

E-learning tools and resources in ESL: putting principles into practice



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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to introduce a *selection* of e-learning tools and resources and provide suggestions for their use in ESL teaching and learning contexts. Ideas for engaging learners with e-learning technologies are grounded in the literature, informed by the experiences of instructors in the field, and discussed at conferences for English language professionals.¹ A brief introduction to each type of tool is provided followed by a bulleted description of its features. Teaching and learning ideas are offered to stimulate a thoughtful, intentional approach to the use of each technology tool within your ESL context. Finally, select readings and resources are offered to inspire further exploration.

The e-learning tools and resources introduced and reviewed in this guide reflect recent trends and advancements in technology. Tools used for learning, working and socializing are beginning to merge. This trend is due, in part, to increasing consumer demand for user-friendly formats and an appetite for IT tools.² In addition, the capabilities of Web 2.0 allow users to publish on the Internet as well as communicate and collaborate in ways not possible even five years ago. Though many of the tools included in this guide were not designed specifically for English language teaching and learning, instructors and learners have embraced their potential and found success in their use.

E-learning often relies on educational technologies such as computers and a connection to the Internet. However, not all programs, instructors or learners across Alberta have regular and reliable access to high speed Internet services or an up-to-date computer laboratory to accommodate and support the use of e-learning tools and resources. For those working in limited technology contexts,³ e-learning tools and resources that do not require a computer or an Internet connection (e.g., digital cameras, digital voice recorders) are also discussed.

The inclusion of specific e-learning tools and resources including website pages and hosting service providers thought to be reasonably representative of the type of tools or resources currently available on the World Wide Web should not be considered a blanket endorsement of the product(s) or service(s). It is at your discretion as an English language professional to thoroughly review and select those tools and resources that best suit your program's particular goals and learning outcomes, and those that best meet the needs of your language learners. In addition, privacy issues and keeping learners safe when using Internet-based tools and resources must also be considered.⁴ Before endeavoring to use e-learning tools, it is

¹For example, ATESL, TESL Canada, TESOL, CALICO, ED-MEDIA, EUROCALL Hart, 2010

² Alberta Employment & Immigration, 2010

³ See Egbert, 2010.

⁴ See Diaz, Golas, & Gautsch (2010). Though an American-based resource, there are some useful tips to consider for our Canadian context.

advisable to consult with program administrators and/or IT personnel to ensure software or other downloads from the Internet are permitted on institutional computers. Not only is it important to consider the technology supports (e.g., IT assistance, hardware, software) available institutionally when selecting or developing e-learning tools and resources, but to also consider the skills, experiences, and comfort learners have using technology to learn English.

At times, website links can become exceedingly long and are not well-suited for inclusion within a paper-based document such as this one. To ease the burden of typing long links to access the information provided in the following pages, longer website links have been shortened for your convenience using the free online service, TinyURL.com. Every effort has been made to ensure the website addresses are correct at press time.

Chat and instant messaging (IM)

Text messaging interactions that occur in real-time through the use of a computer connected to the Internet⁵ is commonly known as chat (sometimes called the chat function) and instant messaging (IM). Chat can be a stand-alone application like Yahoo! Messenger available on the Internet or it can be included within a course management system (CMS) like Blackboard, preloaded on your computer (e.g., iChat for Mac OS X), or available on a web site or as a part of a game. While chat generally refers to communication between more than two people who connect to the Internet and join a chat room, IM usually refers to communication between two people. Some learners may be familiar with chat and IM because they use these tools to communicate with their friends and family (e.g., mobile phone applications). IM tools often accommodate the use of webcams for video conferencing and voice chat (see *Voice chat*).

Features of chat and instant messaging

- Text chat and IM are used for quick ad hoc communications.
- Both chat and IM use abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons (emotional icons) that may be challenging for ESL learners and the uninitiated. For example, :) expresses happiness, sarcasm or a joke, and :@ expresses shock or screaming.
- Learners who are generally quiet in face-to-face classrooms may become active participants in chat or IM sessions, while those who dominate in face-to-face discussions may not be as active in an online session.
- Both chat and IM can be used to support online collaboration as learners can share information, clarify misunderstandings, negotiate meaning, and organize their learning.

⁵ Reinhardt & Thorne (2007)

