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ITBE

Newsletter

the

Technology Issue

FALL 2011

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submissions

Submission Information

Find our current submission guidelines online at http://www.itbe.org/submission_guidelines.php

Snap shot of submission info:

- email to news@itbe.org
- subject line: "ITBE Newsletter Submission"
- article: Microsoft Word attachment only (.doc/.docx)
- APA citations/references
- Pictures embedded and submitted as separate jpegs
- Ideas for regular columns are welcome
- Submitted by the deadline

Quarterly Deadlines:

June 15 September 15 December 15 March 15

The editors reserve the right to modify any material selected for publication to fit the available space, or to improve on clarity and style. Authors will be consulted prior to publication if changes are deemed by the editors to be substantial.

about

*The newsletter is a publication of Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/Bilingual Education, a non-profit professional organization, founded in 1970, which disseminates information, provides a forum, and serves as an advocate for students, educators and administrators in the field. Illinois TESOL*BE is an affiliate of TESOL, an international organization. Membership in Illinois TESOL*BE is open to all interested individuals. To join, please visit our web site at http://www.itbe.org/join_itbe.php .*

More about the newsletter at http://www.itbe.org/newsletter.php

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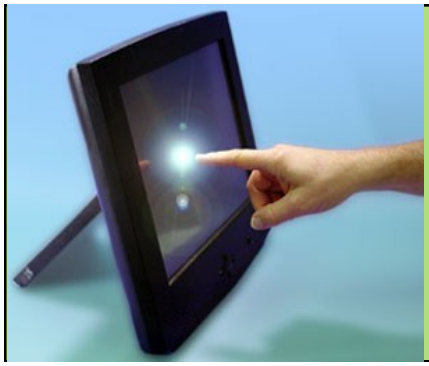


ITBE Helping educators stay in-touch with today's technology.

The Future Is Bright for Technology in Education

By: José A. Resto, MAEd.
ITBE Elementary SIG Co-Chair

As a parent and educator, I am truly excited about the changes that I am seeing in the use of technology in the classrooms today. Just like any other change that life puts us through, every new government regulation thrown at us, every adaptation of new curriculum; technology in education too is being received with varying degrees of acceptance. This article aims to persuade those resistors to come join us on this exciting journey of discovery.

Just as educators and parents are on different ends of the spectrum on the issue of technology in education so are many school districts across the nation. Those districts are now studying closely the standards that have been set by the International Society for Technology in Education. This association claims that their NETS standards are to meet the needs of all students by creating, "standards for Global learning in a digital age". Some are puzzled where is all the money coming from to make the necessary changes, while others are diving right in an making changes to their district infrastructure and school buildings as we speak. Long gone is the day of the one-room school house with the blackboards and benches or very uncomfortable furniture for the children to sit in.

Gone are the days when classrooms only had a phone jack in it for communication. The new schools come equipped with Category 5. Also called (Cat 5) is a twisted pair cable for carrying signals. This type of cable is used in structured cabling for computer networks such as Ethernet. It is also used to carry other signals such as telephony and video. The cable is commonly connected using punch down blocks and modular connectors. Most Category 5 cables are unshielded, relying on the twisted pair design and differential signaling for noise rejection. Some other districts that are embracing this change are already incorporating fiber optic cables throughout their newly constructed schools with Wi-Fi signal transmitters in every classroom, every hallway and in all common areas of the new buildings.

The children that we are educating today are not just exposed to technology, but immersed in it. For us as educators this could then present a new challenge, or for others like me a fascinating opportunity. Curriculum developers are constantly making changes to integrate technology modules into their instructional units. They are doing this for two main reasons, technology provides more opportunities for rich, engaging and exciting multi-media presentations to provide our students with a more enriching educational experience. Second, we are charged with educating children today for jobs that don't yet exist. This is one of the main points made in the YouTube video, "Did You Know? Prepare for the New, Global Economy in 2011", yet it is not science fiction - it is our new reality.

Today's children are connected to technology 24/7 this is creating new problems for society with cyber bully issues, but it also is creating new opportunities for us as educators, because of technology lessons could come to life, and become more relevant to the students. Such was the case when I pulled a lesson on Lewis and Clark for my Dual Language class from www.Teacher.Scholastic.com and I witnessed first hand the transformation of a drab social studies lesson into a true learning adventure.

Providing a lesson with this interactive component enabled me to facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity which satisfies NETS standard number 2. Many studies have proven that children learn best by doing as is the opinion of Don Tapscott the Chair of the Alliance for

Converging Technologies and author of Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation. He explains to us that the Net Generation are the children of the baby boomers. "The Net Generation has arrived. These 88 million children in the US and Canada who are already combining demographic muscle with digital mastery to become a force for social transformation. This is a demographic wave of youth that is also hitting the shores of selected countries along the pacific rim and in Northern Europe. These children are at the heart of the new digital media culture. They are a new generation who, in profound and fundamental ways learn, work, play, communicate, shop, and create communities very differently than their parents". (Tapscott, 1998)

School district are now charged with providing the tools to be utilized by this Net Generation, teacher preparation programs are now mandated to include courses in technology literacy for our future teachers, and ITBE is here to provide you with professional development that will allow you to be more proficient in the use of technology in the classroom and integration of technology into your daily lesson plans. For some of you this is a scary time, but it does not have to be. Our classrooms are going to be more and more technically interactive. It started with the digital document cameras known as ELMOS, continued with the SMART boards and now we have schools already

implementing APPLE I-Pads, PC Laptops and other digital paraphernalia into our classrooms. Our classrooms will never, ever look the same again. We at ITBE are committed to get you ready for all the exciting and amazing technology that is to come.

Technology in the classroom is also utilized to meet RTI and "No Child Left Behind" requirements and meet the needs of our ELL students. Many new programs have become available in the last five years that are now being evaluated by the U.S. Department of Education. The results of these evaluations are available to anyone in their What Works web site. Some of the newer programs that have been identified as intervention tools are: Read 180, LEXIA, Kid's College, Education Place, Star Reading, Star Math and Imagine Learning to name a few. For these programs to be the most effective better technology needs to be made available to schools, and technology fluent teachers need to be ready, willing and able to facilitate the use of the programs and monitor the progress of each and every student.

Most districts are already requiring new teachers and administrators that come to their district to answer the question of, "From your point of view, how important is technology in education? What technology-related skills can you contribute to a school district?" Other districts are already making the implementation of technology into instructional lessons as part of their teacher's evaluation process. These districts are responding to the call, and affirming that they are committed to continuing to expand technology in the classroom. Now it is up to us the educators, and parents to make sure that the future remains bright for our children by supporting technology in the classroom and preparing our kids best to compete in our global economy.

Useful links…

NETS STANDARDS

http://www.iste.org/standards/nets-for-teachers/nets-for-teachers-2008.aspx

YouTube - Did You Know? Video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8W1WuxGniE

Growing Up Digital - Paper

http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/jan98/feat_6/digital.html

Scholastics Teacher Technology Resources

http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/home.jsp

What Works Clearing House, US DOE

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

Technologically Integrated Lesson Plans

http:/www.internet4classrooms.com

Discovery Education

http://www.discoveryeducation.com/search/page/-/-/lesson-plan/technology/index.cfm

Technology and Internet Use Lesson Plans

http://www.sldirectory.com/libsf/resf/techplans.html

MICROSOFT in Education / Teacher Resources

http://www.microsoft.com/Education/en-us/teachers/plans/Pages/index.aspx

Computers and Internet Lesson Plans

http://www.lessonplanspage.com/ci-htm

Smithsonian Education

http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson_plans/science_technology.html

Podcast for Teachers

http://learninginhand.com/storage/podcasting_images/Podcasting_Booklet.pdf

ZOHO Wiki

http://www.zoho.com/wiki/wiki-education.html

In the news

The Intensive English Program at Elgin Community College was recognized as a 2011 Desire2EXCEL Award nominee at the Desire2Learn FUSION conference in Denver this summer for its use of D2L, the online learning platform, with IEP students. "The Intensive English Program at Elgin Community College: Closing the Language Gap Using Desire2Learn" was nominated for the for the Desire2Excel Impact Award which recognizes D2L uses that are "wide influence and scope, and can be replicated by others "& the Desire2Excel Innovation Award which recognized practices that "break with conventional processes to address needs and go beyond marginal improvements."

