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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

by **Jarek Krajka**

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The opening of the academic year 2003/2004 is marked with the new issue of *Teaching English with Technology - A Journal for Teachers of English.* We are perfectly aware of the fact that a large group of TEwT subscribers is composed of tertiary teachers and academic researchers, and we would like to provide them with another handful of useful ideas for the use of technology in foreign language education and pre-service training.

It seems that the nature of learning on the tertiary level is naturally conducive to the application of computers in the learning process. Due to the greater maturity of learners, the change of the role of the teacher from a knowledge transmitter to a facilitator of learning, tertiary level students are used to self-study work, can participate in online learning adventures, do treasure hunts, go on virtual telefieldtrips or use chat to engage in authentic writing interaction. Contrary to the secondary school environment, with its more guided nature and in-class interaction, where it is more likely to use computers and the Web in class to enhance lessons, the students in the tertiary sector should be shown how to work on one's own assisted with technology.

The current issue of the Journal in many ways relates to the experience of this educational sector, providing activity structures and ready-to-use websites. Thus, Pawel

Topol, from Adam Mickiewicz University , Poznan , Poland , writes about language learning enhanced with a CD-ROM package on the one hand, and distance learning courses on the other. The author tries to prove that supporting foreign language examinations by computer technology can be beneficial both for those who take exams and who organize them.

Similarly, Roberta Devlin-Scherer, from Seton Hall University , New Jersey , USA , describes a number of technological applications such as Inspiration Software, Puzzles, Games, and Quizzes, Virtual Field Trips, WebQuests, which constituted the basis of the course for pre-service teachers. The writer shows the positive experience of bringing together the pre-service training with middle school teaching, with the technology projects being spread across the courses in the program.

An interesting point of view is represented by Wlodzimierz Sobkowiak, Adam Mickiewicz University , Poznan , Poland , who makes an extensive discussion of Text-to-Speech technology (TTS) in EFL as approached from a pedagogical perspective. After the consideration of some pedagogically salient features, the paper gives examples of TTS services, websites, information and demos.

The Internet Lesson Plans section is composed of two contributions. "Telling True Stories: Blending Multimedia in a Task-based Activity" by Aiden Yeh (National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology, Kaohsiung , Taiwan) demonstrates the practical application of popular chat software (such as Yahoo! Messenger) to provide online interaction opportunities for language learners. The second contribution, "Instant Lessons – Both In and Out of the Classroom", by Rachel Ellis, shows how students can be taught using one of many lesson plans from English-to-go.com, a rich resource of lesson plans using various media.

So far the Journal has published contributions with a plethora of ideas on technology in teaching English. However, we cannot forget that in order for learners to participate in the learning experience, they need to be equipped in appropriate language structures and vocabulary. To address this issue, Katalin Fazekas from SZAMALK Post-Secondary Vocational School , Budapest , Hungary , presents an entire unit from a coursebook teaching Internet and computer English, with texts, grammatical and lexical exercises. It is hoped that

this material will prove useful in preparing our learners for technology-enhanced language learning.

The Software column has been renamed Courseware for this issue, as the contribution by Yasmine L. Howard, University of Tasmania, Launceston, Australia, "Developing 'Learner-Friendly' Courseware for TESOL: A Preliminary Investigation", deals with the issue of the courseware giving support to the learner in a web-dependent, web-supplemented and fully online environments.

Finally, Dafne Gonzalez, from Universidad Simon Bolivar, Caracas, Venezuela, in the article entitled "Teaching and Learning through Chat: A Taxonomy of Educational Chat for EFL/ESL", discusses the advantages of chat for language learning and teaching, and she presents a taxonomy of educational chat with a detailed description for teachers of the characteristics of different chat tasks with a special focus on the purpose, the role of the moderator, and the structure of the interaction to be generated.

It is hoped that this wide variety of topics raised in the current issue of *Teaching English with Technology* will satisfy the diverse needs of our readers in a number of educational settings and countries all over the world.

I wish you good reading!

ARTICLES

TTS IN EFL CALL – SOME PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Abstract

Rule-based Text-to-Speech synthesis (TTS) is discussed from the point of view of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The perspective is pedagogical rather than technological. Some didactically salient characteristics of TTS are considered, such as (a) its feasibility as a pronunciation model, (b) control afforded over accentual and phonostylistic variation of speech, (c) the prospects of multimodal synthesis ('talking heads'). Some internet website addresses featuring TTS information, products and demos are provided.

1. Introduction

CALL is different things to different people. To some it is the use of text editors in the process of writing a homework assignment. To others it is surfing the internet for language tasks and exercises. To others yet it is when they stick that EFL CD in the drive and start on lesson number five. To learners it brings the welcome air of novelty to break the boredom of the language classroom. To teachers it means that extra effort and stress of preparing and running the technology-assisted lesson, with Murphy spitefully poised to spoil the carefully constructed scenario. To administrators CALL is that expensive foible of teacher X, forever in need of new equipment, software and servicing. To developers it is yet another opportunity to build in one of the newest hard- or software gimmicks to get the edge over competition. To

parents it is sometimes the only motivation to finally give in and buy that idolatrous icon of modernity – the computer. To enthusiasts CALL is the promised land of language teaching and learning, with learners acquiring language knowledge and skills effortlessly from the machine, and the teacher walking benignly among workstations and laptops, offering help and guidance when needed. To technophobes CALL is a monster which can expose their ignorance and inadequacy, which threatens their (human/ist) ego, and which will ultimately destroy language learning as we know it today, transforming language teachers into beggars, and learners into cyborgs.

In the middle of all this commotion and controversy, CALL has now secured itself a safe position in all areas and on all levels of education, and it is certainly one of the most vibrant themes of didactic reflection and research at the beginning of the third millennium. Some of its thrust comes from the tempestuous development of computer technology; some from the concurrent, but seemingly independent, changes in FLT methodology over the last decade or so – changes away from the pure communicative paradigm, in the direction of more form-oriented teaching and learning (e.g. Doughty & Williams 1998, or Ellis 2001). It is linguistic form, after all, that computers can (so far) manipulate much better than meaning or pragmatics.

In what follows I will consider the actual and potential impact of one of the cutting-edge computer technologies on one area of EFL which has traditionally been the most form-oriented of all – pronunciation. In particular, I will look at Text-to-Speech (TTS) synthesis as part of Human Language Technologies (HLT) or Natural Language Processing (NLP). The discussion will, however, be rather low-tech, with no reference to Hidden Markov Models (HMMs), Fast Fourier Transforms (FFTs), Dynamic Time Warping and the like. For these, the reader is referred to some introductory sources, such as Cole et al. 1996, Hovy at al. 1999 or Granström, House & Karlsson 2002. Instead, the perspective will be that of a (Polish) phonetics teacher and materials developer.

2. TTS in EFL CALL

There are, fundamentally, two types of speech synthesis: by concatenation, whereby previously recorded human speech is segmented and recombined, and by rule, whereby no previous human recording is necessary in any form, but rather a complex set of rules derives phonemic representations from spelling, and then generates the segmental and suprasegmental acoustics. While the process is rather more involved than what the preceding sentence might suggest, the TTS synthesis by rule has now overcome most teething problems and reached human-like quality (cf. e.g. Dutoit 1997 and 1999). The high-end TTS engines are rather expensive, and research to improve especially the prosodic properties of synthesized speech is still under way, but the technology is now reaching the stage where it can be applied to CALL.

2.1. Synthesized speech as a FLT pronunciation model

TTS synthesis has been in existence for a few decades now, mostly in applications for use by professionals and visually impaired people. The general public has first come into contact with 'robotic' speech in a variety of telephone information systems, such as train or air timetables. The two quality criteria proposed for such systems have been intelligibility and naturalness (d'Alessandro & Liénard 1996), rather than phonetic correctness with reference to some FLT norm. Thanks to both technological developments (processor speed, cheap memory, better DA converters) and linguistic research, all three criteria have now been reached. Not only is (top-quality) synthesized speech intelligible and natural (click here for a few short demos: http://elvis.naturalvoices.com/demos/), but it can also actually function as a model of pronunciation. For example, *Filoglossia*, a CALL package with (modern) Greek as a foreign language, already employs TTS synthesis: http://www.ilsp.gr/filoglossia_plus_eng.html, and WordPilot (http://www.compulang.com), also has this feature.

This creates a completely new situation in pronunciation-oriented CALL. So far, most of the CALL CD-ROMs (and most of the internet bandwidth for on-line speech-enabled courses and applications) was taken by audio (and video) recordings of speech in a variety of formats, including the space-saving mp3. It was believed that only good quality pre-recorded native speech can be profitably used in an educational CALL setting. But if the trick can be done with a TTS algorithm of a few megabytes, the freed space (bandwidth) can be used for other software, including e.g. artificial intelligence routines, which are crucial in sustaining a

continued dialogue between the machine and the human. And, naturally, speech synthesis is by far less expensive than recording a team of highly trained human speakers.

The space and bandwidth savings are rather trivial technicalities, of course, from the point of view of FLT. Even if some CALL objectives and functionalities had to be compromised in the past due to space restrictions, the advent of DVD and wideband internet is guaranteed to change this facet of CALL completely. This has already happened in the US , and will eventually come to Poland as well.

2.2. Accent control

But there are more pedagogically interesting ramifications of TTS. One of them is the degree of control which the developer has over synthesized speech. Practically all speech variables can be manipulated at will. Take accent, for example. EFL CALL packages and electronic dictionaries for learners have so far catered for at most a few selected accents of English, usually the British RP on the one hand, and the American GA on the other. Some CALL programs would also include texts spoken in other accents, e.g. Australian, because learners' acquaintance with a variety of 'Englishes' has been at a premium in the communicative approach to EFL teaching and learning. But that was the limit of what could be achieved with pre-recorded speech. The learner could not listen to the same text spoken in different varieties of English as this would require wholesale duplication of recordings, and this was (and is) not feasible for a number of reasons. A well-tuned TTS synthesis system will allow the learner to pick the accent at will because – to the extent that accentual variation is rule-governed – the developer will be able to program the salient variables, such as, e.g. vowel quality, rhotacism, flapping, and the like for American English. The simple TTS synthesis plug-ins available for free off the web include the British and American accents as a matter of course (e.g. ReadPlease: www.readplease.com).

2.3. Phonostylistics

Nor is this the end of programmable phonetic variation, of course. Consider phonostylistics, i.e. variation related to the tempo and style (roughly casualness) of speaking.

While accents are usually rather sharply categorized into their respective pigeon-holes, at least for pedagogical purposes in the EFL setting, the phonostylistic variation is evidently a continuum with no clear-cut boundaries, from overcorrect citation-form enunciation at one end, through reading and scripted speaking, to highly reduced allegro speech at the other end. In real life all this variation is heavily context-dependent, of course, with subject matter, situation, speakers/listeners, and a host of other factors all playing their roles. All this colourful phonostylistic kaleidoscope was of necessity mapped onto a grayscale of rather formal speech, with each text frozen forever in one stylistic rendition given to it by the recorded speaker. And yet, as is well known, understanding casual fast speech in naturalistic native settings is among the hardest tasks which the learner of EFL pronunciation must face.

Style-aware TTS synthesis could go a long way to help learners in their endeavours. The phonetic exponents of phonic styles in English are (at least partly) rule-governed and reasonably well understood: vowel reduction to schwa, schwa deletion, sonorant syllabicity, palatal coalescence, alveolar assimilations and elisions, for example, are all phonostylistically sensitive, and have gathered a sizeable bibliography. It is, I believe, mostly a matter of time for the TTS engines to be equipped with appropriate phonostylistic routines and algorithms. These will not only contribute to the overall impression of naturalness of synthesized speech, but will actually support a variety of phonostylistics-oriented tasks and exercises in CALL packages. Even (learners') electronic dictionaries would benefit, for – although today they only speak headwords rather than definitions or example sentences – even single lexical items spoken in isolation can be phonostylistically more or less appropriate: those marked as informal, slang or taboo are sometimes paradoxically pronounced in an incompatibly high style by the bored list-reading speaker.

To the extent that phonetic variation can be coded orthographically, tweaking orthography can crudely simulate a number of phonemic and allophonic processes, such as elisions or assimilations. For example, entering 'tem players' will TTS-synthesize a bilabially assimilated nasal alveolar, while 'coat' will obviously generate a Polglish-devoiced pronunciation of 'code'. There is ample space for experimentation here, but care should be taken as various TTS engines will react differently to nonce strings (mostly depending on the availability and structure of the built-in lexicon). For the sake of my T6 conference (http://www.ictconference.gliwice.pl/) presentation in Gliwice I attempted a rather crude

approximation to the in-spe subtle control over phonostylistic aspects of English speech. I uploaded a short text for synthesis with the Festival TTS engine on the Bell Labs web page (http://www.bell-labs.com/projects/tts/; this service is now discontinued, but see ATT webpage at the URL address specified below). One version of the text had orthographic alterations meant to simulate some phonostylistic phenomena: final alveolar stop deletion, affricate weakening, nasal 'bleaching'. The text which I uploaded was (without brackets): "My name is Radek. I welcome all presen[] in hall C-1 at professor Sobkoviak's lec[s]ure. My task is convincin[] you abo[w] the high level of Bell speech synthesis". The effect (http://elex.amu.edu.pl/~sobkow/tts/RadekFastFestival.wav) is best audially compared to the unaltered version (http://elex.amu.edu.pl/~sobkow/tts/RadekFestival.wav): "My name is Radek. I welcome all present in hall C-1 at professor Sobkoviak's lecture. My task is convincing you about the high level of Bell speech synthesis". Some 'casual speech' effects are of course more convincing than others, but notice that all were achieved by a rather primitive method of orthographic manipulation. With full control at the level of the TTS engine, real phonostylistics can easily be attempted.

2.4. Foreign accent simulation

The accentual, dialectal and phonostylistic variation within the native norm does not exhaust the pedagogically useful control possibilities in TTS synthesis. It would be technically rather easy to simulate a foreign accent, for example to better demonstrate to the learner the areas which need improvement (e.g. final devoicing in Polish English). This is something which few native speakers would be capable of, and while it is not unimaginable to employ non-natives for the job, it would clearly verge on impossible to be able to control just the wanted phonetic variables to the exclusion of others. Expert non-native phoneticians could be resorted to for a better command of the phonetic interlinguistic intricacies, but this would again be troublesome for other reasons. The precise phonetic control afforded by a TTS system can hardly be improved.

