demotivating.

Patterns, Facts and Choices

Things that are indisputably wrong do not present this dilemma. In the following attested examples, the first two are errors in the application of a grammar pattern, i.e., something that holds across an aspect of language, such as regular plurals, comparative adjectives and verbs, SVO word order.

Then the interpretation of such *situation is as follows. (missing article)

... should be hyphenated as ‘re-cord’ when it is a noun, but ‘re-cord’ *being it a verb. (unwilling to use “when it” twice).

The next two are errors of **fact**, i.e., information about a word or structure that pertains to a single item, such as *criteria* being the plural of *criterion*, or the requirement for *put* to have an object (...) and an adverbial (destination).

... which permits *to store any objects (permit + obj+ inf with to)

The second way of* object lookup is to use the knowledge of ... (way of + -ing)

Errors of pattern and fact do not present major problems for correction and should be within the realm of a computer program. The real difficulty however lies with making the best **choice** from acceptable alternatives – this ushers in the possible-probable dichotomy. John Sinclair (1991) contrasts the open-slot principle (slot and filler model) with the idiom principle. In the former, any word or phrase which can be a subject, for example, can go into that syntactic slot: the result should be a “good” sentence, as we know from Chomsky’s 1957 sentence, “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously”. See an article in [Dictionaries](#) for more on this. On the other hand, the principle of idiom is that a language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-precontracted phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments. (Sinclair 1991:110)

The following extracts from students work exemplify this.

... has a *really sophisticated mechanism ... (inappropriate style)

The strategy determines the beginning element of the ... (*beginning* is understandable but *first* or *initial* is more probable)

Last but not least, the final force is computed ... (inappropriate style – MS Word offers Finally yet importantly)

While many successful uses of language contain improbable word combinations, particularly in creative writing, smooth reading relies on a minimum of conspicuous surprises. This leads us now to the question of whether a computer tell us which word combinations are most probable.

Distinguishing between possible and probable choices

In this section, we will look at how counting co-occurrences demonstrates likelihood and then we shall examine what is publicly available for this purpose.

This table of the frequency of co-occurrences of these very common items derives from the full British National Corpus (BNC). It demonstrates, perhaps counter-intuitively, that all combinations do occur, but some are significantly more frequent than others.

	morning	afternoon	evening	night
last	11	21	64	8475
yesterday	345	196	90	4
this	4082	1703	1083	85
tomorrow	411	100	70	447
in the	3691	971	1197	585
next	1234	31	57	86
at	22	2	20	3034

The full BNC includes spoken English, which is one reason *yesterday night*, for example appears at all. And *next afternoon* is almost always preceded by *the*. The other reason is that some of these pairs of words (bigrams) are not complete adverbials but parts of phrases, e.g. *at morning service*, in

The Rev Bob Morgan said prayers at morning service at the Church of the Resurrection in Ely, just 400 yards from where Mr Reed died.

The following attested fragment contains a number of errors.

The second way of object lookup is to use the knowledge of ...

The error here that demonstrates likelihood is *way of*. This two-word phrase occurs 9,677 times in the BNC. Is it possible for *way of* to be followed by a noun (group)? Yes, 1,974 (20%) of the words which follow it are nouns. And 1,013 of those (51%) are the word *life*, 30 *things*, 12 *business* and most of those remaining are gerunds, *thinking*, *living*, *understanding* being the most frequent. In fact, with *way of life* being a chunk, the 9,677 could be reduced by 1,013 to 8,664 when considering the probable colligation patterns. With only a one-in-five chance that *way of* would be followed by a noun, a more probable alternative should be considered. There are 6,027 concordances with a present participle following *way of* which is 70% (not counting *way of life*). There are even 117 concordances containing the whole frame *way of doing XX is to*. So the most **probable** way of expressing this is *The other way of looking up an object is to use ...*. This might not satisfy the authors if “object lookup” is a term. This would then argue for more data or using a corpus specific to the domain.

In practice, it is not necessary to calculate statistics in such detail to solve most quandaries. The point is that such observations do offer the most probable way of expressing something. Importantly here, these conclusions can be reached through publicly available web-based resources.

