Introduction
to CALL

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Lifelong
Learning
Programme

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INTRODUCTION

About the introduction to CALL Course Book

The course book, originally compiled in 2002-2004 by the BP-BLTM project teams, has been updated and extended by the POOLS (2005-2007), POOLS2 (2009-11, with the assistance of The University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI)) and POOLS3 (2013-2015) projects. POOLS2 and POOLS3 are Transfer of Innovation (ToI) projects. The content of the manual has also been used by other ToI projects.

Introduction to Computer Assisted Language Learning

CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) is often considered a language teaching method, but this is not really the case. In traditional CALL, the methodology was often claimed to be based on a behaviouristic approach as in "programmable teaching", where the computer checked the student input and gave feedback (reward?) or pointed the student to appropriate activities. In modern CALL, the emphasis is on communication and tasks.

The role of the computer in CALL has moved from the "input – control – feedback" sequence to management of communication, text, audio, and video. Few people may realise that a DVD player is really a computer. Future devices will integrate video, television, audio, telephone, graphics, text, and internet into one unit as can be seen in the latest generation of smart-phones, devices that let us make telephone calls, but also add features that one might find on a computer. Wifi, multimedia devices (video/audio) GPS and the ability to multitask makes these telephones more powerful than some computers.

How do we use CALL for teaching the less widely used and taught languages, for example? The starting point should not be that students sit at computers to learn a language. The starting point should instead be that students are learning a language and as part of that process sometimes sit at computer or use their mobile apps.

When planning to use CALL, it is important to understand how a language is learned. Language learning is a cognitive process, i.e. it is the result of the student's own processing of language inputs. What is learned is mainly the result of this process and not just explanations, rules, and questions presented by a teacher e.g. on a computer or a smartphone. Based on her/his exist-ing knowledge of the topic being worked on, the language and the language acquisition, the student processes the input and fits it into the language system they already possess. Language knowledge is not just recorded, but rather constructed by the student.

One issue when dealing with CALL in distance/online learning is the social aspect. There is a risk with online learning that the social dimension is not fulfilled. However, several presen-tations at EUROCALL conferences have revealed that distance learning classes using audio conferencing actually developed a strong sense of social community (e.g. "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Teacher: The Role of Social Presence in the Online Classroom" by Tammelin Maija from the Helsinki School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland; and "Fostering (pro)active language learning through MOO" by Lesley Shield, Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom).

CALL offers the language teacher and learner a number of methods that, when carefully integrated into an enhanced technological learning environment (real and virtual), will help the learner learn a language.

eLearning courses for teachers

CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) offers the potential to make language classes livelier and more engaging but it requires the language teachers to become computer literates and feel comfortable with smart technology. At the 1993 CALICO Annual Symposium, which took place on the campus of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, the Provost welcomed the participants with the words "Computers shall never replace teachers, but teachers using computers shall replace those that don't".

The following resources can assist teachers help in becoming more computer literate:

ECDL-F Ltd. (European Computer Driving Foundation) is the organization that develops and provides a range of certification programmes for all those interested in ICT.

One of the most basic and important certification programmes is the ECDL/ICDL. This course covers the main aspects of IT and concentrates on the development of core IT skills and on gaining the confidence to apply these skills in different environments.

ECDL-F is the organization that is ready to meet everyone's needs. If you are a beginner, choose a basic course (Computer essentials, online essentials). If you want to improve your skills, look at the list of more sophisticated and/or specialized courses (2D Computer Aided Design, Advanced Database). If you have, or know someone who has, special needs, visit ECDL http://www.ecdl.org/index.jsp for information about ECDL for People with Disabilities (ECDL PD).

Another possibility recommended for acquiring or improving ICT skills, as well as for getting some useful guidance on using Information and Communication Technology in the language classroom, is to visit http://www.languages-ict.org.uk website. Here you will find information and advice on how to integrate desktop publishing, digital audio, digital still camera, digital video, email communication, multimedia, PowerPoint, Excel and other aspects of IT in your language lessons.

www.ict4lt.org/en/index.htm provides 4 modules addressing the various needs of language teachers who are planning to use, or who already use ICT with their language learners.

Module 1 focusses on basic knowledge and skills and introduces users to new technologies, their advantages for language learning and teaching, computer hardware and software which the language teacher has to be familiar with, text tools and how to use them, Internet and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning).

Module 2 (intermediate level) provides information on CALL methodology (how to use multimedia, www resources online and offline) and gives and introduction to concordance programmes in modern foreign language classrooms.

Module 3 (advanced) covers CALL software design, the creation of www sites, human language technology, and developing the specific management skills needed to manage a multimedia language centre.

Module 4 deals with Computer Aided Assessment (CAA), something which has the potential to make the teacher's life easier and more interesting.

If you are interested in in-service training for teachers and trainers in European languages as a

second/foreign language visit https://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/solki/en. The module, which has been developed by experts from eleven European universities, provides basic knowledge and guidance on ICT and language learning as well as advice on how to integrate ICT into the language teaching process.

Also consider visiting the LANCELOT project website http://web20erc.eu/node/148 a virtual training centre for language teachers.

Types of CALL related materials/activities

Adventure games

Adventure games are computer managed role plays where users are presented with situations that they have to deal with. Users choose what to do and input the result as text, speech (using speech recognition software), or by clicking on options. Based on the input, the program branches out to different scenarios or gives feedback.

Adventure games can be very entertaining when constructed for language learners, but unfortunately only very few have been designed for the lesser taught languages. An entertaining Portuguese example, Uma Aventura na União Europeia, by Mrs Teresa Pacheco, a teacher in the ESES (Escola Superior de Educação de Santarém) can be found here: http://nonio.eses.pt/asp/europa/index.htm

If you want to create your own adventure games we suggest you try Quandary, a shareware programme available to download from http://www.halfbakedsoftware.com/

Blogs (weB LOGS)

The term blog is derived from weblog and refers to a website that is regularly updated with new posts arranged in reverse chronological order so that the newest post is always at the top of the blog. People who make use of blogs are called bloggers, and writing for blogs is referred to as blogging.

Blogs have a number of typical features that make online publishing extremely effective and versatile.

Blogs are hosted by weblog providers such as www.wordpress.com, www.blogger.com, www.blog.de, http://int.blog.com etc. for free. You can create a blog in just a few steps by following the provider's instructions and you can decide whether there will be single or multiple authoring.

Each blog can contain various categories which are opened by clicking.

Each post has a title and a time stamp so that the reader gets an idea of what it is about and when exactly it was posted. It is also automatically archived. Retrieval is possible through the search feature or by browsing the calendar, which is another common feature of blogs.

Publishing is easy as blogs provide templates which do not require any technical skills from the blogger. By clicking on the word 'comment' below the post, the reader can type their opinion on an existing post.

Blogs are not only about text files, they may contain virtually any kind of data such as hyper-

links, graphics, presentations, spreadsheets and something which makes them especially interesting for language teachers – audio and video files.

If the RSS feature is available, readers can subscribe to a blog, and will therefore be automatically notified whenever a change has been made.

If the blog offers a Permalink feature, then a permanent URL leading to a specific entry, which is no longer on the front page but in the archive, can be saved as a favourite.

All these features illustrate the usefulness of blogs in a language teaching environment as a medium that develops reading, writing and communication skills.

As a language teacher you might want to start a class blog which enables you to

- provide online reading texts for your students

- provide additional materials like audio or video clips, images, charts etc.

- organise Internet resources for the class by providing useful links

- give instructions, assign tasks

- allow the students to practice writing for a wider audience

- give teacher feedback

- stimulate student discussion

- encourage peer evaluation and peer support

- carry out project work and make students document their progress

- Experiment to find still more uses of blogs

Chat online

Chat centres can be a rewarding experience for the language learner. The user meets other learners online and can communicate with them through text, speech, and video. It can be easy to set up a chat server, but difficult to gain users (it is a very lonely feeling to be the only visitor in a chat room;-)). The main problems with chats are the lack of content and the difficulty of organising and arranging chats using the lesser taught languages. However, when combined with tasks and suitable groups of students (age groups, interests etc.), chats can lead to real communication and, when followed by post task work, language learning.
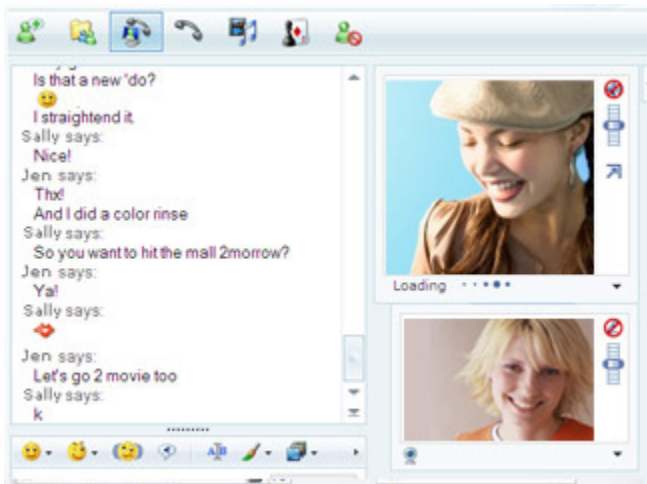
One of the most widely used chat programs is Microsoft Messenger. For more information go to http://windowslive.es.msn.com/messenger/. Microsoft Messenger includes many useful features like:

PC-to-PC Calling
Video conversations
Sharing Folders
Address book

Another platform for online chats is Skype www.skype.com, where a feature named Skypecasts allows the user to participate in online community chats with up to 100 participants. Skype has a directory where it is possible to locate language learning chats or to host one yourself.
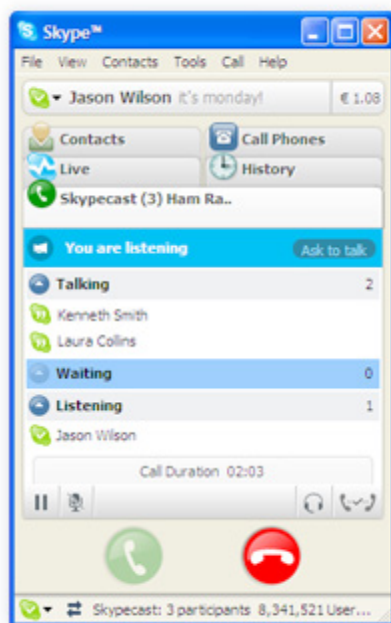
Friends Abroad from Babbel.com is a service that assists language learners in finding other learners to chat with, and has more than 700.000 registered users from 200 countries, see http://www.babbel.com/go/friendsabroad.

Smartphones also allow the possibility to chat with "WhatsApp" and " Line".

WhatsApp http://www.whatsapp.com/ allows users to swap text, pictures and audio clips, as well as to set up group chats. With "Line" http://line.me/en/ you can do the same and also make free calls.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)

Wimba is a web-based voice solution that facilitates and promotes vocal instruction, collaboration, coaching and assessment. It supports traditional communicative styles of language learning by giving students multiple methods of speaking, writing and listening to foreign languages - all online http://www.wimba.com/products/wimba_voice

Cloze exercises

Cloze exercises are similar to the traditional fill in the blank exercise but in a cloze exercise the words to remove are selected automatically (e.g. every 5th word). This is an activity that can easily and quickly be created with Hot Potatoes (a software application that can be be downloaded for free at http://hotpot.uvic.ca/).

Commenting/correcting electronic texts/essays/exercises

When a student has handed in a text in an electronic form, it is bad practice just to print it out and comment on it using old fashioned red ink. A truly digital solution is where the teacher inserts suggestions into the text using a word processor or even a tablet pen. An example of a program for commenting texts can be found at: http://www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/index.htm. The program can be adapted to different languages.

Another example is Grademark, http://turnitin.com/en_us/features/grademark .
With Grademark all students' work, including videos or audio files, can be graded online.

Kung Fu Writing http://kungfuwriting.com/ is a cloud service that allows you to grade work and you can share your comments with fellow learners.

Crosswords

Crosswords are often very popular with students and, when created from the vocabulary that the students have just been working with, they can be a good tool for post task exercises. This is an activity that can easily and quickly be created with Hot Potatoes (a software application that can be be downloaded for free at http://hotpot.uvic.ca/). With Hot Potatoes students may even create exercises for one another.

Drills

Practice drills of individual words or target language structures were a common feature of analogue language labs. Most digital language lab platforms can accommodate this type of activity, with the teachers now being able to easily create their own materials from existing Mp3 files

Electronic dictionaries

Electronic dictionaries are very useful for learners of lesser taught languages. There are several examples of dictionaries that are either free or shareware on the Internet. Two sites which are useful for finding online dictionaries, especially in the lesser taught languages, are:

http://multidict.net/multidict
http://reference.yourdictionary.com/languages.html
http://www.lexilogos.com/

(You can exit Multidict and go to the dictionary's own website by clicking "Esc".) Other methods are to search Google for "Rumanian-Italian dictionary", for example, or to go to the Wikipedia   page about the language.

Electronic Portfolios

An electronic portfolio, also known as an e-portfolio, e-folio, or digital portfolio can be a simple collection of work on a disk or, in the more advanced version, a student website where the student presents selected pieces of work. Some of the work may still be in progress thus demonstrating the learning process.

In education, portfolio refers to a personal collection of information describing and documenting a person's achievements and learning. There is a variety of portfolios ranging from learning logs to extended collections of achievement evidence. Portfolios are used for many different purposes, such as accreditation of prior experience, job searching, continuing professional development, and certification of proficiency.

The pedagogical idea is that the student becomes aware of their learning style, thereby helping them to choose the right activities, and learn productively. Portfolios can also be used for assessing students. Read an article by TIM Caudery on portfolio assessment here:

http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr11/caudery.html

Blogs (see the blogs heading) may also serve as portfolios.

Free software is available that can serve as basis for electronic portfolios, e.g. www.portfoliogen.com/ and Confolio: http://www.confolio.org/

A collection of portfolio templates can be downloaded from:
http://www.uwlax.edu/soe/portfolio/ugportfoliotemplates.html

VLEs such as the Moodle Course Management System http://moodle.org/ can also be used for portfolios.

Prezi www.prezi.com is a web-based presentation application that uses a single canvas instead of traditional slides. Text, images, videos and other presentation objects are placed on the infinite canvas and grouped together in frames. The canvas allows users to create non-linear presentations, where users can zoom in and out of a visual map.

Prezi can either be used directly from an internet browser (e.g. Firefox, Internet Explorer, Chrome, Safari) without the need to install anything or can be installed (Prezi Desktop) so it can be used without internet access.

By using Prezi from an internet browser, you can:

- Share your presentations for collaborating with others.

- Send your presentations and show them to non-Prezi users.

- Log in from any computer, access your presentations and work on them.

By using Prezi Desktop, you can:

- Work on your presentations without internet access.

- Insert large media files.