Simulating a foreign accent of English by computer for didactic purposes is not a new idea. In 1997 Hyouk-Keun Kim created his *Korean Accented English Pronunciation Simulator* (http://odin.prohosting.com/hkkim/cgi-bin/kaeps/kaeps_home.htm), rightly noticing that "Most adult ESL/EFL learners [...] do not recognize the problems of their English

pronunciation", and that it might be a good idea to demonstrate these under computer control. Eventually a rule-based KAEPS system was set up, simulating "three types of English pronunciations in the IPA symbols: 1) a phoneme-based English pronunciation, 2) a desirable allophone-based American English pronunciation, and 3) a possible Korean accented English pronunciation". While Kim's system has never advanced beyond accented graphemic (i.e. IPA) representation, it would be easy enough to attach the IPA-to-speech engine to it. After all, most TTS systems use phonetic transcription at some stage of the synthesis process.

Notice that, like in the case of phonostylistic variation, L1-accented English speech is really a continuum of interlanguage, roughly correlated with the traditional dimension of proficiency. To take a Polglish example: initially Polish learners of English will tend to force the English vowel system into the Procrustean bed of their native 6-point system. At this stage, all of English /æ/ ːɐ, /ɒ/, /ʌ̃/ tend to fuse into Polish /a/. Later /ɒ/ tends to emancipate itself and the back and central vowels take their respective positions, with /ʌ̃/ the last to be properly interpolated between Polish /a/ and /e/. An L1-sensitive TTS system would be able to dynamically adjust its parameters to realistically simulate spoken Polglish at these various stages of proficiency. Needless to say, the relevant phonetic bibliography on the dynamics of English-targeting interlanguage speech development is by far more modest than that devoted to intra-English variation. This is particularly true of such minority L1's as Polish, unfortunately. The bottom line is, then, that much more fundamental research would be needed to feed into the creation of a Polglish speech simulator.

2.5. Non-human speech

If the argument is accepted that listening to variably L1-accented speech, produced and manipulated under computer control, might help learners first notice and then get rid of their accent, the logical extension is to take it one step further, like Keller & Zellner-Keller (2000a) did, noting that "speech synthesis allows [...] the creation of sound examples that could not be produced by a human being (e.g., speech with intonation, but no rhythm)". Demonstrations like this are located somewhere between teaching foreign pronunciation as one practical language skill (on a par with reading and writing, say) and teaching foreign phonetics as declarative knowledge. The latter is done as part of the so-called 'descriptive grammar' in the Polish academic philological setting. The recent rapprochement of these two kinds of courses,

partly stimulated by the 'focus-on-form' movement in EFL mentioned earlier, makes the Kellers' idea quite attractive. Notice, incidentally, the peculiar paradox: TTS synthesis was initially developed (and is still perfected) to make artificial speech sound as human-like as possible, but for some didactic applications it is actually beneficial to create more 'robotic' speech.

2.6. Visual synthesis

The most advanced TTS systems now available go beyond the simple (?) unimodal audio synthesis, into the exciting world of face animation, featuring the so-called 'talking heads' or animated agents. One of the most successful applications of this cutting-edge computer technology to CALL has been the University of Colorado Center for Spoken Language Understanding (CSLU) "Baldi" project (http://cslr.colorado.edu/toolkit/main.html). In brief, it is an NLP environment focused on the use of TTS synthesis and Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), enhanced with the animated face ("Baldi", Figure 1; Baldi has recently been superseded by other faces, but the essentials of the system remain) simulating phonetically realistic articulatory movements in real time.

Figure 1. "Baldi". http://elex.amu.edu.pl/~sobkow/tts/Baldi1.jpg

Visual object programming, speech spectrography and many other components are integrated in the Rapid Application Developer which makes it possible to create a simple dialogue schema in minutes, which can then be built into another application, such as CALL for example (see http://www.haskins.yale.edu/haskins/heads.html for a comprehensive interactive overview of many other 'talking head' projects).

What is most exciting in the package (which is free for educational purposes) is the novelty of using the animated face to enhance speech synthesis and make the spoken exchange more realistic. Baldi not only moves his lips and eyes to provide the much needed – especially in the context of learning a foreign language – visual information to aid intelligibility. It can also 'go transparent', exposing the realistically rendered inner articulators in full motion, down to the root of the tongue (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Baldi gone transparent. **http://elex.amu.edu.pl/~sobkow/tts/Baldi2.jpg**

This is an incredible resource for pronunciation learners, of course: they can listen to natural (if synthesized) speech and see how it originates in the mouth. The head is quasi-3D; it can be rotated in all three dimensions with the mouse, and the amount of transparency can also be adjusted at will, the extreme leaving just the articulators on screen.

The CSLU toolkit, where Baldi lives, has so far been used mostly to assist speech and language therapy of native American children, but its application to EFL CALL (and other L1's – Baldi can be programmed for any language whatsoever) is just a matter of time. Also, it is enough to go to the movies nowadays to see the level of realism which animation of human-like synthetic actors has achieved (e.g. "Shrek" or "Lord of the Rings"; see also Thalmann & Thalmann 1990). In a few short years animated anthropomorphic agents will be used in CALL, which will be hard to tell apart from video-recorded real human speakers. One technical consequence of this will be – like with the TTS synthesis – that more CD space will be freed from the enormously memory-hungry current video files. It is much harder to predict learner reactions to (semi-intelligent) speaking and animated human-like agents acting as conversation partners in settings which are now only available in video conferencing. Learners may relate to these artificial personas to the extent which may be pedagogically relevant, with both its pros and cons.

3. TTS on-line demos

There are many players in the field of TTS synthesis, both academic and commercial. Most would offer some information about their research and products on the Internet, including passive and interactive demos. The latter are of course by far more exciting from the point of view accepted here, i.e. that of a EFL pronunciation teacher. While most demos would only allow to enter a rather short piece of orthographic text for synthesis, some measure of deliberate spelling manipulation is afforded (like I did above with Radek).

Without attempting a comparative description and analysis of the many TTS systems available on the Web, I will close this section with a few best-known URL addresses, and let the interested reader experiment on his/her own.

Some of the best-known TTS systems and their manufacturers:

- Centre for Speech Technology Research: http://www.cstr.ed.ac.uk/projects/festival/

- ScanSoft's RealSpeak: http://www.scansoft.com/realspeak/demo/

- Prosynth Project: http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~lang19/

- ATT Labs: http://www.research.att.com/projects/tts/

- Elan Speech: http://www.elantts.com/

4. Conclusions

Text-to-Speech Synthesis is of course only one branch of the NLP tree. In this text no attention was paid to Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), Machine Translation (MT), multimodal man-machine communication, automatic information extraction (data mining) and summarization, language generation, multilingual resources, speaker/language identification, speech evaluation techniques, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and a number of other areas in one way or another concerned with natural language processing. All of them are potentially of interest to foreign language educators. Some have been recognized as such, and work is going on exploiting their potential, e.g. ASR. Some are still *in statu nascendi*, struggling with technological problems and lack or inadequacy of relevant linguistic research, e.g. AI. But it is a safe guess that sooner or later (most probably – sooner) all of these human language technologies (HLTs) will arrive at the door of Foreign Language Teaching, EFL in particular (and soonest), demanding to be accommodated. FL teachers should better be prepared, lest pedagogy be compromised for sheer technology.

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MULTIMEDIA, THE WEB AND FORMAL EFL EXAMS

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Abstract

Most CALL software available are material-presenting packages or sets of exercises and tests (or a combination of both). The article discusses two (author and co-author) examples of how computer technology can support real EFL exams:

- A multimedia CD-ROM package, "FCE", that prepares for the *First Certificate in English* exam. The package contains more than 1,000 linguistic tasks, as well as two full-time simulations of the real exam.

- The "Multimedia Distant English Courses…" for Polish students of technical universities (within the *Leonardo da Vinci* European Union project). The student learns, practices and takes on-line tests and exams.

Background - Glottodidactic Software

Computer software supporting learning and teaching has a long history. Educational programs were popularized shortly after the introduction of home computers, for example Sinclair Spectrum, Commodore and Atari. The programs were usually single tests, small sets of exercises and/or short practical tasks for the learner. Their modest forms and content could be explained by limited memory and generally low capabilities of contemporary hardware. The scope and shape of educational programs changed and expanded with time, together with the rapid development of computer technology. During the last twenty years or more simple computer-based didactic tasks transformed into complex, multipurpose, multimedia packages.

Languages, especially English, were those "privileged" teaching subjects in humanities that were fairly well supported with educational software. It seems now that English as a foreign language (EFL) has the richest library of computer educational tools among all languages, if not all teaching subjects. This situation is rather natural: English has been an international language for years, first computers came from English-speaking countries. The status of English has been strengthened lately by the popularization of the Internet and WWW.

Are there many EFL computer packages available on the Polish market too? I think there are very many interesting programs. Unfortunately, they are badly advertised. Most ads appear in popular-science magazines, e.g. CHIP, Enter, ComputerWorld. I am afraid they are not periodicals that are extremely popular among English teachers. A few years ago I started my own database which contained basic information about CALL (computer-assisted language learning) packages supporting EFL released in Poland . The database contains more than a hundred records now. This means that an English teacher or a learner of the English language has a choice of over 100 CD-ROM packages in Poland now. It is worth mentioning that many of them are sets of CD's. Some contain 6, 8 or even 10 discs ("Euro Plus+", "Tell Me More", Langmaster series etc.). However, the information about the programs came mostly from those popular-science magazines mentioned above. I am sure there are a lot more packages available on the Polish market.

What kinds of CALL packages do we find then? I would divide them into four groups: (1) multimedia encyclopedias, thematical guides, lexicons and other encyclopedia-type publications, (2) language courses, electronic books and different material-presenting software, (3) language games, learning-through-entertainment software, and (4) programs

checking the learner's knowledge or skills: collections of exercises and tests. The first group comprises mostly encyclopedias (e.g. Britannica, "Microsoft Encarta", "Microsoft Bookshelf for Windows", Hutchison, Grolier) and dictionaries (e.g. Collins Cobuild, Webster, Oxford). The second group is represented mostly by recognized EFL courses published previously in the traditional, paper form, now transferred onto an electronic carrier, CD-ROM. The packages are, of course, supported by exercises and tasks that make use of the computer's capabilities, and would be hard or impossible to provide traditionally, on paper (e.g. "Euro Plus+" based on the "Flying Colours" series by Heinemann). The third group are either games which contain some educational content (e.g. "All-in-One Language Fun") or educational packages supplied with some entertaining elements (e.g. "Lingualand"). The fourth group comprises programs which describe and test selected grammatical, lexical or phonetic issues (e.g. "Professor Henry" series, "Fonetyka w pigułce"). Large collections of exercises and tests also belong to this group (e.g. "PopEnglish", "ETeacher").

In the discussion on different CALL applications, we cannot forget about the Internet. I would distinguish two types of language teaching/learning aids here: educational webpages and web-based CALL software. There are hundreds or thousands of EFL WWW pages. Let us systematize them now:

- homepages of educational publishers known from their traditional, paper production: coursebooks, periodicals, books (Longman, Cambridge Press, Collins, etc.);

- pages by editors of dictionaries and encyclopedias (Webster, Oxford , Collins, etc.);

- homepages of traditional and virtual educational institutions and organizations: universities, colleges, schools, courses and other forms of formal training;

- educational (e.g. EFL) portals;

- homepages of commercial and non-commercial educational software publishers;

- websites – collections of traditional teaching and learning materials: different tests and exercises, English literature in the original or adapted to instructional needs, sets of language tasks for language improvement and many other teaching/learning aids;

- so-called private pages: websites designed by individual, informal, not institutionalized WWW users: educators, teachers, students and hobbyists. Many of those represent a very high professional standard.

Web-based computer software are programs located in the Internet. They are operated remotely from the individual user's computer screen. They should not be confused with downloadable software that is located on the web. These programs, when downloaded and installed, work locally from the user's hard disc. The best examples of remote (web-based) CALL software are on-line dictionaries, encyclopedias and glossaries. On-line language courses belong to this group too. Connecting with such a page activates a special remote program which guides the user through the course, presents material, runs exercises, displays results, and performs many other organizational tasks.

Summing up, almost all CALL programs support the process of learning and teaching. The teacher receives tools that can be incorporated in the classroom along the language course. The learner can use different programs individually in order to improve the general knowledge and skill of the language, or work on selected linguistic issues. Thus, CALL packages are teaching/learning aids, additional to all sorts of traditional materials.

Very few computer applications are designed for formal examination use. On the other hand, very few existing formal, official language exams make use of computer technology, in Poland too. One of the reasons is that software developers and producers are not willing to get involved in special-purpose computer applications for marketing reasons. However, I believe the market response to such software production could be quite positive, at least in the case of common, official or state exams. For example, a program preparing for "matura" (secondary education final exam), or English Departments entrance exams at Polish universities, would sell quite well.

EFL exam on the computer screen – a local example

It is generally known that using teaching aids and materials in addition to the basic textbook along the course of a foreign language is a highly preferable activity. Similar dependence takes place on the side of the learner. The student can improve the process of learning by using different additional tools and materials, including computer software. In the case of a general English course the situation is rather comfortable, because the variety of different programs available is very wide. It is much worse in the case of real formal exams. Such packages are hardly ever produced.

An example of such a package I would like to describe briefly refers to the worldwide known examination, *Cambridge First Certificate in English*. The exam is very popular in Poland , and its popularity is growing year by year. FCE exams are performed by local agendas of the British Council in several cities and towns in Poland (more information is available directly at http://www.britishcouncil.pl/education/polfce.htm, the website of the BC Polish branch). The package I am introducing holds the same name, "**FCE**", and has been produced by SuperMemo World, a computer company in Poznań , Poland . More information about the package can be found at http://www.supermemo.pl/index.php?page=21160 .

This is a multimedia package on CD-ROM which prepares for the FCE exam mentioned above. It is neither a textbook nor an English course – it is a huge collection of exercises and linguistic tasks which can help the user estimate his/her linguistic competence and skill in the context of the FCE exam standards. The package contains over 1,000 tasks similar to those the user can expect at the real examination. The word *similar* is used here intentionally – one should not expect exactly the same questions. However, I have tried to make all the tasks as close to the original ones as possible, both in content and form. Hence the package "brings" the user much closer to the real exam tests than most or even any other preparatory, computer-based materials.

