

**IATEFL POLAND
COMPUTER SPECIAL INTEREST
GROUP**

***TEACHING ENGLISH WITH
TECHNOLOGY***
**A JOURNAL FOR TEACHERS OF
ENGLISH**

ISSN 1642-1027

Vol. 4, no. 2, April 2004

**Teaching Business English with Technology –
A Special Issue**

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

by **Jarek Krajka**

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English for Specific Purposes has earned a prominent position over the recent years. There are more and more students whose language needs and interests are so clearly defined that this poses a true challenge on the teacher as far as the selection of materials is concerned. Of course, ELT publishers have acknowledged this market need and one can come across a plethora of titles and materials for this sector. Business English is one of the most popular "purposes", and this is the reason why the current issue of *Teaching English with Technology – A Journal for Teachers of English* has been devoted exclusively to various aspects of enhancing Business English instruction with computer technology. It is hoped that in the future there will be similar issues covering systematically other areas of language teaching as well.

The contributions in the current issue, interestingly enough, are written almost exclusively by Polish authors, thus, the issue can also be regarded as a state-of-the-art in the Polish ICT-for-ELT, as the editorial team has issued invitations to contribute to academic researchers, teacher trainers and practicing teachers, grouped in IATEFL Poland Computer Special Interest Group, The British Council Poland ICT Project for EFL Teachers Support Group and educational institutions.

The lead article, by Malgorzata Rzeznik and Anna Drzewinska, entitled "Business English for IT Students in the E-Learning Format", makes a thorough overview of different aspects of e-language-learning, using the example of a Business English course designed and run by the authors at one of private colleges in Warsaw.

In the Lesson Plans section, Mirosława Podgórska in her lesson plan "Company Profile" and her husband Marek Podgórski in his lesson plan "President's Message" provide the interesting ideas on the skilful implementation of the Web in Business English instruction, with the emphasis on writing skills. On the other hand, TEwT's constant contributor, Rachel Ellis, presents the readers with another instant lesson, this time destined for advanced learners of Business English.

Jarek Krajka, the humble undersigned, in his contribution "Multimedia in Teaching Business English", writes on how educational software of different kind (electronic dictionaries, coursebook-related programs, skill-specific programs, fully developed language courseware) can be implemented in a Business English course, giving examples of language tasks for a sample coursebook, *Marketleader Intermediate*.

The Journal features the Book Review section, with the evaluation of *The Internet and Business English* by Barney Barrett and Pete Sharma, reviewed by Edyta Frelik. The title sounds like a must to read and use by BE teachers, which is put to test in the review.

Finally, Katarzyna Karska-Menet reviews one of many sites that could be used in teaching Business English with the Net, namely

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/business/>.

It is hoped that this wide array of computer-assisted possibilities will satisfy at least some of the needs of Business English teachers all over the globe.

I wish you good reading.

ARTICLES

BUSINESS ENGLISH FOR IT STUDENTS IN THE E-LEARNING FORMAT

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"Millions of words have been written about the technology and its potential, but not much about what the teachers and learners actually do online" (Salmon, 2000)

Abstract

In this paper, an example of using the Internet communication tools to structure the learning environment in which the foreign language teaching-learning processes take place is presented. Language learning as such is tied to verbal communication, which by definition is carried out over a distance. The challenge of using the Internet in the foreign language teaching-learning process is to harness its potential to better serve the needs of the teachers and the learners.

Introduction

The Internet is making inroads in education but there is a wide discrepancy between the hype surrounding it and the way it is used in the teaching and learning process generally and in the foreign language teaching and learning process especially.

In Poland, even though computers with Internet access are becoming more and more available at every educational level, there are too few institutions which use electronic communication tools to provide education. And there are still fewer which implement them into the foreign language teaching and learning process in a systematic and consistent way.

In this paper, an example of one such institution, Polish-Japanese Institute of Information Technology (PJWSTK), will be described. Special focus will be put on using the Internet tools to structure the learning environment in which the foreign language teaching-learning processes take place and presenting the rationale behind it. Also, the areas in which expanding the scope of using the Internet tools is considered desirable and advisable will be presented.

The foreign language learning-teaching process

The foreign language learning and teaching process, involving the learner and the teacher (but not only) takes place in a unique whole, referred to as the glottodidactic system (Grucza, 1976, 1978), the focal point of which is the language learner.

The language learning and teaching process is understood to be a cognitive process, based on verbal communication, the mental locus of which is human information processing mechanism, specialized for processing language symbols in their special arrangements (Dakowska, 2003). The cognitive and communicative processes are mutually dependent. Language learning as a cognitive process can only take place through verbal communication and each act of verbal communication always has cognitive results. Verbal communication is a form of human behaviour, instantiated by interaction with the environment. The interaction of the learner with the environment is defined by the nature of verbal communication and the learner's information processing equipment, specialized for language.

By its very nature, communication is something which can take place between (at least two) different centres (Grucza 1992: 15). Thus, the setting of a communication exchange is a moment at a cross-section of space and time (situation), being itself an instantiation of a particular communication domain, together with the participants of the communication exchange in their particular roles, with their aims, emotions, etc.

As any verbal communication exchange is carried over a distance, no matter how long or short, by definition it implies an active role of not only the sender, but also of the receiver. In the teaching-learning situation, the teacher does not have the power to control the mental environment of the learner and will not replace the learner in his/her effort to process the information received. However, knowledge of the way human information processing mechanism works can help the teacher make appropriate choices regarding the creation of suitable conditions in which the teaching-learning processes take place by providing plenty of meaningful and structured input in the form of primary language data, i.e. discourse, and organizing the learner's experience and practice in the form of tasks.

E-learning format

With the above written in mind, what has to be established is a comprehensive yet concise definition of e-learning. Many labels have been affixed to using the Internet in education, the most frequently used being 'distance' (e.g., Doughty, Long, 2003; Kedrova, 2000; Olechowska, 2002; Sampson, 2003); 'online' (e.g., Mason, 1998; Swaffar, Romano, Markley, Arens (ed.), 1998; Salmon, 2003), 'network-based' (e.g., Warschauer, Kern (ed.), 2000), and 'web-based' (e.g., Mioduser, Nachmias, Lahav, Oren, 2000), combined with either teaching or learning.

In *distance learning* what is usually stressed is the distance between the teacher and the learner regardless of the technologies deployed for the purposes of the course.

The implied feature of the so-called *online courses* is that the learner has unlimited and constant access to materials available on the course servers and, in some cases, instructors.

Warschauer and Kern give the following definition of *network-based language teaching* (NBLT): "NBLT is language teaching that involves the use of computers connected to one another in either local or global networks" (<http://www.gse.uci.edu/markw/nblt-intro.html>).

Web-based teaching is understood as using existing websites as sources of course materials, and Internet technologies as tools supporting teacher-learner, learner-learner, and learner-content communication.

Their common feature is the fact that the Internet (and computers generally) *are* used in the teaching and learning process. Computers have been referred to as 'cognitive tools' (Wolff, 1999), which does not necessarily mean that they can think, but that they can be considered as a tool in human cognitive functioning. What is important, however, is not only the computers (i.e. the hardware), but also the technologies and their features (i.e. the software), which can be adapted to the needs of the teachers and learners.

Doughty and Long (2003: 15) rightly point that "there is a clear distinction between classroom-connected uses of technology (e.g., CALL) and distance learning". While classroom-connected use of technology is usually just one of the many possible options in the teaching-learning process, in the case of distance learning it is thanks to the technology that the teaching-learning process can take place, as the teacher is "removed in space and time from the learners, who may, in turn, be removed from one another" (Doughty, Long 2003: 53).

What seems then to be important are the issues of time and place. In this respect Kubiak (2000: 27) suggests the following differentiation:

- same time, same place;
- same time, different places;
- different times, same place;
- different times, different places (translation of the author, AD).

When the teacher and the learners are distributed in space and/or time, what comes into play are also the technologies and tools allowing for the establishing and maintaining contact. The available options are synchronous (e.g., chat, audio/video conferencing) and asynchronous (e.g., e-mail, www, bulletin boards, newsgroups, discussion forums) communication tools. The way they are combined and used in the teaching-learning process may have far-reaching

consequences for the subsequent attainments of the learner, i.e. the level of his/her language proficiency.

The tools and technologies not only allow for the reconstruction and extension of the so-far-known learning environment into the electronic space, but also for making the most of the available technical options to create a new – virtual - learning environment (e.g., Britain, Liber, 1999). Such an environment would not only facilitate communication but also host multimodal content as well as tests and other activities for the provision of immediate feedback both to the learner and the course tutor.

The spectrum of possible ways to create such an environment is very wide, and ranges from simple tools, such as e-mail and www, to advanced ones, such as portals, platforms, and dedicated systems, i.e. LMS (Learning Management System), CMS (Content/Class Management System) or LCSM (Learning Content Management System) (Chmielewski, 2002).

A portal is a piece of software, the aim of which is to provide "the entrance site to the Internet as well as different services" (Czajkowski, 1999: 313, translation of the author, AD). In the educational context, however, the system should also meet many different requirements of its groups of users, i.e. learners, teachers, and administration (Galwas, 2000), for example it should provide the opportunity for online testing, online registration and verification of students' marks, automated allocation of students to groups at different level, etc

A platform is a dedicated piece of software which integrates different Internet communication tools to (re)create a learning environment in the electronic space. Currently, there are many such platforms available on the market, which are constantly developed and upgraded, eg. WebCT, Blackboard, etc.

All the technical means are necessary, but should not blur the fact that the most important issue in the teaching and learning process is to facilitate learning, i.e. to support learners and to intensify and enhance language learning processes.

Foreign language learning and teaching online

The decision to go online with the process of foreign language teaching-learning is often not an easy one neither for the teachers (e.g., Lee, 2000) nor for the students (e.g., Hara, Kling, 2000). Introducing a new tool is never without problems, but, considering the many possibilities not previously thought of, its potential should be better harnessed (e.g., Olechowska 2002: 4).

Basing the language learning process on verbal communication and examining it from the information-processing perspective does not simplify the research area, yet allows to mark some tangible points of reference. This in turn contributes to a better understanding of the multilateral relationships between the phenomena of verbal communication and the process of language learning, as well as between the teacher, the learner, the environment, and the technology.

