

MODERN METHOD OF USING INTERNET FOR ENGLISH TEACHING

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ANNOTATION

Those involved in the practice of English language teaching can get any kind of information in the internet. Internet also provides answers for almost all of their questions. Most teachers believe that they may get much benefit through the use of internet. They can use it as one way of getting resources for conducting their teaching or to get in touch with other English teachers from other places. They can use it as a medium to exchange information related to their teaching.

Keywords: internet, English teaching, resources.

INTRODUCTION

The use of the Internet in teaching foreign languages. Involved in the practice of teaching foreign languages teachers can get any kind of information from the Internet. The Internet also provides an answer to almost any question. Most teachers believe that they can benefit a lot from using Internet resources. The Internet is used as a way of obtaining information, restoring knowledge or sharing experiences with other teachers from other countries. With the help of the Internet, teachers' qualification improvement, all kinds of testing and certification are available, confirming the level of language skills and mastery of the teacher.

In Internet for English Teaching, Warschauer, Shetzer, and Meloni provide a practical survey of uses of the Internet for ESL/EFL instructors and researchers. They offer discussions useful to instructors for professional development and research. Most of their book, however, is devoted to practical instructional uses, including a great many helpful tips, with a modest helping of pedagogical theory and research. This survey begins with information essential to anyone using the Internet, starting with how to access the Internet and obtain an e-mail address. This information, as the authors point out, will be useful to instructors who have not used the Internet, the largest number of which may be instructors in parts of the world where the Internet is just beginning to be used for teaching, research, and professional development. Professional development and research related issues are addressed in chapters 2 and 8. The authors discuss professional development opportunities online, providing a fairly lengthy list of Web sites. Chapter 8 is devoted to a survey of research interests related to electronic communications. It provides a short summary of various types of research followed by a selective summary of literature relevant to several areas of investigation.

True to its title, however, most of Internet for English Teaching deals with how to use the Internet to teach English. The authors describe ways in which the Internet can be used for various types of teaching activities, including collaborative assignments, student research, and student-managed publishing of their work. Throughout this discussion very practical techniques are given, along with examples of assignments and reminders that any use of the technology must be grounded in pedagogical theory and deliberate implementation that reflects

theory and proven practice. The authors also discuss distance education, mostly describing various online courses or programs, but also identifying issues relevant to developing and evaluating distance courses or programs.

The authors point out that the book is written for instructors--those who have used the Internet for years or not at all--who are interested in reading about "the latest developments in research, theory, and curriculum" (p. vii). In order to make the book helpful to instructors of various levels of education, examples of projects from elementary school, high school, and universities are provided, and all other discussions are useful to instructors from K-12 to college and university. A wide variety of technologies is discussed, including e-mail, threaded discussion boards, Web authoring, search engines, course management software, multimedia authoring software, and various other related technologies: Common Gateway Interface (CGI), Graphic Interchange Format (GIF), Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), Joint Photographics Experts Group (JPEG), Serial Line Internet Protocol (SLIP), and "what you see is what you get" (WYSIWYG). Many of the instructional uses that the authors discuss, however, can be implemented rather simply through the use of e-mail and/or basic authoring, so novices to the Internet need not be intimidated. [-1-]

In a supplement the authors offer a guide to authoring Web pages. They touch on technical aspects of making Web pages as well as copyright issues. Since this guide is a brief introduction to Web page creation, a list of online sources is provided for software downloads and further reading.

The authors also provide a compendium of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) referenced throughout the book, a helpful addition. Finally, a supplementary reading list and a glossary are provided.

The greatest strength of *Internet for English Teaching* is its highly practical approach to describing and explaining uses of the Internet for language teaching. Instructors should be able to easily apply ideas in the book to their own classroom. The book provides exercises and lesson plans which can be immediately adapted and used in classrooms. It even provides guidelines for adapting exercises and evaluating Web sites. Although some instructors may not be familiar with all of the technologies discussed, the authors' discussion is very readable and non-technical, so instructors who have not used the Internet should find the book very user-friendly. The authors provide a great service to the field by making it easier for instructors to employ what promise to be very important tools for language instruction. Communication technologies such as e-mail, threaded discussion boards, and chat allow the implementation of more communicative and collaborative approaches to language instruction, approaches which were not otherwise possible (Bonk & King, 1998). These technologies allow the extension of language use outside the classroom and promote participation of all students, including classroom "lurkers." By making the technologies more accessible to instructors, the authors have promoted not only the use of technologies. They have also promoted the advancement of communicative pedagogical approaches which have been found effective to language learning and which are made more fully operational by the technologies.