Being the first year that the college has had any nominations, it is exciting to see ESL professionals nominated for an award in the innovative use of educational technology. The nomination recognized 3 ITBE members: Elizabeth Reyes- the program director, Kelly Cunningham- an instructor and the online course developer for the program and Mi Hu- the dean who oversees and supports the program. Following the nomination, the group was also invited to present in the D2L booth at EDUCAUSE 2011 conference this October in Philadelphia.

"Getting the Balance Right"
2012 ITBE 38th Annual Convention
February 24-25, 2012

Call for Participation

In order to have the most successful convention possible, we need our members to deliver dynamic presentations! We encourage all to submit a presentation proposal. Your colleagues around the state are interested in the exciting things going on in your classroom and program!

Proposals can be submitted online at www.itbe.org/proposals.php .

ITBE Tech Showcase

Do you have an interesting tech idea? A great website you like to use in your teaching? Present your idea at the ITBE Tech Showcase. The Tech Showcase will feature shorter, 15-minute demonstrations on cutting edge technology, including computer applications and websites.

Proposals for the Tech showcase should be submitted through the online proposal system at

www.itbe.org/proposals.php.

All proposals must be submitted by October 21, 2011.

Selection of presentations will be made by the Program Committee.

You will be notified of the status of your proposal in November.

“Getting the Balance Right”

2012 ITBE 38th Annual Convention

February 24-25, 2012

Wyndham Lisle-Chicago Hotel & Executive Meeting Center
3000 Warrenville Road
Lisle, Illinois 60532

As the 2012 Convention Chair, I would like to personally invite you to ITBE’s 38th annual convention at the Wyndham Lisle-Chicago Hotel & Executive Meeting Center on February 24-25, 2012.

As language educators, we constantly struggle to balance the various facets of the educational process: theory vs. practice, grammar vs. whole language, direct instruction vs. acquisition, testing vs. teaching. This year's convention is focused on examining ways we can indeed “get the balance right.” We hope that throughout the convention you will be able to gain new insights on how you can best achieve this balance in your own classrooms.

We are very excited to about this year's plenary speakers. Friday will open with Dr. John Nelson, Graduate Program Director, TESOL MA Programs, University of Maryland Baltimore County, and will close with Dr. Randi Reppen, Professor of Applied Linguistics and TESL, Northern Arizona University. On Saturday, Dr. Robin Scarcella, Professor of Academic English, School of Humanities, University of California Irvine, will give the morning plenary with Kory Stamper, Associate Editor, Merriam-Webster, Inc, giving the afternoon plenary.

In addition to our traditional 60-minute breakout sessions, we will have a number of featured speakers from around the state. Each of our plenary speakers will also lead a breakout session to preview or follow up their speeches. And there is more! We will also continue with our Tech Showcase, a type of session we piloted last year in which teachers give short demonstrations on the use of technology in their classrooms. Finally, we have lengthened SIG meetings to forty-five minutes and have changed the format to focused discussions on relevant and timely topics related to each group. There will also be publisher exhibits and demonstrations and attendees can earn CPDUs and professional development credits.

We sincerely hope you will join us for this year’s convention and encourage you to submit presentation proposals. Your colleagues around the state would love to hear about the exciting things going on in your classrooms! The deadline for proposal submission is October 21, so don’t delay! Also, don't forget about early registration. Follow the links provided here for both proposals and registration.

Gevik Anbarchian,
2012 Convention Chair and ITBE Vice-President

Convention info: http://www.itbe.org/convention.php
proposals: www.itbe.org/proposals.php

Using Music and Photos to Jumpstart Neuro-Technology*

by Patrick T. Randolph

The Background

Sometimes we get intimidated by the word "technology", and sometimes we forget that the most enhanced and complex system of technology is right inside our skull; yes, the magic of the human brain. Our brain is perhaps the most phenomenal piece of technology in the world. According to the well-known neuroscientist, David Eagleman, each brain cell "is as complicated as a city" (Eagleman, 2011). And each one of these cells communicates with other cells a vast number of times per second. "If you represented each of these trillions and trillions of pulses in your brain by a single photon of light, the combined output would be blinding" (Eagleman, 2011). The brain is, to be sure, an amazing organ that provides all the technology we need to communicate our thoughts and learn whatever language it is that we put our minds to.

The question then becomes, what are ways that we can jumpstart this miracle in the writing classroom for our ESL learners? The answer is music and photographs. John Medina, in his provocative book, *Brain Rules*, tells us that the more we use multiple senses in the classroom, the better students learn; in short, "learning abilities are increasingly optimized the more multisensory the environment becomes" (Medina, 2008).

I have found that the use of minimal man-made technology; i.e., photographs and music on *Youtube* can facilitate and jumpstart the highly complex technology of the brain and coax it into creating the most magnificent results for any level of writing class.

The Activity

The method I use to do this is threefold. There is the "music-visualization" activity; the "music-writing" activity; and the "music-photo-writing" activity. The first activity is the easiest. Here the language instructor has the students close their eyes while the instructor plays a piece of music for one to three minutes. Before starting the music, the instructor explains that the students are to simply "visualize" a scene in their minds; they are to let the music "take them away" as it were and let the tempo of the music create the scene or scenes in their minds. After this they turn to their neighbor and tell them what they saw, who they met, or what they experienced. This can been done for one or two lessons so that the students start to formulate silent creative scenes in their minds that are inspired by music. This can of course be a warm up activity.

Next, the instructor adds the element of writing; this is the "music-writing" activity. A week later, the instructor first plays another piece of music for one to three minutes and just asks the students to relax and "feel" the music, absorb the rhythm, and work with the tempo. Then the instructor asks the students to write a short paragraph of what they "see in the mind" while they listen to the music. The first time this activity is done, the writing might be sparse. However, the more the instructor does the music-writing activity, the more complete the writing becomes. That is, the first couple of times this activity is used, the writing might be slightly disjointed and physically look more like a collection of sentences cobbled together with random punctuation. But gradually the students can write coherent narratives or descriptions of people, places and experiences.

The third step is to do the "music-photo-writing" activity, in which photographs are added to the activity. Here the instructor can either prepare a single photograph on a piece of paper or a series of two to three photographs that could make a story. For example, I often start with just one photo of an old bicycle leaning next to a fence or wall, or I have a series of photos: one photo of the lone bicycle next to the wall, followed by someone riding a bicycle and next to that someone riding a bike meeting another person.

The students first look at the three photos next to each other, then listen to a piece of music.

At first they do not write anything. Next the instructor tells the students to listen again, this time write a story based on the music and the photographs. Here is where the instructor will see highly coherent and very creative stories develop. Perhaps what is most interesting is that each student will create a completely different story.

The activity lends itself to a number of grammar points as well. For example, the students can write a personified version of the bicycle and tell the story with the voice of the bicycle, or they can write a third person narrative. Whatever specific grammar point you want to focus on will bridge nicely with this activity.

The Music

It is, of course, important to choose the right kind of music for this activity. Songs with lyrics are often distracting and also have the tendency to make the students mimic the lyrics in their writing. It actually influences them in a negative way in terms of developing their own creativity. Although, some advanced language learners may be able to "ride this wave" of music and still write independently, it is rare. For you are asking the students to both listen to the music and the lyrics and write at the same time. Multitasking in this case is not effective. In fact, multitasking in general, "when it comes to paying attention, is a myth" (Medina, 2008). More and more research shows we just can't multitask effectively. "We are biologically incapable of processing attention-rich inputs simultaneously" (Medina, 2008).

However, the simple instrumental music is different. For whatever reason, it fosters the creative juices and nurtures excitement in the brain to produce very interesting, logical and coherent pieces. So for the best results regarding this activity, I suggest classical music, jazz, modern jazz, new age, or instrumental soundtracks.

A second important factor is the length of the music. Segments of one to three minutes are good. You can easily repeat them, and this adds to the effectiveness of the activity. The students feel the repetition and work off of it to create their stories. You can repeat the music as many times as the students want.

The third significant element before doing any of the three activities is to have the students do some physical exercises or breathing exercises. You can have the students stand up and do some light stretches or watered-down tai chi. This has three benefits: first, it simply wakes the students up so that they won't fall asleep while listening to the music; second, it physically carries more blood to the brain, which in turn brings the brain glucose and oxygen and keeps the neurons connecting and creating new neurons (great for true "learning"); and third, it improves the students' thinking skills (Horstman, 2009; Medina, 2008).

The Photographs

The visual portion of the activity can be as challenging or easy as the instructor wishes. You can simply project an image on a screen from a smart-cart, or you can photocopy the photographs from Google images, just make sure to give credit to the original photographer when possible. I always prefer well-lit rooms, as do my students, so I go the route of using the photographs on paper. I usually hand these out and have the student write their stories under the photos. As mentioned above, you can either use one photo, or you can create a series of photos to help the students develop their stories.

