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ABSTRACT

This article details some of the many ways to use the Internet in the English-as-a-Second-Language classroom for both students and teachers. The Internet can be used for gathering information for use in class time planning, for finding teacher-related information, and for exchanging information with other teachers. Complete texts of newsletters and journals may be found on the Internet. Student uses include keypal or computer penpal exchanges for students; class project information gathering; reference resources, such as encyclopedias and dictionaries; and provision of additional English language materials for language practice. Students can subscribe to the IECC-Survey, which will help them conduct class project surveys. Both students and teachers can find news information, including more than 30 teaching resource lists, such as TESLCA-L and TESL-L as well as student-oriented lists in different levels of English. Another Internet news source is the "Daily Brief," which summarizes the world news every weekday morning, and many foreign language newspapers also have English-language versions on the World Wide Web. Simple web pages can also be designed and posted by students; a brief sample is described. (NAV)

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Using the Internet for Teaching English

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Introduction

The Internet is very useful for teaching English. Teachers can use it for gathering information for their classes, including teaching plans and materials for classroom use. They can subscribe to mailing lists related to TEFL/TESL, and exchange information with other teachers. They can subscribe to electronic journals or newsletters either by e-mail or using the World Wide Web and keep up with new trends of English teaching, finding new or interesting publications. They can consult with publishers on teaching materials.

In the classroom, teachers can organize "keypals" exchanges, and students can exchange letters with their keypals and have the experience of corresponding with people from all over the world. Students can use a mailing list, IECC-Survey, for conducting surveys for class projects. They can subscribe to student lists to exchange ideas with other students around the world. There are many learning materials on the World Wide Web, and students can use them to study English. They can read news in English using either by e-mail or on the World Wide Web. The World Wide Web can be used to make students' newspapers or newsletters.

Using the Internet for English teaching is very new, and there are few books and papers on the subject, though there are many resources on the Internet. We need to explore ways to find materials on the Internet and experiment with using them to improve our teaching. This articles gives some information about using the Internet.

The Internet for Teachers

Teaching Materials and Teaching Plans

Teachers can use the Internet for gathering information. For example, Martin Luther King is the topic for a class, you can use search engines*1 to look for information related to him. There are many sites related to him including ones with his photos, information about his life, and the texts of

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his speeches. There is even a web page made to teach about his birthday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (http://www.aec.ukans.edu/leo/kingday.html) which has some materials for teaching and quizzes. The largest mailing list, TESL-L, has a huge archive, and there is a file [HOLIDAYS BIRTHDAYS] which includes a reading passage on King's birthday with some exercises.

If you need additional teaching/learning materials for the class, you can find a quite large number of materials on the web. There are huge amount of material for listening, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and culture.*2 You can select appropriate ones for your students' interests and level of English proficiency. There are some teaching plans which include materials may help you to teach your students.*3 It is a good idea to go over those materials when you have free time, and classify them according to their topic or how you might use them. Since there is a huge amount of material available on the web, there should be many useful materials for your students, if you look for it.

Useful information for classes you obtain on the World Wide Web is easy to present to the class, if you have a computer which can access the World Wide Web and a large monitor or device to show it. The World Wide Web makes use of multiple media, and many resources are very realistic, colorful and attractive.

Professional Resources

Teachers can subscribe to mailing lists or electronic journals and read journals available on the web.

Lists. There are many lists for TEFL/TESL, but the largest one is TESL-L. You can obtain concrete information about it in On-line Resources, III-1 TESL-L (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/onlin31.htm). It is good to subscribe to TESLCA-L with TESL-L, since you will receive information related to computers, e-mail and the web.

We have found more than 30 lists, which are listed in On-line Resources, III-2 (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/onlin32.htm). There are many other useful lists English teachers might be interested in (On-line Resources, III-3--III-8). *4 You can read descriptions of those lists and try subscribing the lists you think might be useful.

In Japan, JALTCALL and HWG are fairly active and discuss English teaching in Japan. The IECC has several mailing lists, and teachers can participate in various projects, look for keypals for their students, or discuss intercultural issues for teaching. There are some specific mailing lists for second language learning or acquisition (SLART-L) and writing (WRICOM).