- Upload presentations to Prezi.com.
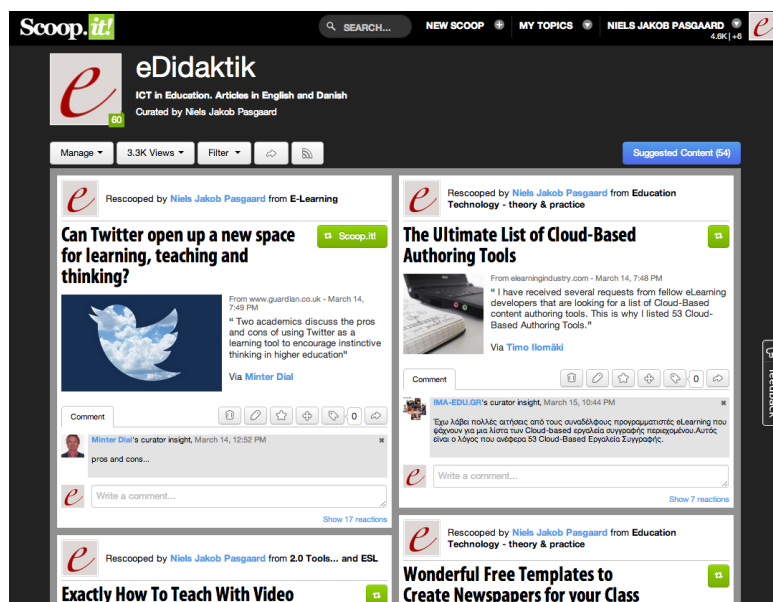
The presentations can be shared using blogging platforms such as Scoop.it! www.scoop.it This is an effective tool for professional development, encouraging individuals to take responsibility and demonstrate the results of their own professional activity. The tool can be used to create a profile, present projects, achievements, future plans and create e-portfolios.

Fill-in the blank

The user works with a text where some of the words have been removed following certain criteria (new vocabulary, verb forms, prepositions etc.), and the user has to find suitable words to complete the exercise. This is an activity that can easily and quickly be created with Hot Potatoes (a software application that can be be downloaded for free at http://hotpot.uvic.ca/).

Find the answers

The student is given a question and looks for the answer in documents, video, or audio using the Internet, CD-ROMs, DVDs or similar data storage systems. The answers can then be presented to the teacher / class in different forms. When the "find the answer" exercise becomes more elaborate, it actually becomes a webquest (read more in the WebQuest entry).

Find the right sequence (or jumbled sentences)

In this activity a sentence or a story is cut into pieces that the user has to reorder in order to reconstruct the sentence or the story. This is an activity that can easily be created with Hot Potatoes.

Grammar

There are only a few grammar programs for the lesser taught languages and often they simply transfer book style exercises to a computer, with a similar lack of success. The VISL site http://visl.sdu.dk/, can be recommended, however. VISL stands for "Visual Interactive Syntax Learning" and is a research and development project of the Institute of Language and Communication (ISK), University of Southern Denmark (SDU), Odense Campus. Staff and students at ISK have been designing and implementing Internet-based grammar tools for education and research since September 1996.

At the start of the project, four languages were involved: English, French, German, and Portuguese. Many additional languages have since joined the project - as seen by the growing number of entries on the language list.

The following "tools" are available from VISL:

Grammatical Analyses (pre-analyzed sentences and automatic machine parsing)
Games & Quizzes (testing of word classes and other grammatical topics)
Corpus Search (access to the BNC and other language corpora)
Machine Translation

If you access one of the VISL languages through the entry page, you will be asked "Which VISL tool do you want to use?". You will find various options available for each language.

Group work – collaborative work

A group environment is a strong motivator and an invaluable support for learners. A class design that facilitates collaborative group work and tasks, directly impacts the learners' motivation to study. At the level of class dynamics, students working in groups are evidence of the shifting of teacher-centred education to learner-centred education. The teacher acts as a guide, monitors the work of the group and passes the responsibility for learning to the learners.

Google Drive www.google.com and Dropbox www.dropbox.com are file storage and synchronization services that offer cloud storage and file sharing. Google Drive is the home of Google Docs, a suite of applications that offer collaborative editing of documents, spreadsheets and presentations. To start using the applications, it is necessary to set up a Google account.
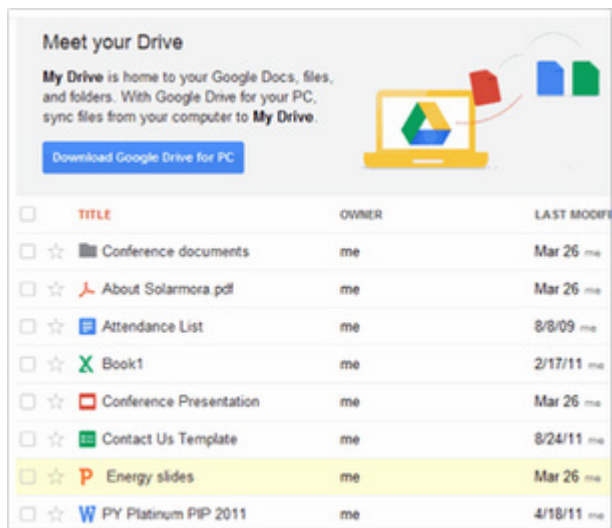
These tools can be explored in several ways in educational contexts, including class management, correspondence with students, project and group work. Students can collaborate on documents in groups and share ideas and information. In classroom situations, the use of Google Drive and Dropbox is governed by the fact that every learner must have access to a computer or that there must be at least one computer per group of learners.

Due to its similarity with other document processing tools, Google applications are simple to use and extensive support is available, including tutorials from Google. The main advantage is that multiple users can make edits to the same files simultaneously. The original creator has full control over the document and can allow and deny access to other users.

Hotwords

This is not really an exercise or activity, but is still very useful for the language learner. In a text, important words and cultural notes can be linked to appropriate explanations and translations. Hotwords can be made with most word processors.

It is possible to create webpages where all the words are hotwords and linked to online dictionaries. To create such webpages you can use TextBlender, which is a program that can convert any text into an HTML document where all the words are automatically linked to an online dictionary, so students just have to click on a word to get help. TextBlender can also include videos and graphics.

All that is needed to convert a text is to type in a headline, then give a short instruction for the end user, and finally paste in the text in the text window, followed by clicking "Export". The program is available from http://www.languages.dk/tools.

Listening exercises

In this activity the computer replaces a tape player. Other activities like multiple choice exercises are often also used in combination, to check if students have understood the content.

Matching words, sentences, or pictures

This activity can be very useful for several purposes even, for vocabulary training, where a student drags words to corresponding pictures. This activity can be created easily and quickly using the Hot Potatoes software.

Multiple Choice

This type of exercise is very useful for a quick check of a student's understanding of the content of information delivered via audio, text, video etc. This activity can be created easily using the "Hot Potatoes" software.

Podcasts

Podcasting is a method of distributing multimedia files over the internet using "RSS" or "Atom syndication" formats. This allows a user to playback these files on any personal computer or mobile device, such as an Apple iPod (http://www.apple.com). If you make a podcast, you are the podcaster. There are other ways of distributing multimedia on the internet, but with RSS podcasting has special features, including the use of syndication, which means that people can subscribe to a site that produces podcasts, and they will be informed automatically when a new podcast is available.

Another useful feature of podcasts is that they use open standards, like mp3 for audio and mp4 for videos (Vodcast), which means that there are many types of devices that can play them. There is both free and commercial software available to create podcasts and to play them, so you have a choice of how to make the technology work in your teaching environment.

The model for pushing multimedia has moved from audio only to include video as well, which is called Vodcasting. This is slightly more complex to create than a podcast, but still quite easy.

Many people use podcasts and vodcasts in their teaching environments. Because of the multimedia aspect, there is an obvious CALL application. And with the use of simple mp3 players that also allow you to record, like the iPod with a Griffin iTalk microphone, your students can easily record their speech and turn in digital audio for assessment or for group work with other students.

The BBC does two "podcasts" specifically for Gaelic learners on: http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/foghlam/learngaelic/an_litir_bheag/index.shtml; and http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/foghlam/learngaelic/litir/index.shtml. There are MP3 downloads of radio programs plus pdf transcripts of the show with notes and comments.

You can find some links to podcasts and articles on podcasts by going to the POOLS website www.languages.dk or the pools BLOG: http://www.weblogs.uhi.ac.uk/pools/?p=59

See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting

Some podcasts in Catalan can be found at http://www.tv3.cat/alacarta/podcast

Ireland's national Irish language radio station, Raidió na Gaeltachta offers an archive of previously broadcast programmes, and a subscription facility at http://www.rte.ie/rnag/podcasts/

Project work

Traditional text-oriented teaching/learning cannot comprehensively cater for all learning requirements. Glogster www.glogster.com offers the possibility of engaging students actively in composing texts and searching for additional material, thereby fostering teamwork and collaboration with classmates. This helps to develop students' ability to reflect critically on their own language learning experiences.

Using Glogster can help students to:

- improve their writing skills

- show creativity

- express their personality

- invest time and effort in researching issues/topics

- engaging them in dynamic, interactive processes of learning

- reinforce connections between teacher–student–lesson content and improve communication

- overcome inhibitions relating to the productive skills. It is a proven fact that some students prefer to record their digital stories rather than reading them loud

- promote classroom discussion, community awareness, global awareness, and a connection between what students do in the classroom and the wider community.

This tool utilizes audio and video to support a learner's digital text-based product and leads to professional results that a learner can feel proud of displaying, even if their writing skills are limited. Its enjoyable format to work with also helps enhance student's motivation to learn languages by using an active learning tool.

RSS

RSS is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated digital content, such as blogs, news feeds or podcasts.

Users of RSS content use programs called feed 'readers' or 'aggregators'. The user 'subscribes' to a feed by supplying their reader with a link to the feed; the reader can then check the user's subscribed feeds to see if any of those feeds have been added to since the last time it was checked, and if so, retrieve that content and present it to the user.

An example of a feed reader that can be recommended is "Omea Reader 2.2", which can be downloaded free from: http://www.jetbrains.com/omea
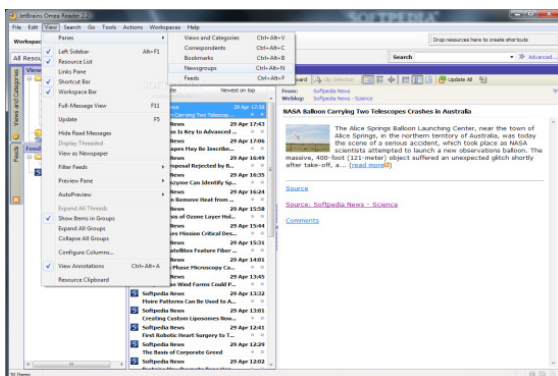
Web feeds are commonly found on major websites and many smaller ones. Some websites let people choose between RSS or Atom formatted web feeds; others offer only RSS or only Atom.

RSS-aware programs are available for various operating systems. Client-side readers and aggregators are typically constructed as standalone programs or extensions to existing programs such as web browsers and Email readers. Many browsers have integrated support for RSS feeds. There also are other applications that can convert an RSS feed into several usenet articles, viewable through the major newsreader software such as Mozilla Thunderbird or Forté Agent.

Web-based feed readers and news aggregators such as NewsGator Online require no software installation and make the user's feeds available on any computer with internet access. Some aggregators combine existing web feeds into new feeds, e.g., taking all football related items from several sports feeds and providing a new football feed. There are also search engines for content published via web feeds like Bloglines.
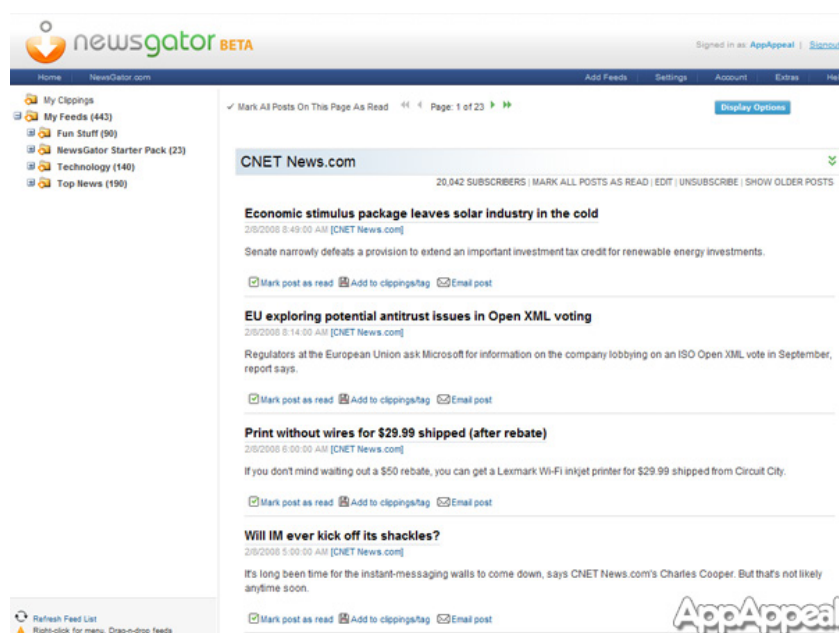
On Web pages, web feeds (RSS or Atom) are typically linked with the word "Subscribe", an orange rectangle, or with the letters. Many news aggregators such as My Yahoo![1] publish subscription buttons for use on Web pages to simplify the process of adding news feeds. (See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS)

Simulations

Electronic or online simulations differ from role plays because the activities conducted in a simulation are real and not just acting. The tools for electronic simulations can be simple emails, mobile phone SMS, chat boards etc. The advantage of an electronic simulation is that the participants can come from different countries. The disadvantage in advanced simulations is the high level of computer skills that is often involved.

Airport is an example of electronic simulation which can be used by students with a language competence around level A1-A2 (Common European Framework of Reference). http://www.languages.dk/methods/airport.html. The simulation can be played in groups with three to

five students (if less than five in a group then some students will have to have more than one profile in the simulation). The simulation is self explanatory, each student is given a text with a personal profile, the students read and inform the other group members about the content. The texts are available in eight languages. The English version of the five profiles are availble online with all words linked to dictionaries in +100 languages: http://multidict.net/cs/939, http://multidict.net/cs/938, http://multidict.net/cs/937, http://multidict.net/cs/936, and http://multidict.net/cs/935

Once all members of a group know the given information, the success of the group in the simulation depends on following the information and having a proper strategy. The students should not be allowed to speak their own language during the simulation. To play the simulation the students need 81 map squares. Each square has a top side with a number, the squares represent parts of a land map. The students can move across the map by choosing squares, when a square is chosen the students turn around the map square to see the bottom side which has information.

Subtitles

Subtitles are a very useful tool with a wider application than most people initially think of, e.g. for assisting deaf students working with a video. Subtitles also serve as an additional aid for language learning students who can both listen to a commentary and simultaneously read the words.

It is not at all complicated to make subtitles for a video and some tools are even free. One example is the Divxland Media Subtitler http://www.divxland.org/en/, which allows the user to prepare subtitles for videos. The subtitles can then be played back with the assistance of a "filter" (a small program that makes your usual media player attach / play the subtitles). VobSub is an example of such a filter, it can be downloaded from:

http://www.softpedia.com/get/Multimedia/Video/Codec-Packs-Video-Codecs/

It is also possible to add subtitles on a permanent basis to videofiles like .avi files, as the following tutorial explains: http://www.divxland.org/permanentsubtitling.php

Students usually love preparing subtitles for small videos or excerpts from videos, and find the task very rewardingJ

Social Networking websites

Social networks focus on building and developing social relations among people, e.g., who share interests and/or activities. Social networking sites generally consist of a profile of each user, a list of their social links/contacts, and a variety of additional services. Most social networking services are web based and provide a means for users to interact over the internet, e.g. via e-mail and instant messaging. Although online community services are sometimes considered as social networking services in a broader sense, social networking is usually individually focussed, whereas online community services are group-centred. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks.