Web-based Resources

Dictionaries and thesauri, collocation lists and word association data are all available electronically. They are faster to use and often contain more data than print resources. However, as we shall see in some of the following examples, they cannot resolve all conundrums. Since the most recently published dictionaries and grammars are distillations of corpus data, it is helpful to directly consult the data directly.

This information is available to everyone via the Internet. In this section, I will refer to two sites, namely, **Bonito** and **Just the Word**, both of which use the BNC as their corpus. To access the BNC through Bonito, it is necessary to fill in an online registration form.

Bonito

Bonito (Pavel Rychly) shows us, for example, that *needed* in *allow all needed manipulations*, an attested example, is improbable. A search of *needed* as an *adjective* returns 33 concordances, of which only eight are in fact adjectives. Entering *all needed* into Word Phrase, returns nine concordances, and all are verbs.

In the same article, the student wrote *...is very time and cost consuming*. Entering *cost consuming* into Word Phrase returns this improbable collocation once, but it is clearly spoken language and the speaker is experimenting with alternatives, as can be seen in the screen shot [here](#).

When a student wrote *with limits given by*, the improbable *given* needed to be replaced. By entering *limits* into the lemma space and choosing *noun*, it found 6,300 concordances. To find the most probable verb to follow it, click on Freqs, and enter 1R (first word to the right) and choose Lemma. The first verb in the resulting list after *be* is *set* while *bring* does not occur once.

Just the Word

[Just the Word](#) (Pete Whitelock) is another online facility that searches the BNC and provides statistically based lists of co-occurring items, both grammatical (colligation) and lexical (collocation). In the process of proofreading an academic article, I came across *primary advantage*. While the meaning is abundantly clear, it did not feel quite right. A quick search in Just the Word did not find it. When you search Just the Word for *advantage*, the significant ADJ N pairs are presented in nine semantic clusters. Click on the relevant hyperlinked colligations in the right pane to go to the clustered collocations. Click on any of those collocations in the left pane to see the actual concordances. Try it!

Both of these programs are very flexible, allowing an infinite number of searches. In the context of non-native speaker writing, they can be of much assistance in finding the most probable word choice and colligation. From just a few examples, we can see that these user-friendly resources can help us resolve the probability of a construction in question. Students could of course turn to these resources themselves in the process of writing, and much is written these days about this discovery approach, namely Data Driven Learning (DDL). For a portal into DDL, see [Tim Johns](#), the father of DDL, and the [DDL](#) page within Gateway to Corpus Linguistics on the Internet. For a discussion of the approach, see [Data-Driven Learning \(DDL\): the idea](#), by Bernd Rüschoff.

Before launching into the future, there is one other existing online resource that I would like to refer to. This is in the context of returning written work to students in a form that promotes a discovery approach.

Returning work to students

When students receive their texts back corrected using Markin, the location and nature of errors have been indicated, but alternatives have not usually been suggested. One way students can explore their errors is to look at their text through the window of a corpus, i.e., to see concordances of specific words. The online resource, [Compleat Lexical Tutor](#) (Tom Cobb, University of Quebec), has a facility for creating a hypertext version of a text. This means that when users double click on any word in the hypertext, concordances exemplifying how that word form is used in the Brown Corpus are displayed in the lower frame of the screen. From this, the solution to the language problem can often be found. The right pane displays the WordNet dictionary entry.

For the teacher, creating the hypertext involves clicking on [Hypertext Builder](#), pasting in the student's text and naming it. Click Build and its name appears which you then click to visit the hypertext page. Provide the student with its URL by pasting it into the Markin version of the student's text. It literally takes seconds to do all of this.

The concordances that the Hypertext Builder present have some limitations: they derive from the Brown Corpus which is small and old in comparison with modern-day corpora, and

secondly, the search word is not lemmatised. This means that it does not find *replaying*, *playfully*, *exams* and *dictations* as wordforms, even though *play*, *exam* and *dictation* are in the corpus. In this situation, the user can perform a manual search on a base wordform.