The linguistic content is based on both formal and colloquial English on the intermediate level. The exercises are divided into five groups according to the division of the original exam into the following parts parts: Reading , Writing, Use of English, Listening and Speaking. The groups are comparable in size, which means that the user can expect about (or a little more than) 200 questions and tasks in each group.

The huge collection of exercises constitutes the main part of the program, however, there is another powerful feature of the "FCE" package: exam simulations. This is a separate module which contains two simulations of the real FCE exam. Here, the user is given questions to answer, problems to solve and tasks to do in the same sequence and similar form. The time is limited and the user is given the score after completing the whole exam. This part of the package is quite exceptional when compared with other EFL multimedia production. Presumably no other program available in Poland , or elsewhere, does the two things at the same time: prepares and tests exactly for a specific exam, and simulates it.

A crucial question in this discussion is the reliability of the simulation, to what extend it is possible to imitate real class situations, whether all the examination tasks can be performed via the computer screen effectively, whether the final grade is representative, etc. First, let it be stated clearly that "full" computer simulations of face-to-face situations are hardly possible. Even the best, the fastest and the most capacious modern computers cannot handle a natural discussion. The situation is similar with open questions. The longer the student's utterance is, the more difficult it is for the machine to assess it. Thus, there are parts of the exam that cannot be simulated by the computer by any means, e.g. essays. The computer can check spelling quite easily, though it is much harder with grammar, or almost impossible with style. It is far beyond the computer's capabilities to take a position on the student's metaphors, wit, irony or meta-language. One can hardly imagine a situation in which the computer could replace the examiner in the Speaking part of the exam.

The Reading part is rather easy to simulate. Even if the text is too long to fit the computer screen, the user can scroll it in a separate window and answer the given questions. The Use of English is probably the easiest part to be adapted to computer-based exercises – it checks grammar, syntax, vocabulary, word collocations and other elements which can be *atomized*, i.e. presented on the screen in the form of short questions and answers. The

Listening part can also undergo certain atomization. First, the student listens to the whole of the text. When specific questions appear on the screen, the user is given opportunity to play back the part of the text the question refers to, usually two or three paragraphs. This portion is short enough to draw the user's attention to the issue, and long enough to mask the issue in question. Speaking had to be atomized because performing a real conversation with the computer is still technologically impossible. The student is given a question and then asked to answer it aloud. Then a number of alternative answers are displayed, and the student can compare his/her response with the suggested ones.

The same method of comparison is used in Writing, the most difficult part to simulate. The student's task is to write an essay. First, the title is given and a more detailed explanation of the task. Then, specific instructions of how the task should be performed are displayed, together with the very detailed criteria of how the essay will be evaluated and assessed. The student is asked to write the essay on paper, read it again and compare the essay with a model answer. A model essay is displayed on the next screen. The student is then asked to grade him/herself according to the grading scale given before. It is enough to click on the appropriate button on the screen: "excellent", "very good", "good"...

One would say the reliability of the test suffers when students grade themselves. This is true, however, the dilemma is whether to include such an element (being aware of its limited reliability), or to exclude the whole part from the simulation. The former solution seems to be good compromise. Nevertheless, we are considering hiring a tutor. The user could send in the texts electronically, the tutor would correct them, and the learner would receive them back with some additional comments.

The learner can use both the simulation and the main parts of the package repeatedly. After the simulation is completed, a report is displayed which then can be saved on disk for future reference. As for the main parts, each answer to single questions is recorded by the program. Then the computer calculates the so-called forgetting curve, and plans in time repetitions of unanswered or wrongly answered items.

The main types of activities in both simulations and main parts of the package are:

- multiple choice test (one correct choice out of three or four);

- filling blanks (missing word or phrase in a sentence);

- matching exercise (drag-and-drop technique);

- pointing the appropriate element on the screen (e.g. "click on the person's forehead");

- indicating the incorrect element in a sentence;

- descriptive tasks which require longer utterances, exemplified by model answers and possible alternatives.

Almost all texts that appear on the screen have been recorded by native speakers. The user can play them back freely at any time.

Both the simulations are time limited, they are 3-hour versions of the test. In my opinion they can help the student feel the climate of the genuine FCE exam. I also believe that people who prepare to the exam individually can benefit from the package as well as those who attend official preparatory courses.

EFL course exam – a remote example

The computer screen, or rather its working area, is called "Desktop". The term is indeed accurate: the user arranges this area with most frequently used tools, just like on a regular desk. The computer desktop presents them in the form of icons. The icons are actually shortcuts to programs installed on local drives, to documents or folders, as well as remote applications located "somewhere" on the web.

Formal web-based instruction takes usually two forms: (1) there are virtual educational institutions which function totally on line, (2) some "traditional" schools and/or universities offer selected courses that can be available electronically, in the Internet. They are often specialization courses or courses for special purposes, integrated projects, or single subjects performed remotely – foreign languages including. I would like to present an example of such a virtual, remote EFL examination application.

The EFL platform I will discuss briefly belongs to the Leonardo da Vinci Project performed under the aegis of the EU. Generally speaking, it is a multi-module course dedicated to students of Polish technical universities. The course covers some specialized subjects, technological issues, and is provided in English only. The full name of the program is „Multimedia Distant English Courses for Polish Users in Legal, Banking and Finance, Science and Technology, and Safety Training Sectors with Elements of European Union Regulations and Standards". The venture is a result of co-operation between two Polish technical universities: Poznań TU and Gdańsk TU, and the University of Wolverhampton, Great Britain.

> "The Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) is one of the three education programmes of the European Union implemented in Poland which contribute to the implementation of its vocational education and training policy. The overriding aim of the programme is to promote activities focused on upgrading the quality of VET systems and adapting the system of education to the labour market needs. The programme provides a framework for transnational cooperation in the sphere of raising quality, fostering innovation and promoting a European dimension in vocational education and training systems, approaches and practices."

The above definition comes from LdV materials. More details are available at http://www.bkkk-cofund.org.pl/, the site of the Polish Agenda of the program – "The Task Force for Training and Human Resources". The largest source of information about LdV can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo/leonardo2_en.html.

As I mentioned above, the course is dedicated to Polish students, though provided in English. A general idea of the project design was to join the content-related issues with the communicative aspects. The objective of the course is to train the student in specialization subjects on the one hand, and to check the student's linguistic competence on the other. I am a co-author of one of the modules.

The *Internet Technologies Module* (P. Topol, A. Adamczyk) takes a special position in the whole course because it covers the issues which should constitute basic knowledge of the Internet among students of any technical school. Therefore, this module has been made obligatory for all the students undergoing any of the specialization modules. Here is the list of most of the issues discussed in the ITM:

- standard Internet services (electronic mail, telnet, ftp, discussion groups, irc, gopher, www);

- advanced services (video on demand, audio- and videoconferences, distant education, e-commerce, e-banking, ip telephony, push channels, portals and vortals, etc.);

- internet services and browsers (Microsoft Internet Explorer vs. Netscape Communicator, off-line browsers and Teleport Pro);

- html and additions (server-side additions, client-side additions);

- authoring tools for the www (programs for graphics authoring, programs for music authoring);

- intranet – practical issues (creating and managing resources);

- technologies and tools of the intranet;

- security issues (network security, information encryption).

The student reads portions of information on a few screens and then does exercises. Each fragment (chapter) is provided with tests, and there are additional exercises and tasks at the end of the whole module. There are different types of manual tasks, e.g.:

- different forms of multiple choice test: pointing the appropriate answer with the mouse, clicking on the correct element (checkboxes, radio-buttons), selecting the answer from a pull-down menus (classification of correct answers);

- filling gaps: writing words or phrases;

- matching (drag & drop technique): two columns of items, hierarchy, ordering.

There are also problem-solving activities. The first screen of such an exercise introduces a short text to be displayed on the next screen, and presents some keywords, key phrases or key issues the student should pay special attention to. Then the full text is displayed which never exceeds one computer screen. The student reads the text without time limits. The third screen shows the correct answers and gives some supplemental information and/or comments. Sometimes screen 3 contains additional tasks for the student and the answers are given on screen 4.

Many exercises are supported by audio recordings performed by native speakers. In some exercises the student listens to a text first and then writes the answer. There are many exercises where the student can check the pronunciation having given the answer in the written form. The main texts in the module have not been audio-recorded because of technical and organizational reasons. This issue is being discussed now, they may be recorded in the next edition of the project.

The student's answers in exercises and tests are checked automatically by the computer in most cases. One of the main goals of the project design was to make the process of student assessment possibly highly automatic. There are situations, however, where some corrections have to be made by a tutor or a person monitoring the student's progress.

The Leonardo webpage can be entered in two ways: as a student and a tutor. The student is allowed to look through the course and perform tasks. Each time an answer is given, the student is informed about its correctness immediately. The student can go through an exercise more than once, then the computer stores the results for each take respectively. The

tutor can monitor the learners' achievements: which student completed which tasks with what result. The tutor can browse all the student's answers, comment on them and also make corrections to the grades given by the computer. This last feature has been added in case an unpredictable factor occurs, and a "manual" correction or assessment will be necessary.

Each module is supplied with some additional tools: chat, calendar and discussion group. Students can chat both with other students and tutors. The calendar functions as a mutual reminder of events, terms, due times, etc. Both tutors and students can add to the calendar. This refers to the discussion group too. All the tools are internal parts of the system. They are available only for those who have logged in to the server. Logging is authorized and password-checked.

The student completes the course and a final grade is calculated. All the student's answers along the module are taken into consideration: both from intra-tests attached to each chapter and from the final tasks. The final result is actually a compound of the student's professional preparation as well as linguistic competence. Thus, LdV is neither a strictly technical course nor a typical EFL project – it is a combination of both.

Conclusion

Both examples described in the article were put in practice in 2001. "FCE" met with positive reviews in popular magazines. It was among a few packages that received an award of the "Product of the Year 2001" in the category of educational computer software, granted by the "CHIP" magazine. The market response to the package is also optimistic. However, no research has been done on its actual usefulness, i.e. if it really proved a value for those who used the package for their own practice and then took the FCE exam. I am considering a survey that would gather such opinions. There are obstacles, e.g. how to reach those people, though the Internet might be the right tool to perform such an investigation.

The latter example, the LdV system, received positive reviews too. It was tested by students of Technical University in Poznań . The project is by all means successful, however, there are elements both in the system and the courses that need improvement. It is worth mentioning, however, this was the first phase of the LdV program. Now we are looking forward to its second edition.

To conclude with a general remark, EFL examinations seem to be a forgotten or neglected area on the computer market. Software developers and producers concentrate mostly on general language courses or multi-purpose sets of exercises. The projects discussed in the article show that supporting foreign language examinations by computer technology can be beneficial for both parties: those who take exams and who organize them.

SOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR PRESERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS AS TECHNOLOGY USERS

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Abstract

This article describes technological applications (Inspiration Software, Puzzles, Games, and Quizzes, Virtual Field Trips, WebQuests) that English Language Arts preservice teachers were able to develop and conduct with middle school students in two urban school sites. Preservice teachers' reactions to their efforts are included with recent web sources that guided their work. Successes and problems are noted. Cooperating teacher encouragement, access to computers, and support from the university class appear to be factors that contributed to their accomplishments.

Introduction

Internationally, there is interest in infusing technology in English programs and concern for adequate training for teachers (Hughes, 2003). Reports, articles, and conferences in the United States have advocated adoption of technology to foster student learning (DOE,

2000; McLester, 2002; NASBE, 2001; November, 2001; NECC, 2001; ICTE, 1999; Wisconsin University System, 2001; Wodarz, 2001). The timing is appropriate. An anticipated teacher shortage in the United States provides teacher education an opportunity and responsibility to revise their programs to prepare preservice teachers to use technology effectively in classrooms. Since 1999, the United States Department of Education has supported an initiative for promoting technology use by educators, the Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) grant program. Participants have been charged with forming partnerships to implement innovative ways to address the need to expand the use of technology in K-12 schools and in teacher education programs. Preservice teachers are beginning to learn computer skills in their teacher education programs, but often in isolated courses. They usually have not used technology with students in their field experiences (Gibson, 2002; Whetstone, L. & Carr-Chellman, A., 2001).

During the three years of the PT3 grant at Seton Hall University in South Orange , New Jersey , the university worked closely with two nearby urban middle schools to increase the use of technology in teaching. The purpose of this article is to discuss technology applications English Language Arts (ELA) preservice teachers were able to use with grade 5-8 students as well as the sources that enabled them to develop the varied applications. ELA preservice teacher perspectives on their lessons are shared as well as factors that contributed to their success.

 Background

For nearly a decade, Seton Hall University has advocated and supported faculty use of technology. All undergraduate students and faculty have been provided laptops, and training for faculty on ways to infuse technology in their teaching has been continuous and extensive. In 1999, EDUCAUSE recognized the university for superior campus networking. In 2001, Yahoo Internet Life's "America's Most Wired Colleges" ranked the university 14th among United States' campuses and first among Catholic universities, for its hardware, academics and services in technology.

The secondary education program at Seton Hall has a strong commitment to develop teachers who become reflective practitioners with the depth and breadth of knowledge needed to make informed decisions about student learning. Increasingly, these decisions involve uses of technology. As part of the PT3 grant, the program has continued to examine and employ technology in its courses in order to help preservice teachers use technology effectively. In Computer Fundamentals, a freshman requirement, students developed projects using Microsoft applications, Excel, PowerPoint and created web sites, a helpful background to lead into teacher education students' creation of technology applications in a field experience associated with the Instructional Theory into Practice course. In this class, preservice teachers reviewed lesson plan sites for technology lessons, planned and taught lesson plans using different models of teaching, and demonstrated and discussed various ways to infuse technology into teaching. They were taught how to use the Inspiration program for webbing ideas for writing or project development. PowerPoint informational presentations were discussed as ways to stimulate student conversation and introduce open-ended questions about the material as well as to serve as outlines of important ideas. It was noted that virtual field trips and web quests could be developed with PowerPoint. A 60 hour field experience in urban schools was connected to this course. In the class, website resources which provided descriptions and examples of the technology were shared, and some class time was devoted to development of the technology application to help preservice teachers get started. Preservice teachers were allowed to work in teams to complete and present technology lessons. Technology project descriptions in the course are in Appendix A following the references.