Another strength of *Internet for English Teaching* is its emphasis on pedagogically sound approaches to using the Internet. In addition to reminding readers of this issue throughout the book, the authors devote chapter 7, "Putting it Together," to discussing the integration of

technologies and the pedagogical concerns that any use of the Internet should address. It can be tempting to "try out" a new technology simply because of its novelty, and there certainly are valid reasons for experimenting with technologies. But, as Bonk & King (1998) point out, it is important to design Internet-based assignments so the assignments provide a structured and pedagogically sound basis for students. Kudos go to Warschauer, Shetzer, and Meloni for reiterating this very important point which goes unheeded all too often.

The authors further note that technology should also be fully integrated in a curriculum in order to be maximally effective. Their point that using the Internet as an integrated aspect of the curriculum is an important one, which the authors could have emphasized more. Limited and passive use of technology leads to a limited perspective--for instructors and students--of the actual benefits of technology, which allows us to perform differently, and hopefully more effectively, as language instructors and learners. A simple, common example is offered by Chong (1998). While threaded discussions offer a number of benefits to communicative curricula, Chong points out that the importance of these benefits should be reflected in the grading practices of courses. Internet-based collaborative assignments, such as threaded discussions, should thus receive grading weight comparable to that for equally important offline assignments. Otherwise, students may perceive the online assignments as less important. [-2] Although the title indicates that the book is intended for the teaching of English, much of the information in the book is applicable to language instructors in general, not only to instructors of ESL/EFL. I would recommend that language instructors of any language who are interested in incorporating Internet technologies in their courses read this book. With e-mail services now available in many languages, and the number of Web sites in languages other than English now more numerous, the Internet promises to be an important tool for all language instructors. This book would serve as a very useful aid to language programs now beginning to incorporate Internet technologies into their curricula.

In fulfilling their major objective of providing a survey of Internet-based technology useful to language instruction, the authors have only touched on numerous issues that could be fleshed out in much greater detail. With any topic as large and as volatile as that addressed in this work, and with a potential audience with such widely varying amounts of experience, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive discussion that would be equally useful to all readers. Consequently, the authors have opted for readability rather than comprehensiveness. However, they also provide numerous resources throughout the book, resources relevant to teacher collaboration, professional activities, professional development, and teaching. These supplementary resources--both online and offline--represent some of the most useful and prominent sources to date, thus aiding more experienced instructors in their research for more detailed information.

While the authors claim that the book will be useful to instructors with any amount of experience with the Internet, it is designed mostly for instructors who have not used the Internet and those with relatively little experience. There is a wealth of basic information which should help instructors begin and improve their use of the Internet. Given the potential increase in language instructors who will use the Internet for instruction over the next decade, this book is timely and should appeal to many instructors. Colleagues in Russia and Ukraine, for example, are using the Internet now mostly as a source of authentic reading materials and

communication with professional resources and contacts. Because of lack of familiarity with pedagogical uses of the Internet, as well as cost and technical unreliability, the Internet is usually not used in English classrooms. It is expected, however, that the Internet will become integrated into language classrooms over the next several years. Internet for English Teaching will no doubt become a useful resource for instructors as they begin this endeavor.

Although the authors' work will be most useful to instructors with little or no experience, there are useful pieces of information awaiting those with more experience. Among the many Web sites listed and technologies discussed, there will probably be a number of sites and technologies with which even the most seasoned of Internet users are not familiar. Since the writing makes for easy reading, the experienced will find their time well spent in exchange for the useful perspective and the additional knowledge of specific sites, technologies, or instructional uses. Instructors who teach students how to use the Internet are one group of seasoned Internet users who will find the book useful. The clear explanations of Web page creation will be useful to students who will also benefit from the sites referenced for additional information. [-3-]

While the Internet has been very useful to language instructors and students, it also poses problems, some of which the authors note (e.g., flaming, viruses, and worms). However, more attention to the technical and non-technical problems (cf. Bonk & King, 1998) would have been helpful. Instructors need to be aware of these limitations, not only so they can avoid or mitigate them, but also to be able to provide a surer basis for effective pedagogical application of the technologies.

CONCLUSION

Internet for English Teaching represents an important contribution to the field in terms of advancing the integration of Internet technologies in language courses and in terms of promoting communicative approaches that are made more fully operational through use of collaborative technologies. While instructors with little or no experience with instructional uses of the Internet will benefit most from this book, those with years of experience will also find this an informative and useful addition to their collection on instructional technology.

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