What the future holds

What clearly emerges from my in-service seminars is that teachers would appreciate a program with some linguistic intelligence. Markin, Wincorr and the grammar checker in MSW are all useful tools, and combining their advantages in one program would be very beneficial. But the addition of linguistic intelligence would be a great boon to the field. It exists in speech recognition programs, for example, [Dragon](#) (from Scansoft): speak to your computer and the words appear on the screen – it accurately distinguishes between *their* and *there*, for example, through grammatical analyses and awareness of context. But none of these programs indicate that any preposition after *accustomed* apart from *to*, or that *way how*, in *the way how to do something* are perilously unlikely.

As we saw in the previous section, corpora will provide us with data, but only if we ask for it: we then have to interpret it. It would be preferable if a program could indicate all the instances of unlikely word usage in a document, by identifying the type of document and then by comparing word combinations that are typical for that type.

In reference to the table of time words above, if a student writes, ... *and next afternoon I will go football*, an intelligent program could tell us that *next afternoon* is mostly preceded by *the*, but when followed by a future clause, is probably *tomorrow afternoon*. Furthermore, *to* almost always appears between *go* and *football*, or between *go* and events and venues generally.

Multi-word expressions also pose problems for the computational processing of language, as do criteria for decision-making that spans the whole text, not just the current sentence or immediate context. The greatest obstacle to realising such software is the so-called sparse data problem. A vast amount of data is needed to make statements about word choice, including those words which are grammar.

In conclusion

While the future may look rosy, the present is certainly far from grim. A skilful application of currently available software can considerably automate the marking of written work and the internet offers us rich sources of information. At the same time, skilful management of these resources can turn that information into student knowledge.

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INTERNET ENGLISH

ON-LINE READING SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN “IT” ENGLISH TEACHING

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Introduction

The question is what is meant by language acquisition? Does it mean speaking a language as well as the natives do, or it means learning a part of it in order to meet certain demands and perform certain tasks. If we accept the second definition, we can probably defend our quite optimistic standpoint, which shows our conviction that language acquisition can greatly be aided and enhanced by electronic means.

Let's narrow down language learning to learning ESP – I have been teaching IT English for several years now – and try to find out what the demands in this field are, what tasks the language user is required to perform. The first evident answer is *accessing written information on the internet*, the second may be writing emails and messages, and some more but not so frequent tasks like delivering talks at international conferences. Let's stick to the first answer and concentrate on the skill of reading comprehension.

Reading skills – what basic competences does it require from the non-native user?

I have tried to make a list (probably far from complete) and give very concrete definitions for basic starting points. I can evidently consider only the Hungarian situation – as I have had the opportunity to collect information in my long past teaching experience.

As a starting point we can state that the Hungarian labour market (employers) expect the potential employee to possess the following basic skills (minimum): ECDL computer skills and at least basic language skills (Generally English). If we take IT English and reading comprehension, the following competencies can be comprised:

- Basic general reading skills, (weak intermediate level)
- Professional background knowledge (around ECDL or above)
- Professional technical vocabulary
- Logical skills for understanding context.

By professional technical vocabulary we mean not more than around 5-600 technical words and expressions that are the most frequently used and recurring terms of technical reading passages, and the competence to use dictionaries.

By logical skills for understanding context we can mean the following mental competences:

- Global understanding from context,
- Global understanding from professional background knowledge,
- Applying analogue thinking (both in context and language accuracy problems)
- Guessing and anticipating from experience (prior suppositions)

Teaching reading comprehension in a face-to-face lesson – the teacher's role

I have tried to make a list of activities the teacher must be involved in to develop and evaluate reading skills as part of the English class activities.

They are the following (again many more may belong to this category):

- Choosing reading passages (selection according to different criteria like language level, content, motivational force, length etc.)
- Processing reading passages in class (+pre/during/post reading activities)
- Helping lexis acquisition (graded exercises to keep motivation, repetition and testing methods, techniques for memorizing – associations, etymology, similarities with mother tongue etc.)
- Developing logical skills needed for reading comprehension (guessing and expectations, associations and analogues etc.)
- Evaluation (testing knowledge – active vocabulary, and testing competence – reading skill and passive vocabulary)
- Further practice (individual work/home assignment + access/resources both traditional and electronic)

Teaching reading comprehension online – teacher’s role in developing e-materials and providing online services

a. Developing e-materials in IT English

This is a demanding and manifold task for the teacher not only because at each stage technology ties their hands (open-ended tasks cannot be included in e-learning materials, exercises should be constructed according to the limited number of templates etc.) but because the reading passages become obsolete so fast that by the time the e-material is finalized and uploaded, it may have become outdated (in some cases directly a laughing matter).