While this class is composed of all subject majors, this article will focus on the work of English majors only, who are typically the largest group in the class. Selected readings about technology practices in schools and discussions with colleagues in the PT3 Grant and in local schools were the basis for technology projects implemented in the class. In the next sections of the paper, the technology application will be described, ELA preservice teacher reactions to conducting the technology application with students will be shared, and current sources for its development will be listed. The sources for the technological applications are listed with brief descriptions, so readers will be able to find those that interest them. In addition, samples of ELA preservice teacher work are provided on the Portfolio Handbook in the Techprojects section found at http://pirate.shu.edu/~devlinrb/portfolio/techprojectsdefined.html (when users go to the

eportfolio to see Techprojects preservice students created there will occasionally be a dialogue box asking them to put in a password, they should click cancel and will be able to proceed).

Technology Lesson Plans

For this first assignment, ELA preservice teachers were asked to survey lesson plan sites and find five technology sample lessons that focused on different teaching areas in English: literature, writing, grammar, media. They were to select lessons that fostered communication, collaboration, and critical thinking (Flores, A., Knaupp, J.E., Middleton, J.A., & Staley, F.A., 2002). Below are selected representative popular sites; others are available under the title, *Helpful Lesson Plan Sites*, at http://pirate.shu.edu/~devlinrb/ on the right side of my homepage.
Lesson Plan Sites: http://www.awesomelibrary.com; http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/index.html; http://www.atozteacherstuff.com

Cooperative Learning Lesson Sites: http://sps.k12.mo.us/coop/cybercoop.html; http://www.educationplanet.com; http://www.cotf.edu/ete/modules/modules.html

For ELA preservice teachers an extensive, specialized list of sites was developed, in these categories: media literacy, writing, grammar, and literature. *English Language Arts Sites*, grades 4-12, is at http://pirate.shu.edu/~devlinrb/ on the right side of my homepage.

Teacher Web Site

Preservice candidates found developing this web site at http://www.teacherweb.com for their cooperating teacher easy to use and update (TeacherWeb.com, 2000). Writing up the "Teacher Information" section had an indirect benefit - the opportunity to learn about their cooperating teachers' background and what they wanted to achieve with their classes. These web sites, which provided announcements, events, homework, links to sites and responses to frequently asked questions were also positively viewed by middle school students.

Middle school students commented on what they learned about their teacher and asked for additional links to use, but many said they would not be able to use the site regularly because they did not have a computer. The purposes of these teacher web sites are to connect home and school and foster independent learning; with increased computer access for students, they will get more use. At this time, these sites got used as lessons.

Inspiration Software

Preservice teachers found many uses for this program that promotes visual learning, brainstorming of ideas, and organizing skills. One stated, "Inspiration is a better way to represent ideas. Students were able to depict the philosophy and teachings of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and could see the differences between them." An 'inspired' guide to revision helped students edit their papers. Middle school students also presented character traits, events in a story, or displayed an author's life and writings assisted by Inspiration. This program proved to have multiple uses.

Teachers can download a free 30 day trial of this program from this website http://www.inspiration.com/freetrial/index.cfm or they can write the company and receive trial CDs and program booklets for their teachers in their school. The site and each CD has a tutorial that shows how the program can be used.

Puzzles, Games, and Quizzes

Presenting typical content with a unique spin caught student attention and maximized review time. With crossword puzzles, preservice teachers commented that the "students were having so much fun that they did not realize they were learning." Quia helped students practice matching synonyms, making a computer period productive. Scavenger hunts were used for literary facts with success. For an overview lesson on literature, pictures of characters and settings were captured from the Internet and boxes for note taking were added to organize the students. "Having a prepared guide, the students focused on their classmates' discussion. They remembered the material." These follow-up activities to cooperating teachers' lessons

were confidence builders for the preservice teachers and helped them get integrated into the class.

Sites   :

Daily Buzzword. http://www.wordcentral.com/cgi-bin/bwwod.pl. Part of the Merriam-Webster web site, it presents a new word every day, the definition, word usage, and a mini-quiz.

Education 4 Kids. http://www.edu4kids.com. Provides drill and practice games.

Fun Brain. http://www.funbrain.com. Contains already made quizzes that students can take over the Internet either at school or at home. Results of the quizzes can be e-mailed to the teacher. Teachers also have the option to make their own quizzes.

High School Hub. http://highschoolhub.org. Provides interactive quizzes, games, puzzles and homework assistance.

Hot Potatoes. http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/. Introduces students to a wide range of puzzles and activities. Software must be downloaded. It includes assessment tools and other important tools and activities.

Internet Coach Puzzle Center. http://puzzles.apte.com. Introduces students to a wide range of puzzles and word scrambles and also allows students to send puzzle greeting cards.

Kids Go Wild. http://wcs.org/7490/kidsgowild/. Includes fun and educational games, facts, and news.

Puzzlemaker. http://www.puzzlemaker.com/. Allows users to create puzzles and games for newsletters, flyers, handouts, or classroom assignments.

Quia. http://www.quia.com/. Creates activities and games for classes

Krajka (2003) identifies additional sites for web-based quizzes and describes ways to develop these tools.

Virtual Field Trips

These trips enabled middle school students to travel to cities, countries, different environments, and museums. The student response to a virtual field trip to India prompted one preservice teacher to realize these tools are "good ways for introducing world cultures." Students who were reading *Harry Potter* got to travel virtually to London. "Students were asked to use their imagination and transport themselves to another world. They were shown pictures of landscapes, monuments, legends, architecture, geography, and people. The students remained focused and said they hoped they could go someday." Of course, middle school students are interested in their new teachers as people, so the trip, "A Day in the Life of a Student Athlete," by an English major on the soccer team was enjoyed and stimulated questions about the college experience.

These sites were helpful in guiding preservice teachers in understanding the purposes of virtual field trips and seeing examples of them.

Blackwell, V. (2001). *Virtual field trips.* http://exit3.i-55.com/~vickib/vft.html. Blackwell offers sites on a range of topics expanding the notion of field trips, e.g., sites for museums in art, broadcasting, history, science and surgery as well as museums by country; scientifically rich sites, e.g., rain forests,volcanoes, fossil hunting, and interesting locations, e.g., Hawaii and Antarctica .

Foley, K. (1996-2003). *Tramline.* http://www.field-guides.com/vft/index.htm. Field trips with suggested grade levels in science, literature, history, and miscellaneous areas are noted.

Onlineeducator. (1995, March). http://www.cris.com/~felixg/OE/ARCHIVE/MUSEUM.html. This article gives guidelines for preparing and presenting field trips and highlights lesson possibilities with museums. At the top left are references for writing, space, geography, writing, earthquakes.

OOPS (Our Overnight Planning System). http://oops.bizland.com/vtours.htm. This site provides teaching strategies useful with field trips, including "postcards, travel, logs, hide and seek, and scrapbooks." It has trips to major cities (e.g., Paris, Rome), noteworthy museums, and unique locations.

WebQuests

WebQuests are problems that are solved by using the Internet, in small groups, where students often assume specific roles. Preservice teachers chose topics that fit in curriculum ("The Meaning of Names," "Civil Rights," "Writing Short Poems") or supplemented the curriculum in interesting ways ("My Future High School Choice," "The Olympics," "Investigate Children's Rights"). WebQuests allow preservice English teachers to enlist their creativity and stimulate their students.

Preservice teachers learned that having a novel approach and worthwhile content was not sufficient; monitoring the task was essential. "After going to a site on creating a student newspaper in the instructional television room, students collaborated on developing current events newspapers using Word. Students worked well together on the web gathering information, but I found it hard to watch everyone to make sure they were on the correct sites." Kurek (2002) provides a clear description of using webquests in a college classroom with criteria for evaluation of their products.

Despite the challenges of conducting these longer term projects, the preservice teachers who used them were pleased by the outcomes. They found students grew in attention and in comfort with using the Internet for searching and worked well in groups. They produced competent writing, presentations and displays as products. Cooperating teachers

stepped in to guide completion of projects when preservice teachers were unable to be with the class due to schedules, providing an opportunity for collaborative planning.

Sites

Devlin-Scherer, R. (2001, January). *Techproject page.* http://pirate.shu.edu/~devlinrb/portfolio/techprojectsdefined.html. Sample ELA preservice teacher technology projects are available on this page.

Dodge, B. (2000). *The Web Quest Page.* http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html. This address is the overview page. Sample webquests in a variety of subject fields and grade levels have been moved to http://www.webquest.org/ When you go to this address, on the left side are the words, top (identifying good webquests), middling (a category for quests that may be older or have some useful features) and new. New quests are added frequently.

Conclusion

This field experience was not without challenges. Preservice teachers' comments revealed the value and kind of preparation required when using technological applications. "Confusion and chaos will ensue if the task is not laid out properly." One preservice teacher spent considerable time preparing sites for middle school students to search. Listing them on the whiteboard was not adequate as the addresses were too long; students had trouble reading them and became inattentive. Having the site addresses on cards in the hands of pairs of students for the next group kept the activity moving. To save time at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher may want to bookmark the website on each computer before the lesson. With more complicated applications, such as web quests, preservice candidates noted the importance of timing, clear directions and a step-by-step approach.

Pacing individual lessons is usually a challenge for the beginner. Sometimes English preservice teachers found themselves rushing students as they introduced tools and tried getting projects completed in a short time frame. "The students were introduced to Inspiration and in groups created a character web using the program. It would have been better to allot

more time for learning the program." In addition to overplanning, on a number of occasions, preservice teachers described having too much detail in an Inspiration web or PowerPoint.

When having students write papers, ELA preservice teachers worried about the cut and paste syndrome. "I tried to emphasize using your own words, but the students did copy and paste a lot." Separating the gathering information from the actual writing time or collecting and discussing the information as a group, then writing up each section helped avert this problem. Preservice English teachers also found students were sometimes more interested in activities tangential to the task. "They also got attracted to Word Art and that took a lot of time." Specifying requirements for a number or length of written items with time limits, having a model entry as an example, then suggesting that a special way to present the information would be presented when they were finished seemed to help students focus on their writing.

Nonetheless, ELA preservice teachers learned a great deal from their experience because of access to equipment and the support they received at the school sites, which allowed them to try out different technology projects. The cooperating teachers often made suggestions in planning and content. They also encouraged the middle school students to be patient through any technology mishaps. Typically, student responses were highly positive; they showed their interest by their active participation and engagement. Support, current sources, and systematic guidance made this field experience successful in promoting literacy learning for middle school students and teaching opportunities for novice teachers.

After three years, the secondary program is currently undergoing revision and preparing for accreditation. The urban field experience is being moved to a course titled Culture Community and Schools because the content of this course is a good match with urban schools. Since it is a senior year course, preservice students wll have more experience to bring to urban settings. The Instructional Theory course will be based at a Professional Development School. The technology projects are being spread across the courses in the program; it is likely the Instructional Theory course will maintain use of Inspiration, puzzles, and virtual field trips.

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Appendix

EDST 2003

Technology Projects and Instructional Strategies

Lesson Plan Sites http://pirate.shu.edu/~devlinrb/

Survey lesson plan sites for *10+* plans on different topics taught in your field (e.g., in English, seek lessons in literature, writing, grammar). Print copies of plans you select. On a cover sheet, offer reasons for selecting them. Note activities that seem unique to you, that catch your interest, that are activities you would do, that provide useful ways of assessing students. Also describe any plans you rejected and why.

The site noted above is my homepage; go to Helpful Lesson Plan Sites.

Learning Stations http://education.shu.edu/pt3grant/learningstations1.html

For background material on middle schools, read Learning Station on American Middle School written by Dr. Sylvester Kohut. Tips on planning portfolios are also available at a second Learning Station by Devlin-Scherer, Zinicola, and Oesen. For both of these do a summary indicating main points.

Techprojects (will be a section of your final portfolio)

Additional sites will be provided during classes.

To assist you as you develop techprojects, a packet is attached with a listing of potential activities that involve **word processing**, **software**, or **the internet**. Create a concept map using Inspiration software (available at Seton Hall. The Curriculum Library, second floor Walsh Library, has a helpful text, *Make It With Inspiration*. If you are in classroom with a few computers in the back, *Ideas and Strategies for the One-Computer Classroom* is also available. Camden Middle School is involved in Problem-Based Learning which can incorporate technology so you may be assisting your teacher in this area. An article describing **Interactive powerpoint presentations** is provided. Guidelines, sources and uses for more extended strategies that use technology to promote critical thinking in students are described in articles on **Virtual Field Trips** and **WebQuests**. Several useful sites for developing Webquests follow:

Bernie's Dodge's site is a wealth of samples and will serve as a guide for this class (http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html).

Kathy Schrock's WebQuests has articles and links to webquests and factors to consider in their design (http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/webquest/webquest.html).

SHU contributions: Professor Zinicola has science miniprojects you could use on a variety of science topics. http://pirate.shu.edu/~zinicode/tech_projects.htm   In the middle of the Techprojects page are a series of brief and informative powerpoints on the environment, unusual creatures (hissing cockroaches, anyone?) and anatomy.

Use these sites to help you construct a virtual field trip (VFT): http://oops.bizland.com/vtours.htm; http://exit3.i-55.com/~vickib/vft.html; http://www.field-guides.com/vft/index.htm.

VFT examples - typically the purpose is of a VFT is to share a location with student that they will not have an opportunity to see or to prepare them for a location that you are going to visit together (e.g., a museum); in mathematics, you might describe the life of a famous mathematician or a group who worked on significant math concept; take students on a race and have them do calculations along the way, e.g., Iditarod; have students visit accounting or investment firm; have students examine data on disasters, earthquakes and do calculations

Teacher Homepage: Link to the Community

Developing a homepage for students and families will be demonstrated in class and you may design such a page for yourself and/or with a teacher   http://www.teacherweb.com

See my example under NJ/SetonHallUniversity. Also see K-12 teacher samples under other schools on list.

Classroom Materials

Below are listed some useful sites to help you design **puzzles, mazes, word searches** and **games**.