- Chat rooms generally include the following features: a list of the participants, a history of the chat (or text) generated, a text window for entering new messages, and editing features that may be used before the message is sent.⁶ The presence and status of participants is signaled when they enter or leave a chat session, for example a person's name changes to italics or changes colour. IM tools often include a mechanism to signal a participant's online availability.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Establish rules of use and conduct for chat and IM conversations. Due to the informal social nature of chat and IM, learners' discussions may easily drift off-topic or be dominated by one (or several) learner(s). Clear objectives, instructions and assessment criteria are necessary when using chat and IM to support English language development.
- Culture plays a significant role in the communication styles used by learners taking part in chat and IM activities. For instance, some learners may prefer a direct approach when communicating with others over an indirect communication style. Disclosure of personal information and the use of politeness strategies can also vary from culture to culture.⁷ Raise learners' awareness of different communication styles. Ask learners to discuss these issues and have them to work together to set up rules for chat and IM sessions that will minimize potential miscommunications.
- Use chat and/or IM tools as an additional mode of communication between the instructor and the learner. For example, instructors can offer office hours or extra tutoring sessions using chat or IM tools.
- Brainstorming, role play, discussion activities, and jigsaw tasks are well-suited to chat and IM.⁸ (See *Help Wanted*, listed in the resources below)
- Because of the nature of real-time chat and instant messaging, abbreviations are often used copiously by communicators, for instance 'lol' (laugh out loud) or L8R (later). These abbreviations vary across languages and cultures, offering an opportunity for learners to research those abbreviations commonly used by both native and other non-native speakers.
- Chat sessions can be examined after the session to review language production.

⁷Dooly, Masats, Müller-Hartmann, & Caballero de Rodas, 2007.

⁸Dooly, Pavlikov, Eastment, Müller-Hartmann, & Visser, 2007; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2007.

Online tools

<p style="text-align: center;">Skype skype.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yahoo! Messenger ca.messenger.yahoo.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Windows Live MSN Messenger 2011 explore.live.com</p>	<p>Free Internet-based software can be downloaded from these sites. Often these tools also have options providing mobile applications and may be linked to e-mail accounts and social networking media such as Facebook. Voice chat and video conferencing services may also be available.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ICQ (Chat) icq.com</p>	<p>ICQ offers a wide variety of pre-existing chat rooms organized by topic. Users can enter at any time to join the conversation.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sync In sync.in</p>	<p>Create a chat room for learners to brainstorm ideas in a group setting or synchronously discuss controversial issues.⁹ It is easy to use, and participant's contributions are colour-coded. Without a paid subscription, the conference notes are available to the public.</p>

Getting started

If the chat or IM software is available online, users can download the application, and then register with their name and e-mail address. Tutorials and help options are available to address questions and technical challenges. Chat and IM functions are often available in many commercially available course management systems including Elluminate, Wimba, and Blackboard.

Instructors may want to consider creating accounts for their learners at the start of the course, particularly if the goal of using chat or IM focuses on the communicative aspect of language. At the same time, learners of all proficiency levels develop technology skills when they have an opportunity to create their own chat and IM accounts.

Readings and resources

Almeida d'Eça, T. (2003). The use of chat in EFL/ESL. *TESL-EJ*, 7(1). Retrieved from <http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej25/int.html>

⁹ Thanks to Sheri Rhodes at Mount Royal University for this suggestion and numerous others found throughout this document.

Gonzalez, D. (2003). Teaching and learning through chat: A taxonomy of educational chat for EFL/ESL. *Teaching English with Technology*, 3(4). Retrieved from http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/j_review15.htm

Help wanted: Interviewing for a new job. (2002-2009). Retrieved from the Pennsylvania State University, Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research website: <http://calper.la.psu.edu/cmc/index.php>. (Click on 'activity database')

Mynard, J. (2002). Making chat activities with native speakers meaningful for EFL learners. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 8(3). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Mynard-Chat2>

Reinhardt, J. & Thorne, S. (2007). *SCMC, Blogs, & Wikis: A manual for professional teacher development*. Retrieved from the Pennsylvania State University, Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research website: <http://calper.la.psu>

Digital images: Photographs and graphics

The power of digital imaging can be harnessed and incorporated into the language learning classroom to add visual appeal and interest to all aspects of teaching and learning. Digital imaging, in this section, refers to both digital photographs and digital graphics (e.g., graphic organizers).

Features of digital images

- Using digital photographs in the English language classroom is becoming easier than ever thanks to reasonably inexpensive digital cameras that are simple to use. Most mobile phones also shoot quality photos that can be used in the classroom. Uploading images to online repository services such as Flickr or Picasa is simple as easy-to-follow instructions are provided with the software and online hosting services.
- Digital photographs are also available through a number of online services including Fotolia and iStock. For a fee, these sites offer quality royalty-free photos that can be downloaded for print or web purposes.
- Graphics such as illustrations, diagrams, animations, and other media can be used to illustrate a concept, present steps in a process, demonstrate a model, mind map, or guide learners' attention.
- Digital images support language and content-based instruction and are useful for learners across proficiency levels.

- Digital images add interest to instructional materials and engage learners with meaningful, relevant, and context-appropriate images to support learning. Digital photographs and graphics may be printed for use in the face-to-face classroom, or uploaded to social media sites (e.g., Facebook), weblogs (e.g., WordPress), wikis (e.g., Wetpaint) or included within slideshows (e.g., PowerPoint or Prezi).