The aim of using distance communication tools (both synchronous and asynchronous) is to (re)create a learning environment that would be psycholinguistically optimal for the learners (e.g., Dakowska 2001; Doughty, Long, 2003). The fact that the process of foreign language teaching and learning is carried out over a distance is its inherent feature, so the biggest challenge is to use distance communication tools to carefully plan and structure it (e.g., Salmon, 2003; Stanisławska, 2002: 10), to suitably configure such variables as discourse type, the state of the learner's information processing mechanism and the learner's readiness to undertake a task (Dakowska 2001: 120).

Having in mind that verbal communication is a form of behaviour, the essence of which is interaction, language learning and teaching should also be built around structured events in which the learners carry out different tasks. A task, whether online or classroom-based, is considered a unit of language learning and teaching and it has to be built in the cycle of human communicative behaviour, i.e. from intention via transformation, performance to feedback.

The example of PJWSTK

When the idea of launching Internet-based studies was first considered, there was much enthusiasm, little expertise and even less money. The new studies offered by Polish-Japanese Institute of Information Technology were to be undergraduate studies in IT leading up to the Engineer degree (equivalent to BSc in IT), delivered mainly on the Internet, with occasional visits of students to PJWSTK for laboratory classes and examination sessions combined to limit the travel and accommodation expenses. English was to be part of the curriculum because of the Polish state regulations.

At the beginning there were two basic attitudes to online language teaching among the PJWSTK staff. The first, favoured by the school authorities, held that the teachers would build an educational multimedia package with the help of students doing their engineer projects and this package would then be used for the course, and in the future, perhaps even sold to other educational institutions. Unfortunately, nobody mentioned any payment for the preparation of the materials. It is also the belief of the authors of this article that such packages are best developed by large publishing houses with adequate resources to do the research, development and thorough testing of their products.

The second attitude, held by the online studies' director, was that it is next to impossible to teach somebody a foreign language without having regular personal contact with them. Thus, the original idea was that the language course coordinator should produce a set of guidelines and requirements for the final examination and act as a consultant to students who would take some English course in the place of their residence or learn alone. Such a solution was not fair to students, as they would incur extra costs and would have to find extra time to attend language classes. This could lead to even higher than expected dropout rates and/or attempts at cheating in the final examination, not to mention the possible accusations of testing students from the material they have not been taught. Yet another issue was that of the exclusion of language teachers from new forms of courses involving modern technology, which could, in the long run, limit their employment options.

The widely held assumption that teaching a language over the Internet is hardly possible is probably based on the popular notion that learning a foreign language means learning to speak it. While this is true to some extent, it overlooks other skills and competencies necessary for the communication in the modern world – writing (including fast typing skills), the knowledge of vocabulary and structures, reading and listening. It goes without saying that these can be taught using the Internet, perhaps even more effectively than in the traditional

way (e-mail communication and chats being the natural environments for practising reading and writing, for example).

Finally, it was decided that the English course at the Internet-based undergraduate studies would be launched as a regular course with a syllabus, assignments and regular checks just as the other courses of the curriculum, but within more limited financial resources. The course coordinator filed a grant application to acquire some funding for building a proper teacher resource centre with adequate literature and for sponsoring expertise building activities, like participation in conferences and workshops on e-learning.

The course was planned according to the regular principles of methodology, which means the following three factors had to be considered:

1. learners: their characteristics, needs, learning experience and language proficiency;
2. available resources: both commercial (including cost-analysis of different options) and cost-free;
3. available technology: how the opportunities it offers translate into methodologically sound tools and what are its limitations from the point of view of the teacher and the learners connecting from their homes.

These elements are now going to be considered in turn.

Learners

Since the course was being planned before candidates started enrolling, some assumptions had to be made basing on the information from enquiries and the coordinator's previous experience from work with evening students of PJWSTK. The basic assumptions were:

- the students would vary as to their level of language competence and they would not be very numerous (a small mixed-ability group),
- the students would vary as to their background, age, work experience and place of residence,
- most students would be working professionals with limited time for studying (otherwise they would have entered full-time stationary education),
- all students would have had some previous experience with language learning, they had acquired certain preferences concerning the teacher's style of instruction, they had some preferred style of learning and they were aware (sometimes to the point of resignation) of their weaknesses,

- for the vast majority of full-time day students and all part-time evening students of PJWSTK the optimal course so far had been a course in Business English with the elements of IT English and some General English. This recipe has been confirmed as correct by a number of graduates who are in constant touch with their former tutors and provide useful feedback.

It must be added that the above list agrees with the description of adult learners by Malcolm Knowles (Knowles, 1984). He identified two characteristic features of such learners:

- they have a lot of experience which can be used to foster learning,
- they have predefined educational goals which must be addressed.

A course in Business English with the elements of IT English seemed an ideal option, as it was relevant to the students' needs to communicate in the workplace and it could be offered to a mixed ability group, from low intermediate (the lowest level now entering higher education) through regular intermediate to advanced. Since Business Communication Skills, such as negotiations, socialising, correspondence etc, are hardly taught at secondary schools, and Business- or IT-related vocabulary is also new, every course participant will find such a course challenging and/or interesting enough to be motivated. Of course, the language level of the course could not be too high and intermediate seemed an appropriate choice.

Resources

The next issue to address was that of proper course materials. The first to be considered were commercial multimedia packages which could be either given to students, or preferably made available to students on the Edu server, just as the other courses. From different options, there emerged only one methodologically sound candidate and that was *Market Leader Online* from Pearson Education – an online course, based on the already proven paper-based course, *Market Leader Intermediate*. The original course had been used successfully with undergraduate and graduate students so at least the course content was not to be new. What *was* new was the form of delivery, while the unknown was the price of this new product. When it was officially announced it turned out that a 9-month login for one student came at 4 times the price of a full paper-based package (Course Book, Practice File and CD), which would be sufficient for the full two-year course. The organisers could either ask the students to pay for their logins or get the school to pay. Neither option was feasible.

Finally it was decided to follow a well-established and tested path of paper-based distance education, albeit with the use of modern technology to foster communication between students and their teacher and students among themselves. This path meant that experimenting on people was kept to a minimum and the students would not bear any

unnecessary costs. The course material from Course Book was broken into 4 terms and 15 weekly assignments in each term. The students were given a syllabus of the first semester with the information which of the tasks were to be sent back as homework for the teacher to check, which tasks were to be realised as online forum discussions, when the online tests were scheduled. At the end of the term there was a face-to-face meeting, the purpose of which was to discuss the material covered and check whether the students have mastered it.

Technology

As far as the technological solutions available for the course are concerned, the most important here is the Class Management System, called the Edu PJWSTK platform, developed especially for Internet studies by the students and database lecturers of PJWSTK. This system allows:

- posting announcements, sending e-mail to selected or all students,
- asynchronous discussion (forum),
- synchronous discussion (chat) – this facility was added in the second term so the course started without the chat option,
- uploading files onto the server by the teacher and the students,
- downloading files from the server,
- adding links to useful web pages,
- running online tests,
- storing students' grades,
- checking traffic (this lets the instructor identify 'lurkers' – students who visit the site but do not participate in group activities).

The first and foremost feature of the Edu PJWSTK platform was its ease of use, even for an inexperienced person (ergonomic design, clear icons, non-flashy colours). (for information about Edu PJWSTK go to http://www.int.pjwstk.edu.pl/edu_pl.html)

The second, more ELT-oriented, software used in the course was Hot Potatoes (<http://www.hotpotatoes.net>). This authoring package helps the teacher create his or her own exercises in a variety of formats – crossword, multiple-choice, gap-filling, etc. The exercises thus created are converted into the html format and can be used on any web browser. Since most material was paper-based and most work done individually by students, the possibility to add some tailored vocabulary and grammar practice was very welcome.

Additionally, some language-related web pages were used as well as information services and pages related to the IT subject-matter. (see eg: <http://www.englishpage.com>)

To sum up the planning process, students were supposed to do the following:

- send answers to selected tasks via e-mail or upload them on the server,
- participate in asynchronous discussions,
- do the online tests,
- read selected articles related to IT by following the links which appeared on the Edu (that was usually followed by summary writing and an online discussion) – the articles were always up-to-date from the most recent issues of Newsweek, Time or Scientific American,
- do the selected exercises from web pages (<http://www.englishpage.com/>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/index.shtml>),
- do additional grammar and vocabulary exercises created by the teacher using Hot Potatoes.

The teacher's role was to:

- check students' homework and indicate any areas requiring more work,
- encourage and monitor asynchronous discussions,
- browse the Internet in search of proper and up-to-date articles,
- write grammar notes explaining more difficult issues,
- design additional exercises using Hot Potatoes,
- write and check online tests (some tests were checked automatically),
- prepare final written and oral test,
- answer any queries the students might have.

The course started and went surprisingly well. The students kept sending their home assignments quite regularly, although there were a few dropouts. The additional materials were popular (also with day students with whom Edu PJWSTK was used as a CMS), tests got solved. However, some problems started emerging:

1. the students seemed resistant to participate in forum discussions,
2. some students were obviously communicating informally concerning homework and tests – the answers received by the teacher were far too similar.

Since the above issues are quite serious, they needed to be considered.

On the basis of the experience gained so far, the authors can venture to say that the problem with asynchronous discussions might stem from a combination of two factors:

1. Students of the first semester generally do not know one another and their group must go through a 'forming' stage – the first stage in the group evolution cycle of forming,

storming, norming, performing and adjourning (Tuckman, 1977). Since the students come from a variety of locations and backgrounds, this will take longer than in the case of the usual two-to-three-week period of a regular full-time stationary group. Gilly Salmon who wrote a lot on the need to foster group-building activities also stressed that this must first of all take time. (Salmon, 2000) For the e-courses held at PJWSTK, it seems that the forming occurs during the whole first semester, with some storming and norming near the end, when the students start negotiating who will help whom with the tasks outstanding. That was repeated in the case of the second course despite all the ice-breaking activities introduced as part of most first-term subject courses and despite the efforts of individual students to consolidate the group (it seems even the informal students' forums collapse). It could be different for different subjects and different participants, but one has to remember that the students of PJWSTK enrol for a 4-year undergraduate study so they have quite a long time perspective. However, anyone who witnessed the slow speed at which online discussions progress, which are educational (not fun) chats, will realize that it must take longer than normally for a group to consolidate. It will take even longer if discussions are asynchronous.