The material should comprise the following units (a longer list is possible, shorter is hardly acceptable):

- Motivating material (appropriate length and language level, correct and up-to-date content, not very specific – IT but at user level etc.)
- Exercises and activities (pre/during/post) for helping reading comprehension and lexis acquisition – with the help of templates and internal links, and enhancing logical skills development (e.g. global understanding, scanning for details, sentence analysis, analogue structures etc.).
- Self- and external evaluation tools
 - Self-evaluation: internal links to key, internal links to glossary or grammar notes etc, internal links to similar tasks. Verbal evaluation: advice on next step (further practice needed, prior unit repetition is needed etc.)
 - External evaluation (the term “teacher’s evaluation” is not always appropriate in this case): Tests (extra reading passages with related tasks) to be evaluated centrally “send” – identical to self-evaluation tasks, but usually more complex. As the e-material is not linear, can be taken at any stage.

External links to English sites with IT content (sites which are long-lasting like MS, PC Magazine etc.) and to online dictionaries.

b. Online services

Developing electronic materials without providing help for the user seems rather useless and a waste of energy. Help can be the organic part of the material, either in the form of an introduction, or with icons or other electronic means. Another type of help can be some printed booklet, which constitutes part of the learning package. Although I don’t really know from practice how a virtual consultation centre works, for my part a virtual tutor is the answer to the problem.

The virtual tutor can manage hundreds of users at the same time. Their tasks may include emailing, administration and monitoring besides evaluation and counseling.

I’m sure present teachers with their long practice of personal involvement will prefer a closer and more individualized contact keeping, which may even include personal consultations.

Sample reading passage for online learning

So far I have given a theoretical insight into my approach to online language learning. Unfortunately my past experience until now is limited: I have only developed one online IT English Reader and the database for its online practice- and examination system. My other experience comes from my participation in a Leonardo Project where we developed multimedia learning material for an online medical English course.

For the present paper I have tried to put my theory into practice and develop a short sample material, which I'm going to show you both in the electronic and in the printed form.

This material consists of the following units:

- Short English reading passage related to information technology,
- Comprehension exercises (pre, during, post) to help and check global and detailed understanding + key
- Vocabulary exercises to help technical lexis acquisition + key
- Tasks for developing logical thinking + key
- Related extra exercises for external evaluation
- Ideas for external links (related to the specific reading passage).

I have selected a passage which may be interesting for several reasons:

- it is about robots,
- it is about Japan,
- it is about Linux and not MS, it is new.

Required language level is low intermediate, required time is about 30-45 minutes.

My objectives when dealing with the reading passage have been the following:

1. to increase reading comprehension level
2. to learn new IT vocabulary
3. to do self-evaluation of reading skill development and IT vocabulary
4. to provide extra reading material (links)

The process for the lesson is the following:

1. Pre-reading tasks

Global anticipating questions: (put a tick next to the character you think gives the correct answer)

a. What country do you think of if you hear the name „Wakamaru”?

1. Japan x 2. China 3. US

b. What is a humanoid robot like?

1. It looks like a human just made of metal. x
2. It looks like a computer.
3. It looks like an alien from the Mars.

.....

2. While-reading tasks

Read the following passage without consulting a dictionary. Check un-known vocabulary with the help of the links to the Glossary - see underlined words.

“As reported earlier, Wakamaru, an experimental Linux-powered humanoid robot developed by Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, is making a guest appearance at the Embedded Systems Conference (ESC) held this week in San Francisco. The 3.3 foot tall, 60 pound robot

is described as the first human-size robot capable of providing companionship or functioning as a caretaker and house sitter. The battery-operated robot moves about on wheels and recharges itself when its batteries run low.