Quia Games; Quintessential Instructional Archive; http://www.quia.com

Fun Brain; http://www.funbrain.com

Puzzlemaker; http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com

Digital Camera

We will also have demonstrations in the use of the digital camera and expect you to find an appropriate use for that tool in documenting your work with students and student activity.

Displays

If you guide a group of students or create a display yourself, here are some tips.

Trifolds or large posters are useful to show visuals and organize material that you present. For headings, it is interesting to use unusual font to catch attention, however, for other text, use Arial font size 40 for visibility. Similar to overheads, displays benefit from use of phrases and avoidance of long text. Use handouts to supplement materials so all the audience can follow the content. Choose colors carefully. We find yellow on white is blurry for viewers at a distance. Avoid clutter; let your message and information stand out. Professor White recommends excite.com for pictures.

INTERNET LESSON PLANS

TELLING TRUE STORIES:

BLENDING MULTIMEDIA IN A TASK-BASED ACTIVITY

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Level: Upper Intermediate and above

Time: at least 3 periods (50 minutes each)

Aims:

1.   To learn the basic structures (see Introduction) and expressions used when telling true stories.

2.   To enhance listening, reading comprehension and writing skills.

3.   To engage in a chat activity with a native speaker of English integrating language skills.

4.   To foster oral communication skills by giving learners opportunities to use the language in an authentic manner or real-life situation.

Technical Requirements:

- at least one computer for each student (or a group of 2) with the Internet access;

- Yahoo Messenger (YM) installed, which is a free chat software available at http://messenger.yahoo.com/;

- a multimedia projector or any broadcasting system that could project images/sounds. If you do not have access to any of these equipment but have enough computers for all your students (Ss), then invite as many Ss as you can to YM but limit their participation. Only selected Ss will have the privilege to speak;

- an optional web cam;

- a word-processor.

Introduction

Telling true stories is a basic English usage task that is used on a daily basis (Beare, 2003). Unfortunately, Ss struggle with their grammar usage while speaking the English language that they wind up being less understandable. A typical story telling structure outline consists of:

1. Introduction: Introduce the story by telling what kind of story it is

2. Beginning: How the story started

3. the Story: The main events related in order

4. The End: What has changed or how things are now

5. Moral: Final Comments or moral conclusions about the story.

The lesson plan is heavily influenced by a lesson that was selected from Kenneth Beare's ESL Lesson archive available at http://esl.about.com/library/lessons/bltellingstories.htm, and is the basis for this class activity, which is divided into three phases, 1) pre-online chat, 2) during chat, and 3) post-online chat activity.

Necessary Preparation

Prior to the activity, the teacher should arrange for a guest speaker (a native speaker of English or a non-native but with near-native English proficiency) to meet with the Ss. Since this activity requires collaboration between the teacher, the guest speaker/s and Ss, it is advisable to invite someone you know (a friend, family member/s and/or colleagues). You may also find support from professional organizations such as TESOL or IATEFL and their respective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Interest Sections (IS) or Special Interest Group (SIG). Teachers can also benefit from joining online collaborative communities such as the Webheads in Action (http://www.geocities.com/vance_stevens/papers/evonline2002/webheads.htm), epals (www.epals.com), and Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections (www.iecc.org). Time and availability of the guest speaker should also be taken into consideration.

Procedure

I. Pre-Online Chat Warm-up Activity

Time: 10 minutes

1. A short discussion about telling true stories

2.   You can initiate the class discussion by sharing your own story.

3.   Then, gather students' opinions and experiences by asking questions such as, "Have you ever told someone about a funny, scary or any memorable incident that happened to you?", "Have you ever shared stories with your best friend, mom or teacher?")

4.   After soliciting answers to your questions, you can now tell your Ss what the activity is about. For example, "You will be meeting (name of guest speaker) online and he/she will share with you a true story…"

5.   Explain in detail the tasks that they will have to accomplish for the day.

II. Voice Conference with Students

Time: 40 minutes

Notes:

For the online chat activity, the teacher should make sure that all the computers to be used have Internet access and YM chat software has been successfully installed.

Steps:

1.   The teacher should log in and start the voice conference by opening YM.

2.   Choose between 5-10 student volunteers.

3.   Ask the students to log in YM.

4.   Add the students' Yahoo ID onto the teacher's YM's Group of Friends.

5.   Slowly invite the students in the conference by clicking on the "invite" feature of YM.

6.   Start the conference as soon as everybody (students and the guest speaker) has settled down. The LCD projector should be running at this point to broadcast and project images as they appear on the students' monitors (A step-by-step procedure is available here, http://www.geocities.com/nkfust2003/listening/story/procedure/steps.html

7.   The students who are offline (the number could depend on the total number of students in class) can still participate by watching the big screen where images from the chat conference are projected via LCD projector. This way, these Ss could read and understand what's going on in the voice/text conference (see photos and chat log here, http://www.geocities.com/nkfust2003/listening/story/ed/p2_edm.htm)

8.   Ask the guest speaker to begin sharing her/his story to the class by either typing on the keyboard or by using voice.

9.   After the guest speaker has shared her/his story, the Ss take turns in asking questions or posting their comments/opinions.

10. After the chat, save the chat log before closing the voice conference interface. The log can be used for assessment purposes and a material for peer feedback.

Teaching Tips

The interaction between the Ss and the native speaker should be as spontaneous and natural as possible. Yahoo! tends to be unstable when there are more than 15 online participants. The connection speed will depend on the computer's bandwidth and the Internet connection. If you lose voice or any of your Ss is unable to hear the sound, it would be wise to

settle for a text-based chat. Instead of clicking or pressing the 'Talk' icon on Yahoo's voice conference interface, ask the participants to simply type on the keyboard.

III. Offline Post-chat Activity

Time: 50 minutes

1. Follow up your guest speaker's story with some basic comprehension questions to check whether the whole class understands her/his story. You may touch on the moral lesson of the story by invoking such questions as 'What did you learn from it?' or "If you were him/her, would you have done the same thing?"

2. Ask the Ss to reflect and think of a situation that they have experienced. The time in which the event/s occurred is not important. It could be last week, last month, as long as it happened in the past. The nature of the story could be one of or combination of the following: happy, sad, scary, inspirational, keeping in suspense, etc.

3. Ask the Ss to plan and write their own true stories of about 100 words.

4. The written work can be printed out or uploaded on the class website (see http://www.geocities.com/nkfust2003/listening/story/sample_joy/sample.html)

IV. Students Telling Their Own True Stories

Time: 50 minutes

1. Students take turns in sharing their stories to the whole class (after the writing phase).

2. Ss may be allowed to look at their notes but try to encourage spontaneous delivery.

3. Encourage discussion from the class.

Conclusion

Technology is a salient tool and medium in implementing this activity, however, we cannot refute the fact that it is not perfect. Technological problems, no matter how trivial could, in a way, affect the outcomes; but, they are not barriers to learning. Teachers are advised to prepare an alternative course of action and give Ss an extra time for technical prep. As they say, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Another important issue that should be considered is the appropriateness of the material or the story. Although, story telling is conversational in essence and the use of colloquial terms and phrases may seem inevitable, offensive expressions are unacceptable even in real-life situations. In a nutshell, the tasks in this activity are designed to achieve the aims of the lesson by combining a blended approach to learning English, crossing boundaries and cultural dimensions and using a different learning environment that cannot be recreated in a regular classroom.

Reference:

Beare, K. 2003. "Telling True Stories for English Learners and Classes". Available at
  http://esl.about.com/library/lessons/bltellingstories.htm

INSTANT LESSONS – BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

by **Rachel Ellis**

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Introduction

The Internet has been touted by many as the world's largest library. In many ways, however, it is a disorganized library without a librarian. Now the potential of the Internet is being realized with a resource that is easy for language teachers to take advantage of. English-To-Go (www.english-to-go.com) produces photocopiable lessons and stores them on the Internet in a searchable library designed exclusively for teachers.

English-To-Go supplies a variety of resources, the main one being "Instant Lessons" - English language training material based around Reuters news articles. These are printable, topical lesson plans that exploit current news articles. As a follow on to classroom work, there are also Instant Workbook (www.instantworkbook.com) exercises. These are online interactive activities for students and are linked directly to Instant Lessons. Grammar points are either further extended, material recycled or students can further practise reading and listening using material on the same topics as have been taught in class. Teachers can choose specific exercises for students to do either in a computer lab or as homework exercises. The activities are fun and rewarding and teachers are easily able to control those exercises students are to do. The following link http://www.selfaccess.com/iatefl will take you to a page where photocopiable materials, comprehensive teachers' notes and answer key and on-line exercises have been provided. Below is a lesson outline showing how one teacher has used these materials.

Title: Bah Humbug!

Level: Intermediate

Time: 90 minutes

Aims:

·   to enable students to listen for specific information

·   to familiarise students with Christmas traditions

·   to enable students to understand and use "like" and "as" in context

·   to practise first person narrative writing

Preparation:

Print lesson and photocopy.

Procedure

This lesson was used as a lead up to Christmas. The theme of Christmas was introduced using Christmas cards and then students' opinions on the good and bad things about Christmas were elicited and written on the board. Students then wrote down a short text that was read out three times by way of introduction to the main reading.

The 7 Pre-Reading and Reading Activites explored two news articles about Colin Wood and his unsuccessful attempts to escape Christmas by hiring an underground bunker. These were completed in the classroom. Upon finishing the language section, students were given background information to Dicken's "A Christmas Carol", the origin and meaning of the words "Bah Humbug", (provided in teachers' notes) and then taken to a computer lab. Learners were asked to log in to http://www.instantworkbook.com using a username and password that was valid for five days. This password allowed students to view only those exercises selected by the teacher – in this instance the 4 exercises linked to the "Bah Humbug!" lesson.

Students were first asked to complete two listening activities – a multiple choose exercise and a cloze. This particular listening was the dictation text students first heard as an introduction in the classroom. However, this time students were exposed to a different speaker, a different accent and given control over how many times they heard the text. Many students felt more confident after recycling the listening in this way, as dictation exercises can prove challenging for some.

After completing the listening exercises, students were then placed in pairs – two students to one computer. This was done to increase peer interaction and led to much discussion before choices were selected. Students then competed the vocabulary exercise relating to the article in the "Bah Humbug!" lesson and reading exercise based on "A Christmas Carol".

For homework students were then asked to write a diary entry for Colin Wood from inside his bunker. This was to be printed and saved on disc to allow for peer correction the following day.

Conclusion

The diary entry activities in this lesson were successfully used as vehicles to practise different skills: listening, text comprehension, and writing. The pre-reading and reading

activities worked well together and students really enjoyed the opportunity to work with the listening text again in the computer lab.

INTERNET ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

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COMPUTER ENGLISH FOR EVERYDAY USE by Batri Blanka-Fazekas Katalin (Di-press, 2003)

A new coursebook for computer users and IT vocational people has appeared on the Hungarian EFL book market. The authors – both involved in teaching IT English at vocational schools and IT colleges - have realized the lack of such a publication on the international market.

With the first volume - the second is due in spring 2004 - they have intended to produce an English coursebook for false beginners or pre-intermediate students who study Information Technology and Computer Science, or work in the IT sector and want to improve their general and professional language skills in the context of IT. It can be used both in regular classes and distance education.

There are 12 units in the book covering basic vocabulary for everyday communication and Computer English. The authentic texts for reading comprehension are taken from popular Internet web pages, manuals and advertisements. Each unit contains work on a mix of language skills and every 4th unit revises and repeats the previous material. The Student's Book includes a comprehensive glossary of current IT terminology. The book contains answer key and all the listening scripts. The CD features all the listening tasks: dialogues, interviews and discussions.

In our following issues we are going to publish some parts of the reading passages along with other exercises such as grammar tasks, reading comprehension assignments etc.

ANYTHING CAN GO WRONG

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General topics: Anything can go wrong

IT topics: Gadgets and problems

Language: Advice on faults

Examination skills: Past tense; 's; negative; there is/are

Nothing is perfect. Anything can go wrong. There are gadgets that you can fix without any help, and there are complicated ones, and when they go wrong, you have to ask for help. Can you fix a printer fault? Do you know what to do when you get a computer virus? What will you do if you can't open a website, or you break your digital camera? Will you phone somebody if you can't withdraw money from an ATM, or you can't get back your credit card from the slot? I think, you can add to this list with your own experiences. But what are the most common mistakes and problems in this area?

One day Judy was alone at home. She wanted to use Google search for some homework but their PC didn't work at all. She was very angry as she had to finish the homework before morning. First she phoned her mother but she was out at a meeting. Then she talked to her father on the phone but he couldn't help her either. Finally she decided to wait for her brothers who – when they got home – showed her how silly she was. She forgot to check the mains. There was a blackout in the whole district!

DIALOGUES

Jack and Judy at home

- Jack, will you help me please? The PC doesn't work. It has stopped. What's wrong?

- Well, let me see. Oh, yes. When the computer freezes, your keyboard stops working, and

   you can't do anything.

- But what shall I do then?

- When this happens, you have to press CONTROL, ALT and DELETE at the same time.

Then click on the TASK MANAGER button, and you will see a list of programs.

- Yes, it says NOT RUNNING.

- If any of them say NOT RUNNING in the STATUS COLUMN on the right, click

 on the button which says END TASK. This will shut down that program.

- Right. But I need that program, I must finish my homework.

- OK. Now you can reopen it. But don't open more than 3 programs at the same time, because the processor isn't very powerful.

- Thank you.

Frank and the IT helpdesk on the phone

- Good evening. IT helpdesk.. Can I help you?

- Yes. This is Frank Fitzgerald speaking. I am afraid I need some help. I would like to use the Internet, but I can't connect to it. What can the matter be?

- I'll check, just a minute. Please identify yourself by user name and password!

- Yes, the user name is Frankie.

- Can you spell that, please?

- Yes, of course, it is f-r-a-n-k-i-e.

-   And what is your password?

-   It is f-5-6-g-h-l-9-d

-   Please open the dial up properties. What is the dial-in number?

-   It is 533219652

-   I'm afraid you must change the dial-in number.

-   How do I do that?

-   You just have to delete the old one and write in the new one.

-   Is that all?

-   Yes. And then you can connect to the internet.

-   Thank you very much. Bye.

-   Bye-bye.

Mother and the supervisor in the office

-   Well, I think, my printer is broken. I don't know what to do with it.