The Benefits

The benefits of this three-part activity are numerous:

(1) Students quickly learn that the creative writing component will help them with their academic writing in terms of the development of ideas and logical
coherence;
(2) Students seem to pick up and use new vocabulary better with the help of music and visual aides;
(3) Students become aware that the more sensory integration they use, the more they remember the various tools of the activity; from vocabulary to the use of different kinds of sentences, to the images that they created on paper via the power of the written word;
(4) Students become cognizant of how much they can produce in a short period of time;
(5) Students gain confidence in themselves as writers and as language learners;
(6) Students begin to see that they can actually "enjoy" writing; and
(7) Students can own the written word and own the language as opposed to being mere slaves of a curriculum.

(Continued After Free Aps Article- p. 10)

Free Applications to Enhance the ESL Classroom Experience

By: Lisa M. Barrett

Are the best things in life really free? Technologically speaking, the answer is yes! How do you stay connected, cut time, be productive, and enhance your classrooms in today's increasingly technological society? If you own an iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, the magic words are "free apps."

You don't have to spend hundreds of dollars on applications for your classroom. In fact, there are many excellent applications available for free download. All you have to do is turn on your device, connect to the app store, type in what you're looking for, and download a free application that has the potential to make you the "coolest" teacher in your school.

Cut Time and Enhance Productivity

Have you ever gotten into your car, driven half way to school and remembered that you forgot an important document on your desktop computer? Have you ever spent time developing lesson plans, saving them to your USB drive, only to forget to pop it into your bag in the morning? I know I have and frankly, my husband is sick of getting my frantic calls begging him to email me a copy of the conversation topics I worked on the night before.

That's when I discovered the free application *Dropbox*. It is an application that syncs your home computer, work computer, and smart phone. You can access your photos, documents, videos and more from wherever you're at! All you need to do is simply drop your document or video into the dropbox and you'll never have to worry about emailing yourself a file again. The free *Dropbox* application allows you to store up to 2.0 GB, plenty

of room for your lesson plans, classroom videos, and even excel grade sheets. Save time and be more productive with this free application.

In-Classroom Applications

Listening comprehension is a skill that our ESL students need as they go about their daily lives in America. We've all used movies and perhaps YouTube videos in the classroom as easy listening comprehension activities, and now there's one more to add to the list. The application TED, "Riveting Talks by Remarkable People, Free to the World," is a valuable resource for in our higher education classrooms.

TED Ideas worth spreading TED has an abundance of speeches on a surplus of topics ranging from informative to persuasive. There are

many categories of talks, including technology, education, business, science and global issues.

The application includes an "inspire me" button, which asks you to pick a general topic, how much time you have, and voila! A random video is ready to view. The application also allows you to share (post to twitter, share on Facebook, or email to friends), bookmark for later viewing, and save, which is very useful in getting the information to our students. While the application has many good features, the website itself www.ted.com has many other features, including conversations, community, a blog, and more.

Are you sick of the same old conversation topics discussed every semester? With the free Discovery News application, it is now easier than ever to find informative and interesting topics to discuss with your students.

Discovery News' app allows you to discover information regarding Earth, space, technology, animals, history and more.

The application includes top stories, video, a search function, and many other topics. This application

provides instructors articles that range in level, with appropriate choices for higher elementary students like "Why Do Leaves Change Color," to more advanced topics like "Near-Death Experiences Explained." While the application includes current news, it also has many articles that you don't see on everyday news sites like CNN. Check out this app and "discover" what it can do for your classroom.

Applications for Students

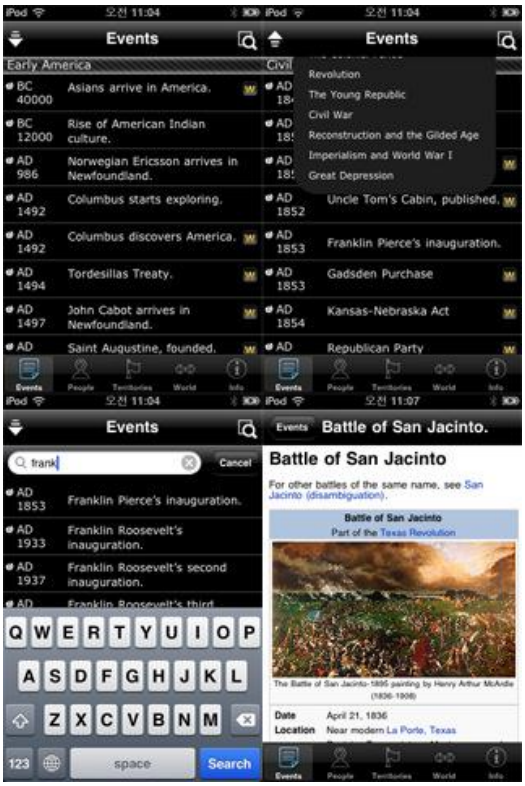
If you have enthusiastic readers in your classrooms, Wattpad's eBook Reader is a great application to share with your students. With over 18,000 stories in just the classics category alone, your students are sure to find something of interest.

Reading categories include action, fantasy, poetry, short stories, spiritual, and teen fiction, and that's

just a few. In addition, if you have aspiring writers in your classrooms, students can upload stories they've written to www.wattpad.com. If you're trying to get your students into reading or even writing mode, this application makes it easy!

When I started my last ESL class in August, I asked my students if they knew who the first US president

was. Not a single student answered. After seeing the shocked look on my face, one brave student raised his hand and said, "Abraham Lincoln?" I laughed and we talked about George Washington for a good portion of our class. Our ESL students may not know much about American History, so the free application US History Timeline is a wonderful resource for them. This application includes



important events, a list of people, US territories by date, and more. What's interesting is that students can easily access more information by clicking on the "W" Wikipedia button at the bottom of many event descriptions or details about famous Americans. This application is certainly cool for eager history learners.

Whether you're looking to save time, access ideas for your classroom, or enhance your students' learning, free applications are where to start! I have only described a few of the multitude of free applications that are useful in the educational environment. Just because they're free, doesn't mean they're cheap. Check out some of these free applications today!

(continued from Randolph Article, p. 7)

Concluding Remarks

The brain can create its own world of feelings, images, sounds, tastes, smells, tactile sensations, and emotional insights. Music and photographs can help the brain elicit these worlds in the ESL classroom. This is an example of how man-made technology can foster and expose the great natural neuro-technology that exits in the bodies of each and every student. The use of sensory integration is the creative vanguard that can and will help any writing instructor make the most of his students' hidden talents. Walt Whitman and his great intellect claimed that "I am large . . . . I contain multitudes". He had peeked into the fantastic complexity of the soul and realized all the wonders within. You can help your students achieve the same by jumpstarting the brain with music and photos, and unfolding the magical neuro-techology of the mind.

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* Neuro-technology is a term I use to refer to the natural "technology" of the human brain.

Discuss this article & more on the Newsletter Discussion Board - here

Online Professional Development Opportunities Abound!

by Laurie Martin, Adult Learning Resource Center

Adult education ESL teachers who teach for programs funded by the Illinois Community College Board are required to complete six hours of professional development each year. Teachers who are unable to attend in-person professional development events like the ITBE convention or workshops can find many excellent professional development opportunities online.

While some online activities provide certificates of completion, others do not. Teachers should discuss their plans for online professional development with their supervisors and determine ahead of time the number of hours that will be accepted and how the activity will be recorded.

Here are a few high-quality sources of online professional development.

Teaching ESL to Adults: Classroom Approaches in Action online video series (New American Horizons Foundation, ©2010)
www.newamericanhorizons.org
There are eight 30-minute videos in this professional development series that can be viewed online or purchased through the website. Each video focuses on a particular aspect of ESL instruction and features an expert instructor in a real-life classroom. Interview clips provide additional explanations of techniques used. For professional development, teachers could view a video, make a plan to try out a technique or strengthen a teaching skill, and report on the results. Or, a group of teachers could form a learning circle and use a video as a point of departure for discussion and classroom endeavors.