Subscribing to those lists will get you useful information on conferences, new products, materials, etc., but if you really want to benefit from a list, YOU have to participate in discussions. Ask questions, if you want information. Bring up issues that concern you, and find out what other people think. If you just wait until something useful drops into you lap, you may wait a long time. Also if you subscribe big lists or many lists, we strongly suggest to set them digest, so that you receive only one file for each list each day with all the messages for that day, rather than many individual messages.

Web journals. There are some useful web journals such as the Internet TESLJ (http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/) in Japan, English Teachers' Electronic Newsletter (http://ietn.snunit.k12.il/newslett.htm) in Israel, and Agora Newsletter (http://www.agoralang.com:2410/agora/agoranews_current.html) are fairly useful. They have their own resources and links to other sites. There are many more around the world.*5 Many of them carry useful articles, announcements, etc. You can also contribute your articles to share your experiences, research findings, lesson plans, teaching materials, etc., with other teachers of English.

Other web sites. You can visit web sites of professional organizations and check on their activities and publications. They have conferences, workshops, publications, etc., for language teachers.*6

Many foreign publishers, particularly American and British publishers, distributors, and large book shops have web pages, and you can find out about their products and get their e-mail addresses. You can order their materials and ask questions by e-mail.*7

The Internet for Students

Keypals

Teachers can arrange keypals for their students, and the students exchange e-mail with keypals individually or as a group, like

corresponding with penpals. IECC is a good mailing list to find keypals for K-12, and IECC-HE is good for university students. There are of course other places teachers or students can find key pals.*8

Robb and Tillyer wrote a detailed article about how to carry out this type of project, which explains how to prepare for the project and what orientation to give to students. It is available from the TESL-L archives, and its file name is [PENPAL ADVICE].*9

Surveys

Students can subscribe IECC-Survey to conduct their own surveys for class projects. If they are interested in wedding customs in certain countries, they can make questionnaire to ask various questions about wedding customs and post it to the list. They will probably receive some answers, and they can use them as resources for their projects.*10

Reference materials

Students can use the Internet as a resource for their projects. That is the Internet serves as dictionaries or encyclopedias. They can also find thesauruses and style sheets for writing papers.*11

Student Lists

Students can subscribe to student lists. There are ten different lists, and students can participate in general discussions for low and high level English students, or discussions on business, economics, current events, movies, music, sports, science, technology, and learning English.*12 You can give students assignments to obtain certain information on lists, and students can bring the information back to the class. Just telling students to subscribe to these lists may not work well.

Materials

There are many learning materials to help students to study English. Some of them are just traditional drill types, but some are very creative and attractive, so that students will have higher motivation to learn English. Of course, you can make your own materials and post them on the web. Simple web pages are easy to make, but complicated and artistic web pages are not only difficult but also time-consuming to make.

Journals and Newsletters

Students can read journals or newsletters for students of English. Many of them have readings and fun activities to do as well as useful

information. It is worth investigating these and making plans for what your students read, and how you can use the materials for your class.*13

News

Students can get news from various sources on the Internet.

One source is of news by e-mail is Daily Brief, a daily summary of U.S. and world news. The Daily Brief is a 2-3 page news summary sent out by e-mail every weekday morning. Included in the Brief are summaries of major news events that occurred during the 24 hours prior to distribution. To subscribe to the Daily Brief, send an empty e-mail message to incinc@tiac.net with "db" (without quotation marks) in the subject line.

The Bangkok Post (URL: http://www.bkkpost.co.th/education/home.htm) has good instruction on how to use their web page for both teaching and learning English. Many Japanese newspapers have English news on the web.*14 It is possible to read hundreds of newspapers in English around the world.*15

A simple web page is fairly easy to make. It can be accessed by anyone in the world. Thus, it is a good device to publicize information, for example, making newsletters for students, local people or even people from all over the world. If you learn a little more, you can create fairly artistic web pages which look professional. It is possible to teach students to make newsletters, etc., on the web.*16 You can see some examples at http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Links/StudentProjects.html. Also, Robb's article "Web Projects for the ESL/EFL Class" at http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/people/teacher/trobb/projects.html will help you to do such projects. You will find more examples at "Links to Projects by ESL Students" (URL: http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Links/StudentProjects.html).

Conclusion

As we have shown, the Internet, both e-mail and the World Wide Web, has a great potential to change our language instruction and students' learning of foreign languages. The Internet itself is absolutely free to use if your school has terminals connected to it.

There are many resources on the Internet already, and teachers and students have tried to use them in various ways. However, there has been little research done on how to use the resources most effectively. We need to continue to investigate ways to use the Internet for better language teaching/learning.

