Room 409

b-001

Moving Learning Materials from Paper to Online and Beyond

Thomas Robb, Toshiko Koyama, Judy Noguchi

Constant advances in computer technology have greatly expanded the range of educational tools and methods but the realities of the classroom environments and limited budgets often make implementation difficult. This project was done to detail a mentoring process for moving two types of courses from paper to online and "beyond," i.e. to a full-scale e-learning milieu.

The first course was a specialist vocabulary learning component of an ESP (English for specific purposes) curriculum in pharmaceutical sciences. About 260 first-year students were given a 10-minute vocabulary quiz at the beginning of each 90-minute class that met once a week. The vocabulary items consisted of terms based on Greek and Latin affixes that are commonly used in the medical sciences. For example, "gastr(o)-" that refers to "stomach" appears in "gastritis," "epigastric," "gastrectomy." By learning to associate "gastr(o)" with stomach and its Japanese equivalent "i," the students should be able to apply this knowledge to expanding their vocabulary range. The quizzes were composed of sentences (averaging 15 words) that included both the technical term and related vocabulary that the students need to acquire. This portion of the project entailed the uploading of paper quiz items onto a Moodle site for mobile phone access.

The second course was a content course aimed at preparing students for a proficiency test in computer literacy. Subjects were approximately 50 first-year students of a college in Japan. In this course, they studied not only the basic skills to use computer but also computer literacy and ethics from the designated textbook including more than 200 quizzes. These quizzes were also uploaded to the Moodle site for computer access. Student preferences of paper and online materials were examined using questionnaires and access records, and pre- and post-test scores were used to evaluate student progress.

For both the language and content courses, the problems encountered and the measures taken to move the courses from mainly paper-based to online-based materials are described. We hope that the mentoring model used here can be useful for both content and language instructors who wish to move from paper to online materials but lack the necessary expertise and budget for this. Future possibilities for development will also be outlined.

Thomas Robb (Ph.D. in Linguistics) is a Professor of English at Kyoto Sangyo University. He is President of PacCALL and Chair of the WorldCALL 2008 Scholarship Committee. Currently, his main interest is finding effective ways to apply Moodle to language learning.

Toshiko Koyama (Ph.D. in Foreign Language Education) is currently Associate Professor of English at Osaka Ohtani University, Osaka, Japan. She also teaches the basic computer skills to college students. Her research focuses on the application of new technologies to foreign language education.

Judy Noguchi (Ph.D., applied linguistics; M.Ed., TESL) is Professor of English in the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at Mukogawa Women's University, Nishinomiya, Japan. She is interested in developing ESP e-learning materials.

Room 410

b-002

TTS (Text-To-Speech) Technology for Language Teaching

Junichi Azuma, Hideto Harashima, Chew Lee Chin

The purpose of this project is to review the current development of TTS technology and explore the possibility of employing TTS technology in a foreign language teaching/learning environment. The impact of future (speech) communication technologies will be also discussed.

After a short description of the nature of TTS (Text-To-Speech) technology, Junichi Azuma will talk about the current status of TTS technology, providing an introduction to several popular English TTS speech engines available today.

Hideto Harashima will show how voice files are generated with one of the cutting-edge TTS software packages － VoiceText. He will also show how to manipulate such prosodic features as duration, pitch, and stress on the voices. After demonstrating how these machine-made voices can be actually used as online listening quiz materials, he will discuss some limitations of TTS technology. Finally, he will propose some ways in which we can minimize the limitations and make the best use of TTS technology at present.

Chew Lee Chin argues that despite widespread use of multimedia in language teaching and learning, less attention is focused on its potentials for language testing. In Singapore, a 2-year research project on computer-assisted assessment (CAA) explored innovative multimedia tests for English Language at primary levels. Her talk will present an example of a Text-To-Speech software application for creating quality test materials for listening comprehension. Based on her field experience of training EL teachers in how to convert digitally written text into oral text, the implications of this technology for creation of multimedia EL tests will be discussed.

Junichi Azuma is a professor of English as a Foreign Language and Media & Communication Studies at the University of Marketing and Distribution Sciences, Kobe, Japan.   He is also an adjunct professor for IICM (Institute for Information Systems and Computer Media), Graz University of Technology, Austria.   His main interest today is application of TTS technology to language teaching and development of a universal symbolic language.