The titles in this series are

- Lesson Planning for Life Skills
- Building Literacy with Adult Emergent Readers
- Growing Vocabulary with Beginning Learners
- Working with a Multi-level Class
- Developing Listening Skills with High-intermediate Learners
- Teaching Grammar in Real-life Contexts
- Cultivating Writing Skills at the Intermediate Level
- Developing Reading Skills for intermediate/Advanced Learners

ELL-U (English Language Learner University)
www.ell-u.org
According to the ELL-U website, it is "an innovative, accessible, easy-to-use, and free learning portal" designed for adult education ESOL practitioners. Teachers can find online courses, discussions, and other resources through ELL-U—all free of charge. ELL-U just opened its "doors" last spring, so its offerings are limited, but growing. Users simply register by setting up a login and password. Note that ELL-U has its own "ELL-U

Hours" that do not correspond to clock hours. ELL-U Hours are assigned to each online course, and users can accumulate them within the ELL-U system, but Illinois teachers needing professional development hours should negotiate a number of hours for an activity with their supervisor.

EL/Civics Online

www.elcivicsonline.org

EL/Civics Online offers free, online courses for teachers who want to learn how to incorporate civics content into ESL classes. After registering with the website, users can browse or can complete courses. Certificates (without professional development hours on them) are printable only after a course is completed. Initially, users are required to go through an introductory course, ESL Foundations. Once that has been done, the user will be able to access four courses:

- U.S. History
- U.S. Government
- Civic Engagement
- The Naturalization Process

In addition to the four main courses, this website also offers supplemental content modules for each course, tutorials on lesson planning and adapting materials, and a master teacher course. This is a huge and many-layered website with a wealth of professional development possibilities.

Developing Oral Proficiency of Adults Learning English (Center for Applied Linguistics)

http://www.cal.org/adultspeak/index.html

This online module was developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics to provide professional development to instructors who want to know more about teaching listening and speaking to English language learners. Within this course are video clips, links to resources, and other information.

Publisher Resources

Publishers of ESL materials offer an increasing amount of professional development for teachers. They may hold webinars, provide downloadable podcasts, or even house professional development videos on their own YouTube channels. To receive email invitations to online publisher-sponsored events, contact your representative. Here are a few publisher resources:

Pearson Professional Development Podcasts

http://www.longmanhomeusa.com/

The Pearson website offers access to numerous short podcasts on a variety of topics. The podcasts are given by Pearson authors who are experienced teachers and professors. The Pearson site also has a link to its **YouTube channel**, http://www.youtube.com/user/PearsonLongmanUSA , which features many professional development videos.

Cambridge University Press YouTube Channel

http://www.youtube.com/user/CambridgeUPELT?feature=mhee#p/c/29EFEBBC48DA9B67

Cambridge University Press also has a YouTube channel with a number of videos on a variety of topics related to teaching ESL.

Discuss this article & more on the Newsletter Discussion Board - here

2011-2012 ITBE HIGHER ED ESSAY CONTEST

Hey, teachers! Bring a little bit of competition into your classrooms this fall with ITBE's higher education essay contest. Help your students finally put their writing skills to the test. Full-time ESL college students of Illinois are invited to participate. There are three essay categories and the best essay in each category will win $150. In addition, winning authors will receive a certificate of merit, have their names and photos posted on the website and will be published in an upcoming ITBE newsletter. Sponsoring teachers of the winners will also be recognized.

The categories are

ESSAY CATEGORY #1: Write a humorous narrative that discusses your experiences in the United States. You may discuss differences in customs, school, culture shock experiences, or other humorous experiences, etc.

ESSAY CATEGORY #2: Write a personal narrative that describes how learning English has changed your life. What challenges did you face and overcome? What doors are now open to you as an English speaker?

ESSAY CATEGORY #3: Write a personal/opinion essay on how technology has influenced your life. What has technology done to enhance your personal and professional life? Is technology helping or hurting society?

For contest rules, submission guidelines, and more please visit http://www.itbe.org/_higher_education.php

Happy Writing!

“Teacher, Are We Brain POP-ing Today?”

by Anne Scatchell
ELL/Bilingual Resource Teacher
Glenn Westlake Middle School

I hear this question from my middle school ELL students almost daily and had much the same reaction as a 3rd grade Bilingual teacher. How often do we have our students ask for brussel sprouts instead of potato chips or other things that are actually good for them? In the case of Brain POP ESL, Brain POP Jr.,and Brain POP this is exactly what is happening- kids are asking for something that actually helps them learn and retain both content and language skills! These engaging, interactive, animated web based learning tools provide what we know as best practice for our ELL students of differing ages and English proficiency levels. Brain POP Espanol also offers native language academic support for many students.

We know that all students, including our ELLs, benefit from highly visual content delivery that utilizes key concepts and academic vocabulary within context. The animated characters stay consistent and become familiar “friends” to the learners- this helps to lower the affective filter as addressed by Stephen Krashen. The Brain POP family of products also uses a sense of humor which captivates its viewers and helps them to relax, making them more open to learning and grasping some challenging material making academic concepts and language structures easier to understand and retain.

For those of you not currently using any of these tools with their students, allow me to give you a brief overview. Brain POP Jr., Brain POP and Brain POP Espanol all provide content support on a wide range of topics including science, social studies, English, math, engineering & technology, health, and arts & music. Within each subject are countless topics and the site makes it easy to navigate by searching for topics covered by our state standards. There are also current events and holidays that are covered providing our ELL students with a better understanding of some of the U.S. holidays as well as their own.

Once an animated movie is selected from the site, you can have students watch it on individual computers or projected as a whole class. I always choose to close caption the brief 3- 5 minute film so that students are able to see the words as well as hear the dialogue. After the movie is finished, there are many follow-up activities to choose from including a quiz. We often do this as a whole group, having students discuss and share their answers with a neighbor or showing their vote with their fingers. The students love taking turns being the “Review Quiz Host” who gets to select the answer that the class has voted on. Most lessons also have graphic organizers or vocabulary activities that can be used on the interactive whiteboard or printed out for the students to compete on their own, with a partner or small group. We often save these sheets in a binder so that the students have a concrete reminder of the lesson long after the animation sequence is complete.

Brain POP ESL is another powerful tool that I use with my students. It is very teacher friendly and even includes easy to navigate lesson plans for additional activities that tie in with the language concept covered by each lesson. There are currently 2 levels each comprised of six units of five lessons. The fifth lesson is always a review of that unit. It is very easy to differentiate instruction for my wide range of students using this tool. I have some "newcomers" who enjoy the initial lessons that help them to quickly gain both comfort and understanding of their new language. For more advanced students, I look for trends in their oral or written language and can search Brain POP ESL for the lessons that will help me address those specific concerns.

Beyond a doubt, the students' favorite parts, Words to Know- introducing vocabulary, and Know More- addressing the grammar concepts, are after the movie is complete. They can interact with both the vocabulary and grammar concepts in fun, engaging interactive games that look and feel like real video games. In order to be successful, the students need to answer questions or select words that help them use what they have just been shown. The students also have a writing opportunity after each lesson- starting with tracing letters and words and building up to more independent writing based on the topic and concept just covered in the lesson.

I have seen firsthand the dramatic impact that these tools have had on my students. There are times when they ask me to repeat a movie; it has started to make things easier to understand but they know if they see it again it will help them that much more and stay with them. I have had ELL students that advocate for their own learning by asking me if there is a Brain POP movie on a certain academic concept that they are struggling through- they have felt that confusion before and know that the visual nature, explanations, and explicit vocabulary instruction will help things click.

Even if you are not a current subscriber, you have access to some of these powerful tools. At www.brainpop.com you will have access to certain free movies, which will give you the opportunity to experience Brain POP with your students. It is also a great way to invite administrators or technology specialists into your room who may control the budget. Once they see the students' level of engagement and learning, they will often do what it takes to find the money to fund a membership. If you are the owner of an iPad (single best purchase of my life) or an iPod Touch, you have access to Brain POP's free app which will give you access to a different movie each day. You can also become a member of the free Brain POP Educators, http://www.brainpop.com/educators/home/, which is a great resource for collaborating with teachers around the nation on lessons for your age group. They also offer both live and archived Webinars where you can learn from their staff and fellow teachers. You may search for lesson plans based on your grade level and content area or through academic standards. The site will also provide you with resources to secure funding for your membership to Brain POP if you are having difficulty it through your building or district.

If you haven't sensed it, I am a huge fan of all of the Brain POP products! It is because it works and it makes learning and teaching that much easier- a true "win-win" for students and teachers! I have had the privilege of meeting several of the fantastic people at Brain POP who are genuinely interested in helping both educators and students. I have also met Dr. Avraham Kadar, M.D., the founder of Brain POP, who created the first animated movies to help his pediatric patients understand why their bodies needed certain medicines and how they helped them. The patients "got it" and wanted more- luckily for all of us it has resulted in this family of tools that are having a tremendous positive impact for students around the world each day, especially our ELLs who look to us to help them grow both as learners and speakers of English.