The main types of social networking services are those which categorise (e.g. a former school-year or classmates). They provide a means to connect with friends (usually with self-descrip-

tion pages) and a recommendation system linked by trust. Facebook, Google +, Twitter and LinkedIn are used worldwide and often in combination with each other.

Some of the largest social networks were founded on the notion of digitizing real world connections, many other networks focus on categories, ranging from books and music to non-profit business to motherhood, as ways of providing both services and community to individuals with shared interests.

Facebook

Facebook www.facebook.com is the most widely used social network by worldwide monthly active users. Since September 2006, anyone over the age of 13 with a valid e-mail address has been able to become a Facebook user. Users can add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves. Additionally, users can join networks organized by workplace, school, or college. The website's name stems from the colloquial name of books given to students at the start of the academic year by university administrations in the US, with the intention of helping students to get to know each other better.
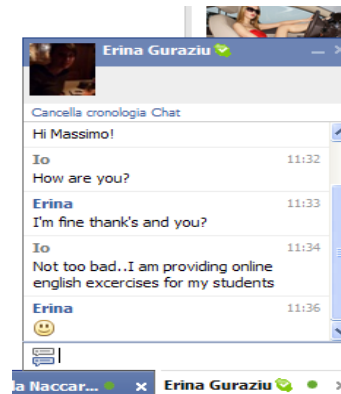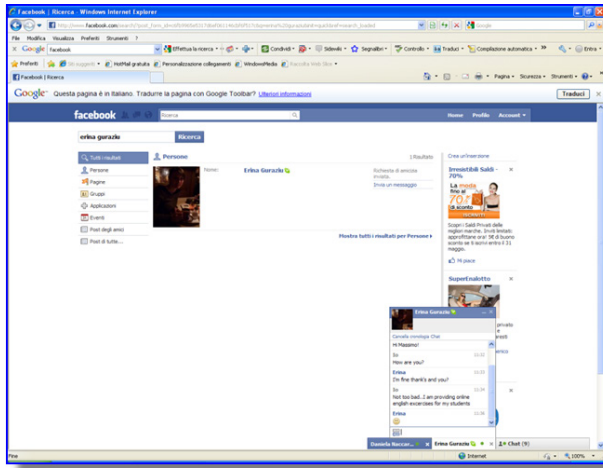
LinkdIn

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site www.linkedin.com mainly used for professional networking. As of 8 April 2014, LinkedIn has more than 300 million registered users, spanning more than 200 countries and territories worldwide. The site is available in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

Twitter

Twitter www.twitter.com is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables users to send and read messages known as *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers, who are known as *followers*. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Since late 2009, users can follow lists of authors instead of following individual authors. All users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS), or external applications (notably including those developed for smartphones). While the service itself costs nothing to use, accessing it through SMS may incur phone service provider fees. The website currently has more than 255 million monthly users worldwide.

Google Plus

Google+ is the second most important social networking website after Facebook. Google+ integrates Google profiles and Google Buzz with Gmail and Youtube. It can be used with Android or iOS smartphones.

Tandem

The best way of learning a foreign language is communication with a native speaker who wants to learn your language. It is a give and take solution, where you are the teacher (of your own language) AND the student (of a foreign language).

Read more about Tandem Learning and watch videos with examples here:
 http://www.languages.dk/methods/tandem.html

To look for other tandem partners, you can visit the European Tandem Network at this address: http://www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/.
The website: http://www.babbel.com/go/friendsabroad is also a good place to start.

Help and tips on how to learn as a tandem partner can be found here:
http://www2.tcd.ie/CLCS/tandem/email/help/helpeng01.html

E-mail tandems differ from face to face tandems (or online audio tandems like Netmeeting) because an e-mail tandem has to concentrate on written communication skills. Read about e-mail tandems at this address: http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr13/pors.html

Task based learning

Task based learning provides a useful framework for using online resources. Michael Svendsen Pedersen's article "What does you have in your 'Task' today?" provides a quick introduction to task-based learning (http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr4/msp.html)

Another interesting article (in English) from Sprogforum on task-based learning, and which is the result of an in-service course for language teachers who teach adult immigrants and refugees to Denmark at the country's language centres, can be found here:
http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr20/msp.html

Vodcast

Video podcast (sometimes shortened to vidcast or vodcast) is a term used for the online delivery of on demand video clip content via Atom or RSS feeds. The term relates to video, and is an extension of the generally audio-based podcast. It refers to the distribution of video where the RSS feed is used as an asyncronous TV channel to which consumers can subscribe using a PC, TV, set-top box, media centre or mobile multimedia device.

From a web server, a video podcast can be distributed as a file or as a stream. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages. Downloading complete video podcasts in advance gives the user the ability to play the video podcasts offline on, for example, on a portable media player. Streaming allows seeking (skipping portions of the file) without downloading the full video podcast, better statistics and lower bandwidth costs for the servers; however, users may encounter pauses in playback caused by slow transfer speeds.

A podcasting client may work with a separate or integrated player. One such example of the latter is iTunes, which is an unusual case of a web feed aggregator being added to a media player rather than vice versa (Source Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vodcast)

Vocabulary training

This is one of the oldest exercise types for computers.
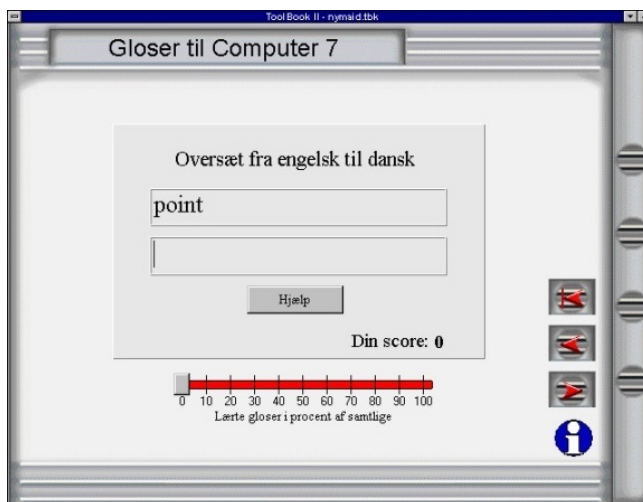
The computer poses a question and the student has to answer with a correct response. The student input can be through text or speech. This exercise type can be very fruitful, but only when the words learnt are placed in context. It can be very useful if the student can choose words they want to learn and build up their own exercises. In this way the student creates a personal vocabulary portfolio.

Webcams

A web camera (or webcam, real camera) is a real-time camera (usually, though not always, a video camera) whose images can be accessed using the World Wide Web, instant messaging, or a PC video calling application. Web-ready cameras typically consist of a digital camera which uploads images to a web server, either continuously or at regular intervals. This may be achieved by a camera attached to a PC, or by dedicated hardware. Videoconferencing cameras typically take the form of a small camera connected directly to a PC. Analog cameras are also sometimes used (often of the sort used for closed-circuit television), connected to a video capture card and then directly or indirectly to the internet (excerpts from Wikipedia).

Webcams are frequently used during online chats using Microsoft Messenger, Skype or similar online services

Web pages with embedded audio
Using Ipadio to create webpages with embedded audio

Many language teachers and learners appreciate teaching materials that incorporate both written and spoken language. However, the creation of sound files has always seemed more complex than the creation of text files. In recent times a number of attempts have been made to harness digital telephone technology for the purpose. One example is provided by www.ipadio.com.

With Ipadio, you can use a landline or mobile phone to record an audio message, just as you might leave a voicemail on an answer phone. This message is then instantaneously rendered as a soundfile on the Internet with its own unique URL. A further feature with messages in English is an automatic transcription, which gives you a written version of the message as well (with a warning attached that there are likely to be some imperfections in the transcription).

In order to use this service, a user needs to create an account with Ipadio. There is no cost for individual consumers, though Ipadio also offers a business service. Details are available on the website. When you create an account you need to give Ipadio some details, including two telephone numbers you will want to use. In return, you get a PIN number to use whenever you call to make a recording. The whole procedure is very simple, and includes a "delete" option if you are not satisfied with your recording. Here are some examples, created for the Island Voices project. The project's collected recordings are available on the Ipadio site itself:

http://www.ipadio.com/broadcasts/all?q=Gordon+Wells

If you click on "more" in any of the phonecasts listed, you get additional information, including an English transcription in some cases. There is also space for comments. For example:

http://www.ipadio.com/phlogs/GordonWells/2010/02/19/Gordons-phlog-Talking-to-Archie-Campbell

It should be noted that the transcription in the above phonecast has been tidied up, using the edit function. Here is an example of an unedited machine transcription:

http://www.ipadio.com/phlogs/GordonWells/2010/02/09/Gordons-phlog-3rd-phonecast

In a language teaching context, care is obviously required with this facility – but even correcting the mistakes could be a learning experience!

Sound quality is also an important issue, and largely depends on the quality of the telephone connection. However, it should be noted that, in addition to the phonecast function, there is a "traditional" MP3 upload option as well. So, if you already have pre-recorded soundfiles on your computer, you can still use these with Ipadio.

Lastly, there is also a valuable cross-posting function which enables you to upload or embed your phonecasts to other Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, or any blogs you may run. This is particularly useful for language teachers, as it enables you to create your own multime-dia web-based materials in a format of your own choosing.

For example, both audio (Ipadio) and video (YouTube) are incorporated in the Island Voices project blog http://guthan.wordpress.com. This is a Wordpress platform, and has been created to record project progress, disseminate news, and encourage interaction with learners and teachers. (Creating a Wordpress account is a painless process, as with Ipadio.) In a couple of linked posts, the project highlighted and previewed one of the topics for a new series of Island Voices videos.

In the first there are interviews with a participant in Gaelic and English, using the telephone. This blog post about the interviews includes embedded links to both phonecasts:

http://guthan.wordpress.com/2010/02/19/local-language-teacher/

The following month the project created another blog post, this time embedding the video.

http://guthan.wordpress.com/2010/03/24/buain-na-monadh-peatcutting/

Any or all of these webpages can, of course, also be linked to Wordlink and Multidict to allow instant online dictionary access. Potential language learning uses are immediately evident.

To sum up, Ipadio offers a valuable additional audio functionality in any language teacher's repertoire of material creation tools. When it is teamed up with other web based programs and platforms, such as Wordpress, YouTube, and/or Wordlink/Multidict, the potential is there for some very powerful multimedia work to be created.

WebQuests

A WebQuest is an activity where the student answers questions/compiles information mostly found on the web. WebQuests are designed to focus on using and analysing information rather than looking for it. This means the teacher/constructor provides the student with the required links.

The best place on the web to learn about WebQuests is:
http://www.etni.org.il/etnirag/issue8/nancy_mckeand.htm

The WebQuest model was developed in early 1995 at San Diego State University by Bernie Dodge and Tom March, and was then outlined in Some Thoughts About WebQuests.

The main problems with using the WebQuest method for the lesser taught languages are the language level of the websites (usually difficult) and the fact that for some languages there is still very little content available on the web.

To create webquests you may use InstantWebquest, a web based programme for creating WebQuests in a short time: http://instantprojects.org/webquest/main.php

For more information visit: http://webquest.org/ and http://bestwebquests.com/, which give an excellent introduction to WebQuests and which contains a large archive of ready to use materials.

WIKIS

Wikis are similar to blogs. People can enter a wiki and edit texts there that later can be read by anyone who visits the site. The most popular one Wikipedia is a huge live encyclopedia.

It is advisable to use wikis with care, as the sources of the information they contain is not always provided or clear.

How to transfer analogue materials to digital materials

Copyright

This unit is not intended to cover all aspects of copyright, but rather to give some general guide-lines.

First of all, copying for private use of materials that you own (legally bought materials) is now generally legal. There may, however, be problems with educational materials, but it seems fair use to make a backup copy to store away in order to protect the investment.

The idea behind copyright is to ensure that the producer gets paid/rewardared for work done. Copyright expires after some years, but the expiration period changes constantly. For example, in 1998 The Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act extended the term from the end of the author's life plus 50 to life plus 70 years. The works made for hire term was extended from 75 to 95 years.

Copyright issues are still being investigated. Lawrence Lessig is one of the pioneers challenging the courts, who find it acceptable that e.g. Disney earns money from producing Snow White, but unreasonable that, without paying anything, Disney is protected for decades for the creation based on they story written by the Brothers Grimm as a result of the 1998 Sonny Bono Act.

A general trap is to use background music in videos. Only music which has been bought with a license to be used as background music in videos and film may be used for this purpose. So unless you yourself have composed the music, avoid using music in videos. However, it is legal to make video recordings where music is part of the natural background and has not been inserted as part of the editing process (e.g. in a disco), but take care!

Excerpts from Wikipedia about copyright: Copyright is a set of exclusive rights regulating the use of a particular expression of an idea or information. At its most general, it is literally "the right to copy" an original creation. In most cases, these rights are of limited duration.
The symbol for copyright is ©, and in some jurisdictions may alternatively be written as either (c) or (C).

Copyright law covers only the particular form or manner in which ideas or information have been manifested, the "form of material expression". It is not designed or intended to cover the actual idea, concepts, facts, styles, or techniques which may be embodied in or represented by the copyright work. In some jurisdictions, copyright law provides scope for satirical or interpretive works which themselves may be copyrighted. For example, the copyright which subsists in relation to a Mickey Mouse cartoon prohibits unauthorized parties from distributing copies of the cartoon or creating derivative works which copy or mimic Disney's particular anthropomorphic mouse, but does not prohibit the creation of artistic works about anthropomorphic mice in general, so long as they are sufficiently different to not be imitative of the original. Other laws may impose legal restrictions on reproduction or use where copyright does not - such as trademarks and patents.

Copyright laws are standardized through international conventions such as the Berne Convention in some countries and are required by international organizations such as European Union or World Trade Organization from their member states.

Obtaining and enforcing copyright

Typically, a work must meet minimal standards of originality in order to qualify for copyright, and the copyright expires after a set period of time (some jurisdictions may allow this to be extended). Different countries impose different tests, although generally the requirements are low; in the United Kingdom there has to be some 'skill, originality and work' which has gone into it. However, even fairly trivial amounts of these qualities are sufficient for determining whether a particular act of copying constitutes an infringement of the author's original expression. In Australia, it has been held that a single word is insufficient to comprise a copyright work.

In the United States, copyright has been made automatic (in the style of the Berne Convention) since March 1, 1989, which has had the effect of making it appear to be more like a property right. Thus, as with property, a copyright need not be granted or obtained through official registration with any government office. Once an idea has been reduced to tangible form, for example by securing it in a fixed medium (such as a drawing, sheet music, photograph, a videotape or a letter), the copyright holder is entitled to enforce his or her exclusive rights. However, while a copyright need not be officially registered for the copyright owner to begin exercising his exclusive rights, registration of works (where the laws of that jurisdiction

provide for registration) does have benefits; it serves as prima facie evidence of a valid copyright and enables the copyright holder to seek statutory damages and attorney's fees (whereas in the USA, for instance, registering after an infringement only enables one to receive actual damages and lost profits). The original holder of the copyright may be the employer of the actual author rather than the author himself if the work is a "work for hire". Again, this principle is widespread; in English law the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 provides that where a work in which copyright subsists is made by an employee in the course of that employment, the copyright is automatically assigned to the employer.

Copyrights are generally enforced by the holder in a civil law court, but there are also criminal infringement statutes. Criminal sanctions are generally aimed at serious counterfeiting activity, but are now becoming more commonplace as copyright collectives such as the RIAA are, more and more, targeting the file sharing home Internet user. Thus far, however, these cases have usually been settled outside of court, with demands for payment of several thousand dollars accompanied by nothing more than a threat to sue the file sharer, which will be ruinous to many defendants in practice, thus such cases rarely make their way to civil law courts.