2. As far as asynchronous discussions are concerned, they do not provide participants with immediate rewards for posting their contributions. When the chatroom was introduced to Edu PJWSTK in the second semester of the first course, the students participated eagerly. The same happened with the second edition of studies for whom the chat facility was available since the beginning. They would come online to talk to their teacher and colleagues and refuse to participate in a forum discussion. Still, the group lacked cohesion and took almost 3 months to consolidate, despite synchronicity and special attempts of tutors in all subjects to introduce more team-building activities.

'Cheating' was another serious issue, which needed some considerations. In the end, it was decided students would not be punished for communicating during test- or task-solving as long as they did not send in identical summaries of articles or identical correspondence. After all, negotiating answers means that the students have to pay more attention to the issues in question. It could even lead to better internalisation of knowledge (Mietzel, 2000). The teachers waited for the face-to-face oral test at the end of the term to see whether the communication between certain students led to good learning outcomes. When the assumption was confirmed, it still came as a bit of surprise, probably due to the lingering

attitude to 'cheating'. The fact that students can and will communicate informally solving tests outside a physical classroom is a given and must be treated as another learning opportunity. However, it is still of prime importance to hold end-of-term tests in a controlled environment (the school's or proxy's premises) for objective and academically rigorous assessment (McVay, 2002).

In the second semester the chat function was added to the Edu PJWSTK platform and the lecturers were obliged to provide real-time consultation. After the first online meeting and a discussion with students, the course format changed. Nowadays it looks as follows:

- Students do most long reading and listening offline, as well as grammar and vocabulary exercises.
- They send in only longer pieces of writing and answers to additional grammar exercises (from the Macmillan's Language Practice series – the level depending on each student's needs, although this is increasingly being superseded with practice using the <http://www.englishpage.com/> – a web page with good quality exercises at many language levels).
- Shorter tasks, discussions, communication practise ('speaking' tasks), fast reading exercises are done in real-time during online meetings (the teacher being preferably a facilitator rather than a participant). This means less time spent correcting homework for teacher and more quality communication time for students.
- Students do online tests.
- Students come for the end-of-term face-to-face oral test (written tests are provided for those students who could not participate in the course systematically and have not met normal pass requirements).

As can be observed from the above description – the course which has emerged in the process of evolution has nothing to do with the classical ideal of network-based learning available any time to anyone from any place, with the participant being able to pick and choose what they want/need to learn. In fact, the courses verging on the ideal thus described have collapsed bringing about a lot of unnecessary disappointment and huge financial losses. Since the Internet and related technological solutions were built for communication, and language learning is basically done to improve people's communication skills, it is only natural that we can teach and learn communication through communication over the Net – both asynchronous (e-mail, discussion forum) and synchronous (chat and in the near future group-teleconferencing). It agrees with McVay's idea of 'learning cohorts' – groups assembling for

the purpose of completing a specific course over the Internet within a predefined time and with a human tutor closely monitoring the progress. (McVay, 2002)

Is there is still room for 'knowledge repositories' available at any time to anyone connecting from any place? Certainly – explanatory notes, dictionaries, vocabulary and grammar drills are vital elements of language learning over any medium in any form, and the fact that nowadays most of them are available as automated computer applications means they are easier to use and they can be done at one's leisure freeing the online and classroom time for less structured (and more demanding) communication practice.

One must also note that chat is not always feasible as a method of teaching. It is quite time consuming and could be costly for participants if they use a classical modem connection. The same would apply to the attempts at practising speaking (there are some programs which allow the exchange of audio messages). If the problems is serious, perhaps communication should be limited to the exchange e-mail correspondence and participation in asynchronous forum discussions.

Suggestions for online tutors and course managers

The article has discussed the planning, launching and evolution of an Internet-based language course which is still running and whose participants are making noticeable progress. Finally, some tips for those who want to engage themselves in similar programmes are provided:

- Online chat sessions must be held twice a week – on a weekday for those learners who communicate from work, at weekend for those who cannot communicate from work. The latter might collide with one's family life but is necessary (see also McVay, 2002).
- Online discussions are slower – contributions take longer to type than to say, they also take some time to arrive, especially during peak traffic times. The teacher must be careful not to rush things. Moreover, the teacher also has to remember (and not being able to see the learners makes it more difficult) that his or her level of language proficiency is higher than that of the students, so s/he puts thoughts into words quicker.
- Even with IT students one must not assume that they have had experience with Internet chats. They may not automatically understand typical chat acronyms (eg., LOL meaning 'laughing out loud' or BTW being 'by the way'). On the other hand, the

chat should be educational and that means quite formal without much 'netspeak'. The balance between the inherent informality of the medium and the formality of the teaching/learning situation must be achieved.

- There are several stress factors specific to distance teaching which have to be borne in mind – high student dropout rates (30-70% acc to McVay, 60-70% at PJWSTK so far), huge time demands on the teacher and lack of face-to-face contact with the learners.
- The CMS must be easy to use and technical staff running the institution's servers helpful. The servers should be operational at all times – technical problems with the Internet connection seriously disrupted language courses at PJWSTK for a month in one of the semesters and this disruption led to considerable delays in the teaching/learning process, not to mention the frustration of tutors and students.
- It is obvious that people may communicate informally if they are not supervised (ie physically watched) during an online test. Thus, online testing should be treated as a learning, rather than testing, opportunity and a more controlled environment for a final test or examination must be provided. One can also plan tasks which will eliminate 'cheating', eg ask open questions requiring a person to give his/her opinion (McVay, 2002).
- Above all – careful planning and clear structure is of paramount importance. Technology used and the course format are variables depending on the resources and preferences of the students and the teachers.

Despite some problems, e-courses in English at PJWSTK go smoothly and the students are generally more cooperative than in the case of other forms of study offered at the Institute. What is more, there is observable progress in the students' speed, quality and precision of response during online chat discussions, which indicates their improving mastery of language (and typing). The students are also able to read and understand increasingly complex texts and write increasingly complex pieces of business correspondence. It can be inferred then that online teaching and learning is possible. For the teachers, it offers the possibility of teleworking, the opportunity for professional development and the source of satisfaction from being part of an emerging educational solution still in its experimental phase, at least in Poland. For the students, it is the possibility of learning at a school or university of their choice or sometimes the only chance to get a degree (in case of a serious disability or work and family commitments).

Implications for further research

Currently, there are many projects going on at PJWSTK aiming at increasing the scope of the Internet use in the foreign language learning-teaching process. The ideas envisaged include multilingual input archives in the form of audio, video, and text-based resources; educational object repositories; a chat research tool.

It is not certain what the future will look like for Internet courses at PJWSTK and for online education in general. Certainly some technologies will become more sophisticated and widespread. Hopefully, within two or three years broadband Internet access will become much cheaper, allowing for teleconferencing solutions to be used on a regular basis, thus resolving the problems of teaching the speaking skill (this will of course come at the expense of the writing skill now prevailing) and monitoring learners during online tests.

Teleconferencing will also definitely help strengthen the teacher-learner and intra-group ties necessary for better motivation of learners as well as teachers. Cheaper, more sophisticated and more numerous multimedia packages will be available for the use on e-learning platforms. Students and teachers will have got used to new ways of communicating and computer-assisted teaching/learning, although perhaps the need for 'tangibility' will still make most of them print out 97% of materials available online (US data for 1999, McVay, 2002). Nevertheless, for all the predictions which are now being made, the distant future, which at the present rate of progress means a 10-year perspective, will not resemble anything one can imagine now.

Conclusion

The Internet communication tools have their merits and using them in the foreign language learning-teaching process is therefore justified. However, they are but one element of a much more complex issue. As it has been demonstrated, in the learning process, no matter whether online or classroom-based, what seems to be most important is using the available resources, both material and non-material (e.g., Drzewińska, 2004), to create a learning environment that would be beneficial for human information processing mechanism. As far as the Internet as such and the Internet communication tools are concerned, there is still much room for research to explore the possible options.

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BBC Languages, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/index.shtml>

Englishpage, <http://www.englishpage.com/>

Hot Potatoes, <http://www.hotpotatoes.net/>

PJWSTK school website, <http://www.pjwstk.edu.pl>; information about e-learning: http://www.int.pjwstk.edu.pl/edu_pl.html

INTERNET LESSON PLANS

COMPANY PROFILE

by Mirosława Podgórska

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Subject: Company profile

Level: Upper-intermediate and above

Time: 2x45 minutes

Aims:

1. To talk about facts and figures
2. To write a company profile

Technical requirements: One computer per group of 2-3 students with an Internet connection and a Web browser

Knowledge: students should have basic skills of searching for information in the Internet

Procedure: (before starting the proper lesson students should quickly revise reading numbers)

I. Pre-stage

1. The teacher says: 'Write a list of facts about a company that you find essential in a company profile'. Students report back.

II. While-stage

1. The teacher says: 'Go to <http://www.global.yamaha.com> and try to find the Yamaha facts section'. The teacher asks questions:

- a. Where are the headquarters of the company?
- b. When was the company founded?
- c. Who is the CEO?

The teacher writes the answers on the blackboard.

Then the teacher divides the class into 3 groups (or each group of 2-3 people at a computer gets one question) and students complete the table:

Number of Employees Around the World	Number of Consolidated Subsidiaries	Paid-in Capital	Annual Sales	Primary Businesses	Number of pianos produced since 1900	Number of patents and utility models held	Number of students enrolled in Yamaha Music Schools

Students report back, then suggest the way they would combine all the pieces of information from the most to the least important.

2. Students go to <http://www.gm.com> and find the company profile. They compare the sequencing of information in the profile with their order and discuss the differences.

3. Learners are asked to locate particular facts within the General Motors company profile and match them to their Yamaha counterparts. Then they write down (or dictate to a partner) the phrases that incorporate them.

e.g. the world's largest...employs...

has manufacturing operations in countries

its global headquarters are at ...

offers ... with an array of...

remained the industry leader in...etc.

4. The teacher tells students to imagine they were given this list of facts about Yamaha to make a presentation. Take a quick look at it and go on to present a company profile.