Wakamaru was developed by the Robotics Group of the New Products & Space Systems Department at [Mitsubishi Heavy Industries](#) and has an internal software platform that was developed using MontaVista Software's embedded Linux distribution and tool suite.

The following description of Wakamaru's capabilities was provided in a statement released by MontaVista . . .

A robot that is friendly to people and useful for your life at home.

Speaks spontaneously in accordance with family member's requirement. Has its own role in a family.

Recognizes approximately 10,000 words required for daily life and provides topics in accordance with life scenes and communicates in a friendly manner using gestures.

The robot has its daily rhythm of life, moves in accordance with time and purpose, automatically charges its batteries and lives with family members.

Connects itself to the Internet to provide various external information and services and reflects the information obtained from the contact with the owner in the succeeding service provision.

Wakamaru is expected to be initially introduced into the Japanese market beginning in 2004, priced at about 1 million yen (approx. US \$14,250).”

3. After reading:

After reading the passage once, do the following exercises.

A. Global questions:

Answer the following questions with Yes or No.

- a.) The passage is about a Japanese robot that looks like a human but it is much smaller.
(Y)
- b.) The robot will be on sale first in San Francisco at the Embedded Systems Conference.
(N)
- c.) The robot will be plugged in while moving around in the house. (N)
-

B. Detailed comprehension:

Underline the sentence/s where you find the answer to the following questions:

- Where was the robot developed? (by Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries)
- Where could it be seen? (making a guest appearance at the ESC)
- What roles can it take over? (caretaker and house sitter)

.....

C. Vocabulary exercises: (only technical vocabulary, it should concentrate on the broadly used professional lexis).

a. *Build related words from the words given! See the example: provide – provision*

1. experiment (experimental)
2. able (ability, capable)
3. require (requirement)

...

b. *Read the passage and find words with similar endings:*

(internal-external, capability, statement, daily, approximately)

c. *Build nouns from the words given and guess their meanings:*

4. use (usability)

5. state (-ment)

6. move (-ment, mobility)

....

d. *Here you are different verbs which can be made longer by adding a prefix to the beginning and this way changing its meaning. Can you put them into the different columns. Some can go to more than one! Example: cover – discover.*

Load, connect, construct, charge, date, fresh, appear – dis/up/down/re/

DIS UP DOWN RE

(up/down/reload, dis/reconnect, reconstruct, recharge, update, refresh, dis/reappear)

e. *Fill in the blanks by using the words from the passage. (with the help of this exercise the learner will read the passage once more)*

The robot will make its appearance at a conference in San Francisco. (guest)

It can as a caretaker and house sitter, (function)

The internal software platform was using embedded Linux distribution.

(developed)

....

4. Follow-up tasks

What is meant to prove here is that we can develop language skills without teaching specific structures rather developing logical thinking like drawing conclusions, using analogies, copying best practices etc.

1. How would you give the following data in a much shorter form? See example: 3,3 foot tall robot

A baby weighing 3200 dekagrams? (a 3200 dekagram baby)

A mountain that is 2000 metres high? (a 2000 metre high mountain)

A computer that is worth 5000 thousand dollars? (a 5000 dollar worth computer)

.....

2. Make one sentence from the following two by using the same structure. Example: it provides services. It connects itself to the internet – it provides services by connecting itself to the Internet.

a. The robot can recharge itself. It can move to the power supply on wheels. (it can recharge itself by moving to the power supply on wheels.)

b. The robot's capabilities were described in a statement of MontaVista. They provided the information in a conference. (The robot's capabilities were described by providing the information in a conference).

c. The robot's database is always updated. It can connect itself to the Internet. (Its database is updated by connecting to the Internet).

d.

3. *Look at the last sentence and answer my question:*

Are we sure Wakamaru will be out at the beginning of year 2004?

Use „*to be expected to*” in the answer to the following questions. Use the hints in brackets.

Example: Do you know when you will graduate from this school? (work, September) I'm expected to start work in September.

a. When will this battery run low? (last as long as the Guidebook says) (It is expected to last as long as the Guidebook says).

b. How many words can the robot recognize? (10.000 required for everyday life) (It is expected to recognize 10.000 required for everyday life.)