It is important to understand that absence of the copyright symbol does not mean that the work is not covered by copyright. The work once created from originality through 'mental labor' is instantaneously considered copyrighted to that person.

Copyright notices

Use of a copyright notice — consisting of the letter C inside of a circle (that is, "©"), the abbreviation "Copr.", or the word "Copyright", followed by the year of the first publication of the work and the name of the copyright holder — was part of previous United States statutory requirements. (Note that the letter C inside of parentheses ("(c)") has never been an officially recognized designator.) But since 1976, when the U.S. passed a new Copyright Act that followed the model of the Berne Convention, the use of copyright notices has become optional to claim copyright, as the Berne Convention makes copyright automatic. However, notice of copyright (using these marks) does have consequences in terms of allowable damages in an infringement lawsuit in some places.

The phrase All rights reserved was once a necessary formal notice that all rights granted under existing copyright law are retained by the copyright holder and that legal action may be taken against copyright infringement. It was provided as a result of the Buenos Aires Convention of 1910, which required some statement of reservation of rights to grant international coverage in all the countries that were signatory to that convention. While it is commonplace to see it, this notice is now superfluous, as every country that is a member of the Buenos Aires Convention is also a member of the Berne Convention, which holds a copyright to be valid in all signatory states without any formality of notice.

This phrase is sometimes still used even on some documents to which the original author does not retain all rights granted by copyright law, such as works released under a copyleft license. It is, however, only a habitual formality and is unlikely to have legal consequences.

The exclusive rights of the copyright holder
Several exclusive rights typically attach to the holder of a copyright:

-to produce copies or reproductions of the work and to sell those copies (including, typically, electronic copies)

-to import or export the work

-to create derivative works (works that adapt the original work)

-to perform or display the work publicly

-to sell or assign these rights to others

The phrase "exclusive right" means that only the copyright holder is free to exercise the attendant rights, and others are prohibited from using the work without the consent of the copyright holder. Copyright is often called a "negative right", as it serves to prohibit people (e.g. readers, viewers, or listeners, and primarily publishers and would be publishers) from doing something, rather than permitting people (e.g. authors) to do something. In this way it is similar to the unregistered design right in English law and European law. The rights of the copyright holder also permit him/her to not use or exploit their copyright for its duration. This means an author can choose to exploit their copyright for some of the duration and then not for the rest, vice versa, or entirely one or the other.

There is, however, a critique which rejects this assertion as being based on a philosophical interpretation of copyright law as an entity, and is not universally shared. There is also debate on whether copyright should be considered a property right or a moral right. Many argue that copyright does not exist merely to restrict third parties from publishing ideas and information, and that defining copyright purely as a negative right is incompatible with the public policy objective of encouraging authors to create new works and enrich the public domain.

The right to adapt a work means the right to transform the way in which the work is expressed. Examples include developing a stage play or film script from a novel; translating a short story; and making a new arrangement of a musical work.

Fair use and fair dealing

Copyright does not prohibit all copying or replication. In the United States, the fair use doctrine, codified by the Copyright Act of 1976 as 17 U.S.C. Section 107, permits some copying and distribution without permission of the copyright holder or payment to same. The statute does not clearly define fair use, but instead gives four non-exclusive factors to consider in a fair use analysis. Those factors are:

-the purpose and character of your use

-the nature of the copyrighted work

-what amount and proportion of the whole work was taken, and

-the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

In the United Kingdom and many other Commonwealth countries, a similar notion of fair dealing was established by the courts or through legislation. The concept is sometimes not well defined; however in Canada, private copying for personal use has been expressly permitted by statute since 1999. In Australia, the fair dealing exceptions under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) are a limited set of circumstances under which copyright material can be legally copied or adapted without the copyright holder's consent. Fair dealing uses are research and study;

review and critique; news reportage and the giving of professional advice (ie legal advice). Under current Australian law it is still a breach of copyright to copy, reproduce or adapt copyright material for personal or private use without permission from the copyright owner. Other technical exemptions from infringement may also apply, such as the temporary reproduction of a work in machine readable form (e.g., in an information technology storage system).

In the United States the AHRA (Audio Home Recording Act Codified in Section 10, 1992) prohibits action against consumers making non-commercial recordings of music, in return for royalties on both media and devices plus mandatory copy-control mechanisms on recorders.

Section 1008. Prohibition on certain infringement actions

No action may be brought under this title alleging infringement of copyright based on the manufacture, importation, or distribution of a digital audio recording device, a digital audio recording medium, an analog recording device, or an analog recording medium, or based on the noncommercial use by a consumer of such a device or medium for making digital musical recordings or analog musical recordings.

Later acts amended US Copyright law so that for certain purposes making 10 copies or more is construed to be commercial, but there is no general rule permitting such copying. Indeed making one complete copy of a work, or in many cases using a portion of it, for commercial purposes will not be considered fair use. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act prohibits the manufacture, importation, or distribution of devices whose intended use, or only significant commercial use, is to bypass an access or copy control put in place by a copyright owner. An appellate court has held that fair use is not a defence against engaging in such distribution.

It is absolutely vital to remember that copyright regimes can and do differ between countries, even countries which both adhere to the same copyright Convention. It would be dangerous to assume that an activity permitted by the laws of one country is necessarily permitted elsewhere.

Read about EU copyrights: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EU_Copyright_directive

Copying and recording audio

Most sound cards have four 1/8" jacks - two outputs and two inputs at the back of the computer. One of the inputs will be marked as the microphone input by the word "Mic" or by an icon of a microphone. Don't use that one!

Instead, find the Line input. Check the markings on the back of your sound card to determine which one it is - there are usually either symbols or text labels back there to help you out. If the labels are not clear, refer to your manual. Make sure that the plug you use going into your sound card is a 1/8" stereo connector.

The next step is to start the recording/editing software. The POOLS teams can recommend Audacity: Audacity is free, open source software for recording and editing sounds. It is available for Mac OS X, Microsoft Windows, GNU/Linux, and other operating systems.

To download the software go to http://audacity.sourceforge.net/

The Audacity software allows you to:

-record live audio
-convert tapes and records into digital recordings or CDs
-edit Ogg Vorbis, MP3, and WAV sound files
-cut, copy, splice, and mix sounds together
-change the speed or pitch of a recording
- the interface exists in a variety of languages and can be adapted.
- and much more!
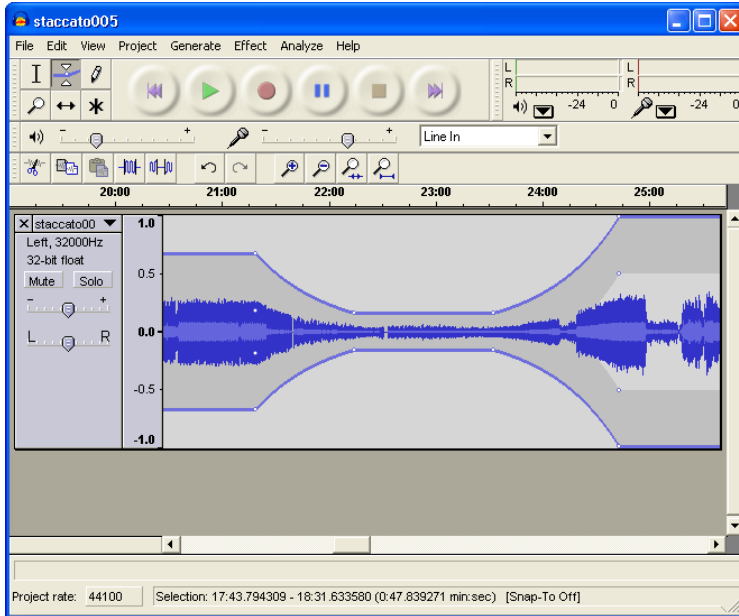
After recording, it is possible to fine tune the results, with a noise filter for example.
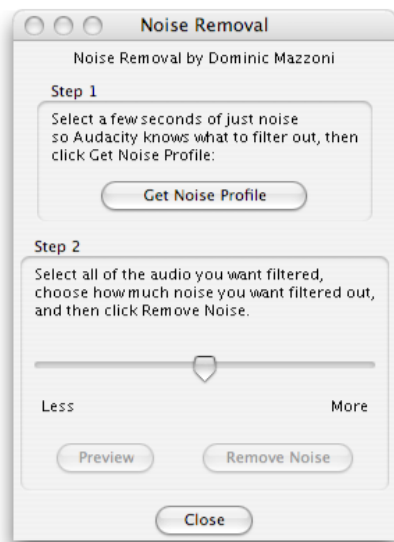
The resulting files can then be written to different file formats (e.g. mp3 files that can be distributed online and podcast).

Best of all, Audacity has excellent documentation and step by step tutorials. Please go to
http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/tutorials

Recoding videos

Taking a picture or recording a video can be done with any Smartphone or smart device.

Before recording remember:

- To check the battery of the smart device, and to make sure there is no external sound that could interfere with the recording.

- Consider whether or not additional lighting will be needed flash, and the resolution required to produce quality pictures.

- Using a tripod can be very useful to get a better recording and having external microphones will also improve the quality of audio .

- Smart devices can store all the video recordings, images and sounds. These can then be transferred to a PC or Mac via USB cable, online upload or email.

Publishing our videos

After recording the video, we can edit it and add more scenes or credits and finally publish it. Programs such as Windows Movie Maker, or Camtasia Studio are very useful.
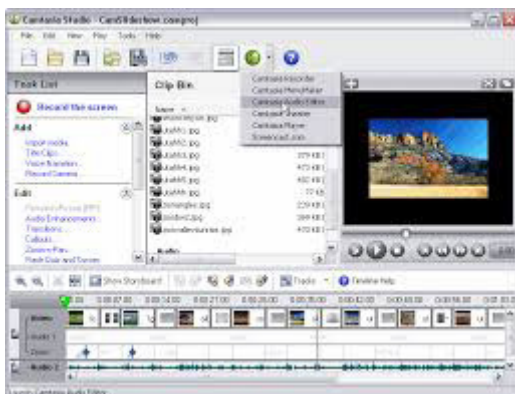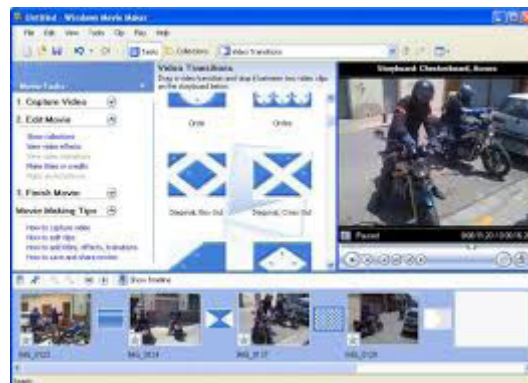
Camtasia Studio   Windows Movie Maker

Teaching Foreign Languages to Hearing Impaired Students

Learning about deaf and hearing-impaired students:

SIGNALL is a transnational language competency and training project which aims to increase awareness of Deaf culture and sign languages amongst organisations, employers and hearing people. It aims to cultivate a behavioural change and commitment by organisations, employer bodies, educational establishments, public authorities and society as a whole in the way people who are deaf are perceived and treated.

Participant countries include the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Spain and the UK.

SIGNALL's awareness information pack aims to provide a mechanism that will witness a change in the way society in general behaves towards hearing-impaired people - not by being tolerant as in the past, but through social integration, access and understanding. Available resourcess include a book, DVD documentary, CD-ROM and a website. For more information, please visit www.signallproject.com

Sign language has no universal standard. For instance, the sign language for Spain will be different from the one for Costa Rica even though the spoken language is the same. So hearing-impaired people who are internationally mobile feel encouraged to learn lip-reading and possibly even to pronounce a foreign language.

In fact, hearing-impaired people have to decide on their goals for a foreign language class: e.g. learning to pronounce, speech-read or read/write. Furthermore, they have to discuss with their teacher how they plan to conduct the lessons: e.g. using voice, finger-spelling everything, mixed signing/finger-spelling, cued speech. (Cued speech = Visual representation of sounds).

However, no matter how deeply hearing -impaired students want to delve into a foreign language, audio-visual materials are helpful irrespective of whether the goal of foreign language learning is merely a perceptive or also a productive one.

Tips for Teaching Hearing-Impaired Students by means of Audio-Visual Materials

- Take advantage of a variety of assistive listening devices (e.g. amplifiers) for watching foreign TV or foreign language movies.

- Use more reading/writing activities such as transcribed audiocassette activities or computer assisted language learning software.

- Whenever possible, use video-clips or movies that have subtitles in the foreign language.

Subtitling Audio-Visual Materials

The decision to subtitle audio-visual language learning materials can lead to additional areas for consideration, for instance:

- Should you offer full transcriptions of the text spoken in a foreign language or merely the gist of it?

- Should you offer foreign language transcriptions with or without translation into the mother tongue of the student?

- Should you straighten out flaws in the spoken original when subtitling or stick to the original (even linguistically faulty) version?

Resources:

- A transnational language competency and training project which aims to increase awareness of Deaf culture and sign languages amongst organisations, employers and hearing people. http://www.signallproject.com

- Damper, R. I., Baker, R. G., Lambourne, A. D., Downton, A. C., King, R. W. and Newell, A. F. (1984) 'Educational subtitling for deaf children'. In *Proceedings of Second International Conference on Rehabilitation Engineering*, pp. 304-305.

- Teaching English to Deaf Learners in China
  http://www.eslcafe.com/forums/teacher/viewtopic.php?t=1056

- Creating an Online English Course for Deaf by Elina McCambridge
  emccambr@sun3.oulu.fi first results expected to be published online in spring 2007

- An English link list on forums and research institutions serving the needs of deaf people http://www.deafblind.com/deafness.html

Visually impaired students and accessibility of materials

When developing audiovisual materials that may be used by visually impaired students it is necessary to rethink the video materials, for example, and include voice over with additional information (e.g. the man left the room + general descriptions).

The article below is mainly based on articles from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Web accessibility refers to the practice of making Web pages accessible to people using a wide range of user agent software and devices, not just standard Web browsers. This is especially important for people with disabilities such as visual impairment. In order to access the Web, some users require special software or devices in addition to a standard web browser, or specially designed web browsers. Design for accessibility is a sub-category of good design for usability.

Accessibility is the practice of making web pages easier to navigate and read. It is intended to assist those with disabilities, but it can be helpful to all readers. Articles adhering to the following guidelines are easier to read and edit by those wikipedians.

Benefits of Web accessibility

Designing websites with accessibility in mind can often enhance usability for all users. Good design can also deliver easier access for automated software programs that read website content, such as search engines.

One important aspect of accessibility is to let people access content in their preferred way. This can also benefit all users, not just those with disabilities: for example, some users may wish to adjust text sizes because they are using a very small display on a mobile phone, or they may need to use keystrokes to control their computer because they do not have a mouse or prefer not to use one. Search engines cannot generally make much use of graphics.

For example, hyperlinks that can only be followed by clicking on them with a mouse are impossible to use for those who can only use a keyboard or screen reader to interact with their computer. Information provided only in audio format cannot be accessed by people who are deaf, and, if provided only in graphic format information, is invisible to people who are blind.

Designing sites in accordance with Web accessibility principles is necessary to enable access for all users.