III. Post-stage

1. Students write a profile of the Yamaha company using the phrases discussed. If there isn't a direct match between facts and phrases the teacher is of help.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by **Marek Podgorski**

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Zamosc, Poland

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Subject: President's message

Level: Intermediate and above

Time: 90 minutes

Aims:

1. To analyse and compare two pieces of writing (President's messages)
2. To practise the style used by Public Relations

Technical requirements: One computer per group of 2-3 students with an Internet connection and a Web browser

Required knowledge: students should have basic skills of searching for information in the Internet

Procedure:

I. Pre-stage

1. The teacher asks: 'How many departments can you differentiate in a company?' Students give answers

2. If students don't mention 'Public Relations', the teacher explains the term to them: 'Public Relations is responsible for creating a positive public image of a company'
3. The teacher asks: 'What might be some specific responsibilities of people working in that department?' Students give answers.
4. The teacher tries to elicit the answer: 'Creating a company's website'

II. While-stage

1. The teacher divides the students into two groups: 'Yamaha group' and 'General Motors group'.
2. The teacher asks them to go <http://www.global.yamaha.com> and <http://www.gm.com> respectively.
3. Students are to check the sites and report to the class what's most appealing about them. Then they give answers to the whole class.
4. The teacher asks students to check if the President of the company is introduced at the site and what he has to say about the policy or philosophy of the company. Both groups find the Presidents' messages on their sites as follows: 'GMability: Demonstrating Our Commitment to Doing it Right' and 'About Yamaha: President's Message'.
5. Students are given texts with gaps (1st group gets Yamaha , 2nd gets GM) and are asked to find the missing words.

GMability: Demonstrating Our Commitment To Doing it Right

General Motors enjoys a long tradition of....., integrity, and that has helped establish our reputation as a leader in corporate We place a high value on communicating clear,, and truthful information about our performance to our employees, suppliers, dealers, investors, and customers.

GM developed the GMability web site in 2000 to further underscore our commitment to corporate responsibility. We realize that our annual reports do not reach everyone interested in our activities; GMability allows us to use the Internet to help bridge geographic and cultural boundaries.

GMability provides information about many of our initiatives, including those in the areas of environment, safety, community, and Visitors to GMability can learn about our promising work in, including.....; find detailed information on the GM plants in their communities; compare our fuel economy to that of our competitors; discover more about the safety features of GM vehicles; and even contribute online to disaster relief efforts through GM Global Aid. Visitors can also find our annual Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Report, which documents our work to improve our operations and products, and toeconomic, environmental, and social objectives into our daily business. GM has been issuing this report since 1994, and was the first automaker to do so. At GM, we believe it is critical that we achieve success by doing things the right way, all around the globe. GMability helps keep track of our efforts. We encourage you to use it to follow our.....

Rick Wagoner
President and Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to Yamaha's Website

At Yamaha, we believe that musictime and borders - barriers that usually prevent the world's people from forming strongbonds. That's why we're committed to combining progress andcraftsmanship with richandto provide products and services that will bring our customers immense satisfaction. With our brand slogan, "**CREATING 'KANDO' TOGETHER**", we aim to create 'Kando' (it is a Japanese word that signifies an state of mind) that exceeds all expectations.

In this spirit, we look forward to serving you and hope you will enjoy your visit to our Website.

Shuji Ito
President & Representative Director

6. Both groups are asked to try to name the features of the style, using words like: *matter-of-fact, technical, sterile, spiritual, emotional, inspired*. Students report back

III. Post-stage

1. Students cross out any names or references to the names of the companies; what is left may serve as a structure for another President's message.

2. The teacher asks them to think of other brands that would fit into the image of matter-of-factness presented by GM or the inspirational approach of Yamaha's message. Then they write own message for one of the brands.

3. Learners now check if the website of the brand they have chosen contains a President's message. If so, they compare the two.

INSTANT LESSONS – BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM – Lesson III

by **Rachel Ellis**

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Introduction

English-To-Go publishes both online, interactive educational materials for student use and photocopiable lessons for teachers to use in the classroom. There are two primary web sites: <http://www.english-to-go.com> and <http://www.selfaccess.com> - a self-study site for students. English-to-go.com produces new photocopiable 'Instant Lessons', 'Weekly Warmers', on-line 'Instant Workbooks' and an 'Anna Grammar' help page every week.

'Instant Lessons' are full lessons; complete with news articles, pre-reading, reading, grammar, post-reading exercises, teachers' notes and answer keys. Every lesson has at least nine exercises. Many of the lessons also have interactive 'Instant Workbooks' attached to them. These online activities for students are linked directly to the Instant Lessons. Grammar points are either extended, material recycled or students practise reading and listening using material on the same topics as those taught in class.

Weekly Warmers are short activities designed to stimulate and energise students. These can be used as lead-in activities, or fillers, and are sent in by teachers from around the globe as part of a competition to win a free 6-month subscription to English-to-go. 'Anna Grammar' provides help pages for teachers. Anna offers advice on some difficult grammar issues and answers a huge range of letters from perplexed teachers. Many of her replies also contain exercises.

Each Instant Lesson is added to a database of lessons, which can be searched by level, subject or skills. The database currently has more than 700 lessons from elementary level to advanced. The 'Weekly Warmers', 'Anna Grammars' and 'Instant Workbook' are also searchable.

The following link <http://www.selfaccess.com/iatefl> will take you to a page where a photocopiable 'Instant lesson' and on-line 'Instant Workbook' exercises have been provided.

Below is an account of how one teacher has used these particular materials with an Advanced Business English class.

The Business of First Impressions

Level: Advanced

Time: 90 minutes

Aims:

- to introduce students to a variety of business settings
- to discuss suitable business attire
- to practise using conditional sentences
- to enable students to scan for specific information
- to practise writing a business email

Preparation

Print the lesson and photocopy it. The email text in the Teachers' Notes also needs to be copied so there is one for each pair of students. Cut the email texts into strips.

Procedure

This lesson was used with an Upper Intermediate to Advanced English Business class. The students were from predominantly Asian backgrounds. The topic of the lesson is first impressions and looks at business meetings; what to wear and not wear, and also how to behave. It is based around the following newspaper article:

Away on Business - One strike, and you're out!

NEW YORK Thu Feb 28 (Reuters) - You have 10 seconds; no more than 90. That's how long it takes to form a first impression, which for business travelers can ultimately sink or seal a deal.

In Pre-Reading Activity A: "What Would You Do?" students are presented with the following situation:

Imagine that you are a salesperson for a company selling machine parts. Your company is hoping to make a large sale to another company and you are going to meet a senior executive from that company for the first time next week. The company's offices are in your city and you will be meeting the executive there. You both speak the same language. You have a week to prepare for this important meeting. At the meeting you want to persuade the executive that your product is the best on the market.

They are then asked to consider a variety of issues including the following:

1. What kind of research or reading would you do before the meeting?
2. How else would you prepare for the meeting?
3. What things would you do on the day of the meeting?

Following this, they are asked to rank items in a list in terms of importance. For example:

- Having the correct attire.
- Having the right demeanour.
- Looking as attractive as possible.
- Bringing the right things with you to the meeting.

- Saying the right greeting and farewell.

Following the ranking exercise, a number of possible settings for different types of business meetings are given and students are asked to match clothing and situations.

Before the Reading Activities, learners read a number of statements, such as "*You do not need to wear a tie in Brazil when you are doing business*", and asked to state whether these are True or False.

In Reading activity A: Understanding the Headline, students read only the heading and first paragraph of the newspaper article to ensure they understand the analogy with baseball.

In Reading Activity B: Finding Ideas, students were asked to re-examine the ideas from the Pre-Reading Activity B: True or False, and find the paragraphs where they were mentioned in the article. For example: *Idea a. - paragraph 6*

As they were interested and involved with the topic, students first completed Activity D: Thinking Carefully before the language and writing activities. During the activity, students also raised a number of other issues, such as the appropriate colour of clothing for meetings. Interestingly enough, the class felt that red skirts on women would be inappropriate as they saw red as a dominant, aggressive colour. Black was also seen as a bad colour to wear, because it could be perceived as depressing. It was deemed that men should wear "boring" coloured suits, such as navy blue or grey, but they should also wear "interesting ties" to show they had personality. Vertical stripes were fine in shirts but horizontal stripes were to be avoided, and there was a class vote on whether perfume or aftershave should be worn. The outcome was "no". The issue of footwear raised a great deal of interest and it was mentioned that in Japan you should wear brand new shoes. People felt you could tell a lot about a person by their footwear and so a class check of footwear was carried out.

To finish this part of the lesson, learners worked in pairs to complete Post Reading Activity C: Language, which focused on conditional sentences. This was done in pairs and although some found it challenging, all pairs completed it successfully.

After finishing this part of the language section, the class moved on to a computer lab. Students logged on to this site, <http://www.instantworkbook.com>, using a username and password that was valid for five days. This password allowed students to view only the three grammar exercises linked to "The Business of First Impressions" Instant Lesson.

Online Activities

Students were asked to complete three grammar activities – all focused on conditional sentences. The first two were directly linked to the business topic and the third was more generally on the use of the conditional. The third grammar exercise was given as homework and students were also asked to print out this exercise and highlight the answers before handing it in at the beginning of the next class.

In the computer lab, students were placed in pairs – two students per one computer. This was done to increase peer interaction and led to much discussion before choices were selected. It also prevents students from "clicking" through exercises.

After completing the second grammar exercise in which students had to choose the correct conditional sentence that matched each business situation, students were presented with the cut up text of a business email and asked to order it. This email then functioned as a model.

Date: Fri, 21 Mar 2003 17:14:14 +1200

From: Tom Barrett <tom.b@english-to-go.com>

Subject: Meeting Next Week

To: John Brown <johnbr@st.luc.co.aus>

Hi John,

It was good to talk to you on Wednesday.

Just to confirm I'll see you at 3 p.m. next Tuesday at your office. I'll bring the software demos. I think you'll be especially interested in seeing "Office Independent" - our new bookkeeping program.

I'm sure you'll enjoy the test match this weekend. I still think Australia is on top. England will have a real job battling their way out of this one!

I'm off home now. I hope the rest of your week went well. See you next week.

Cheers,

Bill

The ordering exercise was completed in pairs and then each student was asked to write their own email for the remainder of the session and, if necessary, as homework.

A: Writing An E-mail

Imagine you are a sales executive and you need to write an e-mail to confirm meeting arrangements. On Wednesday you phoned John Brown, an executive working for a publishing company, St. Lucia Press. You arranged to meet him next week at his office to show him your company's latest software. It is now Friday afternoon and you are e-mailing him to remind him of the arrangement to meet.

The email was printed and saved onto a disk to allow for peer correction in the following class.

Conclusion

Students really enjoyed the discussions that ensued from this lesson. They all had something to say and many interesting ideas were raised. The grammar exercises proved great revision and reinforcement on the use of conditionals.