-   First, we should switch it off and unplug it. Could you open the door on the front of the printer?

- Yes, here you are.

- I will pull out the ink cartridge. Is there any paper behind it?

- No, there isn't.

- OK then, I think we have to replace the ink cartridge. I'll get a new one, just a minute.

- Is it ready now?

- Yes, you should hear a click sound which shows that the cartridge is properly installed. Let's close the door on the front of the printer, plug it back in, and switch it on.

- Can I print the document now?

- Yes, of course.

- Thank you very much.

- Not at all.

COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. Decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

1. If you press CONTROL, ALT and DELETE at the same time, you will see the TASK MANAGER button.

2. Judy is not clever enough to solve the problem with the computer.

3. First you have to plug the printer in before switching it on.

4. Frank had to give his phone number before he got some help.

5. If you can see NOT RUNNING in the status column, that program will shut down automatically.

6. After restarting your computer you have to reopen the program that you want to use.

7. If you hear a click sound, it means that the cartridge is installed properly.

8. When your computer freezes, you can't see anything on the monitor.

9. If you press END TASK in the status column, you will shut down that program.

10. Computers with small processor can freeze easily if you open several programs at the same time.

TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

1. **Match the words from the list with the following definitions**.

Plug in; infect; restart; freezes; delete; user name and password; dial a phone number; replace; crash; Task Manager

1. This is an activity you do when you connect your computer to the electricity supply.

2. A virus can do this to your computer.

3. To start your computer again.

4. This happens to a program if you can see NOT RUNNING in the status column.

5. The synonym of `cancel`.

6. You have to give this data to the helpdesk if you have a problem with the Internet.

7. You do this when you phone somebody or connect to the Internet.

8. You do this with the ink cartridge when you install a new one.

9. The synonym of `go wrong/completely stop working`.

10. You can see the list of programs running here.

GRAMMAR

1. Put the following sentences into past tense. Use `yesterday` in the transformed sentences.

E.g.: She hears a click sound from the printer. – She heard a click sound from the printer yesterday.

1. Frank can't connect to the Internet.

2. Everybody unplugs the printer before changing the cartridge.

3. There isn't any paper in the printer.

4. Frank gives his password to the helpdesk.

5. The PC freezes, because the processor is not powerful enough.

6. The keyboard stops working.

7. After restarting the computer I reopen the program

8. A virus infects the PC.

9. The hard disk often crashes.

10. He forgets his password.

2. Put *some* or *any* into the gaps.

1) I am going to buy … CDs. I'm going to buy some CDs.

2) They didn't make … mistakes.

3) I'll pay, I have … money.

4) Don't buy … diskettes. We don't need any.

5) Can I have … books on programming, please?

6) When we were in London, we visited … interesting places.

7) Sorry, we are late. We had … problems with the PC.

8) Do you know … good computer shops in Budapest?

9) Are there … e-mails for me this morning?

10) I can do this work alone. I don't need … help.

3. Use must or mustn't in the following situations!

Example: There is no paper in the printer. (buy) You must buy some in the shop.

a. The attachment can carry some virus. (open).

b. The cartridge can be old and nearly empty. (shake)

c. The material is full of photos and cartoons. (save on CD)

d. He wants to join a discussion forum but the school's firewall won't let him. (join)

e. He is the network administrator and my PC freezes every minute. (repair)

4. Decide which is correct in the following sentences: "don't/doesn't have to" or "mustn't"!

Example: The programmer …….repair the faulty PCs. The programmer doesn't have to repair the faulty PCs.

a. The helpdesk operator …………shout at the clients over the phone.

b. The web design teacher ……… teach about database management.

c. Judy …………play games before she does her home work.

d. The students …………download copyrighted software in the computer class.

e. The parents ………..buy all the high-tech gadgets for their children.

f. You ……………answer all the spam arriving into your email address.

GUIDED COMPOSITION

Look at the picture of a digital camera and write a short composition, using the following camera parts and the words in brackets.

AD converter — process – amplify – analog signal

AF Servo – moving – focus on – object

Buffer – make – shots – continuous

DPOF – storage card – command

EXIF – have – digital camera — file – standardized format

LCD – preview – review

Storage Card – have – digital camera – removable

Viewfinder – compose – picture

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the text and answer the questions.

Digital cameras - Recommended buy

Looking for a Gift for a Man? -- We've got the best selection on the net!

A digital camera makes a great gift for a man

Digital cameras are becoming cheaper and their prices are now at a level that makes them accessible to everyone.

I recently got a digital camera as a gift and can tell you that if you're looking for a *really cool* gift for a man then you can't go wrong: They're fantastic! I'd always thought that digital cameras might be a little above my rather poor photographic skills but a digital camera is no harder to operate than a regular camera. The biggest difference with digital cameras of course is that you don't have to buy film, and emailing pictures to friends is really easy and hassle free.

Digital cameras make ideal gifts. They're loads of fun and very handy. Digital cameras come in many shapes and sizes and we've taken a lot time and care in selecting digital cameras that will make perfect gifts at varying price ranges.

The *digital cameras* in this section of *HaveGadgets* are all top sellers from reliable manufacturers. The digital cameras you'll find here range from fun, snapshot types to semi-professional digital camera technology.

Digital cameras for all occasions!

If you can't find the kind of digital camera you're looking for or have some suggestions for our **digital cameras** section then we'd like to hear from you. Use one of the forms listed on the

left hand menu to tell us what you think about our digital cameras section or make suggestions on how we can improve the digital cameras section

Answer the T/F questions:

1. People can buy digital cameras at a reasonable price today.

2. Operation of a digital camera is harder than an ordinary film camera.

3. Readers can send their ideas and recommendations on digital cameras to the webmaster of the page.

4. If your digital camera goes wrong, you can ask for free help on this website.

5. There is a wide range of digital cameras for everybody.

6. Women don't like using digital cameras.

7. Digital cameras with left hand menu are available.

8. You can buy digital cameras for anybody for birthdays, anniversaries or Valentine day.

THINK IT OVER

-Why is a digital camera better than a traditional one?

-What do you prefer, a camcorder or a camera, and why?

-Explain to a friend or a total beginner what the basic rules of photography are.

COURSEWARE

DEVELOPING 'LEARNER-FRIENDLY' COURSEWARE FOR TESOL:

A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

by **Yasmine L. Howard**

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Abstract

Courseware has become an important aspect in educational theory and practice. There is consensus about the principles and features of user-friendly in software development, however, the concept 'learner-friendly' and its related educational principles are still debated by researchers in courseware development. In particular, a significant discourse on whether a constructivist framework benefits learning has developed. This article examines the theory relating to the principles of 'learner-friendly', including both user-friendly and courseware pedagogy that it encompasses, which is then used to frame a study analyzing preferred learner methods over a semester, of first year education students using web-dependent courseware to learn Information Communication Skills (ICT). The results provide important information into how students learn, that will be used for developing an instructional design framework of 'learner-friendly' courseware on TESOL - Teaching English as a Second Language.

1. INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of courses are utilising the benefits of educational technology. A study by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) between August and December 2001 found that there are already 207 fully online courses offered by 23 Australian universities, with 31 per cent delivered completely online (Bell et al., 2002: ix). There are numerous definitions of courseware, however, DEST has provided a definitive summary, dividing online delivery of courses into three categories:

- web supplemented, in which participation online is optional for the student and online content is used to supplement traditional forms of delivery;

- web dependent in which participation online is compulsory (students must use the Web to interact with content and/or communicate with other staff and students);

- and fully online, for which there is no face-to-face component, and all interactions with staff and students, education, assessment content and support services are integrated and delivered online (Bell et al., 2002, p.37).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: USER-FRIENDLY AND LEARNER-FRIENDLY DESIGN

2.1.Overview

The concepts user-friendly'(UF) and 'learner-friendly' (LF) have been developed to enhance online learning. The two terms have been considered independent of each other, however, they are co-dependent. To create LF courseware, UF principles must be implemented. There is a significant body of literature on both user-friendly design and courseware pedagogy, which learner-friendly encompasses, however, little attention has been paid to developing and implementing learner-friendly courseware. This research paper defines LF to refer to factors that are put in place to develop an online environment that optimises

learning. This includes a consideration of features such as user-friendly and courseware pedagogy, as detailed below.

2.2.User-friendliness

A literature survey has revealed a commonality among interpretations of the term, which means that the term refers to enhancing the features of computer software in order to make it easier for learners to use. For the purposes of my research, I have defined the term 'user-friendly' as 'specifying, implementing and designing software to enhance human-computer interaction (HCI). This includes aspects such as creating a navigational system to orient users, being consistent in screen design, designing screen layout so that it adapts to human biological factors, e.g. ensuring text reads left to right on the page to adapt to natural eye movement, and implementing colours that offer culturally and socially acceptable cues, e.g. the colour red indicates 'danger' in Australia or the United States, 'death' in Egypt, and 'life' in India (Galitz, 1997: 493).

As stated above, UF and LF are co-dependent. Danielson et al. in "ID and HCI: A Marriage of Necessity" note that the HCI field has its "own experts and literature base; it is not necessary for all instructional designers to develop yet another expertise. Simply knowing basic interface design concepts will go far in the creation of effective Web-based instruction and the facilitation of learning in this electronic environment" (Danielson et. al., 2000: 127). Whilst the authors note the instructional and interface design can assist towards creating a LF environment, they do not consider it essential. In contrast, this paper argues that effective HCI design is essential to creating LF courseware. Poor interface design will discourage learner motivation, and if the interface design is directed at inexperienced users, it may frustrate expert learners and distract them from the learning process.

2.3. Courseware pedagogy

Two major learning theories, behaviourism and constructivism, have influenced the instructional design of educational technology. Both models of instruction produced from these theories are useful, though in different contexts (Jonassen, 1994; Sevilla, Wells, 2001).

Researchers therefore recognise strengths and weaknesses with both theories, but, as described below, believe learning is enhanced if different theoretical models are utilised for specific problem types and stages of learning. Thus, a 'learner-friendly' courseware would ultimately choose the best pedagogical method for the problem type and stage of learning.

2.3.1.Behaviourist Instruction

Skinner's studies on behaviourism directly influenced instructional design to create a subject-centred approach that has dominated instructional design since the 1960s (Lefoe, 1998; Sevilla, Wells, 2001). The focus of behaviourist instruction is on the transmission of knowledge directly from the instructor to the student, with that knowledge directly re-transmitted to 'solve' problems.

Sevilla and Wells (2001) reveal that this method is effective for the self-study of definitions, basic concepts and such technical material as application structure. That is, for learning information for which there is only a limited range of answers and perspectives. Jonassen (1991) also argues that an objectivist approach would be best suited to 'Introductory' knowledge acquisition, with the transition to constructivist approaches as learners acquire more knowledge and become 'Intermediate' learners, and capable of representing problems in different ways. Hence, it is recognized that a weakness of the behaviourist approach is that it is ineffective for problem-based solving, which requires innovative learning, and 'ill-defined' problems. For this, theorists recommend constructivism (Jonassen, 1997; Jonassen, 1999). As Sevilla and Wells (2001) also state, constructivism is necessary for higher forms of learning and creative problem solving activities that cannot be addressed by programmed instruction.

2.3.2. Constructivist Instruction

Constructivism is a learner-centred approach to learning (Perkins, 1991). The central tenet of all constructivist theories is that learners actively construct knowledge, rather than it is directly transmitted from the teacher. Constructivism emphasises building learning environments that foster, rather than control, problem solving (Jonassen, 1994: 35), to encourage the 'construction' of knowledge structures. As Jonassen notes, "Constructivists

emphasize the design of learning environments rather than instructional sequences […] They do not seek to predetermine a sequence of instruction or a prescribed set of activities and thought processes by the learner. Rather, they seek to provide a supportive environment in which the learner can interpret at least a simulated reality in order to better understand that reality" (Jonassen, 1994: 35). Thus, it focuses on the learner as an active participant in the learning process, whereby learners are encouraged to set their own objectives and pace their own learning.

Consequently, to encourage knowledge construction, a constructivist learning environment (CLE) provides multiple perspectives and realities, a 'real-world' environment that emphasises 'real-world' complexity and multiple solution paths, social collaboration between peers and the teacher to ' develop and shape' knowledge structures, and emphasises that the role of teacher should move to that of facilitator and mentor rather than dictator. Appropriately Jonassen (1997) recognises that this method is best used for ill-structured issues that possess multiple representations and understandings of the problem, and multiple solutions and solution paths.

3. THE STUDY: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

As noted, the above theory was used to frame research on learner preferences. One hundred first year education students were tutored in ICT skills for a thirteen-week semester. The students were divided into three groups of expertise – elementary, intermediate and advanced users. The elementary level included students who had had little or no contact with computers and met for two hours weekly, the intermediate students had average understanding of computers and met for one hour a week and the advanced students had expert understanding of computers, and met one hour fortnightly. The course was web dependant, and tutorial notes on computer basics, word processing, Internet browsing, email, multimedia presentations, discussion lists and CD-ROM burning were created and uploaded into WebCT by the course lecturers, and downloaded by students each week. They detailed the instructional sequence students should undertake and set tasks to complete by the end of each tutorial. A discussion board was also set up for students to read notes posted by the course instructors, and collaborate regarding course-related information, however, participation was

non-compulsory. The online tutorials utilised a behaviourist approach to teaching, appropriate for the well-structured problem type they encompassed.

The tutor facilitated the learning process, whereby students had a set time to complete the tutorials and could see me face-to-face to ask any questions. The tutor utilised different teaching approaches for each tutorial group, however, based on Jonassen's research (Jonassen, 1991) as detailed above. Therefore, for the elementary group the tutor took a teacher-centred approach and guided them through the tutorial step-by-step from weeks one to eight. During week nine, the elementary students had advanced their computer skills and the tutor then spent the first hour instructing them through each learning process and let them learn independently for the second hour. In contrast, the tutor took a subject-centred approach for the intermediate and advanced learners and let the students learn independently from weeks one to thirteen and encouraged them to approach me if they came across any difficulties with the tutorial notes.