Teaching and learning ideas

- Create theme-based photo galleries (e.g., create folders for national holidays and celebrations, travel destinations) as an instructional resource. Share with colleagues to expand your digital library.
- Select images to share with learners. They can discuss and comment on these photos using a hosting service such as Flickr. You can also upload the images to a class weblog, wiki, or social networking site.
- Flickr includes an annotation feature that learners can use to add notes to parts of a photo. Comments can also be added under photos. Control who has access to your photos by adjusting the level of security. Comments can be tracked using the RSS feed (see *News feeds*). Invite global participation and interaction by making photos available to the public.
- Digital images add visual interest to slide presentations such as Power Point and can be used to stimulate discussion about world and current events, for example.
- Learners can create a multimedia poster that includes digital pictures and/or graphics using Glogster (ed.glogster.com).
- Class newspapers or newsletters can be designed by learners. Photos of events as well as photos of the learners in their role as reporters/writers can be included in the publication.
- Use photos to stimulate descriptive or narrative writing projects.
- Digital images can be included within learner portfolios.
- Chronicle current events, field trips, guest speakers with photos and generate a photo stream using Flickr.
- Avoid the use of gratuitous clip art or 'eye' candy animations as these tend to distract from learning.
- Avoid culturally-biased materials.

Online tools

<p>Flickr flickr.com</p>	<p>Free for a basic account, but can be upgraded to a 'Pro' account for a fee; registration required. Users can upload their digital photos and video to an online repository. Flickr can be linked to social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.</p>
<p>Picasa picasa.com</p>	<p>Download the free software available from Picasa. Upload your digital photographs and create web albums that can be shared. One gigabyte of storage is provided free. (One GB will store approximately 256 pictures taken with a 7.2 megapixel camera). You can add name tags and geo-tags (places) to your photos.</p>

Online resources

<p>Fotolia fotolia.com</p>	<p>Royalty free, stock images and illustrations for web or print purposes are available from Fotolia. Buy photos using credits purchased from Fotolia. Credits are valid for 365 days from the date of purchase.</p>
<p>iStock iStock.com</p>	<p>After registering for a free account, browse through the repository of downloadable, professional quality photographs, video, audio, flash and illustrations. Resources can be saved to a personal 'light box' folder (shopping cart) prior to purchase. Options for payment include: pay-per-image with credits, monthly subscriptions, and corporate packages. Resources purchased from iStock may not be included within documents that will be sold for profit. Read the content/ license agreement for full details.</p>

Creating digital graphics

<p>Inspiration and Webspiration inspiration.com</p>	<p>This concept mapping¹⁰ software is available for purchase from the website. Free 3- day trials of Inspiration software are available from http://www.inspiration.com/Freetrial.</p>
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¹⁰ A concept map is a type of web diagram. Ideas and concepts are represented in balloons and linked by lines to show relationships between related items.

<p>Graphic Organizers graphic.org</p>	<p>This website is one among many online resources for generating customizable graphic organizers¹¹ for English language classrooms.</p>
<p>Mind Meister mindmeister.com</p>	<p>A free account to this online mind mapping website allows you three maps that can be exported to websites or blogs. To expand the features available to you, purchase is necessary. Supports online collaborative work between learners and notes can be archived for reference. Applications for iPhone and iPad are also available.</p>
<p>Smart Ideas smarttech.com</p>	<p>This concept mapping software integrates with SMART board interactive whiteboards, and allows users to build multi-dimensional concept maps. A free 30 day trial is available from http://tinyurl.com/45potop.</p>

Readings and resources

Levine, A. (2006). What can we do with Flickr? Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yqou7m>

Discussion boards

Unlike chat and IM communication tools that generally include short text messages communicated in real-time, discussion boards accommodate longer text messages using delayed-time communication (i.e., asynchronous). Discussion boards are often used within courses of instruction to exchange ideas, share information, and build a sense of learner community. Discussion boards are an important tool for socializing and learning within course (or learning) management systems (CMS, LMS) such as Blackboard, Moodle, and Web2Go. Many free discussion board forums are also available on the Internet, offering another option for asynchronous or delayed-time communication.

Features of discussion boards

- Discussion boards provide a forum for social interaction, sharing and collaborating, critical and reflective thinking, and knowledge building in an instructor moderated asynchronous environment. They require careful planning, intentional pedagogy, and motivated learners.

¹¹ Graphic organizers are tools for visually organizing and communicating ideas. Examples of graphic organizers include diagrams, concept maps, KWL charts, and timelines.