An accessible web portal designed for people developing reading skills is www.peepo.co.uk with enhanced graphics, unique style controls and improved interactivity (requires SVG supported browser).

User agent devices

Most people access the Web using a Web browser on a computer. Other ways of accessing the Web include a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) or a mobile phone. Search engines accessing Web content via a web spider are also common.

A wide range of techniques and technologies are available to facilitate Web access for people with disabilities, or for users in general. These can be divided into two (non-exclusive) classes: enabling technologies, which circumvent a major disability such as blindness; and assistive technologies for lesser impairments.

Enabling technologies include:

-speech or voice browsers to read textual content aloud

-speech-recognition software that can accept commands spoken to the computer, or turn dictation into grammatically correct text.

-the Braille terminal, consisting of a Refreshable Braille display which renders text as Braille characters (usually by means of raising pegs through holes in a flat surface) and a Braille keyboard (either a conventional "QWERTY" type or one designed for the Braille system).

Assistive technologies

In addition to dedicated Web content user agents, a wide range of assistive technologies is available to help people with computer accessibility. These technologies can greatly assist access to Web content for people with disabilities. Examples include:

-speech recognition software, which can be useful for those who have difficulty using a mouse or a keyboard.

-screen magnification software, which enlarges what is displayed on the computer monitor, making it easier for vision impaired users to read.

-keyboard overlays which can make typing easier and more accurate for those who have motor control difficulties.

-screen reader software, which uses synthesised speech to read out either selected elements of what is being displayed on the monitor (helpful for users with reading or learning difficulties), or which can read out everything that is happening on the PC (used by blind and vision impaired users).

-translation software to allow users to read websites in foreign languages, especially for those who have been diagnosed as having a learning disability.

General advice and guidelines for accessible web page creation

(source Wikipedia accessibility guidelines http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Accessibility)

Article structure

Avoid floating the table of contents if possible, as it breaks the standard look of pages. If you must use a floated TOC, put it below the lead section for consistency. Users of screen readers expect the table of contents to follow the introductory text; they will also miss any text placed between the TOC and the first heading.

Headings should be descriptive and in a consistent order (See also: References, Further reading, External links).

Avoid using heading titles with the same name as one of the form names on the page, like "search" or "go".

Disambiguation links should be the first elements of the page, before any image or infobox. A text only browser or screen reader presents the page sequentially, and otherwise the dablink will be read between the image and the lead section

Text

When editing, never break up a line unless absolutely necessary, as the easiest way to edit with a screen reader is to navigate line by line.

Spelling and grammar errors can dramatically affect the sound of the text ("initative" instead of "initiative"), which can make the text more difficult to read.

Provide a transliteration for all text in a non Latin writing system. Screen readers without Unicode support will read a character outside Latin-1 as a question mark, and even in the latest version of JAWS, the most popular screen reader, Unicode characters are very difficult to read.

Don't use techniques that require physical action to provide information, such as tooltips or other "hover" text.

Links

Do not overlink. Screen readers put each link on its own line.

Create good link descriptions, especially for external links. (avoid "click here!" or "this" kinds of links).

Avoid putting links in section headings, unless the link text is the only text in the title. Screen readers will stop reading the heading title when they encounter a link, and if the link is the first part of the heading title, they will only read the link text. For example, a heading title of "The Simpsons" will be read as "The", and a heading title of "hackers in popular culture" will be read as "hackers".

Use as little code as possible, so the text in the edit window is easier to read (for example: don't use [[clock|clocks]] when [[clock]]s will work).

Colour

Ensure that colour is not the only way used to convey important information. Especially, do not use coloured text unless its status is also indicated by using another method such as italic emphasis or footnote labels. Otherwise blind users or readers accessing Wikipedia through a device without a colour screen will not receive that information.

Many readers may be partially or fully colour blind. Ensure that the colour combinations used (infoboxes, navigational boxes, graphs, etc.) have an adequate contrast. Use a colour scheme generator to select the colours, and tools for simulating colour blind vision (colorfilter.wickline. org or vischeck.com) to check the result.

Web pages can be checked on-line with AccessColor, which analysis the HTML source for a web page and the Cascading Style Sheets associated, and then calculates that the colour contrast and colour brightness between the text and background colours conform WCAG 1.0.

Suitable colour contrast for people with vision impairments, including colour blindness, can be tested with the Colour Contrast Analyser that uses the draft algorithms from W3C.

Tables

Screen readers and other web browsing tools make use of specific table tags to help users navigate the data contained in them.

Caption (|+): A caption is the title of a table, describing its nature

Summary (summary="…"): The summary can provide a longer description of the purpose and structure of the table for non-visual browsers.

Row & column headers (!): Like the caption, these help present the information in a logical structure. The headers can be read first, and then the related data can be navigated.

Voice browsers might read aloud a data table in the following order:

Caption: [caption text]
Summary: [summary text]
[column header 1]: [row header 1], [column header 2]: [cell 1,2], [column header 3]: [cell 1,3]
[column header 1]: [row header 2], [column header 2]: [cell 2,2], [column header 3]: [cell 2,3]

Layout tables

Some navigation, series, and info boxes are made using tables.

Avoid using tables for layout purposes only. The best option is to use HTML's <div> blocks and style attributes because they provide flexibility.

For simple layouts, tables can be an option. If the only point of the table is to get a floating effect, then align="right" etc. will work with some browsers not supporting CSS at all. This is in fact a verbose approximation of <div> plus CSS, and not the design sin known as (nested) "table layout".

However, to avoid accessibility barriers, when using tables for layout purposes don't use any caption, row, or column headers, and also no summary attribute. These structural table elements should be used only for data tables. Don't use structural elements for presentation purposes, use style sheets.

Images

Images should contain a caption, either using the built in image syntax or a secondary line of text. The caption should concisely describe any information contained in the image.

Where possible, any charts or diagrams should have a text equivalent, or should be well-described so that users who can't see the image can gain some understanding of the concept.

Detailed image descriptions, where not appropriate for an article, should be placed on the image description page, with a note saying that activating the image link will lead to a more detailed description.

Style and markup

Avoid inline CSS style= attributes where a similar common class is available, e.g. class="wikitable".

Avoid inline CSS if simple legacy markup has the same effect for more browsers, e.g. align="right".

Test inline CSS effects with disabled CSS. Inline CSS isn't supported by several browsers, media, and XHTML versions.

Don't use <font> tags or inline CSS to play with font sizes. If really necessary, use <small> or <big> also supported by Lynx to a certain degree (even nested).

Don't use <font> tags to manipulate foreground colours, unless you also use legacy bgcolor= markup to set the background colour. It is better to use simple logical style tags like <em>, <code>, or <strong> for semantic differences.

Inline CSS is ideal for decorative purposes including decorative colours, but then don't mix CSS with legacy markup: Old browsers respect the legacy markup and ignore the CSS.

Combining logical style tags with CSS colours is a good idea (of course depending on the colours for browsers supporting CSS).

Don't use the physical style tags <u>, <i>, or <b>. It is preferable to use Wiki markup '' or ''', or logical style tags.

Above all, use common sense, a deprecated <u> could be perfectly okay if it's used to indicate something like an un-clickable link.

Website accessibility audits

A growing number of organisations, companies and consultants offer website accessibility audits. These audits, a type of system testing, identify accessibility problems that exist within a website, and provide advice and guidance on the steps that need to be taken to correct these problems.

A range of methods are used to audit websites for accessibility:

Automated tools are available which can identify some of the problems that are present.

Expert technical reviewers, knowledgeable in web design technologies and accessibility, can review a representative selection of pages and provide detailed feedback and advice based on their findings.

User testing, usually overseen by technical experts, involves setting tasks for ordinary users to carry out on the website, and reviewing the problems these users encounter as they try to carry out the tasks.

Each of these methods has its strengths and weaknesses.

Automated tools can process many pages in a relatively short length of time, but can only identify some of the accessibility problems that might be present in the website.

Technical expert review will identify many of the problems that exist, but the process is time consuming, and many websites are too large to make it possible for one person to review every page.

User testing combines elements of usability and accessibility testing, and is valuable for iden-tifying problems that might otherwise be overlooked, but needs to be used knowledgeably to avoid the risk of basing design decisions on one user's preferences.

Ideally, a combination of methods should be used to assess the accessibility of a website.

Standards and guidelines
The main page for the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI):
http://www.w3.org/WAI/

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0
http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/

Resources for users

American Foundation for the Blind - Web Accessibility:
http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=57&TopicID=167

Royal National Institute of the Blind: Technology:

http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/computersphones/Pages/computers_mobile_phones.aspx

http://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/softwareandtechnology/Pages/software_technology.aspx

My Web My Way from the BBC:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/

Resources for designers

Accessibility101 – UK Web Accessibility FAQ
http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/accessibility101/

Accessibility Advice from The National Library for the Blind (NLB)

http://nlb-online.org/#content

Accessibility at Web Design Reference - A large online reference dedicated web design and development

http://www.d.umn.edu/itss/support/Training/Online/webdesign/accessibility.html

National Disability Authority (Ireland) - ICT Accessibility

http://www.nda.ie/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/34774EDB9EDC2A1E80256F8600431030?OpenDocu-ment

RNIB Web Access Centre

http://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/webaccessibility/Pages/web_accessibility.aspx

Why W3C Compliant? The Importance of Valid Web Codes by Mihaela Lica

http://www.articleslash.net/Internet-and-Businesses-Online/141857__Why-W3C-Compliant-The-Importance-of-Valid-Web-Codes.html

Unified Web Evaluation Methodology
http://www.wabcluster.org/uwem1/

Just Ask: Integrating Accessibility Throughout Design from Shawn Lawton Henry
http://www.uiaccess.com/accessucd/overview.html

Section 508 Training Courses (free!)
http://www.epa.gov/inter508/training.htm
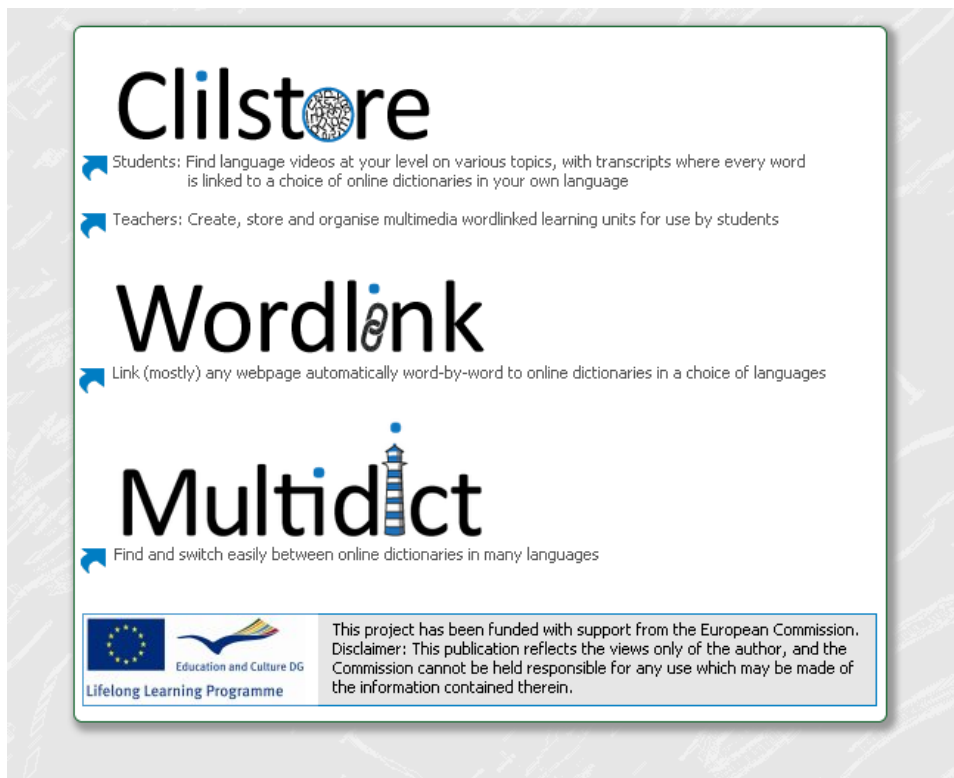
Web accessibility checkers

The W3C database of Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools - revitalised in early 2006 and regularly updated : http://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/Overview.html How to make your own CALL exercises.

CLILSTORE

In the following sections we shall describe Clilstore and its two integrated tools, Multidict and Wordlink. All three applications are accessed online at multidict.net.

*Figure 1. **Clilstore** homepage accessible at* http://multidict.net

Clilstore

Clilstore is a multifaceted site which (i) caters for teachers who wish to create or find multimedia language learning units to use with their students and (ii) offers a repository of language learning units in a variety of languages which students can access directly and use independently. Students are also welcome to register as authors and create and share units. The repository of existing units is open access, therefore, teachers or students wishing to use existing units do not have to register with the service before viewing or using the materials. Anyone wishing to create units must first register and have their email address verified. The authoring interface has been designed to be user-friendly, however, new users are encouraged to read the step by step guides provided on www.languages.dk/tools and if possible to avail of one of the many training workshops offered by the Tools team (details available on project website). The emphasis in Clilstore units is on multimedia i.e. using combinations of video, audio, images, text, hyperlinks and supporting secondary technologies which allow for the creation and sharing of interactive language exercises etc. In order for Clilstore language learning units to be most effective, however, they should contain a significant amount of text. The reason for this is that a key element of what makes Clilstore a unique language learning service is the way the software treats embedded texts. At the touch of a button all words are automatically linked to our bespoke dictionary interface Multidict, which places online dictionaries in over 100 languages at the learner's disposal, thereby enabling them to interrogate texts at their own pace and according to their own learning requirements.

Multidict

Multidict functions as a stand-alone online dictionary interface accessible at multidict.net or directly at multidict.net/multidict but also as the one stop shop for all of the language combinations featured in Clilstore language learning units. Once users of Clilstore units click on words in embedded texts, the Multidict interface opens beside the Clilstore unit thereby facilitating easy dictionary consultation for learners. The majority of the 100+ languages catered for by Multidict will feature multiple online dictionaries, therefore, if a learner is not satisfied with the first result from their search (which they will have performed by simply clicking on a word in the embedded text) they can simply consult another source by either selecting it from the drop down menu of available dictionaries or by clicking on the dictionary icons, without having to re-enter the search term. Multidict will also facilitate bilingual consultation between pairs of languages for which no print dictionary exists (e.g. Irish Gaelic to Scottish Gaelic).
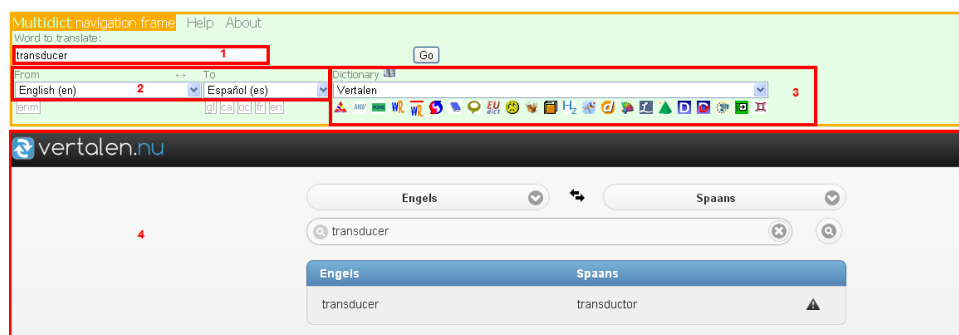
Figure 2. Multidict stand-alone interface.