4. THE STUDY: FINDINGS

The elementary group flourished, and all group members had solid ICT skills at Intermediate level by the end of semester. The group also bonded well, and divided themselves into collaborative learning groups that worked together both in and out of the set tutorial time. By week nine one group of students had grown particularly confident, and took it upon themselves to assist other students. On the other hand, there was a small minority of students whose only ICT usage was in my class, who still needed to be instructed on basic concepts such as 'password protection' and 'toggling between screens' and how to access and use the courseware components in WebCT. The tutor had the most positive feedback from this group – with either face-to-face or electronic feedback from the majority of students, at the end of semester, regarding both the teaching method used and gratitude for the tutor's role in developing their ICT skills.

The intermediate group tended to provide the most negative feedback regarding my teaching approach, preferring me to use a more teacher-centred approach. Many students felt they did not receive adequate assistance for both tutorial and assignment work, and believed it was my responsibility to 'tell them what to do'. The majority of students on this level worked

alone, and appeared reluctant to approach the instructor if they needed help - preferring to sit in front of their computers until they were approached instead.

On the other hand, the tutor received positive feedback from the advanced group who were confident in approaching me if they required help, and preferred to work independently. Whilst a good student-teacher relationship was developed however, it wasn't as strong as the bond formed with the elementary students.

The discussion board was utilised by several students, as an effective research tool. A small group of students had developed a discussion group on the discussion board, and collaborated frequently regarding assignments and tutorial tasks. If a student had posted a message that provided 'incorrect' information, another student was quick to respond with the correct information – also providing a reference to the teaching notes to back up what they were saying.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TESOL COURSEWARE DEVELOPMENT

5.1. Creating a modified CLE to cater for 'traditional' students

This study backs up the theory that the behaviourist approach is better suited to well-defined problem types, as feedback regarding the teaching resources was positive and students found it easy to navigate. Whilst the TESOL courseware would be best suited to the constructivist approach, however, this study has revealed that both elementary and intermediate level students prefer to follow direct instructional guidance. I would argue that failing to cater for students who demand more direct instructivist guidance would decrease student motivation and therefore optimal learning. The constructivist theory tends to disregard the learning methods preferred by traditional students, believing that adequate scaffolding and facilitation into the course would address the needs of these students. Furthermore, the weakness of Piaget's 'discovery' learning posited by 'Personal Constructivism' is the lack of instructional guidance it provides for students forcing them to become confused due to the sheer amount of information and actually delimitating their learning experience.

To solve this dilemma, the TESOL courseware could be a modified Constructivist Learning Environment that provides instructional guidance for the learner. The major TESOL teaching components including 'Linguistics,' 'Teaching Methodology' and 'Real-World Applications' could be the three sections of the courseware. Each section should contain a 'learning task' that involve problem solving. For example, in 'Teaching Methodology' it could be writing an essay on the strengths and weaknesses of two major teaching methodologies. These sections should provide direct instructional guidance regarding important domain content in the area, such as informing students on the major teaching methodologies, and be clear on the assessment objectives of the learning task. It should however, also provide multiple perspectives of each topic – for example it could instruct the user on different methodologies such as grammar-based, communicative or technology based teaching, but should also provide links to different perspectives on each theory. Assessment should then be based on evidence of a deep understanding of methodology, rather than on specific criteria of expected facts that should be replicated. Students would then have strong awareness of exactly what they should do and of the major learning issues, without their learning dictating a single learning perspective. Furthermore, these students would therefore, avoid the risk of 'rote-learning' that the behaviourist methodology could be said to enforce.

5.2. Creating compulsory interactive learning environments

The case study has confirmed that students who 'actively' participate in the 'classroom' enhance their learning. As Heidi Schweizer notes, "the research on interactive learning environments is clear and compelling - interactive learning environments have powerful and positive effects on student achievement, self-esteem and the development of higher order thinking skills" (Schweizer, 1999: 55). For example, students who collaborated both in the elementary group and on the discussion board developed deeper knowledge structures and have become more confident learners, in contrast to the students in the intermediate group who tended to be passive learners. Thus, the courseware should enforce compulsory discussion board activities for students to collaborate both with each other and the online tutor, on specific topics – such as 'what is the importance of learning linguistics to become a TESOL teacher'. This will also encourage passive students who are too shy to address their learning problems in a face-to-face situation to address them in the 'virtual' classroom.

5.3. Making instructional support optional

The last group I would like to address is 'expert' users. Jonassen notes that users with 'expert' knowledge would likely be "surfeited by the rich level of instructional support offered by most constructivist environments" (Jonassen, 1991: 31). Instructional support within a CLE need not affect learning for expert users. If a 'learner-friendly' environment is developed, instructional support from the tutor could be offered via a direct email link or by setting up a topic on the discussion board devoted to different learning enquiries. Thus, all levels of users would have access to a rich learning environment that provides a range of learning options, where extra support is optional rather than in-built.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study backs up research regarding appropriate pedagogical approaches to different problem types and varying level of knowledge acquisition. However, it has also exposed some of the weaknesses of the behaviourist and the constructivist theory and proposed how they could be addressed to develop LF TESOL courseware. Due to the scope of the topic, the paper is described only as a 'preliminary' investigation of LF courseware. It hasn't detailed how developing a UF interface is essential to creating a LF courseware. I did argue that UF and LF are co-dependent therefore, if the courseware pedagogy is designed to facilitate different levels of learning, surely the outcome would be a more effective user-interface for both elementary and advanced users? Future research can further understanding of this area, and amalgamate some of the considerations raised in this paper to develop a complete LF courseware.

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ON THE WEB

TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH CHAT:

A TAXONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL CHAT FOR EFL/ESL

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Abstract

Chat are synchronic communicative spaces which are incorporated into online activities, especially in EFL/ESL courses, due to the possibilities to interact with native and non-native speakers of the L2 they offer participants. Teachers interested in using chat for educational purposes should know the characteristics of different chat tasks according to the objective, role of moderator, and structure of the interaction to be generated, in order to plan their activities accordingly. This paper introduces a taxonomy for educational chat which was designed based on the author's experience using chat with language learners and in-service teachers.

Introduction

"hmm It is very hard to chat useing English to chat for me, but it is fun!" (original spelling)

A comment made by a Japanese student after using a chat for the first time, April 22

Synchronous communication in online learning is by all means an important element of language teaching nowadays. More and more, language teachers around the world are incorporating online components to their face-to-face classes to offer students the opportunity to communicate with speakers of the language, whether native or non-native. This exposure to the languages of the world through synchronous modes of communication has also other positive sides. On the one hand, it provides the opportunity to interact and learn with and from people from different cultures and different native languages. On the other hand, while using these means of communication, students get prepared for the use of web tools, which is an added value for their future as professionals in any area.

However, to be able to take this challenge, language teachers need to be computer literate, or e-literate, and should learn to make the most of web tools available and apply this knowledge to their educational contexts, which has not been an easy task. Some teachers are afraid of technology either because they have not been offered training or do not feel ready to shift their traditional educational paradigms to more collaborative and student-centered paradigms needed in e-learning. Another obstacle is that most institutions do not have the required infrastructure to carry out online projects.

I have always been interested in learning and applying new methods and technologies to enhance my pedagogical practices, but it was not until I joined Webheads in Action (WIA) that I had the chance to learn to use CMC tools and applied them in my teaching.   Once I started participating in chat with Webheads, designing and implementing online units and courses, I began to realize the importance of chat in e-learning. One of the main criticisms towards e-learning is the lack of human contact, the isolation of the students in cyberspace. However, chat brings us the live, real time contact and interaction with and among colleagues and students, which, in turn, enhances discussion, interaction and collaboration. According to Kimura (Kimura, 2003), "human interaction, discussion and collaboration is still the foremost in leading to new knowledge and enabling us to overcome the challenges that face us in the classrooms".

My university students and in-service teachers have also mentioned in their evaluation of online units and courses that group work in chat have been the most useful component for them in terms of learning gains and reflecting about their learning process.

All this, and my own experience of participating in chat for web tools exploration, as well as presenting or attending presentations and online conferences, led me to reflect in all the different ways in which chat can be used for learning and teaching, and the implications it has for the e-moderator and the audience.

Synchronous Communication – Chat

Synchronous communication refers to real time communication, interaction with live audiences. Almeida d'Eça (2002) has defined chat as "a two-way synchronous form of computer mediated communication (CMC), a dialogue in real time as we keyboard or speak our words, an online conversation between two or more people by means of a computer" (Almeida d'Eca, 2002). This definition contains all the elements that describe the nature and characteristics of chat which, in turn, make them a great tool for language learning, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Nature of Chat – Characteristics

The word "chat" means informal conversation, as defined in Merriam-Webster: "to talk in an informal or familiar manner", and that is what makes chat a natural space for communication to take place. The language in chat is usually composed of short phrases and a special lingo, "chat language", which makes communication closer to a face-to-face (f2f) conversation. That is why, in my view, chat should not be used for teaching or correcting lexical items or syntax and they cannot be taken as a product to be evaluated in terms of grammar and spelling. In f2f conversations people make mistakes, restart their sentences, self-repair, etc. In this sense, conversations in chat are very similar to f2f conversations for the following reasons:

- Greetings are part of the "meeting" rituals.

- People talk without respecting turns, not always, but it is very frequent that people start answering without waiting for the person who has the floor to finish.

- People introduce new topics without finishing previous ones.

- Turn taking is not usually well distributed. Some people tend to hold the floor or participate more than others.

- Some people only listen to the dialogues taking place.

- Different threads may be going on at the same time: two or 3 people are talking about something while others are pursuing some other topic (even if they are not next to each other).

- People attend to the thread that is of their interest, and may change their attention after a while, while some may participate in two or more different threads at the same time, which only depends on their ability to concentrate.

The fact that there are different threads does not mean that at the end each person has not taken anything out of the conversation, especially when they have met with a purpose. This also happens in a chat, with the advantage that at the end of the conversation, we can read the log and learn about all the topics treated even by those we were not paying attention to.

Of course, there are traits of f2f conversation that are missing in chat, namely body language and voice suprasegmental levels. The use of videos (webcams) and voice may help to overcome these obstacles; however, voice applications and webcams are still far from substituting the physical presence of the interlocutor, even though emoticons do help to express some feelings in text chat.

Chat have been neglected in the classrooms mainly due to the bad reputation of public chat rooms, and most educational institutions do not allow chat applications in their computer labs. In spite of the fact that research is needed regarding its benefits for language acquisition, the practice with students and colleagues has revealed many ways in which chat can be used to offer practice in a second or foreign language. Warschauer (1998) narrates his own experience as a language learner of Hawaiian and how CMC was useful for him: "During oral class discussion, it is not infrequent that I become lost, and thus receive no benefit. However, during computer-mediated discussion, no matter how complex, I can always reread the sentences, take out my dictionary, ask questions of the person next to me-in other words find some way to make the input comprehensible and thus benefit from it" (Warschauer, 1998: 5).

This reflection reveals that CMC can reduce the level of anxiety of a language student. Affectivity has been considered by many educators, in the past, as an influencing factor in the learning process (Dewey, Montesory, Vygotsky). More recently, Rogers (1969) emphasized that the affective domain needed to be considered if global education was to be achieved. In the field of second language acquisition, Krashen & Terrell's Natural Approach (1983) proposed activities which are especially designed to minimize stress, following one of Krashen's five hypotheses for language acquisition: the affective filter hypothesis. In this sense, the social nature of chat contributes to lowering the affective filter by offering a relaxing atmosphere for learning to take place.

Chat in Language Learning

Poole , Axmann, Calongne & Cox (2003) claim that "given the right conditions, the synchronous environment of the chat room can be a successful medium for learning". Let us look at several characteristics of chat which may be taken advantage of to enhance language learning:

- Interaction with real audiences (those who listen in order to get the message and not its form).

- Receive input and produce output

- Immediate feedback from interlocutors.

- No restrictions regarding location.

- Opportunity for negotiation of meaning.

- Collaborative learning towards knowledge construction.

- Opportunity for intake (what the language learner retains from the input received) through "language noticing" (A hypothesis of second language acquisition which states that for language to take place, students should be aware of what they learn, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.).

- Chatlogs (written transcription of chat) allowing for further analysis of conversation and adding coherence to the different threads of the conversation.

- Promotion of learner autonomy.

Most of these aspects have been considered by different hypotheses of second language acquisition: the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985); the output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1993); the interactionist hypothesis (Long, 1985); the intake hypothesis (Schmidt; 1990), among others. The negotiation of meaning through interaction and modification of input has also been mentioned as a factor facilitating language learning (Long, 1985, 1996). More recently, Egbert, Chao & Hanson-Smith (1999) have discussed eight conditions for optimal language learning environments, most of which can be fostered in chat: opportunities for interaction and negotiation of meaning, interaction with authentic audiences in the target language, students' involvement in authentic tasks, exposure to and encouragement to produce varied and creative language, feedback, metacognitive guidance, and an ideal anxiety or stress level.

Not many studies have investigated the use of chat in language learning, but the ones carried out reveal some interesting aspects. Pelletieri (2000) found that some of the patterns of computer mediated interaction are similar to those encountered in face-to-face interaction: all aspects of the discourse serve as triggers for negotiations, task types influence the kind and amount of negotiation (difficult tasks promote more negotiation than easy ones), self-repair, corrective feedback, negotiation within negotiations. This seems to indicate that students made efforts to ensure their understanding of the messages. Chun (1994) also found that chatting seems to improve students' interactive competence.

Language students, however, may find some difficulties in chat. Mynard (2002) points out some of them:

- If students' keyboarding skills are slow, they may miss part of the conversation taking place.

- Slow readers may find difficult to follow the sometimes fast scrolling screen.

- Chat lingo may result incomprehensible for newbies (people new to the use of web tools or Internet).

- Culturally-specific issues may result in misunderstandings arising.

However, the assets of chat tend to outnumber the possible difficulties, which can be minimized with a good lesson plan and preparation on part of the teacher.

Chat in Teacher Development

Chat can be used to improve different aspects of our teaching practice:

- **Planning for events**. Teachers are always short of time to attend meetings, or to collaboratively plan activities. In chat we have found a great alternative to meet with colleagues from all over the world to write lesson plans, to prepare events, and to design joint projects.

- **Sharing work done**. Collaboration and sharing are key words in professional development. Some examples of our work in WIA may illustrate this aspect. We share our work and our findings in online synchronous events that take place at different chat platforms. Methods, evaluation, activities, course design, are just some of the topics that may be found in our chatlogs. We mainly use text chat, other times, however, voice, webcams, web pages and Power Point are used to enhance the presentations. E-learning and online components for f2f courses are the main issues behind our sharing and collaboration efforts, but teachers who do not teach online could benefit from online activities to enhance their f2f practice.