- Discussion forum postings are threaded. This means messages are organized hierarchically and displayed in an outline style format. To start a thread, an initial message is left by the instructor (or a learner). This initial message can be responded to by the learners. This creates a set of messages referred to as a thread. When messages are posted in this way, it makes it easy to see who initiated a message, and who responded to it. The instructor and the learners can create or respond to a message at any time. Within most CMS's, postings are also date- and time-stamped.
- Because discussion boards are asynchronous (i.e., delayed time), learners have more time to reflect on their language choices and ideas before responding than in a face-to-face situation.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Develop a sense of belonging and community by providing a safe, comfortable learning environment for your learners. If your course is held entirely online, begin with a virtual "Meet and greet" activity. Introduce yourself and invite learners to do the same. Use this time to go over the course outline and any technology-related issues learners need to be aware of. If your course is blended (i.e., face-to-face and online), consider holding your 'meet and greet' in the classroom. Take time to introduce learners to the online discussion board through a live demonstration.
- Invite learners to develop discussion board protocols or online etiquette (netiquette) early in the course. This will serve to guide learner participation, help learners write clear and useful messages, and outline expected roles and responsibilities of both learners and the instructor. This collaborative work can be completed within the discussion board itself and serves as a point of reference throughout the course.
- Assessment protocols and other guides the instructor co-develops with learners can be discussed and posted within the discussion board.
- Spend time developing clear, engaging, quality discussion topics that move learners to higher order thinking skills (e.g., from comprehension to synthesis, analysis to evaluation). When working with high proficiency learners, invite them to be moderators of a discussion topic, but be sure to provide (or negotiate) the expectations that accompany this role beforehand.
- In addition to engaging learners with the course content, be sure to develop and maintain a strong teaching presence within the discussion board.¹² Among the most important roles of the instructor is managing and monitoring the online discussions, helping learners feel comfortable within the online community, and providing direct content-specific instruction as an English language professional.

¹⁰ Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) propose the Community of Inquiry model that includes three interrelated and overlapping presences, namely, cognitive presence, social presence and teaching presence.

- If you choose to assess learners' discussion board postings, provide a detailed rubric at the beginning of the course. Include criteria that attend to the learning objectives and outcomes of the course. Generally speaking, the quality of learners' postings is weighed against the quantity of postings they generate.

Online tools

<p>Boards2Go boards2go.com</p>	<p>Boards2Go provides free online discussion boards. Discussion boards can be password protected. Control who posts messages on the board by allowing only registered users to contribute. Multiple moderators can be assigned to discussion topics. Messages are threaded. Discussion boards can be embedded within websites. Registration requires your username, password, e-mail address, and your first and last name.</p>
<p>Quick Topic quicktopic.com</p>	<p>Quick topic is a free, easy to use message board hosting site. Discussions are private, unless made public by the board's owner. The postings are not threaded, so each new posting appears as a new entry. Submit and receive postings to a topic by e-mail. Register by entering your e-mail account and creating a password.</p>
<p>Wallwisher wallwisher.com</p>	<p>Wallwisher is an online message board for posting short (multimedia) messages in response to a prompt. Set up a wall where learners can post 'post-it' type notes in response. Wallwisher includes an RSS feed so it is easy to follow new developments/additions to the page. There are also bookmark and share options. Supports video and web links. Security options allow you to decide who will have access to the wall space and who can post. Register with your name and e-mail address for a free account.</p>

Readings and resources

Beckett, G. H., Amaro-Jiménez, C., & Beckett, K. S. (2010). Students' use of asynchronous discussions for academic discourse socialization. *Distance Education*, 31(3), 315-335. doi: 10.1080/01587919.2010.513956

Garrison, D. R. & Anderson, T. (2003). *E-learning in the 21st century*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Peachey, N. (2009, April 13). Using online sticky noticeboards. [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://nikpeachey.blogspot.com/2009/04/using-online-sticky-noticeboards.html>

Salmon, G. (2003). *E-moderating*. (2nd ed.). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Shea, V. (1994). Netiquette. Albion Books. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/6d8r8b3>

Ware, P. D. (2004). Confidence and competition online: ESL student perspectives on web-based discussions in the classroom. *Computers and Composition*, 21(4), 451-468. doi: 10.1016/j.compcom.2004.08.004

Document sharing

Sharing documents, slideshows, and other multimedia is easy with online platforms that support a variety of document types. The titans of document sharing sites include Scribd and Slideshare. Each boasts millions of users and includes authentic resources across a range of topics. When learners upload their assignments to one convenient, secure online location (e.g., Google docs), instructors have easy access to these assignments and are able to provide feedback and support as well as monitor progress and assess completed work in a timely way.

Features of document sharing tools

- Supports collaborative learning by allowing learners to access and work on shared documents at any time. This is particularly useful when learning tasks require group work.
- Documents can be uploaded or downloaded and shared among members of a group.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Learners can upload and share their assignments with their peers and their instructor for review and assessment. Provide a detailed rubric for learners to use when reviewing the work of their peers.
- Instructors can upload documents or assign readings for learners from sites such as Scribd.
- Build a library of course-related readings, Power Point presentations, digital images, how-to guides, or exemplars of assignments and share these with your learners.