Book Review

Review by Diana Booth

Empower English Language Learners with Tools from the Web.
Ramirez, L. L. (2010).
Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Even though the target audience of *Empower English Language Learners with Tools from the Web* by Lori Langer de Ramirez (2010) is grades K-12, anyone can benefit from reading this book. As Ms. Ramirez put it herself, "the beauty of learning about Web 2.0 tools is in their applicability to all levels of education, all subject areas, and all students" (p. xii). Also, this book will be useful to anyone regardless of how much or how little one knows about technology: "No matter where you are on the technology continuum, this book contains suggestions, ideas, and resources for you" (p. xii).

The author starts by explaining that Web 2.0 technologies are the ones that allow users not only to passively access (find, view, listen to, or read) information available online, but also to actively contribute by creating, uploading, and sharing information with others (p. xi).

In the first chapter, Ms. Ramirez answers the anticipated question: "Why use Web 2.0 tools with ELLs?" Some of the benefits that the author explains are:

- Opportunities for extra practice
- A safer, more anonymous space with a controlled setting
- Authentic tasks
- Interactive activities
- Greater motivation and student enjoyment
- Students' familiarity with the tools and their positive attitude toward them
- Improved writing, reading, speaking, as well as social skills
- Increased self-awareness and attention to detail
- Enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills

The author also reminds the readers that by incorporating technology in their lessons, they help raise "successful citizens of the 21st-century global society" (p. 4).

The rest of the book is a fascinating show-and-tell of various Web 2.0 tools. The reader can either study all the chapters in the presented order or pick and choose. There are chapters on blogs, wikis, podcasts, YouTube and TeacherTube, VoiceThread and Flickr, Social Networking (Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter), Social Bookmarking (Diigo and Delicious.com) and, finally, Virtual Worlds (Panwapa and Teen Second Life). Each of these chapters follows the same structure.

Each chapter begins with a link to an online video, such as the ones created by Common Craft: "Explanations in Plain English," followed by the author's explanations of WHAT this tool is. This section includes computer screenshots accompanied by arrows and text boxes, which clearly show where each element and function can be found. After that, the author explains WHY this particular tool should be used with ELL's. She then proceeds to the HOW section, which is a sample project, accompanied by screenshots and clear TESOL Standards correlations. Next, one will learn WHEN this Web 2.0 tool can be used with grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The next section is my favorite. It is called, "WHO is using …?" and contains another example of a project incorporating this particular tool. Here one can read about how a fellow teacher decided to try this technology, what difficulties he or she encountered, how the students reacted, and what shape the final product took. There are often pictures of student and/or teacher work available and advice from the teacher on how to create grading rubrics for such a project and what pitfalls to avoid. Each chapter ends with screenshots of the websites where the reader can create his or her own free blog, wiki, etc. and the WHERE section, which provides references, suggested readings and

helpful web sites for anyone interested in more information on the topic.

The book is exceptionally well-researched. Ms. Ramirez has already done the hard work of finding simple explanations, outstanding examples, and free resources available on the Internet and compiling all that information into this useful and practical handbook. The abundance of ideas, projects, and applications is amazing. If you cannot incorporate the described projects, I am sure that they will inspire you to do something more appropriate for your audience and objectives.

The only shortcoming of the book is dead links. Because of the fast pace at which the content of the Internet changes, some of the links sited in the book do not work anymore. However, this is something that is quite expected, and I am sure that future editions of the book will solve this problem.

All in all, whether you are looking for a friendly, gentle, and patient guide on any of the Web 2.0 tools, or whether you are looking for some fresh ideas on how to spice up your classes and make them more efficient, useful, and more fun for your students and yourself, this is the book you should consider.

ITBE SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Apply today!

Nominate a colleague or yourself!

- $1000 Graduate Scholarship
- $500 Undergraduate Scholarship
- Professional Development Scholarship
- Teacher Innovation Grant
- Elliot Judd Outstanding Teacher Award

See www.itbe.org/awards.php for more information and application materials.

Deadline: December 2, 2011

ITBE Elementary Poetry Contest
2011 to 2012

Elementary Poetry Contest Awards
2011 to 2012

Sponsoring teachers of the award winners will receive a free membership to ITBE for one year. In addition, there will be refreshments and cookies served at the awards ceremony. Family members are welcome to attend the awards ceremony on February 24, 2012. Time of the event is to be determined.

Prizes for the students

2nd grade - 5th grade winners receive a gift card for a local bookstore and a certificate.

1st Place $ 30 2nd Place $ 20

This year's categories

Diamante Poem Acrostic Poem Open Poem Haiku Biopoem

You can find all of the information you need for the contest on the website! Go to www.itbe.org. Click on Awards. Then click on Elementary Poetry Contest.

- *Cover Sheet for the Contest*
- *Guidelines for the Contest*
- *Diamante Worksheet & Guidelines*
- *Bio Poems Worksheet & Guidelines*
- *Acrostic Checklist*
- *Haiku Guidelines*
- *Open Poem Guidelines*

All entries must be postmarked or emailed to Margaret Gigous by December 2, 2011. All entries must also include the cover sheet and Teacher Sponsors must be current members of ITBE.

We look forward to seeing all of the winners at our convention on February 24, 2012!

NEIU Prepares Teachers to Teach the Web 2.0 Generation

by Margaret Moore-Taylor

Today teachers are challenged with using an enormous amount of techniques and innovative ideas to reach students, often with little assistance or direction from school administrators. Schools are eagerly purchasing the newest technological gadgets, such as interactive whiteboards (like Smartboards), document projectors, tablets and electronic readers. Training and in-service are limited to learning the basics, and focus only on how to work these devices and use the resources offered through company websites. This often leaves the teacher with the task of integrating these tech tools within their lessons and developing creative and exciting new ways to use the tools. As a result, a Smartboard often becomes no more than a glorified chalkboard, being used for projecting images and showing movies. With tremendous pressure being placed on teachers to juggle a multitude of responsibilities, how do they locate and learn the tools needed to instruct the Web 2.0 generation?

Students at Northeastern Illinois University are gaining an advantage on learning about Web 2.0 tools and how to incorporate them in everyday teaching. Most of these tools are free. The class, entitled "Using Technology with ELLs", has been a big hit with the student population. The class is offered through the TESL department at NEIU, and is taught by Dr. Jacqueline Trademan. Within the class the students prepare to teach English language learners using a variety of Web-based tools. The students use wikis to post their assignments, collaborate on projects and demonstrate that they have learned how to use and incorporate a variety of web-based tools into their lessons. The emphasis is focused on finding the best web-based tools to use with English language learners.

Many of the students come with little or no background in using technology to teach ELLs. To keep all of their ideas and collaborations in one place, the class uses a Wiki. The wiki site used is through http://pbworks.com/ . Each student has their own page on the wiki and uses this page to upload article reviews of websites beneficial for ELLs, link resources on their page and demonstrate their ability to use tech tools such as http://animoto.com/, http://www.picnik.com/, and http://www.wordle.net/. To assist the class with sharing the many web sites they found with each other, the class developed a Diigo group at http://www.diigo.com/ . To keep abreast of interesting articles and blogs about technology for ELLs, the class made an igoogle homepage and placed an RSS feed e-reader on the page to collect updated web content. Two of the sites chosen were the award-winning blog by Larry Ferlazzo at http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/ and Richard Byrne's, Free Technology for Teachers http://www.freetech4teachers.com/.

This class is remarkable, and allows the participants to leave the class with over 80 technology tools that have been reviewed and tested by the participants of the class. All of the tools presented in the tech class can be used within ESL classrooms with elementary through adult learners. Look for the *technologyforells* group on the Diigo bookmarking site and join the group. The members of the group would love to have you!