1. Word entry field.

2. Language pairs: source and target language.

3. Selection of online dictionaries. Both drop-down menu selection and icon selection.

4. Selected dictionary interface with translation.

It is important to select the dictionary which best suits the particular translation need. Each dictionary has strengths and weaknesses. If a dictionary does not have the word being searched for, a different dictionary can be selected either from the drop-down menu or from the dictionary-specific icons.

Wordlink

Wordlink can link most webpages word-by-word to online dictionaries. It is the software which facilitates the automatic linking of every word in embedded texts within Clilstore language learning units and can also be used as a stand-alone tool accessible at multidict.net or directly at multidict.net/wordlink for learners who wish to easily consult online dictionaries as they read through webpages.
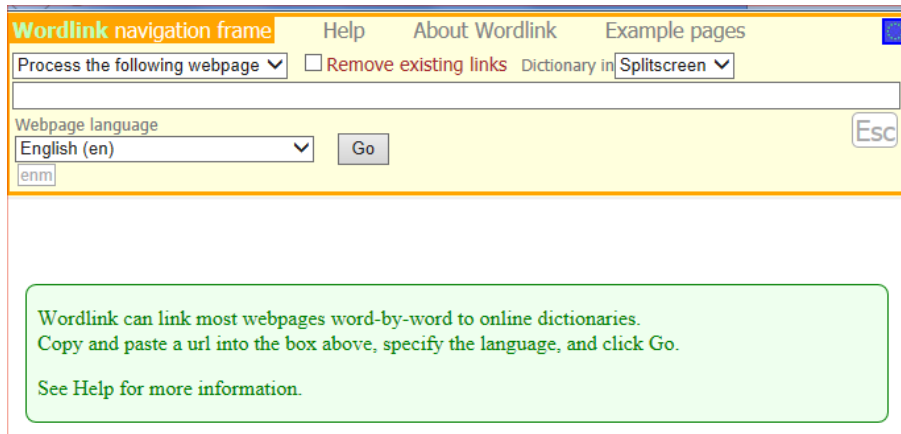
Figure 3. Wordlink navigation frame.

When using Wordlink as a stand-alone tool to link all the words in a given webpage to the online dictionaries available from Multidict, the first thing we have to do is select the language of the page from the drop-down menu. After that, we have to paste the URL of the webpage we wish to link into the appropriate field and click on "Go" (see highlighted section 1 in Figure 4 below). This enables us to click on any of the words in the text and look it up in Multidict (see highlighted section 3 in Figure 4). As we can see in the Figure below, the word that has been clicked on in the text is "considerado". This information automatically transfers to the Multidict navigation frame, as we can see in section 3 in Figure 4. Lastly, the translated entries appear in the native interface of the selected dictionary. In the sample below (highlighted section 4), the dictionary displayed is WordReference.

As we can only look up one word at a time, if we wish to translate a compound word, such as "look after", we have to type in the missing word(s) in Multidict.

In order to save time, Multidict is capable of remembering which dictionary was last used and the language pairing that was being worked with, although the language and dictionary can be changed at any time.

Additionally, if we click on a link within the webpage we have "imported", then the next page will also be converted by Wordlink. In case we wish to look up a word which is already hyper-linked, then we need to select "Remove existing links" and click "Go" (see highlighted section 1 in Figure 4.)

Figure 4. Sample page from Wikipedia about Spanish author, Miguel de Cervantes, linked to Wordlink.

In the following section we shall see how Multidict and Wordlink are used in the Clilstore student interface.

Clilstore - Student Interface

Once we have entered the student interface by clicking on the arrow pointing towards "Students" in www.multidict.net (see Figure 1), learners encounter the screen illustrated in Figure 9.

First of all the learner has to select the language he/she wishes to practise. This is done by selecting a language form the appropriate drop-down menu (see highlighted sections 2 and 3 in Figure 9 below). Next, the learner has to select the target language level of his or her choice by clicking on one of the option buttons. A learner may also choose to select all the units that are available for a given language by clicking on "Any" (see Figure 5). This will call up a list of all the available units to practice that given language at the specified target level.

Figure 5. Language proficiency levels as describes in the CEFRL.

Once the list of units appears on the screen, additional information is provided to describe the contents of a given unit. As pointed out before, the level and the title of the unit, plus an icon describing the media type embedded in the unit, i.e. video, audio or none. However, if the learner selects "Student page – more options" from the drop-down menu (see 1 in Figure 9), a number of additional descriptors appear to allow learners to filter and find a particular unit; i.e. number of words comprising text in unit and duration of media file. These additional filtering options include:

- Id: Unique unit identification number.

- Hits: The number of hits, which gives the user an idea how many times a unit has been used.

- Changed: The date when the unit was last modified or updated.

- Owner: Who the designer of that unit is.

- Level: To select a range of levels from the CEFRL to make it easier for the learner to find units matching his/her level.

- Title: Word appearing in the title of the unit.

- Text or Summary: To search for specific key words appearing in the summary or the text of a given unit.
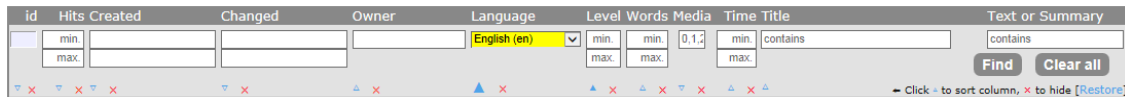
Figure 6. Clilstore student interface filtering options.

A very useful filtering option is that which allows the learner to enter key words into the "Text or Summary" filter field. In Figure 8, we can see that there is currently one unit featuring the keyword "plug".

Figure 7. By entering a key word into this field the learner can easily find a specific unit where that item is featured.

Figure 8. List of units which appear after searching for a key word in the text and summary of a given unit.

As we can see in Figure 8, the result of our search has called up one unit; i.e. "UK homes are a minefield of electrical hazards" at the required language level.

Additionally, it is possible for the learner to sort the list according to any of the above mentioned preferences and to hide any of the information columns by clicking on the red-coloured "x" next to the sort-column icon. Lastly, it is also possible to restore everything to the default options by clicking on "Clear All" or "Restore".

Figure 9. A view of the Student Interface where users (teachers or learners) can use a series of filters to find learning units specified by language, learner level (according to CEFRL), word count, video length or keywords.

(1) Drop-down menu allowing navigation between the Student Interface and the Author interface

(2) Filter by the source language of the unit, i.e. the main language featuring in the audio, video or text content of a unit.

(3) Filter by the learner level as specified by the unit authors in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL). The scale ranges from A1>A2>B1>B2>C1>C2, with A1 being the easiest and C2 the most difficult.

(4) Filter according to the length of embedded texts by word count.

(5) Filter according to the length of any embedded video files.

(6) Filter by keyword in the Unit Title.

(7) Filter by keywords in the author generated summary of the unit or the unit's embedded text.

Let's now have a brief look at a unit to see the options that are available for learners. A unit will typically consist of a media file –normally a video sequence–, its script (with all of its words linked to a wealth of online dictionaries thanks to *Multidict),* and links to further exercises or learning materials. In section 2 below, we shall describe a number of sample units illustrating these features.

Figure 10. The view of a unit once it has been selected and a learner-determined word clicked on.

(1) The author of the unit will have already indicated the source language, therefore, this lets *Multidict* know where to begin.

(2) The learner can select the language they wish the search term to be translated into, or if they select e.g. English to English they can perform a monolingual consultation.

(3) The user can quick-switch between dictionaries by using the drop-down menu of available sources or by clicking on the dictionary icons. They are not required to re-enter the search term in order to switch between dictionaries.

AUTHORWARE

HOT POTATOES

There are many authoring systems offering an easy way to create exercises, however many of these are complicated to learn and to use (despite what is promised on the cover!). Many authoring systems are expensive and some even ask for a license fee for each end user. But do not despair: there is also free software which is easy to use. We recommend you try out the free software called Hot Potatoes, made by "Half Baked Software" (Free, but only if the exercises you make are placed on the Internet without any charge to the end user).
You can download "Hot Potatoes" from the Hot Potatoes homepage: http://hotpot.uvic.ca/

The Hot Potatoes suite offers a wide range of exercises. From the welcome screen you click on the exercise type you want:
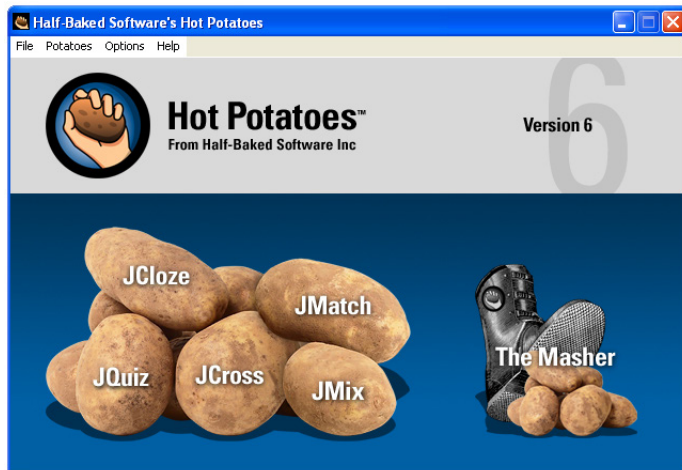
The best way to learn to use Hot Potatoes is to work through the on-line Tutorial provided with the program. By doing so you actually work your way through the different types of exercises you can make with the program.

Hot Potatoes can be adapted / translated into any language so all instructions and feedback are given in the target language.

If you want to try what other teachers have created using Hot Potatoes, you can visit http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/hotpot/sites6.php, where you can work with many different languages such as Arabic, English, Finnish, French, English, Galician, Latin, Indonesian, Italian, Jersey, German, Italian, Maori, Portuguese, Salish, Spanish, and Swedish.

An example of the resources available from these links are "Video on Demand Resources" from the Ashcombe School in the UK: http://www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/Curriculum/modlang/spanish/index_sp_video.htm. In mid 2006 the site offered free of charge a total of 35 French Videos, 23 German Videos, 16 Spanish Videos, and 8 Italian Videos. Each video is accompanied by exercises made in Hot Potatoes. The videos cover topics like: Self, Family & Friends, Leisure/Entertainment, Free Time, Pocket Money, Local Environment, My house and home, Home and Home Life, Daily Routine, Education, School subjects, Travel and Transport, Holidays and Tourism, Food and Drink, Shopping & Services, Healthy Living, Healthy lifestyle, Work, and Career & Plans.

Below you find a very simple walk through of the exercise types that you can create with Hot Potatoes

**A multiple Choice Quiz (this is a type of quiz – see below)**

JBC is a function of JQuiz and can be used to make a multiple choice quiz. In the quiz you can add as many questions you want, each with an unlimited number of optional answers.
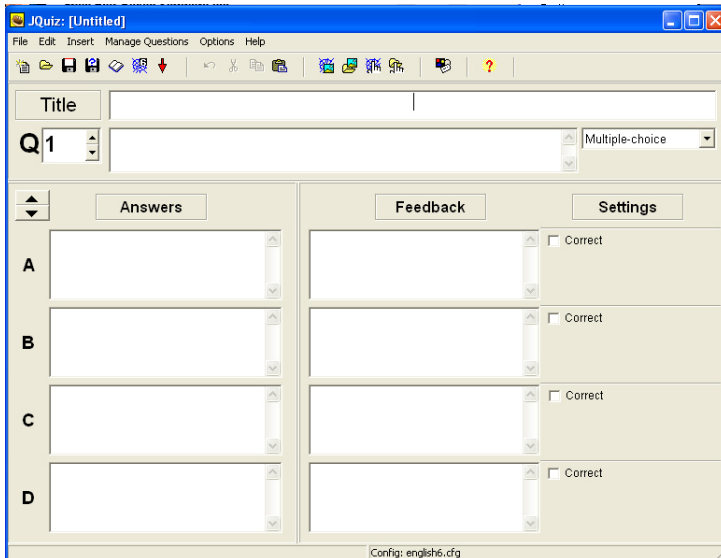
You simply type in a number of choices. For each choice you have to choose a feedback response and indicate if it is correct. If more than one answer is correct, you can decide that the student must click on all correct answers.
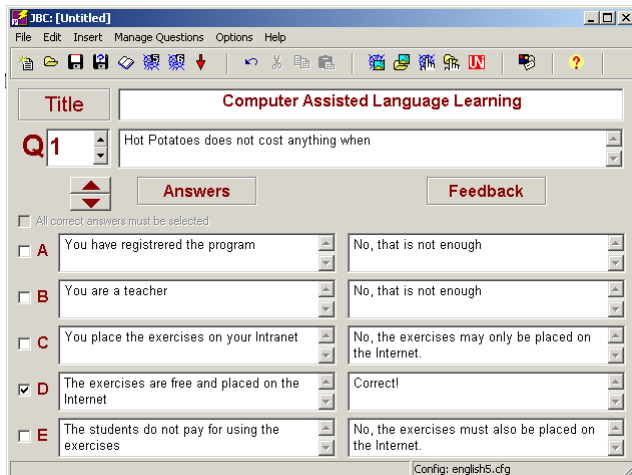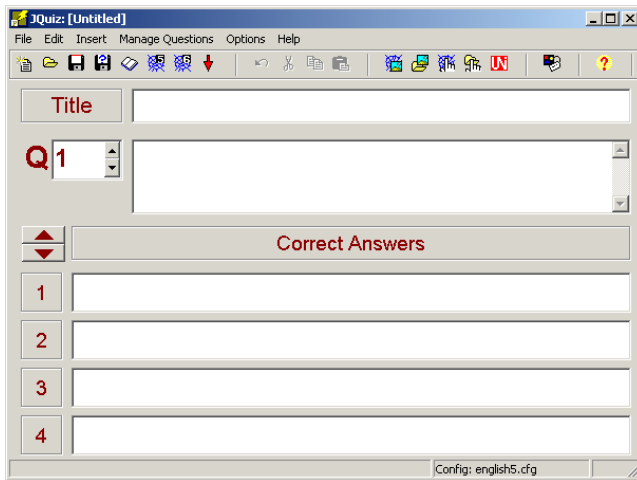

The resulting exercises look like this:
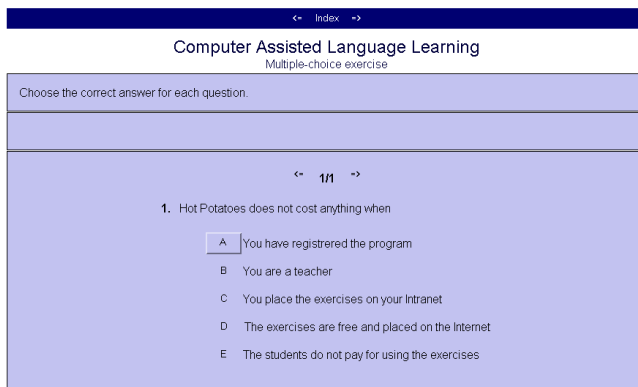
A Quiz program

JQuiz is the Quiz program which lets you ask questions and provide answers. It is more demanding for you because you must imagine all the possible correct answers that a student might write, otherwise the student may be told that a correct answer is wrong!