Online tools

<p>4 Shared 4shared.com</p>	<p>Free online file sharing including music, pictures and documents. Sign up for a free account.</p>
<p>Google Docs docs.google.com</p>	<p>New documents and presentation slides can be created using Google docs or upload Word, Open Document text, Star Office text, Rich text or HTML files. Excel, Open Document spreadsheets, Power Point's or drawings can also be converted and uploaded. Documents can be shared. Security controls are available. Files can be saved into folders for easy organization. New features are added regularly. Google docs does not support SmartArt graphics included within Word documents. Google Docs is a free online service.</p>
<p>Scribd scribd.com</p>	<p>A free online resource for social reading and for publishing documents and slideshows. Reading materials can be shared through social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) or embedded into weblogs or websites. Use the 'explore' feature to search this expansive resource base. Scribd supports a variety of file types including: pdf, doc, ppt, tiff, png, jpg, OpenDocument, and StarOffice documents.</p>
<p>Slideshare slideshare.net</p>	<p>Slideshare allows users to upload and share their Power Point presentations, documents, PDF's, and videos. A basic account is free and upgrades are available for a monthly fee. A free account includes unlimited uploads, but advertising is present. Google doc presentations can also be imported into Slideshare. Users can browse Slideshare by area of interest and by tags. There are also social networking features that allow users to <i>follow</i> (like Twitter) or <i>share</i> (like Facebook). Slideshare can be embedded into websites, blogs, and wikis.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Zoho zoho.com</p>	<p>Zoho offers a wide selection of applications, among them, online word processing, presentation, and spreadsheet tools as well as chat, wiki, e-mail and more. Zoho also features a tab-based tool bar, a document template library, and offline support (documents can be edited offline). Edits to documents can be tracked. Documents can be shared with individuals or with a group. Zoho also supports real-time collaboration and chat. It is free to join.</p>
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Readings and resources

Ranjan, A. (2008). Slideshare: Why you should use it. [Online slide presentation]. Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/AmitRanjan/quick-tour>

Electronic portfolios (*ePortfolios or e-portfolios*)

Electronic portfolios (ePortfolios) or digital portfolios are a collection of learner work (i.e., artefacts) that can be used to support English language teaching and learning in a variety of ways. They function in the same way as paper-based portfolios, that is, as a record for both learners and instructors to demonstrate their learning, skills, and development over a period of time. However, ePortfolios are also considered an extension of paper-based portfolios because they are able to support the inclusion of multimedia products like podcasts and movies. They act as an electronic filing cabinet for learner work. Electronic portfolios may be authored using software applications such as Dreamweaver or MovieMaker. Web-based tools such as PB Wiki or WordPress incorporate interactive elements so dialogue and feedback can be included within the ePortfolio. (See *Wikis and Weblogs*) Other web-based services (e.g., Google Pages) provide a static-only¹³ approach. Institutionally-based hosted tools are also available for developing both static and interactive ePortfolios.¹⁴

Features of ePortfolios

- Electronic portfolios are portable and can be accessed at any time from any computer with an Internet connection.
- Electronic portfolios accommodate a flexible, reflective, personalized approach to learning. Learners make decisions about how to organize and present evidence demonstrating achievement of learning outcomes and objectives. Elements found within ePortfolios may

¹³ Static-only web pages include information, documents, and hyperlinks that we can access and read, but not make changes to. Interactive elements such as dialogue or feedback either through comments or collaborative editing are not available on static web pages (Barrett, 2007, 2008).

¹⁴ See Barrett, 2007,2008 2008).

include coursework samples, other artefacts reflecting work or personal achievements, commentary about each included item, and reflective writing about the learning process.¹⁵

- Learning artefacts may be developed in an electronic format (e.g., podcasts, blogs, multimedia, digital images, word processed documents) or a non-digital one (e.g., diorama, collage). Non-digital artefacts may be included within an e-portfolio by scanning them into an electronic form (e.g., PDF) or photographing them and uploading the digital image into the e-portfolio.
- E-portfolios are commonly used to assess learners' performances and skills or to showcase outstanding learner achievement. Other uses for e-portfolios include: emphasizing the learning process (e.g., showing growth over time),¹⁶ determining program placement, and compiling professional or career-related documents and contacts. Portfolios provide a basis for dialogue between each learner and his or her instructor.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Specify the purpose of the portfolio. Provide clear goals, objectives, examples, and a detailed description of the design criteria for creating learning artefacts that will be included within the digital portfolio.
- Provide learners with opportunities to practice using the portal, software or web-based tool selected for their ePortfolio.
- Reflection is an integral part of any type of portfolio. Rubrics can be used by learners as a form of self-assessment or as a checklist to ensure all artefacts are included. Questions can be used to guide learners through the reflective process and/or focus their attention on particular learning objectives or outcomes.
- Professional portfolios can be used by both learners and instructors to highlight important aspects of their careers. Include a resume or CV, cover letter(s), and other important documents or artefacts relevant to future career or employment opportunities. Instructor portfolios may include: a statement of teaching responsibilities, a teaching philosophy statement, representative syllabi, learner course evaluations, colleague reviews, and honours and recognitions.¹⁷
- Project portfolios can be used to demonstrate the process for completing a project, demonstration of skills and achievement at each stage of the project, or as the final learning artefact of a project.

¹⁵ Shank, 2007

¹⁶ Palloff & Pratt, 2009

¹⁷ Seldin, Miller, & Seldin, 2010

Online tools

Also see *Wikis*, *Weblogs*, and *Slideshow* sections for additional online services that support the development and presentation of multi-media ePortfolios. For example, WordPress, PBWikis, and VoiceThread.

