f-007

Building bridges: Technology, community building and BBC Learning English

Paul Scott (BBC Learning English)*, Catherine Chapman (BBC Learning English)

bbclearningenglish.com is a hugely popular award-winning free ELT resource, receiving over 14 million page impressions monthly. User participation and inclusion is key to this success. This show and tell presentation examines the role of technology in the evolution of the BBC Learning English online community, focusing on tools including e-mail discussion lists, message boards, comments boards, blogs, competitions, voting and mobile telephony, as well as social sites such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. It will explore how and why tools are adopted, exploited and discarded in order to meet the needs of this evolving community. The session will include a preview of forthcoming innovations and an exploration of "The Flatmates," our interactive online ELT soap opera.

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*Paul Scott has worked in education for over 15 years and for the past eleven years managed bbclearningenglish.com, the BBC's English language teaching website. In addition, he is leading BBC Learning English's involvement in a major multi-media English language teaching project in Bangladesh and is also devising new innovative products for Brazil, Japan and the UK.

f-008

OpenSource CMS modules

Paul Daniels (Kochi University of Technology)

Open source course management systems (CMS) make it possible for teachers to contribute to the development a comprehensive learning system. Language teachers in particular require custom-built modules for language learning activities. One popular CMS, called 'Moodle', is especially easy to customize because of its plug-in activity modules and blocks. This showcase introduces several custom-built Moodle modules and blocks developed for language learners at Kochi University of Technology. The modules include a presentation module, a lecture questions module, a seating chart module, a shared whiteboard module, a data display module, a mobile media blog module and a mail quiz module.

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f-009

The NDSU virtual lecture series: An on-demand study companion

Sachiko Takahashi (Notre Dame Seishin University)*

Notre Dame Seishin University has an EFL program in place to help students improve their skills in English comprehension and communication in addition to lecture courses in English literature and linguistics delivered in English. One of our goals is to help integrate these two components by making content-based videotaped materials easily accessible. I propose to give a presentation and demonstration of the virtual lecture series under development at Notre Dame Seishin University in Okayama, Japan, along with the rationale for the program and an evaluation of the program that is now in place.

*Sachiko Takahashi has been teaching in a middle-sized city in the western part of Japan for 15 years. Her major is applied linguistics (specifically, second language acquisition).

f-010

Developing software for virtual student-teacher conferencing

Hui-mei Hsu (Fo Guang University)*,
Fu-Chiang Pan (Fo Guang University),
Teresa Chen (California State University)

This session will examine the development process of a writing conferencing program, Conferencing Tool, including its design process and the implementation challenges in the four major iterations of the software development. The first part of the presentation will be devoted to a demonstration of the four major iterations of the software and a comparison of the design focus and features. The second part will address the design and implementation challenges encountered in each of the iterations. The third part will be the discussion of the technical issues involved in the software development and the direction for future improvements.

*I am an assistant professor at the department of learning and digital technology at Fo-Guang University in Taiwan. My research interest is CALL and technology integration.

f-011

Developing an automatic text and video synchronization tool, SyncVOA, for ESL learners

Berlin Chen (National Taiwan Normal University), Howard Chen (National Taiwan Normal University)*

There are many video clips available, but most of these video clips do not have captions. If captions can be added to these videos, students can understand the content better and pick up new vocabulary items. To help teachers and students to have access to a wide variety of captioned video clips, we developed an automatic synchronization system called SyncVOA. This system can automatically synchronize the VOA (Voice of America) videos and scripts. Based on the survey results, students enjoyed watching synchronized videos generated by SyncVOA. Most students also felt more comfortable and confident with the support of this new listening tool.

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*Howard Hao-Jan Chen (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania) is Associate Professor of English at National Taiwan Normal University. His research interests include second language acquisition, computer-assisted language learning, and corpus linguistics.

f-012

Using animated characters and speech recognition technologies to teach speech acts

Hao-Jan Chen (National Taiwan Normal University), Feng-Fan Wei (National Taiwan Normal University)*

Learners of all languages tend to have difficulty producing a speech act using appropriate language and manner in the target language. In this study, we developed several lessons in teaching speech acts with the help of an animation tool called Character Builder and the Microsoft speech recognition technologies. With these tools, we developed five Flash-based speech act lessons. A group of 34 college students were asked to use these interactive lessons. The survey on these students showed that student enjoyed using the multimedia program and became more familiar with various speech acts. Students in particular liked the opportunities for practicing the speech acts with the help of ASR technologies.

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*Graduate student in TESOL at National Taiwan Normal University

f-013

Improving students' pronunciation with text-to-speech software

Reima Sado Al-Jarf (King Saud University)*

Freshman students have several pronunciation problems (cannot associate written graphemes with their corresponding phonemes, read word by word and lack oral reading fluency). They downloaded a natural text-to-speech software. They typed the lessons from the textbook and pasted them into the software. They listened to the lessons read by the software and could follow the parts read on the screen. They could listen to the text as many times as they needed and could adjust the software reading speed. Test results showed significant improvement in pronunciation correctness, reading fluency and spelling ability. Improvement was slow but gradual.

*Reima Al-Jarf is professor of EFL and ESP at King Saud University. She integrates new technologies in language teaching. She is widely published, and has given conference presentations in 32 countries.