....

5. Related test for external evaluation

It can be of two different forms. One evaluation type is when we assess the learner's progress in a certain skill (reading in our case). So we can find a similar reading passage using similar vocabulary and test comprehension by questions checking global and detailed understanding.

1. Reading passage downloaded from the Internet – related topic using similar lexis

2. Vocabulary test: Maximum 20 points.

If your score is below 10, go back to the original reading passage and the related exercises.

1. *Fill in the blanks by writing in one word from the reading passage about Wakamaru, the robot. You can choose from the list – be careful because there are two more.*

Each correct answer is 1 point.

Accordance, battery, capable, developed, expected, experimental, external, functioning, guest, internal, recharges, update,

This (1)..... (experimental) Japanese robot was (2).....(developed) by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and made its (3)..... (guest) appearance at a Conference. This human-size robot is (4).....(capable) of recognizing thousands of words and of (5)(functioning) as a caretaker or house sitter. It has a/n (6).....(internal) software platform and uses Linux OS. ...

3. Choose one of the words by underlining the correct one.

Each correct answer is 1 point.

Wakamaru is an experiment/experimental Linux-powered robot. 2. It is capable/able to recharge itself. 3. It can provide/require companionship as a house sitter. ...

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF FUTURE EVENTS

ELEARNING FOR COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS AND COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS FOR ELEARNING INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

to be held in conjunction with COLING 2004

Geneva, Switzerland

August 28th, 2004

<http://www.issco.unige.ch/coling2004/index.html>

This workshop focuses on the relation between Computational Linguistics and eLearning within two sessions.

1. eLearning for Computational Linguistics

With the SOCRATES thematic network project "Advanced computing in the Humanities" the need for information technologies, and, in particular, eLearning in the humanities, including CL, has been identified. The survey which has been launched revealed the interest in high-quality teaching material and (distance) courses. On the occasion of a conference and a workshop, both held 1998 and 1999 resp., first results were presented in the form of project notes. Furthermore, didactic issues which concern (distance) teaching and learning of computational linguistics and language technology were raised. In the meanwhile, various projects have provided high-quality teaching material and (distance) courses for various disciplines of Computational Linguistics, like ELSNET and MiLCA. This part of the workshop should give practitioners in the field the opportunity * to share didactic experience of eTeaching CL, * to identify and to disseminate good practice models and resources, * to share novel approaches to eLearning in CL, and * to discuss curricular issues.

2. Computational Linguistics for eLearning

In the context of computer-mediated distance learning, language technology can help to enhance the accessibility of online teaching material and the adaptivity of learning management systems. * In the context of computer mediated communication, language

technology can be applied for, e.g. summarization of discussion threads and support of discourse coherence in synchronous CMC * In the context of accessibility and usability of online teaching material, language technology can be applied for, e.g., - matching of semantic representations of learning modules on the one hand and the prospective user's knowledge of the topic on the other hand; - facilitation of access to learning material by more flexible and sophisticated search methods; - improvement of retrieval by supplying metadata for learning objects on a (semi)-automatic basis; - adaptive components which adjust the system to particular users, e.g adaptation of learning management systems for disabled persons, taking into account their special needs. With this part of the workshop, we want to further address the role which language technology plays in the development of intelligent platforms for eLearning.

We want to particularly encourage submissions by scholars and software developers who present implemented and working eLearning systems in which language technology supplies a crucial part of the implemented solution. The entire workshop constitutes an informal forum for researchers and teachers to discuss the various issues, to create networks of common interests and to launch new initiatives in the area of eLearning, check <http://www.issco.unige.ch/coling2004/coling2004downloads.html> or the COLING homepage for details.

SPECIAL INTERESTS – INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

IATEFL Special Interest Groups 2004 Symposium

Volkshochschule der Stadt Bielefeld, Bielefeld, Germany

September 10-12, 2004

<http://www.iatefl.org/frameset/frame.asp?../members.asp~mainFrame>

Keynote Speakers: Willis Edmondson English as cultural chameleon?; Luke Prodromou The Idiomatic Paradox in English as an international language; Herbert Puchta Teaching for thinking in the young learners' classroom; Brian Tomlinson Localising the Global: Making Textbooks Match the Local Context of Learning

For their 2004 Symposium, the IATEFL Special Interest Groups will present a programme which addresses the theoretical, methodological and cultural issues raised by the global spread and development of English. The symposium will consist of keynote speeches and a variety of workshops and talks reflecting the diverse perspectives of the SIGs.