<p>Mahara mahara.org</p>	<p>This open source e-portfolio repository includes: a file repository system for uploading documents and files, a blogging tool where blogs from other sources may be integrated into Mahara using RSS feeds, and a social networking environment with an option for group discussions. Personal, career and academic skills can also be documented. The user has control over what artefacts are shared and viewed by different audiences, for example, a resume and cover letter for an employer or learning artefacts shared between group members. Registration is free and a username and password are required for log-in.</p>
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Readings and resources

Barrett, H. (2007, 2008). Categories of ePortfolio Tools. Retrieved from <http://electronicportfolios.com/categories.html>

Sherman, G. (2006). Instructional roles of electronic portfolios. In A. Jafari & C. Kaufman (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on ePortfolios* (pp. 1-14). doi: 10.4018/978-1-59140-890-1

Games

An activity that is categorized as a game includes tasks that provide an element of engagement, decision making, and knowledge acquisition from a new perspective. (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004, p. 93)

Most instructors have, at some point, included web-based games in their English language classrooms. There are a plethora of websites offering games to support the development of language skills and vocabulary development.¹⁸ Games in the ESL classroom provide learners with an opportunity to engage in focused, meaningful language learning practice and

¹⁸ Try typing "ESL games" into your Web browser's search engine. The search will yield an almost endless list of game web sites.

production. A modest representative sample of Web-based games that are ready-made and customizable are included below.

Features of games

- Games in the English language classroom have potential to provide engaging, focused, meaningful language learning opportunities for learners. They provide an entertaining, motivating way for learners to practice and build language skills in context. Games also help promote a sense of community in the classroom when learners play together.
- Online games can be used to practice and review grammar points, build vocabulary, improve reading skills, develop skills with technology, and more.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Use online flashcards to build sight vocabulary with beginning level learners.
- Learners can play a game of Concentration to practice verb forms by matching irregular past tense forms with present tense (e.g., found, find).
- Create a cloze to accompany a listening activity (e.g., a song, story or newspaper article).

Online tools

<p>eLearning Templates elearningtemplates.com</p>	<p>This site provides templates to create dynamic interactive games and activities, Power Point pages for course development, and more. Purchase in a bundle to save money or each template may be purchased individually.</p>
<p>Game Show Presenter almorale.com</p>	<p>Download a free trial version. Compatible with Windows and Mac. Spyware free. Game Show Presenter includes graphics, music and sound effects, a question editor, and it tracks scores for up to 10 people or groups. Step-by-step instructions are provided to create your game show.</p>
<p>Jeopardy Labs jeopardylabs.com</p>	<p>Create a customizable Jeopardy game using the template provided. Start building a game by creating a password. Unless you become a Jeopardy Labs member, your games are available publically. You decide on the price for your membership. A library of templates is available to modify or use.</p>

<p>PowerPoint Games uncw.edu/edgames</p>	<p>Jeff Ertzberger's customizable Microsoft-based games include those for PowerPoint, Excel, and Word. Each game template can be downloaded individually and includes a video tutorial, instructions for Office 1997-2003 and 2007 and a sample game.</p>
<p>Quia Web quia.com</p>	<p>Create your own learning games, quizzes, Web pages, surveys, exercises and more. A 30-day trial version is free. Subscription rates are available on a monthly basis.</p>

Readings and resources

Ferlazzo, L. (2008). Free online games develop ESL students' language skills. *Tech and Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.techlearnng.com/article/8270>

Games and activities for the ESL/EFL classroom. (n.d.) Retrieved from The Internet TESL Journal website: <http://iteslj.org/games>

Gaming and Virtual Worlds: MMOGs and MUVes

As computer technology evolves to increasingly more sophisticated video cards, faster broadband connectivity, and improved (and inexpensive) memory capacity for computers, increasing attention is being paid in the Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) literature supporting the use of gaming and virtual environments in English language programs. Gaming commonly refers to massively multiplayer online games (MMOs or MMOGs) where many players interact with one another within a virtual fantasy world. In these games, players role play a character, taking on the traits of that character. These games are persistent, that is, they continue to exist and evolve even when a player is away from the game. Multiuser virtual environments (MUVes) also are persistent and among the most popular and largest of these is Linden Lab's Second Life (SL). Within SL, players are able to create a customizable avatar, travel throughout the 3-D virtual environment, attend events, interact with others and much more.

Features of MUVes and MMOGs

- Directions and instructions for playing massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) may not always be apparent to the learner, so it is important for the instructor to explore each game in detail and provide information to learners ahead of their play. Within MMOGs' players can share and read the text messages of others who often provide tips, cheats and walk-throughs and reviews.