Hideto Harashima is an associate professor of applied linguistics and language teaching technology at Maebashi Institute of Technology, Maebashi, Japan.   His current interest is e-Learning and integration of multimedia learning objects within a Web-based teaching environment.

Chew Lee Chin is a professor in the Psychological Studies Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, where she teaches pre-service and master level courses in the teacher education programs.   Prior to joining the National Institute of Education, she was for many years a school teacher and administrator.   As an educator she has been involved with several local and overseas educational research projects since 1997 and is currently a principal investigator for MOE-funded research.   She has been Honorary Secretary and Vice-President of the Educational Research Association of Singapore. From 2004 she has actively promoted action research by classroom teachers as a consultant with several schools.
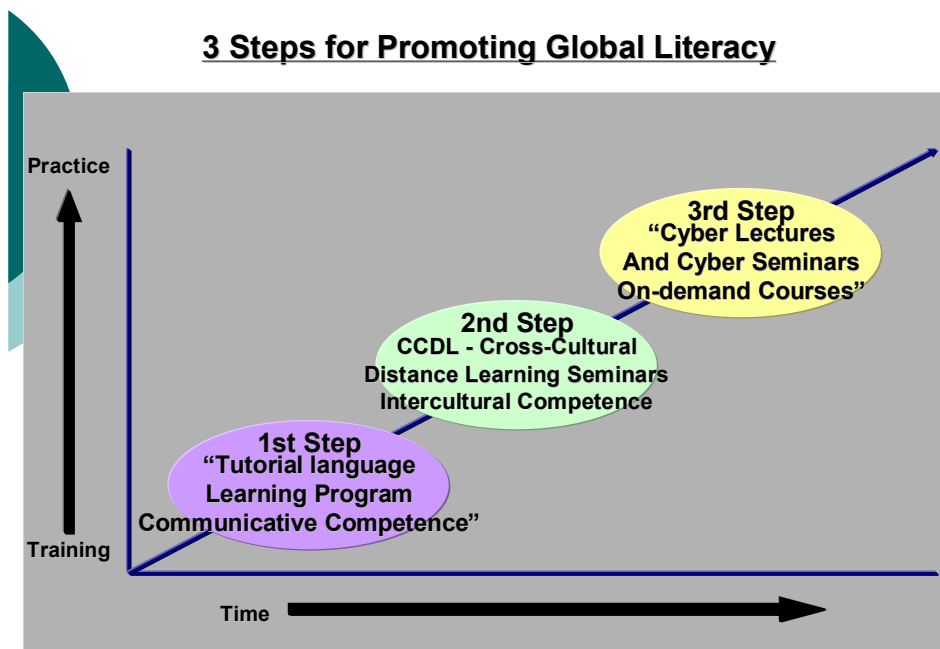
Room 411

b-003

ICT-based English Language Education toward Creating Asian-Pacific Intelligence

Michiko Nakano

Waseda University has developed the three-stage English Language Education since 1997, shown in the following diagram:

3 Steps for Promoting Global Literacy

In the first step, by reviewing and stabilizing what they have learned in high schools, their passive knowledge relating to communicative competence is turned into active knowledge so that they can develop oral communicative competence. This first stage adopts a hybrid method of ICT-based instruction, automatic scoring with face-to-face training of oral English. In order to reduce a learner's speech anxiety, one tutor teaches only four students. 100000 students enroll this English Tutorial Course every year. In the second step, our students are engaged in Cross-Cultural Distance Learning: theme-based interactive courses. Currently we have three broad categories: Global & Social Issues, Media Issues and International Career Path. The discussion topics include Climate Change, Unemployment Rate, Globalization, Entrepreneurs, Gender Issues, Advertisement, Country Images, etc.

At this stage, we instruct transferable skills: Critical thinking, research methods, Grice's maxims, Politeness strategies, and Presentation skills. The third stage adopts multi-point cyber sessions among 9 universities in Asia; we deal with World Englishes, Co-existence in Asia, Free Trade Agreements, etc.   Our education at the third stage focuses on the development of cross-cultural competence, since our students should be able to discuss competently the current problems in the world with their oversea partners whose worldviews are incommensurable.   We believe that multi-point distance learning offer opportunities for turning a learner's point of view into trans-cultural ones which may be termed as Global Literacy Education with Cross-Cultural Competence.   This paper describes our educational efforts in Asia to encourage our students to adopt flexible and strategic multiple points of views to overcome incommensurable world views.