Discuss this article & more on the Newsletter Discussion Board - here

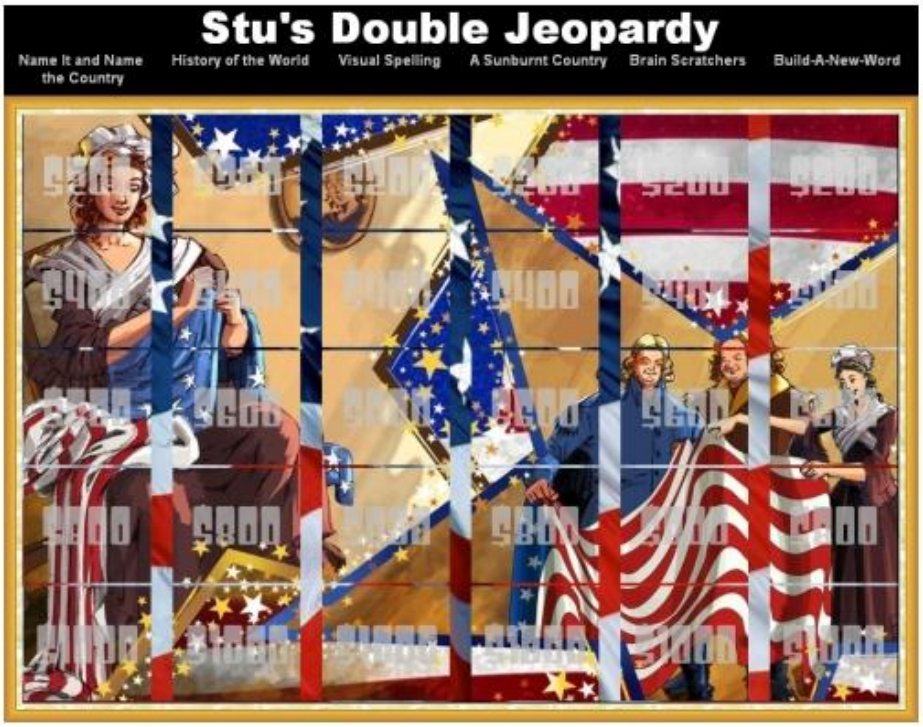
Review:

Stu's Quiz Boxes

by Diana Booth
http://quizboxes.com

Stu's Quiz Boxes is the best FREE software for designing professionally-looking jeopardy games. Such games are excellent for presenting one's syllabus, organizing a chapter or a course review, or even leading a workshop or a departmental meeting.

Stu's Quiz Boxes can be found at http://quizboxes.com/. To get started, select "Download" and click "Download Now." Then choose "Instructions" and click "Create Your Own Quizzes: Step-by-Step." That's all! You will have all the information needed to create your own jeopardy game. The developer – Stu Hasic – does ask everyone to share their quizzes as a way of payment for the privilege of using his software for free, but it is not difficult to upload a game once it's ready.



The best thing about this tool (in addition to being free) is that the games look modern and very attractive. You can either use the provided "skins" (background images), or you can customize your game and use your own pictures – there are detailed instructions on how to do that. Another feature that I greatly appreciated (and I am sure you will, too) is an *extremely* simple organization. I've been using jeopardy games for a while – they are incredible for breaking the routine and bringing in a lot of educational fun into the classroom. However, the other templates that I'd found on the Internet had several significant flaws. First of all, some of them had glitches and did not display some questions correctly. Second, they looked quite boring – just like regular PowerPoint presentations. The biggest problem, however, was the way they were set up: each question and each answer had to be entered on a separate page. I had to be very careful about keeping track of the category and the question value under which I wanted each question and the corresponding answer to go. Several times I got confused and entered information on the wrong slides. It took me quite a while to fix the mistakes and reenter all the information.

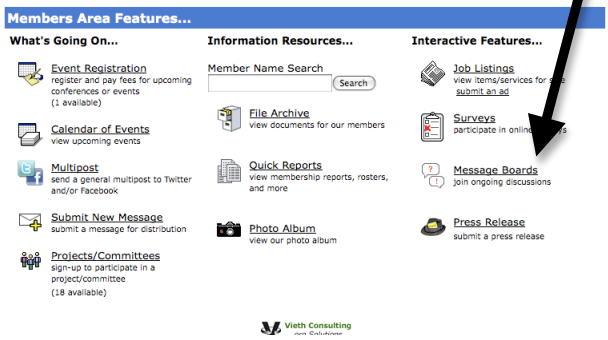
With Stu's Quiz Boxes, this problem is non-existent. You decide whether you want to have 30, 20, or 10 questions, and after that questions AND answers for each category are entered on ONE page! That makes things so much easier and eliminates mistakes, frustration, and wasted time. "Make a New Quiz," "Save," and "Print" buttons are also conveniently located on each screen.

The only drawback that I've discovered with this software is that it does not work on Apple computers; However, it can be downloaded onto a flash drive and played from it without any problem. Thus, if you can find a PC (at school, library, or some other place) on which you can design your game, the problem is solved right there.
If you get confused about something, there is a FAQ section on the website. You can read the dozens of questions and answers or post your own question. Stu Hasic responds to each question himself. Since August 24, 2010, there have been 27,000 visits to Stu's site from all over the world. If you go to http://quizboxes.com/ and look at the sample games, you will know why.

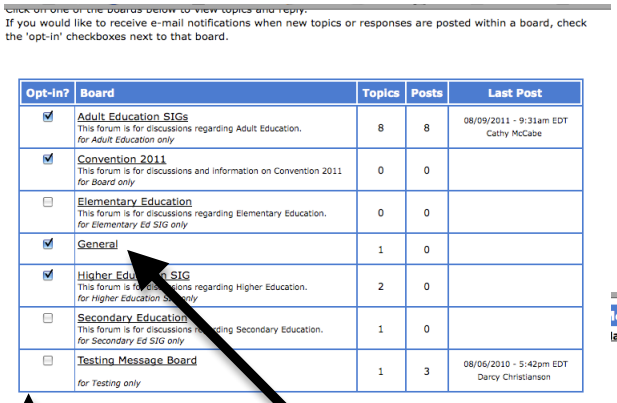
Discuss the articles online now at ITBE.org!

[Newsletter Discussion Board click here]

Log in to the Members Only area of itbe.org

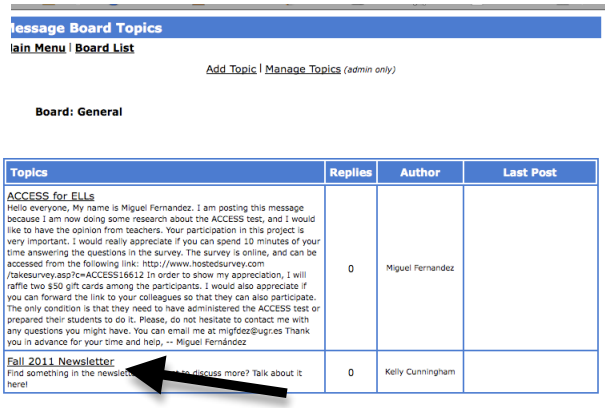


Scroll down & click 'message boards'



Click the check boxes to subscribe to the areas that interest you.

Click 'General'.



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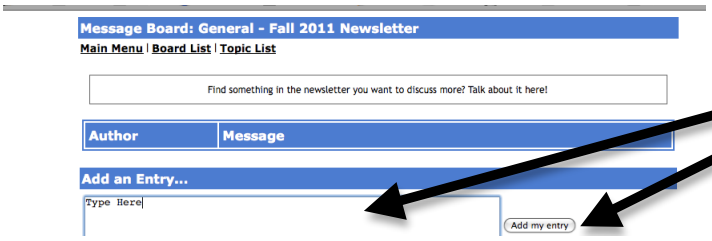

Type your message and post
Read other messages and keep the discussion going.

Getting the Balance Right

2012 ITBE

38th Annual Convention

February 24–25, 2012

What do I do with twitter? Get Professional. basics

By @ESLCunningham

So you've heard tons about twitter(so 2009) but as far as you can see its just a bunch of people broadcasting what they've had for lunch or what they're watching on TV. Like any other resource, twitter can be used for the most frivolous or the most educational of purposes. Beyond using it in the classroom for things like live streaming questions and class discussions in large classes, a tweet stream of class resources, interviewing experts as a class or posting class updates, twitter can also help you as a professional become better at what you do while connecting you with other professionals and experts in the field. There's plenty to do with a professional twitter account. And I do mean, set up a professional account and keep your family photos, vacation updates and what you're watching on TV for a personal account.