SOFTWARE

MULTIMEDIA IN TEACHING BUSINESS ENGLISH

by **Jarek Krajka**

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Introduction

Nowadays, computer-based multimedia has a well-established role in the language teaching and learning process. Together with great technological development of computers, increased speed and processing power, language learning multimedia is undergoing a dramatic change, becoming more and more versatile, lifelike and elaborate. The market is flooded with language learning programs of different kinds, and one can buy them virtually anywhere, even at a relatively competitive price. However, using such software can be in many cases devoid of sound pedagogical principles, and, consequently, bring more harm than benefit. Thus, the situation of a learner can be compared to the one of a patient who takes expensive antibiotics, without the doctor's supervision, strongly believes in the success of the process, but actually can use the medicine effectively only once.

The present paper is going to deal with the issue of using different kinds of language learning multimedia programs in the process of teaching Business English. The emphasis here will be

on the role of the teacher in using programs, and the present author will attempt to show how electronic dictionaries, coursebook-related programs, skill-specific programs and full language courses can be used in the teaching process. To make the discussion even more practical, the paper will consist of examples of computer-based activities referring to a specific Business English coursebook, *Marketleader Intermediate*.

Computers in the teaching and learning process

Before moving on to specific applications of computer technology in the learning process, one should consider the view of modern educational technology in general. To start with, there are the following dimensions of the use of computers in language learning:

- Computer-Assisted Instruction, where the machine is used as a teaching tool, presenting subsequent pieces of material, storing and effectively combining multimedia data;
- Computer-Managed Instruction, where the main purpose of using the computer is to store, deliver instruction, create, execute and check students' tests;
- Computer-Mediated Communication, in which computer technology helps learners engage in meaningful communication with the use of email, video- and audioconferencing, chat, ICQ;
- Computer-Adaptive Testing, which is characterized by the computer running the testing process "in the real time" and adapting the test to the testee's level, selecting more difficult or easier questions from a test bank depending on the testee's answers;
- Computer-Based Multimedia, where the use of the computer, its multimedia capabilities plus enormous storage capacity, make it possible to enhance the content with the use of picture, video and sound together with the text.

The multimedia programs analysed in this paper will mainly fall into Computer-Assisted, Computer-Managed Instruction and Computer-Based Multimedia categories, of course, to a different degree.

When considering the advantages the computer brings to the learning process, one can mention, above all, the following:

- fast access to words, sentences and files;
- hypertextuality enabling effective combination of different elements and non-linear access;
- advanced searching possibilities, especially useful in case of electronic dictionaries;
- storing huge amounts of multimedia data in a convenient format;
- user identification procedures, enabling various learners to use the same copy of the program;
- automatic test giving, test taking and test checking, making it possible for learners to use the content on their own, without the need for the teacher;
- progress tracking and report generating facilities, thanks to which the teacher can monitor a student's activities in the program;
- elaborate user support systems, in the form of an interactive guided tour, a help file, a FAQ page or a dedicated website.

From the point of view of the teacher, one could add here giving fast and competent language information, covering various aspects of use; enabling lesson preparation by providing vocabulary, texts or recordings for classroom use; equipping the teacher with multimedia means for varied vocabulary presentation; eliciting language instruction by providing contexts, models, situations.

Language learning software in the classroom – general remarks

It is a frequent misconception that for a language teacher to implement multimedia in a language course, they need to have a fully equipped computer lab at their disposal, with the number of workstations equaling the number of students, all state-of-the art, with the newest software installed. This ideal situation, fairly infrequent in underresourced Polish schools (and perhaps also in many other countries of the world), does not have to bring expected profits in teaching terms, for a computer-student interaction only would change the classroom from a social gathering into an individual study place. On the contrary, depending on the

resources available, a creative language teacher can effectively exploit the potential of multimedia software in the following modes:

- a lesson in a computer lab, one computer per a pair of students;
- a lesson in a computer lab, one computer per a group of students;
- a lesson in an ordinary classroom, a teacher computer and a display device (an LCD projector or a TV set);
- a lesson in an ordinary classroom, a teacher computer and a sound system;
- a lesson in an ordinary classroom, printouts of activities/texts for students;
- multimedia software used in preparation for lessons.

The above modes of work in a computer-assisted classroom should be, on the one hand, suited to the logistics of the classroom, on the other naturally give way to the nature of the task executed. Thus, in many contexts, especially involving listening comprehension, preparation for speaking and pronunciation work, a teacher computer and a soundsystem might be sufficient to introduce the multimedia element in a language lesson. Therefore, what seems important to keep in mind is that a creative and conscious language teacher could use many of the available modes of work, to suit the situation and conform to the needs of the class, and it is not a must to provide the most prototypical whole-class individual student-computer work only.

Finally, one has to consider the relation between different types of computer software enumerated above and the coursebook teaching. What can be noticed is that some programs are most flexible, enabling easy and smooth adaptation to the relevant coursebook units. Such an example is an electronic dictionary, which is a purely utility program, used by the teacher to prepare vocabulary tasks for the lesson, provide examples for the contextualization of structures, giving students practice in resourcing. Similarly, coursebook-related programs (such as *Marketleader Interactive*), which are created on the basis and as continuation of a given coursebook (here *Marketleader Intermediate*), are fully compatible with the coursebook, and the teacher may use either the program or the coursebook to teach a particular point, enliven the lesson with a multimedia dimension or provide self-study vocabulary or grammar tasks.

On the other hand, skill-specific programs (such as *Talking Business*), follow a distinct syllabus, usually divided according to thematic modules developing certain aspects of a given

skill. Such programs can be used alongside the coursebook, provided the program content is carefully scrutinized and suited to the respective coursebook units.

The final type of language learning software to be discussed here is full language courses (e.g., *Longman English Interactive*). Fully developed courses, just like coursebooks, have clearly defined principles of selecting, ordering and grading content. Therefore, it is essential to follow such courses linearly, as otherwise the author's intentions about introducing, practicing and reinforcing material are more than likely to be distorted. For these reasons, it might be difficult, if not impossible, to use the coursebook and a program of this kind, as the aim of the program is to constitute the basic source of materials for the course.

At this point, some space needs to be devoted to the evaluation of how effective computer software can be at developing language skills. It is beyond doubt that the computer is at its best when providing listening and reading tasks, due to the inclusion of multimedia input facilitating comprehension (video, pictures and text), on-demand user support systems (looking up words hyperlinked to a dictionary or listening with a tapescript) and self-study comprehension tasks. Equally, one can exploit the power of interactive multimedia when learning vocabulary and grammar in its presentation phase (owing to multimedia formats of the presentation of information) and testing phase by giving varied practice in a multitude of activity formats.

On the other hand, one could be somewhat critical towards developing speaking skills only in human-computer interaction. The example of such a speaking task can be the format from *Talking Business*, where learners listen to the whole dialogue, then listen sentence-by-sentence, repeat and record sentences, then play the whole dialogue back and compare it with a model dialogue. This can be regarded as highly artificial and might be despised by many teachers and learners. Therefore, it seems necessary to use the software in the two modes: in the self-study mode, to practice testing listening and reading comprehension, checking the knowledge of lexis and the use of grammar, and the teacher-whole class mode, developing speaking and writing, with teachers using the elements of the program as a source of models, contexts, stimulus for speaking or writing.

Electronic dictionaries in a Business English classroom

Electronic dictionaries, unlike paper ones, undergo the process of transformation into more versatile tools, becoming a combination of a variety of components. Thus, a sample electronic dictionary, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDOCE 4), has an A-Z dictionary, a thematic dictionary (Activator), a thesaurus, a collocations component, a corpus of examples, both dictionary and newspaper/book ones with a concordancer, a compendium of cultural knowledge, an exercise bank with a testing facility, information about word origin, a collection of labelled pictures, and pronunciation practice software. All these components are successfully combined and activated whenever a wanted word is enquired. Non-linear and multiple access to the dictionary data is enabled and the learner is provided with the chance to retrieve different kinds of information on demand.

What is characteristic about CD-ROM dictionaries is providing fast access to words in hyperlinked word entries. Another important issue is advanced searching capabilities (searching with and/or/not operators, specifying frequency for written or spoken words, style, part of speech), which is not only word search, but also multimedia search (looking for pictures or sound effects), subject search (words relating to a given topic), word origin search or pronunciation search. Multimedia formats for vocabulary storage, storing huge amounts of data, enormous amounts of examples, both dictionary and corpus ones, interactive pronunciation practice and automatic feedback are other useful features.

The information included in the entry is composed of a word, its category, its usage information (written or spoken, top 1,000, 2,000 or 3,000 words); an icon to play pronunciation; a word origin button (to give information on the etymology of the word), a word set button, pronunciation, grammatical information, signposted meanings, the definition, examples, pictures, synonyms or related words, phrases a given word appears in. Another component of LDOCE 4 dictionary may be the phrase bank window, which contains phrases with the given word from other entries and words commonly used with the word (prepositions, adjectives, nouns and verbs), while the examples bank window has extra dictionary examples, taken from a corpus, 80,000 example sentences from other Longman dictionaries and over 1 million additional sentences from Longman Corpus Network. Finally, the "Activate your language" box features a link to the Activator component of the dictionary and contains specific grammatical information about the words frequently misused or very similar, with examples and definitions for comparison.

Using the dictionary in the language classroom might involve practicing the pronunciation by recording; using pronunciation search to find a word by sounds, rather than spelling; doing exam preparation in self-study exam exercises; using subject search to come up with the words in a selected subject area. When preparing for a lesson, the teacher might print different components of the dictionary (a single entry or a list of words) to present the use of some words or copy and paste to a word-processor to create vocabulary worksheets.

To give an example of how to use an electronic dictionary in a specific classroom context, one can consider a sample unit, Unit 1 "Globalisation" from a coursebook *Marketleader Intermediate*. For "Starting up" activity, the teacher can use the 'subject search' feature of the dictionary to prepare more vocabulary on companies to give students additional lexical input for speaking. When dealing with new vocabulary for a listening activity, the use of dictionary examples printed for classroom use may facilitate learning new words. "Phrase bank window" of the dictionary can be used to find collocates for new words from a vocabulary exercise and use them in constructing sentences of one's own. What is more, for a speaking activity it might be useful to use the thematic component of the dictionary, the Activator, to find more adjectives to express feelings and show the differences in strength of their meaning. Similarly, as continuation of "Language Review" section of the coursebook, the dictionary exercises on intensifying adjectives would help present adjectival collocations.