Notes

1. Net Search (http://home.netscape.com/home/internet-search.html) is the link to 15 search engines. Among search engines for the World Wide Web, we believe Alta Vista (http://altavista.digital.com/) is the most powerful search engine for finding this type of information.

2. "Exercises/Activities for Students" in On-Line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics (3rd Edition) (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/student.htm).

3. "Useful Resources, Lesson Plans, and Teaching Materials for Teachers" in On-line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics (3rd Edition) (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/teacher.htm). TESL-L has the file in their archives [LESSON PLAN].

4. The table of contents of On-line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics is at http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/onlin.htm. Since it is still being constructed, many URLs mentioned for sections of it may be changed, but the URL for the menu will not be changed.

5. English Teachers' Electronic Newsletter and Agora Newsletter can be subscribed to by e-mail. You send the message "subscribe il-eng" to majordomo@www1.snunit.k12.il to subscribe to the former and the message "subscribe agoranews" to majordomo@agoralang.com to subscribe to the latter. You will receive only one issue of agoranews at the beginning of each month.

There are many more web and e-mail electronic journals as shown in "Journals and Newsletters in TESL/TEFL, Linguistics, and Communication" in On-line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics at http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/journal.htm.

6. "ESL/EFL Organizations and Mailing Lists" in On-line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/organi.htm)

7. Hundreds of web pages are listed or linked in "Commercial Places (Publishers, Distributors, Software Developers, etc.) " in On-line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/commer.htm).

8. " E-MAIL PEN-PAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS" in On-line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/keypal.htm).

9. Robb, T., and Tillyer, A. (1993). Electronically yours: Cross-cultural communication through e-mail penpals. TESL-L.

10. IECC-Surveys for students
iecc-surveys-request@stolaf.edu
iecc-surveys-digest-request@stolaf.edu (set digest: I suggest that you to set the list to digest)
Send the following message to either of the above addresses to subscribe to iecc-surveys. Since it is an active list, it is good to subscribe to it with the digest mode.
subscribe iecc-surveys

IECC-SURVEYS is an electronic mailing list where students (and teachers) can post requests for assistance on short-term projects, surveys, and questionnaires. This differs from the IECC-PROJECTS mailing list, which is intended only for teachers seeking classroom partners on specific projects.

11. "Dictionaries & Reference Materials" at http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/ESL2.html#DICTIONARY

"Reference Materials for Students and Researchers" in On-line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics at (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/referenc.htm).

12 In order to use student lists, the teacher has to register the class with Tom Robb at Trobb@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp. General information is available on the following web pages.

"Sl-lists: International EFL/ESL email student discussion lists" at
http://www.latrobe.edu.au/www/education/sl/sl.html

"Sl-lists: International EFL/ESL email student discussion lists" at
http://math.unr.edu/linguistics/esl.student.list.html

13. "Exercises/activities for students" in On-line resources and journals related to ELT and linguistics
http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/visitors/kenji/student.htm

14 The following Japanese newspapers are available in English on the web.

National Newspapers

http://www.asahi.com/english/english.html
Asahi Shinbun
http://shrine.cyber.ad.jp/~jtinter/home.html
The Japan Times Online
http://www.mainichi.co.jp/index-e.html
Mainichi Newspapers<
http://www.nikkei.co.jp/enews/
NikkeiNet
http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/index-e.htm
Yomiuri Shinbun

Local Newspapers

http://www1.meshnet.or.jp/sanyo-np/sanyo/eindex.html
Sanyo Shimbun
http://www.chunichi.co.jp/index-e.html
Chunichi

Weekly

http://www.cdc.toppan.co.jp/CW/
Chubu Weekly (regional in Nagoya area)
http://www.weeklypost.com/
Weekly Post

Other

http://www.twics.com/~stripes/home.html
Pacific Stars and Stripes (American newspaper)

15. The following are links to newspapers throughout the world.

http://www.wfi.fr/volterre/newspapers.html
VOLTERRE-FR: Newspapers OnLine in France & Worldwide
linked to thousands of newspapers and magazines around the world

http://www.cs.vu.nl/~gerben/news.html
The daily news has CNN and hundreds of newspapers from around the world!

16. "Using the Internet" in "On-line Resources and Journals Related to ELT and Linguistics" is useful.