A few to get you started:

#ELTchat – Wednesday chats for ESL professionals

@AAALinks – American Association of Applied Linguistics
@TEFLtech – tech in EFL
@lexicalist
@Larryferlazzo – edublogger ESL
@TESOL2011 – TESOL2012 conference
@TESOL_Assn – TESOL Int'l Assoc.
@ITBE – ITBE ;)
@Chronicle – The Chronicle of Higher Ed

don't follow @ESL- it's a sports league

http://www.twibes.com/group/ESL a twitter group devoted to ESL

Follow, Follow, Follow

While twitter is touted for what people tweet, reading those tweets is probably a good 80% of what you'll do on twitter. Who do you follow? Well us at ITBE of course (@ITBE) & the TESOL International Association, @TESOL_Assn, for starters. You can also search twitter for professional topics that interest you, find people you know or would like to know or follow people whose work you admire. Each time you find someone to follow, check out the people they are following. This is one of the best ways to find new people to follow. You can also look at who else is following the person you are following. It's likely you may have something in common. You might also find people to follow as you follow and participate in chats. Once you have a few people to follow, you can also try to 'who to follow' button at the top of the page for more suggestions. You can always take a quick look at someone's tweets first to see if they say anything of interest to you.

Basics:
#hashtag – begins w/# tags a tweet so you can find like tweets or follow/participate in a chat
@UserName - @ denotes an account (person/organization) – you can follow these, tag them in posts or direct message them- to *find them go to twitter.com/username*

Why do you want to follow? You follow to learn. Following professionals in your field, colleagues and researchers, organizations and developers can help you learn and ultimately get better and most interested in what you do. You don't need to hook twitter up to your phone so you never miss a tweet, but signing on every now and then can bring you a myriad of news ideas. You can stay up to date on the latest news & opportunities, find new resources, get questions answered and answer questions for others. It can help you stretch your brain as you read research articles you probably wouldn't have found otherwise (if this is what you're after try academia.com). In addition, you can build a professional & educational network. If you're a lone teacher, twitter might help you develop an extended professional community. It's always about learning and connecting, isn't it?

Lists & Chats

Lists are just that. They allow you to follow a whole list of people. You can make your own lists to help you organize those you want to follow or you can follow public lists that someone else has curated already.

Hashtags can help you find chats or at least tweets of interest. Chats are often scheduled in advance and you can follow them via the given hashtag. Most will occur the same time each week. You can participate by including the hashtag in your tweets. It's akin to a large focused group discussion. Many chats archive the tweets after the discussion and post them to a website as a resource. This is a great way to meet people, discuss topics in your field, ask questions and share resources.
Larry Ferlazzo (@Larryferlazzo), a second runner up in 2010 in the edublog awards, has a quick blog post of ESL chats on twitter here http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2011/01/18/twitter-chats-for-eslefl-teachers-how-to-participate-in-them/ and it has links to a myriad of twitter resources including lists specific to ESL instructors. See a huge list of resources here. His developing personal learning networks goes well beyond twitter for ESL professionals. You might as well follow the blog in addition to his twitter account.

What to tweet

Tweet what interests you. Talk about conferences you're excited about, live tweet during conferences, share resources & links or retweet great posts. Retweet? Yes, retweet. If you see a great tweet from someone you're following, you can click retweet and broadcast it to your followers as well.
You can also tag others in your tweets by typing their name into your tweet. If you ever want to hear back form an organization or company about something, tweeting seems to get the quickest result. You can also direct message others (DM) in a similar way.
You could create a specific persona. You might only tweet about the use of commas like @CommaRules or set up your account as a place for others to ask you questions on specific topics or to broadcast great ESL listening links. Or, you could just be you.

For further reading:

http://bloggingandsocialmedia.blogspot.com/2009/05/building-your-twitter-network.html
http://burcuakyol.com/2009/06/top-elt-people-to-follow-on-twitter/ (follow list)

Don't forget to share and discuss your experiences and recommend others to follow on the Newsletter Discussion Board!

NPR's StoryCorps: More than Listening Comprehension

by Sherry Rasmussen
DePaul University

Introduction

As language learners, our students also learn culture, and often prefer to do so with authentic material such as that from National Public Radio (NPR). The mission of NPR's *StoryCorps* (*www.storycorps.org*) is "to record, preserve, and share the stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs" through short interviews. This article addresses how to use *StoryCorps* effectively in ESL classes, considerations teachers should make when choosing which interviews to use, and student learning outcomes from this resource.

The Interviews

A new *StoryCorps* interview can be heard every Friday morning on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" program, and all interviews are archived on the *StoryCorps* website. Each interview is 2-4 minutes long and is usually of one person being interviewed by a friend, family member, or loved one. Different ages, races, and backgrounds are represented, and although a few celebrities have been interviewed, most interviews are of "regular" Americans on a variety of topics touching on US history and/or culture. Some topics I have used in my high-intermediate listening & speaking class include the following:

- If a parent can and should also be their child's friend
- Adopting children, and whether adoptions should be "open" or "closed"
- The success of an international student in becoming a US public school teacher
- A successful marriage of 61 years
- How an oncology nurse deals with work among the dying

Considerations for Choosing Interviews

There is a huge archive of interviews at *StoryCorps.org*, so teachers may want to consider the following when choosing appropriate interviews for their students:

1. Is the theme one that the students will be interested in?
2. Is the theme one that the students will want to speak/write about?
3. What aspects of culture does the interview address?
4. Is the theme one that the teacher and students will be comfortable discussing if students want to do so in class?
5. How quickly are the people speaking during the interview?
6. Are the accents easy or difficult to understand?
7. Do the speakers use a lot of advanced vocabulary?
8. Do the speakers use a lot of slang?

More than Listening Comprehension

As *StoryCorps* interviews are mostly of Americans by Americans, they can be used to teach English vocabulary, idioms, and elements of US culture. In addition to using these interviews for listening comprehension (see the example lesson), I use these interviews as springboards for class discussions and as models for an interview students will conduct later as part of the course. They could also serve as writing prompts.

The Structure of Each Assignment

While class lessons could certainly be organized around a *StoryCorps* interview, my *StoryCorps* assignments are always done as homework, giving students a few days to complete them. I grade them for accuracy and completeness. On the assignment, students are instructed how to find the interview and told to listen as many times as they need to. Before they listen, students do a vocabulary exercise and/or study some words and idioms from the interview. Questions include those for main ideas and details as well as those which encourage critical thinking and relate the topic to the students' lives. After the assignment is submitted, students often ask to discuss the topic of the interview – either in small groups, as one large group, or both. These discussions tend to lead to comments and questions about US culture and other cultures. Teachers can also reinforce vocabulary and idioms from the interviews during class.

The Website for Teachers to Use

I recommend that teachers choose the interviews from the *StoryCorps* website: www.storycorps.org. On the left side of the website, one can find "Listen to Stories;" then, on the right side of the new page, there is a drop-down menu under "Browse by Category". Clicking on one of the categories will provide a list of all the interviews that relate to that topic and a link for listening to each interview.

The Website for Students to Use

Although the *StoryCorps* website is ideal for teachers to gain access to each interview, the site is not as good for the students because there is no introduction to the interview, and thus, there is little context provided. As such, students should gain access through www.npr.org, as the Morning Edition announcers introduce each interview, providing extra information about the people or topic involved and helping to activate the schema of the students. On the assignment, I instruct my students to go to the website

, and in the search box, type the names of the people in the interview; the result of the search will be a link taking the students to a recording of the interview with the introduction by the announcer; note: Students may have to sit through a 15-second ad or public service announcement before they hear the interview.

An Example Lesson

Note: The real handout leaves more space for answers.

Name:

StoryCorps Interview 5: Nancy and Frances

1. Go to www.npr.org
2. In the "search" box, type "Nancy Wright"
3. This is an interview about a woman and her relationship with her mother. After the vocabulary exercise, read the questions and listen to the interview. You may listen as many times as you want to.

Do this vocabulary exercise (below) first!

Vocabulary: Write the definition and part-of-speech of these words. Then, write your own sentence with the word.

e.g. appalled *adjective* It means "shocked" and "disgusted". *I was appalled when I heard that my neighbor had stolen money from a poor man.*

1. adolescence
2. defiant
3. formidable
4. miserable
5. to slam

Other expressions you'll want to know:

1. to criticize = to say what is wrong with something/somebody in a negative way
2. to deal with = to manage a difficult situation
3. to go downhill = to become worse
4. to grate on someone's nerves = to irritate someone
5. in-a-row = consecutively; without interruption; following in order
6. judgment-laden = full of criticism
7. a screen door = a door with a screen on it so that insects cannot enter

Comprehension questions: Listen for the answers to these questions.