- Multiuser virtual environments (MUVes) offer learners opportunities to interact with other players in a way that reflects face-to-face situations. Players communicate by texting or speaking (using a headset) to one another in real-time while engaging in collaborative, meaning making situations. By participating in MUVes, learners build their online presence, actively contribute to a community, and practice their language skills by using English in communicative situations.¹⁹

Teaching and learning ideas

- Learners can join an existing English language learning or multicultural community in Second Life. There, they can interact with participating members. There are also areas of Second Life built specifically for interactions between non-native English speakers and native speakers.
- Institutions and instructors can build learning spaces for their learners in Second Life, where classroom instruction can be held.

Online MUVes and MMOGs

<p>Jeopardy Labs jeopardylabs.com</p>	<p>Create a customizable Jeopardy game using the template provided. Start building a game by creating a password. Unless you become a Jeopardy Labs member, your games are available publically. You decide on the price for your membership. A library of templates is available to modify or use.</p>
<p>Second Life (SL) secondlife.com</p>	<p>Second Life is among the largest and best known MUVes. It is a virtual 3-D reality game where users interact with other customizable avatars. Many universities and other institutions in the 'real world' have an established presence in Second Life for educational purposes. First-time users of Second Life will require considerable time and assistance getting acquainted with the many features of this MUVes.</p>

¹⁹ Cooke-Plagwitz, 2008

<p>Façade interactivestory.net</p>	<p>A free interactive, 3-D, real-time storyboard MMOG. Players log in with their name and gender to role play the friends of a successful materialistic couple who are experiencing marital problems. The interactions of players will influence the outcome of this one-act play that can be played again to see how different interactions will influence or change the outcome. (Warning: Content may be offensive to some learners.)</p>
<p>Xenos xenos-isle.com</p>	<p>Xenos is a free online MMOG where players enter the Isle of Xenos. The island has a number of different areas players can explore and within each area are a number of games for building and practicing language skills. Help options are available within each game. A flashcard matching game is also available. Another feature, <i>Xenos in the classroom</i>, is currently under construction and is purported to be a place for instructors to tailor their instruction and track learners' progress within Xenos games.</p>

Readings and resources

Cooke-Plagwitz, J. (2008). New directions in CALL: An objective introduction to Second Life. *CALICO Journal*, 25(3), 547-557.

ISTE Island in Second Life. (2011). Retrieved from International Society for Technology in Education website: <http://www.iste.org/connect/communities/second-life.aspx>

Sykes, J., Oskoz, A., & Thorne, S. (2008). Web 2.0, Synthetic Immersive Environments, and Mobile Resources. *CALICO Journal*, 25(3), 528-546.

Microblogging

Microblogging is the practice of posting small pieces of digital content – which could be text, pictures, links, short videos, or other media – on the Internet. Microblogging has become popular among groups of friends and professional colleagues who frequently update content and follow each other's posts, creating a sense of online community. (EDUCAUSE, 2009, p.1)

Twitter is one of the most well-known and popular microblogging tools available on the Internet, and Edmodo is a tool designed specifically for educational contexts.

Features of microblogs

- Microblogging is a mobile way of communicating short messages in real-time over the Internet. Twitter allows 140 characters in each message or 'tweet'. Connected to the Tweet is another pane or box where you can provide additional information including embedded media (i.e., photos, video) to support your Tweet.
- Microblogging tools provide easy access to a network of people and information for personal and professional purposes.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Learners can 'follow' people, groups, events, companies, or organizations and read their tweets. By using the directories available in Twitter, learners can connect to other people and have conversations about shared areas of interest. This is particularly useful when searching for information on a topic, for example, for an essay or research project.
- Learners can follow current event stories occurring around the world and connect with the people directly involved in the incident. A recent example of this was demonstrated during the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Survivors used microblogging tools to find their family and friends and provided up-to-the-minute personal accounts of their experiences. Microblogging tools connected family members, friends, and the outside world when other communication tools were unavailable.
- Microblogs can be used by instructors to post updates and links to course materials, provide assignment and quiz reminders, and announcements. Instructors can also answer learner's questions using microblogging tools.

Online tools

<p>Edmodo edmodo.com</p>	<p>This free microblogging site is designed specifically for educational contexts. Register for a student, teacher, or parent account. When instructors create a group, an access code is generated for learners to access the group page. Internet-based resources can be linked to the group page.</p>
<p>Twitter twitter.com</p>	<p>Twitter is enjoying immense popularity around the world. Set up a free account to begin tweeting. You can also follow people, groups, events, companies, an area of interest to you, and much more. You can use Twitter on your mobile device, including your iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, or Android. Twitter can be added to your web site or social media page (i.e., web log, Facebook). The best-known microblogging site is Twitter with over 175 million registered users.</p>

Readings and resources

EDUCAUSE. (2009). 7 Things you should know about microblogging. Retrieved from <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7051.pdf>

Hart, J. (2006-2011). How to use Twitter for social learning. Retrieved from the Centre for Learning and Performance Technologies webpage: <http://www.c4lpt.co.uk/140Learning/twitter.html>

Lefever, L. (2008). Twitter in Plain English. [Video]. Retrieved from <http://youtu.be/ddO9idmax0o>