Coursebook-related programs in teaching Business English

Coursebook-related programs are the continuation of the tendency of publishers to add more and more different types of materials based on successful coursebooks. Programs of this kind (see, for instance, *Marketleader Interactive*), are closely integrated with a given coursebook by following exactly the same syllabus of topics, structures, lexis and functions. On that, they reinforce the material introduced in the coursebook, provide more practice in grammatical structures or lexical items, add a multimedia dimension to the classroom and allow for additional work in a self-study mode in games, crosswords, gap-filling and drag-and-drop exercises.

Marketleader Interactive, a language learning software built up on the basis of *Marketleader Intermediate* coursebook, is a software focusing on teaching ESP vocabulary, practicing

listening and reading comprehension, as well as business negotiation skills. Students' knowledge is based on real-life examples, which gives models for presenting and negotiating. Eight thematic units, of exactly the same structure and labels as the ones in the book, contain Introduction, Listening, Reading, Vocabulary, Grammar and Business Skills sections. Interactive tests, both pre-test, end-of-unit test and post-test, evaluate learners' progress during the course, while progress reports give the learner and the teacher the idea of how much has been done.

A language classroom using a coursebook-related program will get added value with additional listening and reading input in multiple tasks, both general and detailed comprehension tasks. Thanks to authentic materials and wider contexts created by multimedia content, learners are stimulated to acquire and use the language in more natural situations. This can be done in a whole-class mode with one computer, a soundsystem and/or a display device, when the teacher presents the listening comprehension materials to the whole class. Another way of using the course might be providing students with printed transcripts of recordings, then listening and completing gaps or learning the pronunciation of new words. While the computer is at its best when helping practice receptive skills, grammar and vocabulary retention, speaking and communication must be done in the classroom, while the computer software might provide models of interviews to listen to, separate structures to learn, repeat and master. This stimulus for the pre-speaking stage has the aim of encompassing students with language tools and drilling ensures automatic habit formation.

Finally, dialogues and descriptions of situations from the program serve as contexts for pair- and groupwork communication, where "Business Notes" pose authentic communicative tasks students have to cope with using the language acquired in the course of the unit.

To see the application of the program in a teaching situation, one can look at the second unit of *Marketleader Intermediate*. As a lead-in to the unit, students could listen to opinions of other people from the program to introduce them to the topic of branding, which would be then followed with additional listening comprehension tasks from the software, either done in the whole-class mode or for student self-study. Before reading a text about fashion piracy, the teacher uses the multimedia slideshow from the software to provide students with a fuller context and develop receptive skills while listening with or without reading the transcript. After having done that, students take interactive lexical exercises individually, to see how much they remember from the lesson. The entire teaching module culminates with an

interactive test, summing up the whole unit and checking mainly vocabulary knowledge, as useful revision before a standard test.

Skill-specific programs

Teachers of Business English might make profit from using skill-specific programs, focusing on mastering grammar, listening comprehension or speaking skills. Such programs as *Talking Business* are not integrated with any coursebook, and follow their own syllabus, created according to the skills and subskills learners are supposed to master. Apart from giving learners the practice in a given skill, general language development can be found there as well, with some elements of vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension and pronunciation practice.

In skill-specific software, multimedia input is combined with textual input to form a coherent whole for the presentation of new language material, while interactive testing component (self-study games, crosswords, drag-and-drop tasks, recordings of one's responses and comparing them with a model) allows learners to work on one's own or under the teacher's guidance on developing language competence within a specified area. Thanks to a set of user-friendly tools, such as a pronunciation practice module, a mini-dictionary, a glossary, a grammar compendium, the learner is provided with the learning environment sufficient for the language learning process.

Talking Business follows its own clearly structured syllabus, aiming at learning different aspects of speaking, however, at the same time building on other skills and integrating the practice in various areas of language. Of course, speaking skill is given much greater prominence than others, and the syllabus of such programs is clearly subjected to passing on various elements of a skill to learners. This is evident when one looks at the table of contents of *Talking Business*, which consists of the following units: First Contact, Small Talk, Further Contact, Hospitality, Telephone Messages, Appointments, Travel Arrangements, Directions, Current Projects, Project Timing, Sales Results, Market Trends. Some of the units head more towards passing on the elements of speaking skill instruction, when learners acquire language functions and practice tasks preparing them for real-life oral interaction. On the other hand, apart from more speaking-oriented units, one can find here also units of more topical labels,

which are intended to provide vocabulary input and practice of the new lexis in meaningful contexts.

On the level of a lesson, it is interesting to look at the structure of the course to see what a skill-oriented program might look like. A sample unit outline contains work on:

- language functions, in the three modes of "Listen", "Listen and Record" and "Practice";
- listening, both listening for specific information and listening for specific language;
- vocabulary;
- pronunciation;
- speaking;
- round-up of the unit in the form of a quiz.

Due to the fact that the teachers will not find here systematic language development, the use of the program is advisable for teachers whose learners have already acquired some language level, have clearly specified language needs, also as far as skills and situations they might work in are concerned. On the other hand, using such a program as a means of developing learners' linguistic competence, in order to move them to a higher level of language proficiency, might leave them with incomplete knowledge in some respects.

In order to demonstrate how a program of this kind can be used when teaching a selected course, *Marketleader Intermediate*, there are the following ideas for teaching unit 3 of the book, together with two modules of *Talking Business*:

1. Travel Arrangements:

- listening to a dialogue and repeating sentences to practice their pronunciation
- completing dialogues with words practiced
- after having listened to a dialogue about flight reservation, learners using the flight information extracted from the listening extract to create their own dialogues

- after having listened to an interview from the program, students adding more questions to the survey on the hotel service which is filled when checking out, and later performing it in pairs.

2. Directions:

- listening to a dialogue from the program to reinforce the knowledge of structures used when asking for and giving directions,
- extracting relevant phrases for their later use
- using the sentences from the pronunciation exercise to reorder them into a dialogue
- acting out a roleplay of a tourist and a local person asking for and giving information, being modeled by a dialogue.

Fully developed language learning courseware

The programs described above can be used in a language course either as tools in preparing and running lessons (electronic dictionaries) or sources of additional input for the development of skills (coursebook-related programs, skill-specific software). However, the teacher needs some kind of Business English curriculum with a corresponding coursebook or a set of materials that would help to realize the aims adopted in the curriculum. On the other hand, fully-developed courseware (such as *Longman English Interactive*) are complete products, offering a balanced diet of skills, grammar and vocabulary, coming in a variety of levels (in case of *LIE*, four) to ensure sufficient coverage of the material graded according to the principles adopted and distributed over all learning levels.

What is characteristic about language learning courseware is the proper balance between the module of content presentation and testing, between receptive and productive skills, oral and written. A look at the overview of *Longman English Interactive* shows that: there are fifteen units in three modules, each containing a section devoted to listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, opening with the outline of the unit and learning

objectives, while culminating with a review quiz and unit summary. The units are bound together by a device of the same characters reappearing in subsequent sections. Also, just like a coursebook, software of this type is a blend of text and multimedia (contemporary video materials, news broadcasts and animations) to enhance comprehension.

The learning process with the use of language courseware demands sufficient maturity of the user, as it is possible for the learner to cheat the tasks or fail to complete them. On the other hand, the automatic report generating facility enables both the teacher and the learner to monitor the progress, see the performance in single tasks, in different skills or areas of language. Thanks to that, planning work and diagnosing language competence is enabled. Further means of motivating learners to work is the assessment system, which is composed of an entry test (pre-test), end-of-module tests and an exit test. When taken, these evaluation instruments allow for objective assessment of learner's performance, both on-going during the course, and summative after having completed a level. Due to this, it should be possible for the learner to maintain self-discipline when learning with the course, while for the teacher and/or the parent to monitor the user's activity if necessary.

When thinking about using programs of this type in a Business English course, it must be kept in mind that they are, similarly to antibiotics, to be used instantly, in one go, with the pre-determined order of working with the material, and are most effective for the first time. A Business English teacher might find it difficult to use a Business English coursebook and a general English software, as these two will have their curricula incompatible and working with both will not have much sense. On the other hand, a general English software like *Longman English Interactive* could be quite well used by ESP teachers who do not have published ESP coursebooks for their disciplines and whose students need both general language development and specialized vocabulary and tasks. In such a case, programs of this type could be used to raise the proficiency level, and form a basis for supplementation with materials of other kinds to satisfy ESP needs.

Conclusion

As the above paper has attempted to show, there is a variety of types of educational multimedia software that could be implemented in a Business English course. Contrary to

popular beliefs, language learning programs do not have to be used only by individual students, in a self-study mode, with the interaction only with the computer. There can be a variety of ways of using the programs depending on the logistics of the classroom, and a creative teacher can harness them to add value to the teaching process.

It is evident how programs described above differ in the role of the teacher they presuppose. Some, like dictionaries, play the most subservient role, and it is the teacher's creativity that puts it to play when creating language tasks. Others, such as skill-specific programs, although possessing their own syllabus, can be subordinated to the curriculum of the course, and the teacher can use them selectively in supplementing some core material. Coursebook-related programs leave less room for the teacher, by providing tasks that are compatible with the coursebook material, however, the teacher has the freedom of doing them in the most convenient mode, with the coursebook or the software. Finally, full language courses enslave the teacher to the largest degree, as it is not possible to make any modifications in the language content nor in the order of working with it, and this has to be kept in mind while deciding on using the program.

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ON THE WEB

LEARNING BUSINESS ENGLISH ON THE NET

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Site: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/business/>

Author: The BBC producers and experts

Language: English

Email: at the *FAQ* section of the site

Overview

The BBC World Service Learning English Site comprises a range of possibilities for teachers, students or even businessmen in search of practical development within their areas of expertise. Users can listen to BBC World Service, find information on working abroad, or on how to improve work skills, and can even keep up to date with everyday English, thanks to the Quizzes and Lingo sections.

Contents

Within the site, individual sections provide all types of different information relating to many aspects of Business English. This information is beneficial not only for teachers but also the students of BE. Because each sub section covers a sufficient amount of material, and because the site is edited daily by professionals working at the BBC, it is recommended for anyone wishing to broaden their horizons for both business and everyday English.

The educational value of the site is obvious. Being an English teacher myself, I would feel confident in referring to any section of the site. For myself, just listening to the BBC World Service on topics such as world news, international business, or even movie reviews can be very interesting. But also, I would consider using this site in a classroom with Internet access. The students can take the quizzes, learn some "lingo", or just ask the experts any question related to their learning.