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Consultant, Japanese Institute of Educational Measurement

Director, Digital Campus Consortium (DCC)

Director, Forum for On-demand Lecture Circulation (FOLC)

Room 412

b-004

CALL in an ESP Context: TUMSAT's Maritime English Initiative

Naoyuki Takagi

The importance of English as the "lingua franca" at sea has recently increased considerably as more and more merchant vessels have come to be manned by multilingual crews. In response, the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology (TUMSAT) launched its Maritime English Initiative under a grant provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (http://www2.kaiyodai.ac.jp/~takagi/mei/index.html) In this presentation for WorldCALL 2008, computer-assisted parts of our general and Maritime English education will be discussed in the light of CALL in an ESP context.

Any type of ESP shares essentially the same grammar and phonology with general English. We regard the proper use of tense and voice as essential for successful onboard communication and provide web-based learning tools for these. We also offer an interactive site to improve English pronunciation and listening skills focusing on Maritime English, and another site that helps future seafarers to cope with various accents of English that they will inevitably encounter at sea.

The biggest challenge for ESP instructors is technical vocabulary. Thus, we created a Maritime English Database, and are using its subsets as vocabulary lists for memorization. Also offered through our web-site are a series of lectures on navigation and engineering delivered by English speaking experts.

We believe conscious knowledge of grammar and vocabulary items can only be internalized through meaningful language use. Accordingly, we emphasize actual use of Maritime English in our classroom, and also utilize our bridge simulator, diesel engine lab, and training ships for Maritime English instruction.

Computer-based language learning tools such as web-sites, vocabulary lists, and video clips can easily be shared over the Internet. In this sense, CALL does "bridge the world." English instructors in various ESP fields should make the best use of this technological advantage for the benefit of their students.

Naoyuki Takagi graduated from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies with a master's degree in English in 1989 and obtained his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of California at Irvine in 1993. He has published many papers in cross language speech perception since then and worked on several English-Japanese dictionaries as well. In the Maritime English field, he has produced a Maritime English pronunciation site and published a Maritime English textbook for deck cadets. He was in charge of the Maritime English Initiative as a full professor in the Faculty of Marine Engineering, Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology. He has recently been appointed steering board member of the International Maritime Lecturers' Association, the International Maritime English Conference (IMLA-IMEC).

Room 413

b-005

Smart and Interactive e-Learning System Based on Smartive

Nobukazu Yoshioka, Shinichi Honiden

E-Learning has been important role for teaching English conversation. Traditional e-Learning systems, however, have problems from the viewpoints of system developers, teachers and learners. From the developers' point of view, it is difficult to develop systems which dynamically change contents to adapt to the ability and situation of learners. From the teachers' point of view, it is difficult to ensure consistency with policies or guidelines of each teacher. Additionally, it is difficult to teach English conversation with group learning because of difference of conversation ability. From the learners' point of view, e-Learning tends to be tired easily because of lack of the interaction with people.

We have proposed a new e-Learning system overcoming such problems using Smartive. Smartive is an agent middleware which we have been developing for content delivery, which uses agent technologies such as self-control and collaboration policies and negotiation among agents. The e-Learning system has four kinds of functions. First, we can adapt to different learners levels. In other words, contents can be automatically changed with respect to learner's levels. Secondly, it can adapt to learn with a group to avoid losing the interest. Thirdly, it can decide conversation partners based on both teachers and learners policies. Fourthly, advice of teachers can be inserted automatically between conversations with respect to the progress of conversation and learners ability.

We have evaluated the ability through experiments with junior high school classes. In consequence, students felt appropriate difficulty with the conversation and learned without losing the interest. In addition, teachers evaluated the usefulness of automatic insert of advice based on their guidelines. After all, the system allowed the conversation with learners with difference levels, which the conversation partners was selected based on both teachers and learners wishes.

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Nobukazu Yoshioka is a researcher at the National Institute of Informatics, Japan. Dr. Nobukazu Yoshioka received his B.E degree in Electronic and Information Engineering from Toyama University in 1993. He received his M.E. and Ph.D. degrees in School of Information Science from Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology in 1995 and 1998, respectively. From 1998 to 2002, he was with Toshiba Corporation, Japan. From 2002 to 2004 he was a researcher, and since August 2004, he has been an associate professor, in National Institute of Informatics, Japan. His research interests include agent technology, object-oriented methodology, software engineering, and software evolution. He is a member of the Information Processing Society of Japan (IPSJ), and Japan Society for Software Science and Technology.