After having given the exercise a title and asked the question, you simply fill in the possible correct answers, which can be unlimited in number. The generated result looks like this:
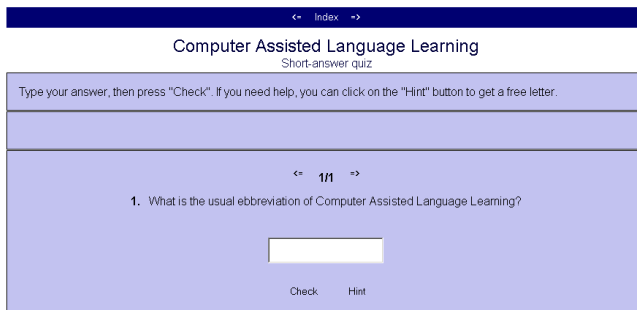
The student can ask for a hint and will then be given the next correct letter.

JQuiz also offers "hybrid" and "multi-select" options.

Jumbled sentence exercises

JMix is for making Jumbled sentence exercises that are very good for language beginners. The student is presented with a number of words that they have to place in a correct sequence.
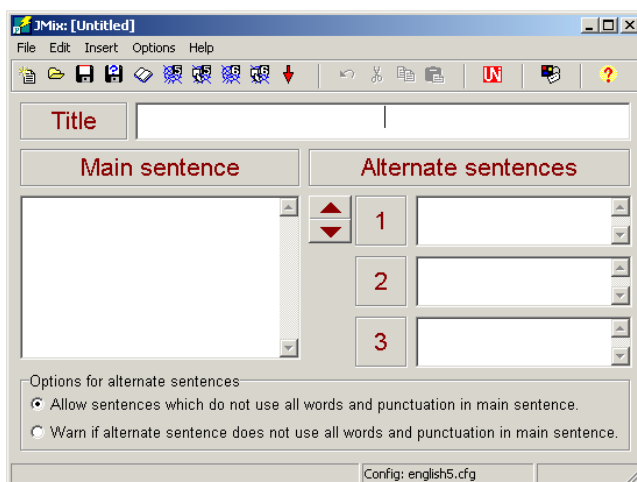
To make an exercise you have to type in a sentence in the "Main sentence" window, but with the "Main sentence" you must press Enter after each word. You may also create alternative correct sentences, e.g. the words "he is good" should be accepted as well as "is he good".
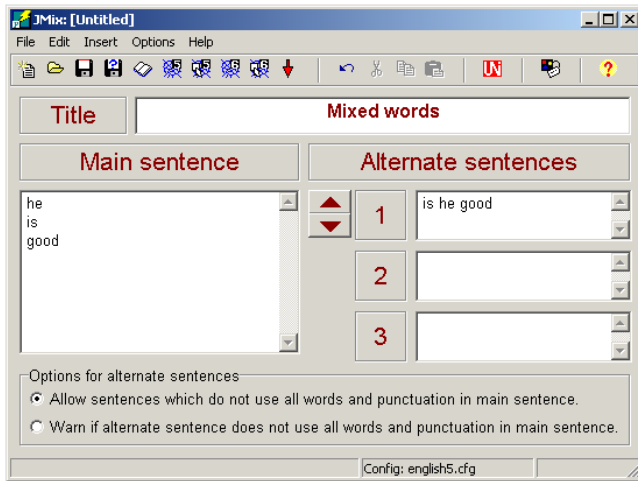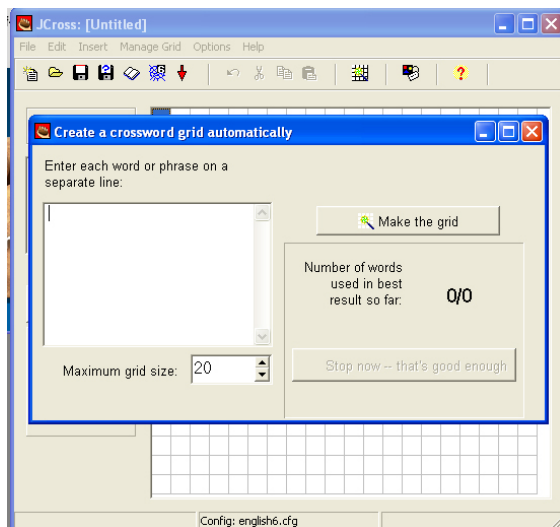
The resulting exercise may look like this:
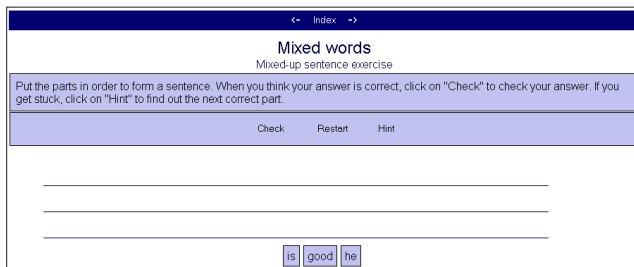
The user drags the words and places them in the correct sequence.

Crossword exercise

JCross is for making crossword exercises which are very rewarding for beginners. It is also a very easy exercise to construct when using Hot Potatoes. You simply type in the words you want and let the program create the grid for you.


The result of two minutes work may look like this:
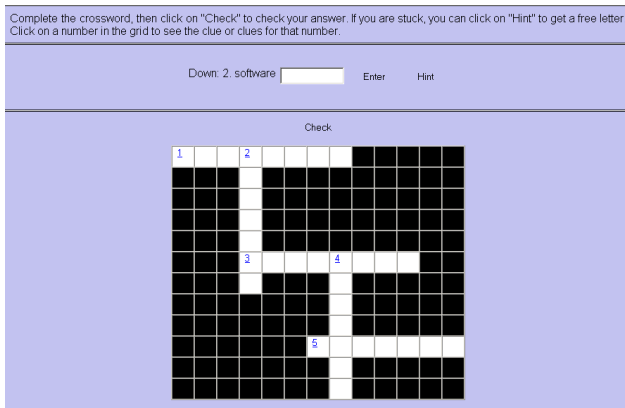
Matching exercise (Drag and drop)

JMatch is the matching exercise type which is another very good exercise for all levels of students. You can have an unlimited number of items to match. Items can be words OR pictures, so you can easily create a picture based vocabulary trainer!

In this example we have taken a sequence of five instructions on how to wire an electric plug.
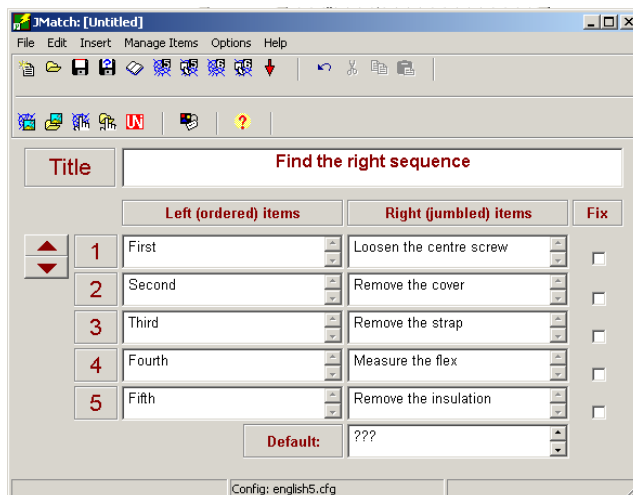
The student will be presented with the five items and will then have to drag the matching items to the correct places.
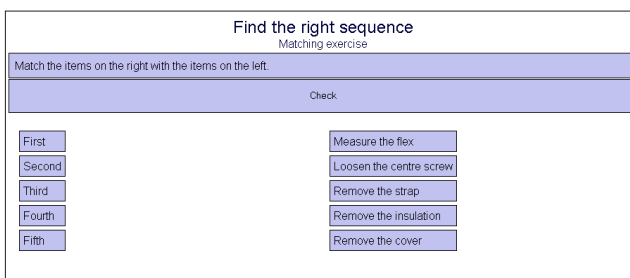
To insert pictures is a little more difficult. First you need to have the pictures ready in the same folder as the resulting exercises, next you need to insert them instead of text. To do so, you select "Insert" in the top menu and then select "Picture from local file". You then choose the picture. After choosing a picture, you need to decide on its size. All pictures should be the same size (e.g. Width 50 pixels, Height 50 or 100 is usually a good choice):
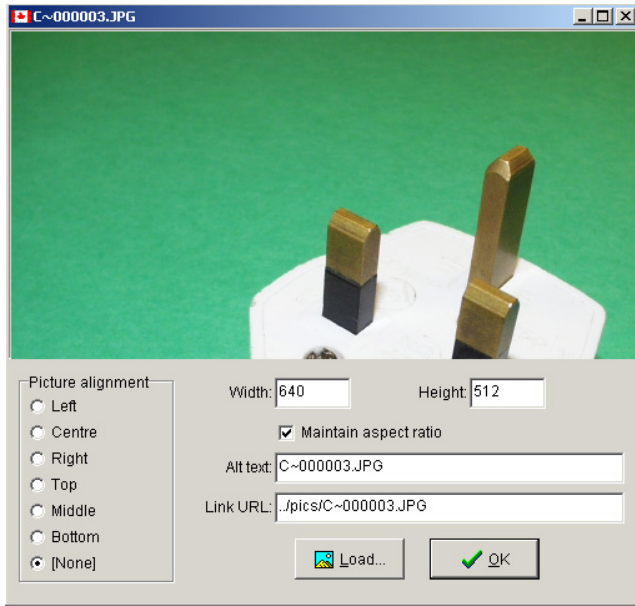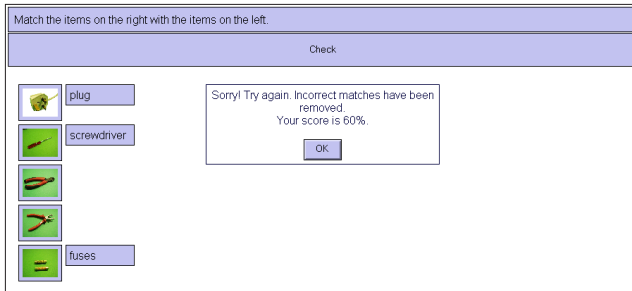
The program then automatically creates the required html code and puts it in the item box:
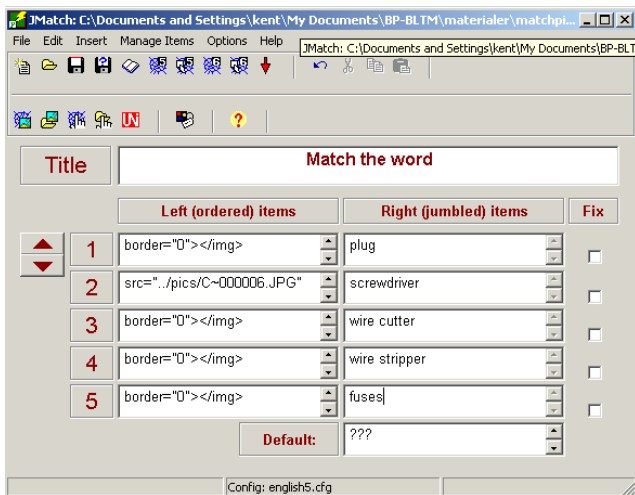

The resulting exercise may look like this:
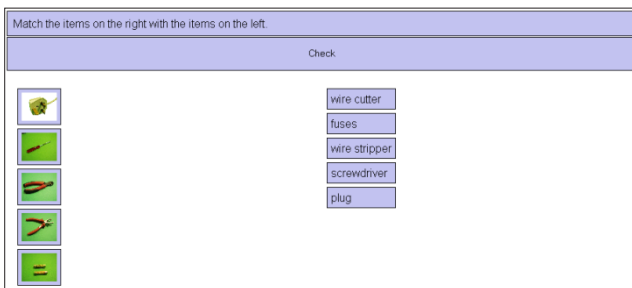
The student has to drag the text to the correct picture. In this example, the student has made some errors:

Fill in the blank or Cloze exercise

JCloze is for Cloze exercises: If you like cloze exercises then you will love Hot Potatoes! If you have a text, then it takes less than a minute to create a cloze exercise! You may of course want to fine-tune the exercise with more acceptable correct words for each blank, this may take a couple of extra minutes.
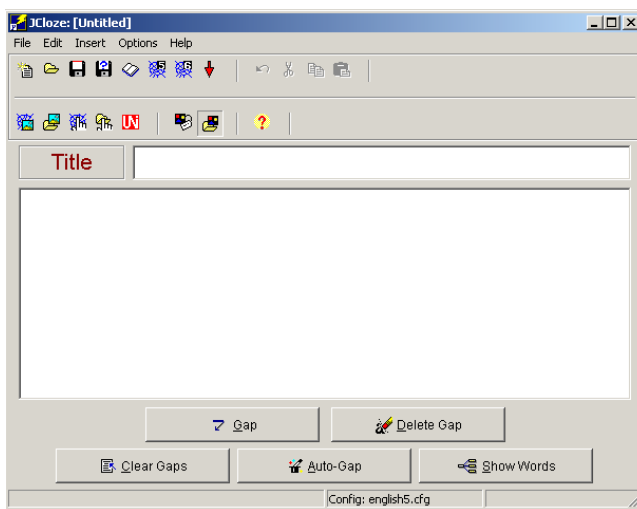
First you give your exercise a title and then you are ready to paste the text. Once you have done this, click on "Clear Gaps" this is needed to remove hidden information produced by some word processors. Now all you have to do is click on "Auto-Gap" and choose e.g. to remove every fifth word.
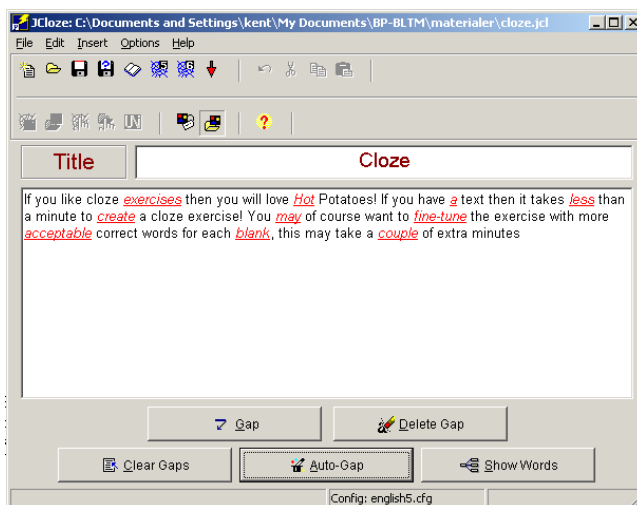
After 30 seconds work by the teacher, the students can "enjoy" many minutes work:

Fill in all the gaps, then press "Check" to check your answers. Use the "Hint" button to get a free letter if an answer is giving you trouble. You can also click on the "[?]" button to get a clue. Note that you will lose points if you ask for hints or clues!

Check   Hint

If you like cloze [ ] then you will love [ ] Potatoes! If you have [ ] text then it takes [ ] than a minute to [ ] a cloze exercise! You [ ] of course want to [ ] the exercise with more [ ] correct words for each [ ] , this may take a [ ] of extra minutes

Check   Hint

Other Practice Exercises

Other authoring systems worth mentioning are Xerte (http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/xerte/index.aspx), Glomaker (http://www.glomaker.org) and Quia www.quia.com/shared/.

How to make your own paper based exercises

There are several tools available for the teacher who wants to produce paper based exercises. For example, many of the online exercise types produced with Hot Potatoes also have a print option (e.g. the crosswords).

Another suite of exercises can be found at http://www.thelanguagemenu.com. Several of the tools found there can be used for free, there is also a free trial week in case you want to get a feel of the advanced facilities/tools.