1. How tall was Frances? [find out how many centimeters is the same]
2. Nancy says that her mother was "defiant", and she gave an example of something that happened in the class room when her mother was young. What happened?
3. How old was Nancy when she told her mother that she needed a friend, not a mother, anymore?
4. How did Frances react when Nancy told her that?
5. What did Nancy expect after she saw her mother's reaction?
6. *Opinion/Personal life questions: These questions ask you to write your opinion or to tell me about your life or situation.*
7. When Nancy told her mother to stop criticizing her, Frances replied, "That's what mothers do." Do you agree with Frances? Why/why not?
8. Are your parents also your friends? Do you think that our parents should be our friends? Why/why not?
9. Why do you think Nancy started to cry at the end of the interview?

Further Independent Use for Students

At the end of the course, I give students the *StoryCorps* website so that they can listen independently to more interviews if they so choose. A new interview is archived each week, so the website can be a resource for a long time to come. I received evidence that some students listen to *StoryCorps* after the course from a student who had finished the course a year previously and wrote in her email: "I still like to hear stories from npr. It is so helpful to me to understand more American culture."

Conclusion

Students and teachers often prefer to use authentic materials in language classes. NPR's *StoryCorps* interviews are a wonderful resource to teach vocabulary, idioms, and various aspects of US culture. Teachers can choose appropriate interviews for their classes by visiting *www.storycorps.org*, and students get extra context provided if they listen to the interviews through *www.npr.org*. Teachers may use the interviews in class, as homework, as discussion or writing prompts, or as models for student interviews. After the course, by providing the students with the *StoryCorps* website, students can continue to listen independently to the interviews.

Professional Development Planner

October 15, 2011

ITBE Fall Workshop

Elgin Community College, Elgin, IL

December 2, 2011

Northern Region Adult Education Fall Conference

Hilton Indian Lakes Resort, Bloomingdale, Illinois

February 24-25, 2012

ITBE's 38th Annual Convention 2012

Wyndham Lisle-Chicago Hotel & Exe. Meeting Center

3000 Warrenville Road Lisle, IL 60532

Integration of Computer Technology into ESL classes: A Reflection

by Maja Grgurovic
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With the advent of the Internet, increased computing power, and affordability of personal computers, smart phones, and tablets, communication technology started becoming an integral part of our lives. Just 20 years ago, not many people had a cell phone. Today, how many adults do you know who do not own one? Probably few, if any. As computer technology entered offices and homes, it slowly entered our ESL classrooms. And it is here to stay. Thus, it's important to gauge how teachers have reacted to it. It isn't surprising that there are mixed feelings regarding technology use in the classroom. Some more "adventurous" and tech-savvy teachers embraced it right away, some teachers needed a critical mass of colleagues around them to start experimenting, and some were interested but never got down to actually trying it out. There are also many more levels of teacher technology comfort along this continuum.

Oftentimes when I give talks about computer technology integration into language teaching, I hear the following comment: "I've taught for _ _ number of years (insert any two-digit number) without an extensive use of classroom technology and I was very successful. What is my incentive to change now?" My answer is always the same: we should integrate instructional technology into our teaching because of our students. We should model technology use, teach students computer skills, and explain how the use of computer applications and the Internet can help them improve their English. Even more importantly, we should teach our students how to interact with and interpret the information in the digital form. Without these skills they will be at a disadvantage in the workplace, in future academic classes, or wherever their paths take them after they leave our ESL classrooms. For example, in an intensive English program, employing a learning management system familiarizes students with an important tool they will later need in most of their college classes. In an adult education setting, word processing skills learned in a writing class when revising and formatting essays may set the student apart from other job candidates. In an academic ESL class, guiding students through the process of online research and use of academic sources could be especially useful in a content class where they are asked to compose research papers in their discipline.

Regardless of the huge advancements computer technology is making every year, the ESL teacher will not be replaced by a classroom computer any time soon. What we can do is take the advantage of language learning applications and Internet resources as aids in the teaching and learning process. These aids have helpful strengths across different language skill and knowledge areas. For instance, in online grammar exercises, the computer can provide immediate scoring and feedback so students know right away if they made a mistake and how to correct it. Computers could be of assistance in a pronunciation class because they never, unlike us, get tired of modeling sounds, words, and sentences. Moreover, students can learn the use of a new word by searching a corpus of texts using a concordance program. Finally, the Internet can make the classroom walls disappear by connecting ESL learners with speakers of English all over the world at a mere click of a mouse.

While the advantages of instructional technology are easy to see, learning to use it may not be that easy. A concern I frequently hear is: "Where in my busy schedule do I find time to learn about a new program or an application? And by the time I master

it, there will be something new and I'll have to start all over again." These are all important issues to consider because learning new technology does involve a substantial amount of time and patience. The good news is that the skills build up and the next time you want to try something new, it will be easier.

If you are contemplating enhancing your lesson with technology, keep these suggestions in mind. First, always start small. Make the technology component just one part of the unit. This should help you see how the technology works, how much class time it takes, how students work with it, and how it can be improved. For subsequent lessons, you will be able to trouble-shoot technical problems and expand the activity. Second, always have a back-up plan. What do you do if a webpage won't load, a media player needs an update, or students' headphones don't work? Inevitably you will run into technical problems and you have to be prepared. Always test all technological aspects before class in the classroom/lab where you will meet students, have a non-technology option ready, and be prepared to modify your lesson. Third, collaborate with others. Run ideas by colleagues when planning and designing the lesson, seek their feedback, and even ask them to join your project. Finally, ask for help when you need it. It can be very disheartening to take students to a computer lab only to see a show of hands come up when something doesn't work and you are the only person everyone turns to. Some sources of assistance could be IT personnel, computer lab coordinators, teaching assistants, teacher aids, community volunteers, and finally ESL students themselves. In my experience, students are usually very willing to help their teacher and classmates and are proud to put their computer skills to good use.

It takes time, patience, and skills but integrating technology into the classroom is worthwhile for our ESL students.

Book Review

Reviewed by Stacey Krueger
Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL

Teaching Adult Second Language Learners

Authors: Heather McKay and Abigail Tom
Publisher: Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2008. (234 pages); ISBN: 0-521-64990-0; $30.00

In this text, McKay and Tom provide a comprehensive, accessible resource for teachers of adult ESL students. The first section aptly guides the reader through the unique advantages and challenges of working with adult second language learners, a discussion that is lacking in other generic ESL curriculum guides. The second section provides a basic approach to setting up a positive classroom environment, seemingly geared towards new teachers. The bulk of the text is in the third section, which offers nine theme-based units relating to life in the U.S., with ten to fifteen communicative activities for each theme. Each activity follows a consistent lesson structure that is easy to use and remarkably conscious of differentiated learning through simple yet effective multi-level variation options.

The main strength of this text is its holistic approach to language teaching. Its activities are carefully structured to incorporate reading, writing, listening, and speaking across whole community, whole class, small group, pair, and individual activities. It goes beyond arbitrary language activities to address the real-life situations the learners will encounter, especially in health and consumer education. One exemplary activity within the health unit has the students identify health facilities in their community, interview someone from their assigned facility, create a narrative with basic information about their facility, and compile a class resource book. Through such activities, the text shows its adeptness at addressing the basic needs of adult language learners through integrated language activities.

In general, the text is sensitive to both its own culture and the cultures of its intended students. It explicitly makes room for low-anxiety and low-controversy interactions in which students learn about each other's cultural practices, such as describing food markets in their home countries and discussing how they spend money in their new country versus in their home countries. By including these activities, the text values the home culture of the adult language learners to an extent. However, the vast majority of the activities focus explicitly on the learners' new country, thus prioritizing the new sets of skills and concepts that the students will have to negotiate rather than the existing skills and beliefs that the adult learners have already developed.

Its major weakness is that, while the text does help acclimate students to U.S. culture, it provides no explicit opportunity to discuss or explore alternatives to the dominant viewpoints. The themes emphasize individualism and consumption in an effort to help students adapt to life in the U.S., incorporating activities that help students navigate supermarkets, catalogs, apartment ads, job listings, and American bank accounts. The text does not explicitly value or devalue this consumerism, but the absence of channels for resistance can potentially alienate students who might not agree with all aspects of mainstream American culture, also risking the portrayal of a single image of the U.S., rather than the complex identities the country encompasses.

Future editions of this text could easily incorporate more critical approaches to English language learning in order to better serve the diversity and maturity of its adult learners. The activities section could also be expanded to include more real-life situations of new arrivals to the U.S., including parenting in the U.S., the U.S. legal system, travel and transportation, and media studies. Of course, individual teachers can add these elements on top of the existing activities, so as a whole the text is still incredibly useful and practical as a starting point for developing an ESL curriculum for adults.