In the "*Working Abroad*" section, users are introduced to eight individuals who present details of their lives and experiences with moving from their home lands to work in other countries. Whether it is from Buenos Aires to Germany, from Germany to France, or from Poland to England, each person's experience is recorded in six different units, dealing with issues such as cultural differences, language difficulties and relationship development.

This section is organized by a simple step-by-step procedure. Users may either listen to or read the interviews of each of the eight individuals presented. It is even possible to read the text while listening to the interview. The topics include verbal communication, time, status, and body language. In addition to these units/lessons, there are additional vocabulary pages, exercises and quizzes helping develop and test the user's ability in English.

Another section offered on the BBC Business English site is "*Quizzes*". Here, a user can further polish English skills when taking communication, grammar and vocabulary exercises. The activities are subcategorized into a set of topics. In each subcategory there is a list of informal phrases and their standard English definitions, as well as a list of abbreviations commonly used in advertisements.

The section "*Teachers*" is made for teachers and by teachers. Articles are posted with useful tips on teaching techniques and practical activities for the classroom. Thanks to this page, teachers have the opportunity to contact and consult others to alleviate any doubts concerning their teaching styles. Teaching-related questions will definitely find appropriate answers.

Information on this site includes a new radio series for teachers teaching English and highlights how they can use the internet for themselves and in their classrooms. Further teaching suggestions are also supplied at www.teachingenglish.org.uk.

Another section of the BBC Business English Site is *FAQ*, or frequently asked questions. The questions answered are the most common ones asked by students. Teachers may find some of the answers provided very handy. Perhaps the most frequently asked question by students appears to be: *'Can you help me learn English?'*. Rather than answering with a simple yes or no, the reply given is of a different kind. The answer hints that the user's ability to learn English relies on his/her own willingness to work through the courses and exams on the site. It is also indicated in the *FAQ section* that all the quizzes, articles and features remain permanently on the site. As the site is updated, older courses are still available in the archive area. *FAQ* also informs us about the possibility of ordering Learning English Email Newsletter.

When a user clicks on the *"Contact us"* section, he/she can ask questions or make general comments concerning the material on the site, as well as point out technical difficulties or broken links.

On the right hand side of the home page for Business English on the BBC site, there are links provided under the heading *"More Learning English"*. These links take the user to other areas of the BBC site which also provide opportunities for learning English. These links include: *"Virtual masterclass"*, *"Example Lessons"*, *"Business Words in the News"* and *"Lingo"*. The *"Masterclass"* develops further into the categories:

- *"Learning Tips"* - equipped with information on how to learn provided by ELT trainer Gareth Rees,
- *"Business Hints"* - how to communicate successfully at work - the advisor being David Evans,
- *"Education in UK"* - a British Council expert on education - Nick Butler - suggests how to apply, choose subjects, find accommodation, etc.,
- *"Grammar Surgery"* - Martin Parrott is willing to answer some of the most common queries,
- *"English in the News"* - a BBC correspondent recommends the most typical language of the news or helps us choose from the selection of the topics for a bulletin.

Other links include: "*Welcome to London*" (multimedia lessons on life in London, with the current lesson on the topic of shopping); "*Business Words in the News*" (archives of business words used in the news stories) and "*Lingo*", which deals with the colloquial language and provides lists of business words in their less formal version together with standard English explanations.

Technical Issues

The vast majority of the audio streamed from this site is in Real Player format. Radio programmes, however, offer streaming via Real Player or an MP3 player. Links are provided to sites where free versions of these programmes can be downloaded, enabling the user to listen to the audio streams in a very, uncomplicated manner.

Interactivity

On the BBC Business English site, users are provided with many different ways to interact. They can take the quizzes, ask questions concerning learning or teaching, do the listening exercises or give their opinions about the site itself. The visitors to this site can enhance their knowledge about Business English, if they are willing to go through the various sections and learn from the professional advice of experts available.

Overall Issues

The site is copyrighted and fully paid for by the BBC alone, freeing it from distracting sponsors' windows or advertising banners. Information is updated frequently, so that repeat users can often come across new materials. The overall design seems to be given as much consideration as the content on this site, making it very user-friendly. There are no unnecessarily aggressive colours to catch the user's eye to take concentration away from the courses provided. All Business English visitors will appreciate the variety and the potential this site gives, while the teachers will clearly appreciate true pedagogical value of this site.

BOOK REVIEW

The Internet and Business English

by **Barney Barrett and Pete Sharma**

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Title: *The Internet and Business English*

Authors: Barney Barrett, Pete Sharma

First published: 2003

Publisher: Summertown Publishing Limited, <http://www.summertown.co.uk>

Pages: 198

The technological revolution of the last decade has affected the way in which Business English is taught in a number of ways and on many different levels. It has influenced the content of a lesson – new vocabulary items, neologisms, activities in which students practise composing e-mails, etc., are more and more often integral parts of Business English (and General English) courses. It has also shaped the way we teach. With the rise of web-based

training materials and CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication) additional possible teaching tools have come into practice.

Without doubt, in this day and age any language teacher needs to be Internet-aware. The Internet increasingly dominates students' lives. It is also impossible not to see how dramatically the Internet has been changing the ways in which English can be taught and how it is changing the language itself. Barney Barrett and Pete Sharma, the authors of *The Internet and Business English*, stress the fact that in the last decade the use of computers in teaching has moved into the mainstream and analyse countless reasons for such a state of affairs – instantaneous access to an inexhaustible range of language materials and the ability to communicate with other users around the world are among the most obvious ones. There is, indeed, a wide range of reasons why the Internet should be used in teaching. If we can use a text, video clip or audio-cassette, why not choose to incorporate the Internet into a course or lesson simply for variety? It can be used as part of face-to-face language lesson, as a stimulus for a self-study activity or as a means of communication between remote users.

The Net is also a valuable source of materials, as it allows teachers (and learners) to find a useful or relevant text from practically any area of knowledge. For many learners such authentic materials can be truly motivating. Besides, there is an issue of immediacy – materials from the Web can be really up-to-date. Many Business English learners frequently use the Internet in their private and professional lives – certain tasks can be replicated during language instruction. Appreciating the key role of the Internet in business today the authors claim that no Business English course can work without it.

Although the rationale for using the Internet in Business English is so obvious, there are still many teachers who do without this irreplaceable medium during their lessons. Indeed, using the Web effectively and efficiently to create motivating activities poses a major challenge, which combined with rapidly changing technologies, the constantly growing number of websites, and so many potential pitfalls discourage many a teacher from using it altogether. Let's face it: for many the Internet may be still too daunting to get to grips with. Fortunately, we have been given the Internet book which provides a truly comprehensive and practical introduction to the Internet for Business English teachers and introduces us step by step to the world of websites and browsers. It concentrates in particular on the use of the World Wide Web in Business English classroom teaching but can be also used for self-study. In fact, a number of ideas presented in the book can be applied to any general English course as well.

It does not focus on on-line teaching. The title is easy to work with not only for technology-savvy users but also for those completely inexperienced or relatively new to the field who either have a background in the business world or not. The book is available in a printed format, with support provided on the Internet. As websites are updated or changed with alarming frequency, information on such changes is given on the Summertown website (<http://www.summertown.co.uk>).

Barrett and Sharma start with a brief analysis of what in fact Business English is. By looking at its defining characteristics, the authors try to demonstrate how enormously helpful the Internet can be in designing a course.

The book is divided into three parts: The Internet, Practical Ideas and Reference. From the very start the reader is guided step by step, so that no problems arise and everything is clear.

Part 1 of the book, devoted to the basic concepts connected with the Internet, can in fact be skipped by more experienced teachers but it is indispensable for those who do not have a strong background in using technology and are relatively new to the field. It covers essential technical features and vocabulary, clarifies what the Internet really is and explains the key terms used in the book. For those who wish to explore the topics further, lists of useful websites are provided.

Next the authors concentrate on the World Wide Web, not only presenting different definitions and its history but also looking at how various aspects of Business English teaching can be practised through integrating the Web. The explanations are exhaustive and clear enough even for a complete layman to comprehend. To ensure successful presentation of the topic simple analogies are often made such as the one in which a website is compared to a book, made up of pages with the front page featuring some sort of contents list. The authors describe the design and usability of different websites and then go into details of using browsers, outlining reasons for the various technical choices concerning them. All step-by-step tips are accompanied by images of a computer screen with simple explanations provided accordingly, which will undoubtedly help avoid frustrating moments in front of the computer or fruitless search.

What follows is a presentation of some ways in which the World Wide Web can be used in language teaching in the classroom (on-line and off-line, presentations, projects, specific pre-

and post-lesson tasks, etc.), in self-study using sites expressly created for language learning, and in "blended learning" allowing it to take place at a distance as well as in the classroom. Understanding that Business English teachers work in a variety of situations instructing groups or individual learners in-company, in a language school, or running seminars in a conference centre, the authors devote several pages of the book to the problems connected with incorporating the Internet into the course/lesson depending on the location and availability of computers.

Four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are examined in connection with the Internet and the possibilities it offers. The Internet can be the "means" through which speaking takes place, such as during desktop video-conferencing or while making telephone calls. It also provides a variety of materials which can be used as a springboard for discussion. As far as listening is concerned, the Internet offers exposure to native speakers, presenting a range of accents and giving the learner an opportunity to be in charge of listening practice thanks to sliders and transcripts or related texts.

Yet another important aspect is that the Internet affords many opportunities for the study of grammar. There are countless sites which offer practice in discrete items of grammar, such as work on tenses, prepositions and conditional forms. The authors suggest a few websites offering grammar practice activities and a site answering students' questions about grammar. Finally, the Internet provides a rich environment for lexis exposure. Again, the URLs follow for specialised vocabulary, translation tools, collocations, and on-line dictionaries.

A large sphere that provides a wealth of useful material which can be used to work on the different skills and that should not be overlooked is Web radio and Web TV. Although because of their size there may arise a need to make certain technical compromises in order to deliver these files over the Web in some sort of useable form, one should not be discouraged from exploring these formats. Again, the authors provide us with useful tips on streaming, compression and connection speed as well as the best places to look for established radio stations and television channels.

As the book specifically focuses on the Business English learner, this section also analyses the way the World Wide Web can be helpful in teaching some core business skills such as giving presentations, attending meetings, negotiating, telephoning, or writing. It also looks at

a range of elements which are features of many Business English courses (ESP, simulations, games, inter-cultural training, tests, examinations).