- **Practicing e-moderation with students**. Moderating online is not the same as teaching f2f, and the only way to learn is with practice. Tutoring a student in chat is quite different from working with groups of students or whole classes in this environment. Internet offers the possibility to get in touch with students from all over the world (Yeh, 2003) who are eager to practice their English with native or non-native speakers of the target language. Teachers may also start practicing with their own students in the classroom, setting group tasks to be completed through chat.

- **Exploring web tools**. Technology overwhelms us with new tools everyday, thus, exploring web tools is a never-ending activity for online educators. Sometimes these tools seem difficult and above our understanding. Chat give us the opportunity to explore and evaluate these tools with the collaboration and scaffolding (the help given by experts to non-experts) of one or more colleagues, who may have experience with it, or more technological knowledge to guide us in the process. Chatlogs will stay there for those who come behind.

- **Participating in online conferences as audience and as participants**.
  Participants have the opportunity to attend presentations given by people who can be in another continent, ask questions as if f-2-f without leaving their homes; and presenters have the chance to discuss their work with a wider and diverse audience which makes his/her work more relevant.

A Taxonomy of Chat

After participating in many chat for different purposes, the differences observed in terms of the objective of the session, the role of the moderator and the performance expected of the participants were the trigger to develop this taxonomy, which, as I have mentioned before, is still a work in progress. I have had the feedback of many colleagues from the WIA Community (Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, Vance Stevens, Teresa Almeida d'Eca, Susanne Nyrop, Rita Zeinstejer, Buth Othman) to get to the categories presented in this paper. The table below has been divided into six columns: category, purpose, characteristics, moderator's role, examples, and subcategories:

Category	Purpose	Characteristics	Moderator's role	Examples	Subcategories
Free-topic chat	Practice language, Learn about and explore web tools.	Shared with friends. No pre-established agenda. Different threads are going on at the same time. Each one joins the conversational thread of his/her interest. Free turn taking.	Free moderation. Distributed leadership.	Webheads' Sunday meetings at Tapped In. Students practice English during week-ends.	
Collaborative Task-oriented Chat	Participants get together in a chat to accomplish a real-life task.	Participants share a common goal. There is a need for a product. Learners autonomy.	There is not need for a moderator. The same group establishes the norms, and handles the situation to complete the task in the time they have available.	Discussion after a video viewing lesson. Cooperative Group activities (jig-saw). Students get together online to discuss a final project.	

| **Presentation or Academic Seminar Chat** | Presenting material to an audience: Program to be presented Research results Methodologies The goal is not to inform, but to educate, that is, "draw forth" ideas or explore a specified topic, based on information provided external to the chat. | The moderator has prepared the material beforehand and the topic to be discussed has been previously announced to the audience.

Guest presenters may be invited. The moderator could prepare 3-4 questions to consider and try to keep audience into focus on those topics, and change topics periodically throughout the chat time, e.g. 10 min. for discussion of each question. Reflections: -Could one chat be intended within one of the subcategories turn into another through the process in-action? | Reflections: Should the moderator keep on track despite side issues that arise, or anticipated questions asked by the audience? Latecomers to the chat do not know the approach set, and being eager to participate, the discussion may take different roads and not get where it was supposed . What should the moderator do? -Establish procedure at the beginning- negotiated with participants? -Inform that the question will be answered later? -Evaluate the importance of keeping on track by reverting to original topic, against the weight of the unexpected query? | Students present final project. Presenting this taxonomy to an audience of teachers. | **Workshop**

Moderator shows how to do something and audience completes the task too.
Demonstration Presentation followed by questions and discussion.

Swap

All or some participants bring topic, questions or materials to share and discuss about.
Presentation Moderator presents information and audience listens and asks questions.

Discussion Presenter brings a question or topic to discuss about |
| **Practice Chat** | Participants, using the chat, practice a skill or strategy with other participants and the moderator eg. a given function of a language | Very closed-topic chat Individual or group activity. | Moderator usually establishes the rules and turn taking style. | Role playing an interview Practicing reporting genre Individual or group tutoring. | |

Evaluation Chat	Asses students' learning gains.	Teacher prepares questions to give to student(s).	Moderator / teacher can give immediate feedback.	Written questions or topics to be developed by individual learners. Debates on a given topic with a group of students.

The **category** indicates the kind of chat. So far, we have found free topic chat, collaborative task-oriented chat, academic seminar or presentation chat, practice chat and evaluation chat. The **purpose** column indicates the objective of the chat, the kind of activity for which this chat would be useful.

The **moderator's role** column describes the way the moderator behaves during the session. Depending on his/her performance the chat will be a more or less controlled activity, with free topic chat being the ones with less control, and evaluation chat the ones with more control. By control, we mean the autonomy of the participants (less control = more autonomy), the structure of the activity (less structure = less control), and the intervention of the moderator in guiding the activity (less intervention = more autonomy of the participants).

In the **examples** column we mention some activities that can be planned to fit in the corresponding category. After the main classification was created, we found that there were some chat that fell into the presentation chat category but that showed some differences in the their structure. This led us to design the last column, **subcategories** for this kind of chat, including workshop, demonstration, swap, presentation, and discussion chat.

a. Free Topic Chat

The main purpose of these chat is to practice the target language, to learn about and to explore web tools with the social scaffolding of colleagues or peers. There is not a pre-established agenda, and there is free moderation. Different threads are going on at the same

time and each one joins the conversational thread of his/her interest. A good example of this kind of chat are WIA Sunday meetings at Tapped In, where English teachers and students worldwide get together to discuss about web tools and the best way to incorporate them into their educational contexts in a friendly atmosphere.

b. Collaborative Task-Oriented Chat

Participants get together in a chat to accomplish a real-life task. The activity should be planned and structured in such a way, the once in the chat, participants know what they are there for, and they are responsible for going through a process to be able to accomplish the objective of the activity, which might be a final product, or only a sub-product to be used as resource for a following activity. In this kind of chat, there is no need for a moderator: the same group establishes the norms and handles the situation to complete the task in the allotted time. Two good examples for this type of chat: some teachers gathered in a chat to design a strategic plan for a week we had to moderate for one of the TESOL Electronic Village Online 2003; and when my architecture students worked to share the characteristics of the different buildings each student had read about and come up with the shared characteristics, which were going to be used in further tasks.

c. Academic Seminars –Academic Presentation Chat

These chat have the purpose of presenting material. Usually, the moderator has prepared the material in advance, and the topic for discussion has been previously announced to the audience. It may be in the form of a **workshop**, where the presenter shows, hands-on, how to do something and the participants have to get involved in the "doing"; a **demonstration**, where the presenter shows how to do something and the audience asks questions but is not involved in any other action; a **presentation**, where the speaker only presents information and expects the audience to ask questions - it can be the presentation of a program, a methodology, results of a research, etc; a **swap shop**, where each participant brings material on a given topic to be shared, discussed and analyzed during the chat; a **discussion**, where the presenter brings a couple of questions to be discussed or brainstormed. Guest speakers could be an enhancing element for these academic presentation chat.

We have added some questions for reflection under some of the columns. Should the moderator keep on track if side issues arise, or if there are anticipated questions asked by the audience? Sometimes latecomers to the chat do not know the approach that has been set, and are eager to participate, and the discussion may take different roads not getting where it was supposed to. What should the moderator do? These are questions to be answered by each practitioner according to his/her own experience and the situation at the moment.

d. Practice Chat

The objective is that students in the chat practice a given function of the language with other students and the moderator (e.g. role playing an interview, practicing a function of the language, individual or group tutoring). These are very closed-topic chat, and the moderator usually establishes the rules and turn taking style.

e. Evaluation Chat

As far reaching as it might seem, chat has been used to assess students' learning (Marta, 2002). Teachers can administer online quizzes while in a chat with students, ask questions to be answered by individual students, prepare debates on a given topic and then use the chatlog to check the participation and contributions of each student. Immediate feedback is an asset of chat as a medium to administer evaluations.

It is important to point out that some chat may mix some of these categories, whether because the session has different objectives or because there is a need to introduce a new element.

Conclusion

As we have seen through our discussion, chat is an unexploited tool for language learning and teacher development. The collaborative construction of knowledge that can take place through chat should be considered by teachers. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of learning through social interaction and collaboration (von Glaserfeld, 1989), and chat seems to be the ideal space for this kind of learning.

In recent research, Margalit & Sabar (2003) found that:

- Most students and teachers believe it is possible to learn using chat.

- They like learning via this medium.

- They believe moderators are important to conduct the sessions.

- Students and teachers believe chat have a positive influence on creativity, thought-generation, social relations, and learning.

- Teachers place great importance on the e-moderation aspect of chat.

Regarding our own experience, students seem to prefer the synchronicity of chat over the asynchronous modes to interact online. Chats do not promote learning on their own, their effectiveness lies in the way the activities are planned and carried out within the framework of the syllabus of a course. It is our responsibility as teachers to learn to use this environment to ensure optimal conditions for the students' performance.

It is our hope that this taxonomy of educational chat we have presented here, can help teachers to plan chat activities for their students, and to select the type of chat that suits their syllabus, students' age, level and interests, and at the same time, teachers consider using chat for their own professional development.

To end, I would like to present a comment made by a Venezuelan student after her participation in a video-chat unit (Gonzalez, 2003): "it was really a new and innovating learning English class, hope this method would be applied in the future with other students too" (April 30, 2003).

Note

Anyone willing to make comments about this article is kindly requested to visit my discussion board at **http://dafnegon.tripod.com/discussionboard.html**.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS OF FUTURE EVENTS

INDEPENDENT LANGUAGE LEARNING:

NEW RESEARCH DIRECTIONS CONFERENCE

Department of Languages, Open University,

Milton Keynes , United Kingdom

December 4th-5th 2003

This conference focuses on new research in: Learner strategies and strategy training; Independent Language Learning; Computer-Mediated Communication; Intercultural competence; Materials and curriculum design; Portfolios; Study Abroad; Translation.

To register or view the conference programme, please point your browser to http://dol-conf.open.ac.uk and follow the appropriate link.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TERTIARY/COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING:

FROM THEORY TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Nanjing , Hong Kong , China

May, 14-18, 2004

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/eltu/conference/2004/

The English Language Teaching Unit of The Chinese University of Hong Kong is pleased to organize a joint international conference with the National Association of College English Teaching and Research of China in May 2004. The major aims are to enhance the quality of college English teaching in the Chinese context as well as to provide open forums for the discussion of current issues related to language teaching and research. To maximize participation and to attract colleagues from different parts of China and other countries, the conference will take place in two locations: Nanjing (14, 15 May) and Hong Kong (17, 18 May).

The conference will cover the following themes: Changes in classroom practice; Curriculum innovation and evaluation; Use of information technology in teaching cultural awareness in tertiary English programmes; Roles of native/non-native speakers of English among teachers; Assessment in second/foreign language teaching and learning.

Types of presentation include paper presentation, symposium, demonstration and workshop. We are confident that the joint conference will be informative and will provide a stimulating

arena for intellectual and cultural exchange among teachers. For more information about the conference, please visit our conference website with the URL:
http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/eltu/conference/2004/

CALICO 2004 ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

CALL: Focusing on the Learner

Carnegie Mellon University

Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania

June 8-12, 2004

http://calico.org

CALICO is a professional organization dedicated to the use of technology in foreign/second language learning and teaching. CALICO's symposia bring together educators, administrators, materials developers, researchers, government representatives, vendors of hardware and software, and others interested in the field of computer-assisted language learning.

Preconference Workshops: Tuesday, June 8 - Wednesday, June 9

Courseware Showcase: Thursday, June 10 (tentative)

Presentation Sessions: Thursday, June 10 - Saturday, June 12

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: OCTOBER 31, 2003

All presenters must be current members of CALICO by the time of the conference and are responsible for their own expenses, including registration fees. Use CALICO's proposal submission form at http://calico1.modlang.swt.edu or request a text version of the form at info@calico.org.

For more information, contact

Esther Horn, CALICO Coordinator

214 Centennial Hall, 601 University Drive , San Marcos , TX 78666

512/245-9089 (fax); 512/245-1417 (phone)

e-mail: info@calico.org or ec06@swt.edu

CALL & RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Conference Center "Elzenveld",

Antwerp , Belgium

September 5 - 7, 2004

www.didascalia.be

Research methodologies will be the main theme of the conference. After an overview of research methodologies in various disciplines, the following issues will be raised:

- which research methodologies can be adopted in CALL ?

- what are the challenges due to the multidisciplinarity of CALL ?

- to what extent does the choice of methodology depend on CALL-activities such as Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation ?

- what about dedicated CALL research methodologies ?

You can read all about the evaluation of the previous CALL Conference on www.didascalia.be.

Please send any suggestions or questions to mathea.simons@ua.ac.be. Of course we will keep you informed about the upcoming calls for proposals (foreseen September 2003) and registration.

 Jozef Colpaert

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July 24-29, 2005

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CONFERENCE PROFILE

Presentations at the World Congress will bring together applied linguists from diverse communities and from varied intellectual traditions to explore the future. The theme of the conference is "The Future Is Now" – a future where language is a means to express ideas that were unthinkable, to cross boundaries that seemed to be unbridgeable, and to share our local realities with people who live continents away. We particularly welcome presentations on the educational uses of computer technology, the Internet, software, and distance learning.

For the first time the World Congress of Applied Linguistics will be held in the United States . The American Association for Applied Linguistics invites colleagues, students, and friends from all over the world to participate in AILA 2005 in Madison , Wisconsin – a city in the American heartland that has been called "the best place to live in America ." Madison is built around four lakes and the conference sites are located on two of them. Monona Terrace is the conference center designed by Frank Lloyd Wright on Lake Monona , and the Pyle Center on Lake Mendota is the state-of-the-art distance education and conference center of the University of Wisconsin .

AAAL invites you to Madison in 2005. We promise you intellectual excitement and warm Midwestern hospitality in a relaxed and beautiful setting.

CONTACTS

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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.

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The next issue of "Teaching English with Technology" will be published in January 2004. Submission deadline for the next issue is December 1, 2003.

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.

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