Times

The Symposium will begin on September 10th, at 2.45pm. Registration will be open from 12:00pm on the first day and 8:00am on subsequent days. The Symposium will end at lunch time (2:00pm) on Sunday September 12th.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be handled by the Bielefeld Tourist Services through a special arrangement with the Conference Organisers. If you require these services, please ask for our special leaflet which will give you all the details (to be had for German participants from the Bielefeld office, for all others from IATEFL Head Office). The Conference organisers cannot be held responsible for any problems incurred in this process. Your bookings will be with the establishment chosen and you will be liable for all charges.

Meals

The Cafeteria "Café Flachs" and other catering services will be offering light lunches and refreshments at reasonable prices. The "Casino" Restaurant in Bleichstrasse is just 200m from the venue; they have been alerted of this event and can seat up to 200 guest. This is a Greek-Turkish Restaurant with an international slant. Their salads are fresh and big and quick. A leaflet containing a list of eating establishments within walking distance of the venue is in your Conference Bag (green sheet).

One Coffee/Tea per break is included in your conference fee; please use your ticket in the "Café Flachs".

Symposium Dinner (Saturday 11th September 2004)

The Dinner will take place in the Sparrenburg castle sitting high over the old town on the Osning mountains and guarding the pass through the Teutoburg Forest. The castle possesses

the mightiest fortifications of any castle in Northern Germany. We will take the Dinner in the old Stables that have been preserved and converted into a very pleasant, good quality restaurant. Places are limited to 95, so we recommend you book early! Buses to the castle will leave from the venue in Bleichstrasse at 7.30pm. A three-course meal costs approx. € 28,00 excluding drinks. There are some vegetarian choices. The cost of the Dinner is **not** included in the Conference fee.

Sponsorship

The Gill Sturtridge Scholarship is available to cover all Symposium costs for one participant. If you wish to apply for this scholarship, write to the IATEFL office, and include a CV and a supporting statement of between 300 and 400 words explaining what you will gain by attending the Symposium.

ICT IN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Leiden, Netherlands,

September 17-18, 2004

<http://www.minerva-dissemination.nl/>

Main goal of the conference is discussing issues and sharing experience related to recent developments in the use of ICT in Teacher Education. Outcomes of European initiatives and projects will be presented. Discussions will be underpinned by input from a number of International experts in the field. The number of participants will be limited to 100!!

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

David Warlick of the Landmark Project has addressed conferences and delivered workshops in nearly every state of the USA and in Europe, Asia and South America. David is an innovator and leader in the field of educational technology. Redefining literacy in light of the changing nature of information Mark Brown, Massey University, College of Education, Auckland, New Zealand. Telling a different story: Lessons from ICT Teacher Education in New Zealand Hans Pelgrum Senior Researcher Center for Applied Educational Research University of Twente, The Netherlands E-Learning, ICT and teacher education: an international perspective on policies and lessons learned

Irma van der Neut is senior researcher at IVA and project manager of the annual research activities on ICT in Dutch (Teacher) Education Innovation in Dutch Teacher Education: Monitoring ambitions and developments.