In the final section of Part 1, the Business English teacher will find an overview of the professional support available on the Internet. Up-to-date sites are suggested that can serve as an equivalent of reading *The Financial Times* or *The Economist* or watching business news programmes. Here we can also find sites offering a range of activities and downloadable Business English worksheets as well as supplementary web-based materials for course books. These are accompanied by sites with on-line Business English courses, journals and newsletters. Interestingly, the authors do not forget about less obvious ways of finding interesting things on the Web and advise teachers to keep their eyes peeled when looking through newspapers, magazines and other websites and not to neglect the value of word-of-mouth or e-mail. They suggest developing a habit for collecting useful-looking website and page URLs.

The main part of *The Internet and Business English* concentrates on practical ideas which can be implemented into lessons/courses. It starts with the realisation that many learners need help and guidance with Web skills. Before using the Web as part of a course, the teacher may feel it is necessary to introduce elements of learner training to enable the learners to use it effectively in their language training. Some practical ideas for helping learners become familiar with terminology and with using the Internet are given. Next, a range of practical teaching ideas follows in the form of 30 activities with clear description of the procedure complete with variations on the task. They cover different business areas and have a clearly defined aim, specified level and time. These are multi-level tasks – each task either incorporates the use of the Web, or has a Web-based theme. There is a bank of grammar practice activities, tasks designed for vocabulary enrichment but also activities simply practising business skills and fluency. A lot of them are supported by framework material and questionnaires (both included in the book and available on the Internet). The good thing is that the tasks and materials are flexible and can be easily adapted to different teaching situations.

Part 3 of the book, entitled "Reference" is a data bank divided into two sections, with section 1 relating to specialist areas such as insurance, finance or law. Within each subject area, the authors suggest key sites which are recommended for a number of reasons: as a source of articles which may be of interest to learners in that particular field; as a source of information

to be used by these learners after they have finished their language course; and as a stimulus for practical tasks. Section 2, complete with a useful list of Web addresses for major companies, is designed to help teachers access sites which may prove helpful in their teaching.

Teachers wishing to incorporate the Internet into their teaching will find here a range of useful tips such as how to download images or plug-ins. There are some suggestions of how to read common types of websites in order to be able to navigate the information you want as quickly and smoothly as the website allows and technical advice for common problems. The final chapter presents two glossaries: a list of technical terms and a list of pedagogical terms (such as, for instance, 'blended learning').

Although *The Internet and Business English* is designed primarily for teachers, it can also be of use to pedagogical management such as Directors of Studies, Teacher Trainers and Heads of self-access centres. The book features a bank of teacher training ideas to help develop Business English teachers in the area of the Internet, and enable them to integrate the Web into their training programmes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF FUTURE EVENTS

DISTANCE EDUCATION, DISTRIBUTED LEARNING & LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION: REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, HI

July 27-30, 2004

<http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/prodev/DE2004/>

The National Foreign Language Resource Center invites language educators with significant experience using distance and distributed learning models to propose presentations for the Symposium. Presentation proposals should address new technologies, innovative software, research projects, or new uses for old software. Possible topics could include but are not limited to:

- Issues in distance/distributed learning administration, infrastructure, or delivery
- Instructional design or development of web courses/materials
- Online interactions and community
- Electronic resources for educators

SESSION TYPES: 45-minute sessions; 75-minute sessions; electronic poster sessions (e.g., class website tours, multimedia instructional materials demos, etc.)

NOTE: Financial support is available for presenters of 45-minute and 75-minute sessions only - up to \$800 per session to help defray travel expenses, with the possibility of supplementary support if there are multiple presenters in a session.

To submit a proposal, visit <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/prodev/DE2004/>. Submission deadline is March 1, 2004.

**"EFFECTIVE USE OF THE INTERNET IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: WHAT &
HOW"**

15 - 22 August 2004

"DIGITAL AUDIO AND VIDEO IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: WHAT & HOW"

22 - 29 August 2004 and

"DEVELOPING MULTIMEDIA ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING"

17 - 24 October 2004

Amsterdam Maastricht Summer University

In these intensive courses participants will acquire specific knowledge about Internet applications and resources and/or digital audio and video relevant to foreign language teaching. The courses will help the participants to create language materials that they can use in their classroom practice. The emphasis will not be on technology itself, but on the methodological applications.

These courses are intended for newly qualified and practising foreign language teachers interested in the possibilities of the Internet and/or digital audio and video for their classroom practice. A basic knowledge of computers is necessary: participants should at least be familiar with Windows platforms and word-processors. There will be no facilities available for Mac users.

The courses offer a unique opportunity to learn together with colleagues from other European countries and from other continents how the Internet and its multimedia applications can be used quickly and effectively in language lessons. The social and cultural evening programme offers an excellent opportunity for exchanging experiences and for enjoying.

The three courses have been approved by the European Commission for inclusion in the Comenius - Grundtvig / Catalogue. Teachers in secondary education may be eligible for grants within this framework.

For further information on these grants, please visit the courses WebPages (<http://www.amsu.edu/courses/language>) or the Comenius - Grundtvig / WebPages at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/comenius/index_en.html.

Detailed information about the three courses is available at: <http://www.amsu.edu/courses/language>.

These courses are organised by The Graduate School of Teaching and Learning (ILO) of the University of Amsterdam in co-operation with the Amsterdam-Maastricht Summer University.

Ruggero Lala

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EUROCALL 2004

University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

September 1–4, 2004

<http://www.eurocall-languages.org/>

Conference main theme and title: TELL and CALL in the Third Millennium: Pedagogical Approaches in a Growing EU-Community.

With this conference we want to create a new dynamic in European CALL by bringing East and West more closely together. We aim to promote the integration of research and practice in CALL by focusing on the pedagogical implications of developments in CALL, TELL and e-learning in secondary, tertiary and adult education. The theme aims to focus attention on the changing concepts and practices in language learning and teaching brought about by technological developments. With the following list of sub-themes the organisers seek to bring a rich and interesting variety of perspectives to the conference:

Sub-themes:

- pedagogical networking and dissemination
- developing e-learning and collaborative learning strategies
- innovative technologies and their didactic application
- interactive e-learning vs distance learning?
- corpus applications in language learning and teaching
- electronic publishing tools for e-learning
- good practice concepts and examples

All presenters must be current members of EUROCALL by the time of the conference and are responsible for their own expenses, including registration fees. We invite submissions for Papers, Show & Tell Demonstrations and Posters (please specify) related to at least one of the above themes. This list does not exclude other possible topics within CALL / WELL, but in the selection process, preference will be given to papers dealing specifically with these sub-themes.

Please specify to which theme your proposal is related, and please send submissions of 200-300 words by 31 January 2004 to the following address, preferably by e-mail:

Further details can be found at the Conference website, which is accessible via the EUROCALL website from September 2003: <http://www.eurocall-languages.org/>.

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THE 3RD ASIA CALL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Penang, Malaysia

November 24-25, 2004

<http://www.asiacall.org>

The overall theme of the conference is: CALL and Collaboration in ASIA. Sub-topics include, but are not restricted to:

- Computer Assisted Language Learning
- Multimedia Assisted Language Learning
- Technology Enhanced Language Learning
- Web-based Language Instruction
- Distance Language Instruction
- Mobile Assisted Language Learning
- Literature, Culture and Multimedia
- CALL & Less commonly taught languages
- CALL & New learning environments
- CALL & Collaboration

We invite abstracts of up to 200 words for Paper presentations (time allotted 30 min), Show & TELL Workshops (approx. 50 minutes), Posters (space allotted 180x90 cm).

Submit abstracts by email in an attachment to chongld@gyeongju.ac.kr. Remember to give the name(s) of the author(s), affiliation, e-mail address, phone number, FAX number and 50 word biodata.

Important dates:

- Deadline for submission of abstracts: June. 30, 2004.

- Notification of acceptance: July. 20, 2004.

Details regarding the program, registration and hotel accommodation will be sent out in June, 2004. If you submit an abstract, you will automatically receive this information. If you do not submit an abstract, send us an email in order to receive our next newsletter.

Mailto: chongld@gyeongju.ac.kr (International Group), ambiga@usm.my (Malaysian Group)

Larry Chong, Ph.D., President

Ambigapathy Pandian, Ph.D., Conference Chair

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

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

The editorial board of "Teaching English with Technology":

- Jarek Krajka (Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland) – Editor-in-Chief (Articles, Lesson Plans, Software, On the Web)
- Jozsef Horvath (University of Pecs, Pecs, Hungary) – Editor (Articles, Book Reviews)
- Maria Jose Luzon de Marco (University of Zaragoza, Spain) – Editor (The Internet for ESP)
- Guo Shesen (Luoyang University, Henan, P.R China) – Editor (A Word from a Techie)

To subscribe to "Teaching English with Technology," write to: Jarek Krajka, Editor, at jkrajka@batory.plo.lublin.pl. In the Subject line, write: Subscription Request. You can also get the journal from the IATEFL Computer SIG website at this URL:

<http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/callnl.htm>, where the past issues can also be accessed, downloadable as zipped .html or .pdf file.

The next issue of "Teaching English with Technology" will be published in July 2004.

Submission deadline for the next issue is June 1, 2004. Detailed submission guidelines can be downloaded from <http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/guidelines.doc>.

We invite submissions covering the following categories:

- Article: articles describing classroom practice or discussions of work in progress, being of immediate relevance to teachers, or articles presenting case studies or work in progress
- The Internet for ESP: practical discussions of Web-based activities/classroom ideas for the ESP environment
- Lesson plan: plans of lessons done in the Internet or using computers, set in the reality of the education system, detailing the procedure, technical requirements, skills needed by

students and teacher, together with URLs used in the lesson and any worksheets/checklists students are asked to complete

- On the Web: discussions of websites having potential for organising Internet lessons around them or relevant in some way to the field of English language teaching and learning
- Software: descriptions, evaluations and recommendations of widely available language learning software or articles pertaining to the use of software in language learning
- A Word from a Techie: discussions of applications of computer programmes to teaching English, outlining new possibilities given by software to the process of learning and teaching, explanations of technological issues
- Reports from Past Events: brief accounts of conferences, methodological workshops, commercial presentations, courses that relate to the field of using computer technology in teaching English
- Announcements of Future Events: as above, together with contact addresses.

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

Please forward the following details with each submission:

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

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

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