Some example outputs from the Web Project

Go to the project website to download/work through the exercise types below: http://eng.teachers.thelanguagemenu.com/

Board game generator

Choose between 3 sizes, add pictures from the clipart gallery or write your own texts, questions or grammar exercises, and let your students work on their grammar or vocabulary by playing a game. You can also make up your own flash card questions for the board games with the flash-card generator, laminate them and use them together.

The Bingo maker has 3 possibilities: make your bingo boards with pictures, mix pictures and words or just use words, and choose your bingo board size according to your own needs. The clipart gallery gives you hundreds of possibilities for this tool. Choose or randomise.
Just create, generate a pdf-file and print. With the refresh button you can change the pictures in seconds.

Crossword maker

Create two types of crosswords in no time. Crossword puzzles are an easy way to practice vocabulary. Use the vocabulary from the clipart gallery to create bilingual crosswords in several categories.

Word search

Just enter the words you wish to have hidden, with or without clues. The tool creates a worksheet with answers quickly and ready to print. Use it with the multilingual clipart gallery.

Fill in the blank

Create your own worksheets. In a hurry? Use the database with hundreds of sentences to choose from.

Make your own flashcards

Just add a sentence you wish to have on the flashcard, generate a pdf document and print. For longer lasting material to be reused, laminate the cards. Use this tool to create discussion themes for your class, bilingual word drills or informative cards. You may also choose a picture from the clipart card gallery and add your own text next to the picture, and print.

Label the pictures

This works with pictures, with or without hints and/or answers. Perfect for bilingual use as well. Just choose the native language and let the students write the vocabulary in the target language.

Matching exercise generator

Use the generator to create your own worksheets with pictures, add your own text or just a word for your students to match the picture with the text.

Multiple choice

Make your multiple choices worksheet quickly with the worksheet generator. Write your question and give some alternatives and create a pdf document. It only takes a minute. Use for vocabulary drills, bilingual exercises, explanations, maths, questions and answers worksheets etc.

Missing words

Add a text to the missing words generator, choose the interval of the words to be missing, decide on the fontsize and print your pdf file and the worksheet is ready to use. Now you have a text with missing words and a small word bank to choose the right word from.

Split words

Split the words in two, let your students put them together, with or without hints. Excellent for practicing suffixes and prefixes, or just to work on vocabulary. Write the word in two parts, add a hint if you wish, and print your pdf file. Easy to make.

Framework

Choose this tool when you want your students to fill in words in the framework, pictures or words chosen from the clipart gallery. Write the words yourself. Can also be used for bilingual students to translate the "hint" words. Choose between the normal setting or black background. You may also print answers.

Scrambled sentences

Write a sentence and print a pdf document. The generator scrambles the sentence and you have a ready work sheet for your students to practice word order with. Easy as one, two, three.

Word spiral

The word spiral works in the same way as the crossword, but the program generates the squares in a spiral. You may also create a spiral that has the first and last letter intertwined. A

tool for bilingual use as well.

Lined

A tool to make written exercises for your students. Use your own words, choose words or pictures from our clipart gallery and ask your students to explain what these items are used for, how to use them, write a sentence about the word, add synonyms for the word. Quick and easy for all levels.

To try out these resources, go to: http://www.thelanguagemenu.com or http://eng.teachers.thelanguagemenu.com/

Computer Assisted Language Learning within the framework of Task Based Learning.

Why Task Based Learning?

The TBL methodology has gained many devoted supporters in the last decade. The methodology can be described as a complete change of paradigm within the world of language teaching, a change from the behaviouristic PPP paradigm (present, practice and produce) to a learner centred approach - the TBL paradigm. In the PPP method, the aim is to present a certain form or structure, make the learners practice this form and afterwards produce a number of sentences within the specific form. With this approach language teaching first of all becomes a very closed and rigid process, where the teacher is constantly in control of what the learners work with, do and say. Here, the teacher works within a framework where answers from learners are ruled incorrect or correct in relation to the taught form. For example, if the answers given by learners do not match the taught form, which was presented by the teacher, the answers will be listed as incorrect, despite the fact that the answer was a correct English sentence, only not using the right form or word.

Now you might ask yourself why it is important to know about the PPP method. By comparing the two methods, we can emphasize the many advantages of TBL. Basically, it is a question of belief and if you believe in TBL, you believe in the idea that language learning is a natural and uncontrollable process. According to Peter Skehan (who teaches on the MA and MPhil/PhD programmes at Thames Valley University, London):

> "Teaching does not and cannot determine the way the learner's language will develop. The processes by which the learner operates are "natural" processes. Teachers and learners cannot simply 'choose' what is to be learned. To a large extent the syllabus is 'built in' to the learner." (Jane and Dave Willis, eds., *Challenge and Change in Language Teaching* (Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1998), p. 19).

Many books and articles have been written about both TBL and the PPP method. Here is what Michael Lewis, author of several source books, says about the PPP method:

> "A paradigm based on, or remotely resembling, Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) is wholly unsatisfactory, failing as it does to reflect either the nature of language or the nature of learning.
>
> The fact is the PPP paradigm is, and always was, nonsense." (Jane and Dave Willis, eds., *Challenge and Change in Language Teaching* (Hong Kong: Macmil-

lan Publishers Limited, 1998), p.17).

There are many other arguments from different scholars and language teachers against the use of the PPP method. Some of the most striking are arguments like the following by Peter Skehan, who states:

> "the PPP method enables the teacher to orchestrate classroom behaviour, ie to use a maintaining authority, ie by using the bundled techniques to show to students exactly who is in charge."

> "a belief that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught" (ibid, p. 17).

> "PPP has served to perpetuate a comfortable position for teachers and for teacher trainers"

Another reason for keeping the PPP method in mind is that the method has probably been the most globally used language teaching methodology in the last fifty years; and it is still used by many language teachers and text book writers.

But let us have a look at some of the arguments in favour of TBL. As the name of the method indicates, the methodology is based on learning language by the use of different tasks in order to bring life, spontaneity and individuality into the classroom – in short learning by doing. The aim of the TBL method is that each learner, by working with different tasks and primarily with other learners, goes through an individual internal learning process. The most important job for the teacher is to supply the teaching material, the tasks and to help create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

A TBL sequence could for example be based on creating a timetable for a week.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning					
Midday					
Afternoon					
Evening					

Introductory tasks, written and oral, could easily be conducted, introducing names of days, day times, specific expressions, etc. etc. The introductory tasks will give the learner a basis of words and expressions to use as they please before moving on to other tasks. In this case, the introductory tasks could be followed by a task where the learner must fill in the timetable according to their own life. This personal timetable will then form the basis of an oral task, where two learners ask each other questions about their timetables. For example: "What do you do on Tuesday afternoon" and so on.

The teacher is not supposed to interfere in the communication between two learners in a task, unless they ask for assistance or unless a natural opening for teacher commentary occurs. The

teacher must listen and observe and wait with language commentaries and focus points until all learners in the classroom have worked through the tasks. This is a very important phase. Here the teacher must be the catalyst for a language focus process, with the aim of making the learners aware of and conscious of their own learning abilities as well as different language complexities – a consciousness raising or clarification process based on the different observations and questions from all learners. Clearly, this leaves the teacher in a completely new role, where he or she cannot plan a language teaching sequence beforehand. Here is what Michael Lewis says about language teaching and TBL:

> "Language is successfully acquired only when it is available for spontaneous, personal use with other people". (Jane and Dave Willis, eds., *Challenge and Change in Language Teaching* (Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1998), p. 13).

> "The teacher helps students make explicit their perceptions of similarity and difference…helps them to correct, clarify and deepen those perceptions". (*ibid* p.15).

> "The teacher's primary role is the selection of materials and tasks and the creation of an appropriate atmosphere". (*ibid* p.15)

It is very important not to forget or skip the consciousness raising process, a process which should come at the end of either every task or a full task sequence. It is here that the learner can ask questions or make different observations in relation to the work with the tasks. It is here that the teacher must help students to reflect on their own work with the language that individual learner used in the tasks. The teacher must monitor and correct language mistakes and direct attention towards language complexities. The most important thing to remember at this point is that the clarification process must be based on the observations and reflections of the learners.

Another important job for the teacher, if he or she wants the tasks to work well, is to properly describe how a task is meant to be conducted. If this is not done with enough focus and detail, some learners might spend more energy on figuring out how the task is meant to work, rather than on the language learning activity itself. This is especially the case with beginners or learners who are not familiar with the TBL method.

It is not difficult to use TBL with learners at a beginner level, but one must be aware that it is necessary to give beginners many examples of the new language, in different media, including text, sound and pictures, as long as the examples are always understandable. Crucially, the tasks must not be overcomplicated and they must be simple in structure. In addition, the tasks should focus on things and topics which are familiar and recognisable to the new learners. Jane Willis has made a handy list of priorities for the teacher:

- establishing a relaxed, anxiety-free atmosphere in the classroom

- providing a lot of exposure that learners can make approximate sense of

- building on what they know, but without expecting perfection

- not forcing them to speak at first if they prefer not to

- reassuring them of their progress, and generally boosting their confidence.

(Jane Willis, A Framework for Task-Based Learning (Malaysia: Longman, 2000), p. 118)

Willis uses terms like "pre-task, task cycle and language focus". (ibid, p. 52). In the chapter about Task Based Learning, her model is described in full.

In the following example we will present a learning sequence where we try to integrate the ideas of TBL with the ideas of CALL. The CALL exercises will function as introductory tasks, which aim to build up a vocabulary for the following oral and written tasks.

A task based example "The Wired Plug"

In this lesson, Computer Assisted Language Learning is used to give students a vocabulary based on technical phrases, and the students will learn about instructions. Important skills in vocational training include being able to give and receive instructions.

The materials and videos for this lesson are available in Basque, Danish, Dutch, English, Gaelic, German, Romanian, and Spanish.

The following outlined lesson plan can be used for most students irrespective of their specialities because many of the instructions can be used in different trades.

The electronic lesson materials support two levels, elementary and intermediate. By using the multimedia materials, it is possible to have different learner levels in the same class.

List of materials:

a. Electric plugs; it is best if British plugs are available because these are more "complicated", but other plugs may be used.

b. Flexible wire

c. Screwdrivers

d. Wire cutters

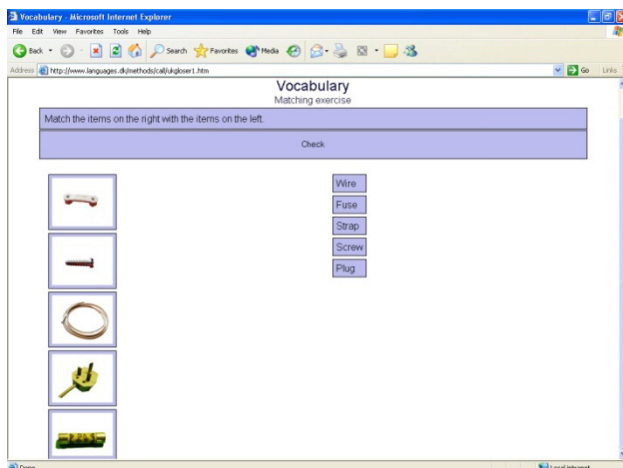e. Wire strippers (but wire cutters can be used if these are not available)

Lesson plan

1. The students are introduced to the CALL materials, in this case a web based application with video and text, followed by exercises: http://www.languages.dk/online/en/plug.htm

2. The students work through the web based multimedia material doing the following activities:

Watch the video giving instructions on how to wire a British plug. Read the text while listening to the video. Click next when finished.
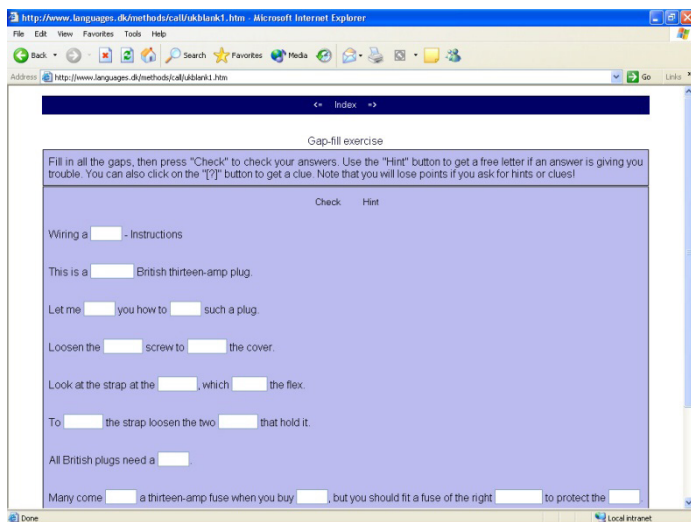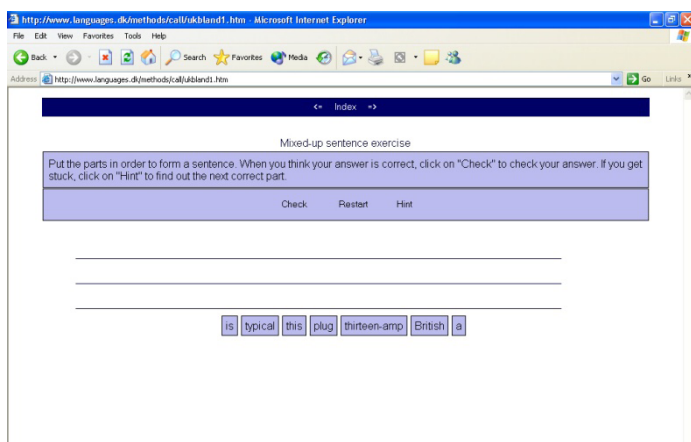

Place words next to photos of tools to learn the technical vocabulary.
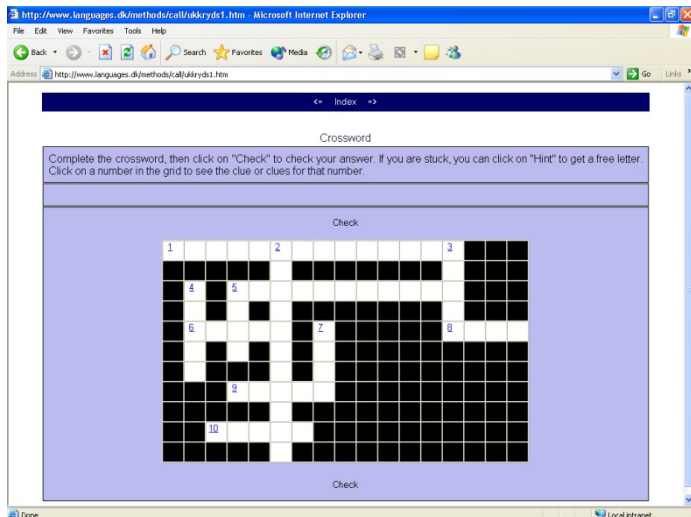
Complete the crossword containing the technical vocabulary.

Complete the "fill in the missing words" exercise from the video text.

Complete the "jumbled words" exercise to make instructions

3. When the students have finished the work on the computers, remembering that students need not finish simultaneously, they receive a text version of the same instructions. The texts can be downloaded from http://www.languages.dk/methods/materials.html

4. The students work in pairs; student A instructs student B on how to wire a British plug. Student B may help student A with the language, but s/he must not do anything that student A does not instruct her/him to do. The text may be used as supplementary help, but the students should try to avoid this.

5. The students change roles and repeat the activity above

End of pre-task