Wilfried Admiraal is a researcher, teacher and administrator at the Institute of Education of Utrecht University. His activities include the project management of various European projects in the area of ICT and (Higher) Education, research in similar projects and administration of the Research Department of the Center for ICT in Education. ICT-E competence standards and professional development: a European perspective Arjan Dieleman Programme manager at the Ruud de Moor Centre for Professional Development of Teachers, Dutch Open University Development of Teacher Education and the role of ICT REPORTS AND WORKSHOPS ON MINERVA PROJECTS Odette Open and Distance Education for Teacher Training in Europe ODETTE's main aim is the development, application and evaluation of a methodology to promote flexible teacher training at a distance, focusing on supervising school practice of teacher trainees. Pronett Professionals Networking Education and Teacher Training Develop a regional and cross national learning community of pre- and in-service teachers and teacher educators supported by webbased resources and tools to collaborate and to construct shared understandings of teaching and learning in a networked classroom. Elise E-Learning (in) In-Service (teacher training) in Europe Development of e-learning modules for professionally active teachers - and for their trainers (in in-service contexts). PePCAA A Pedagogical Psychology Computer Assisted Assessment System to support Initial and Life long Teacher Training PePCAA is developing a tool which allows teacher and student teachers to self-assess their knowledge in Pedagogical Psychology, to identify knowledge gaps and to get hints how to fill it. For further information and registration: <http://www.minerva-dissemination.nl/>

ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN 2004

10TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TECHNOLOGY-SUPPORTED LEARNING
AND TRAINING

December 1-3, 2004

Berlin, Germany

<http://www.online-educa.com/en/index.htm>

With 1486 registered participants from 68 different countries representing all continents at the 2003 conference, ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN has once again established itself as the world's largest international e-learning conference and also Europe's largest gathering of e-learning and distance education professionals.

This annual conference attracts high-level decision makers from education, business and government - the three key areas driving e-learning adoption and innovation - making it the most important networking venue for experts, practitioners and newcomers from all over the world. Please note the conference language is English.

Keynote speakers in this year's Opening Plenary taking place on Thursday, December 2, 2004 will be [Nancy DeViney](#), IBM Learning Solutions, USA, [Robert Cailliau](#), CERN, Switzerland, and [Prof. Stephen Heppell](#), Ultralab, UK

Themes for Online Educa Berlin 2004: Building and Implementing E-Learning Strategies in Companies and Public Sector Organisations; Building and Maintaining the Virtual Campus; Effective and Efficient E-Learning; Creating Interactive and Collaborative E-Learning Environments; Managing the E-Learning Process; Future Trends in E-Learning Technology including the Impact of Wireless Technologies; Large Scale Deployment of E-Learning; Improving the Quality of E-Learning through Evaluation including Online Assessment and Certification; E-Learning as a Tool for Social Change.

Online Educa Berlin features various types of sessions in order to create the most comprehensive and cohesive agenda possible.

The conference agenda is divided into Pre-Conference Workshops, Pre-conference Seminars, Pre-conference Meetings, Plenary Sessions, Presentation Sessions, Debates and Discussions, Special Focus Sessions, Practical Demonstrations, Best Practice Showcase, Vendors Presentation Sessions.

Meeting the networking needs of the international e-learning and distance education industry, the annual Online Educa Berlin conference is the key networking venue for strategists and practitioners from all over the world. ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN delegates are high-level decision makers from education, business and government - the three key areas driving e-learning adoption and innovation - making it the most important networking venue for experts, practitioners and newcomers from all over the world. It is the largest gathering of e-learning and distance education professionals in Europe, enabling participants to develop multinational and cross-industry contacts & partnerships, as well as to enhance their knowledge, expertise, and abilities. ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN is held entirely in English and includes plenary sessions with world-class experts, smaller presentation and special focus sessions, practical demonstrations and debates on specific topics, as well as various informal networking opportunities where practitioners share their experiences, ideas, new information and perspectives.

The conference features the work of more than 320 speakers from 32 countries, addressing all forms of technology enhanced learning and includes a rich mix of themes, topics and a variety of session formats. It is accompanied by an exhibition and demonstration area where leading international e-learning manufacturers, suppliers and service providers present their latest products and services. Participants have come to value the exhibition as a central meeting point within the conference.

ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN is preceded by a full-day programme of workshops conducted by leading e-learning practitioners. These small, intensive sessions offer attendees a unique opportunity to fine-tune their skills and acquire new ones. The conference features a number of special events that take place alongside the conference, such as product launches, special interest group get-togethers, sponsored workshops, best practice showcases and meetings.

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)

To subscribe to "Teaching English with Technology," write to: Jarek Krajka, Editor, at jarek.krajka@wp.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 2004. Submission deadline for the next issue is September 1, 2004. 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 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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