Twitter is the best way to discover what's new in your world. (2011). Retrieved from Twitter website: <http://twitter.com/about>

Mobile learning: Smart phones and Tablet PCs

Learning English as a second language has potential to extend beyond the brick and mortar classroom when learners have access to mobile devices such as Smart phones (e.g., iPhone, Blackberry, Android) and tablet personal computers (e.g., iPad, Blackberry's Playbook). With a wide range of applications (apps) available to support teaching and learning, mobile devices provide opportunities to interweave learning experiences within the learner's everyday lives.²⁰



Image source: iStock.com

Features of mobile learning

- Many mobile devices are able to access the Internet either through Wi-Fi or the device's mobile provider. This allows users to access services available on the World Wide Web, for example, document sharing tools, social networking and bookmarking sites, ESL Video, news agencies, English language websites, Google Maps, and so on.
- A wide variety of applications (apps) that support English language teaching and learning are available through iTunes for iPhone and iPad devices. For example, flashcard apps such as Cram or vocabulary building word games such as Word Warp. Apps are continually evolving and many are becoming interactive, with animated illustrations and updateable, customizable content.¹ Similar applications are also available for Android devices.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Many interesting and motivating learning tasks can include maps and travel information found using Google Maps (maps.google.ca). For instance, learners can use their mobile device to explore their favourite place or their dream vacation destination using Google Maps. They can develop a multimedia wiki page, blog entry or a paper-based tour brochure from information they find online.
- When learners are working in small groups, they can use social networking sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) downloaded onto their mobile devices to stay in touch with one another outside of class time, provide quick updates on completed work, and organize meetings.
- Many free e-books are available through apps such as kobo or eBook Reader. Subscriptions to newspapers and magazines are also available. Learners can access and download e-books to read as part of their course work or for independent study. "Using the iPad as an e-reader allows searching, bookmarking, tagging, and sharing of content, which could turn a textbook from a static resource into a learning hub" (EDUCAUSE, 2011, p. 2).

²⁰ Kukulka-Hume, 2008.

²¹ EDUCAUSE, 2011

- Recording tools, both audio and video, are often available on mobile devices. These can be used to record learners as they read a passage, practice a pronunciation task or prepare for a presentation. Recordings can be viewed or listened to for self- or peer-assessment purposes. Create a podcast using your mobile device (see *Podcasts*).

Online tools

Android Market market.android.com	Android Market offers a wide range of apps for your Android device. Included among the many categories of apps are games, social networking and education. English language learners will find apps for studying vocabulary and grammar rules. There are also apps for creating flashcards.
Blackberry App World ca.blackberry.com/apps-software	Blackberry offers a range of apps for your Blackberry mobile device, including IM and social networking, video and photo, reference and eBooks, and much more.
iTunes itunes.com	Download a free version of iTunes. Visit the App Store to find a wide variety of apps for your iPhone and iPad. Subscribe to podcasts available on iTunes or upload your own podcasts to iTunes to create a personal library.
Portable apps portableapps.com	According to the website: "PortableApps.com Suite™ is a complete collection of portable apps including a web browser, email client, office suite, calendar/scheduler, instant messaging client, antivirus, audio player, sudoku game, password manager, PDF reader, minesweeper clone, backup utility and integrated menu, all preconfigured to work portably. Just drop it on your portable device and you're ready to go." ²²

Readings and resources

EDUCAUSE. (2011). 7 Things you should know about iPad apps for learning. Retrieved from <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7069.pdf>

Voxy. (2011). Are we wired for mobile learning? [Infographic]. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/5sar45l>

²² PortableApps.com, 2004-2011

News feeds: The world of RSS (Really Simple Syndication)

An RSS feed reader is an online tool that collects new information published on the websites you subscribe to. Many websites include RSS feeds to encourage regular visits to their site. Instead of visiting each of your favourite websites individually to read updates and new information, RSS feeds regularly check these websites for you. The RSS feeds then deliver updated information to you at one convenient web site called a feed reader. A feed reader (e.g., Google Reader) acts like a mailbox, collecting all the current information collected from the web sites you subscribe to.



Universal RSS icon

Features of RSS

- RSS is easy to set-up and use - simply click on the icon of enabled websites. It is usually located in the upper right-hand side of the tool bar. (See the Universal RSS icon above.)
- Current information from all the websites you subscribe to is collected by your feed reader and is available in one place for you. This saves time searching your favourite web sites individually for up-to-date information.
- Information arrives virus and advertisement free.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Feed readers will search the web for key words you provide, so this is a great tool for research purposes.
- RSS feeds can be used to collect learners' work, if they are using blogs, for example.
- Feed readers can also organize websites into folders or collections by areas of interest (e.g., teaching room, daily news) or by topics (e.g., holidays). When learners use RSS feeds, they can build skills for "managing, organizing, synthesizing streams of simultaneous information" (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008, "NCTE Position Statement")

Online tools

<p>Google Reader google.com/reader</p>	<p>Google Reader is a feed reader. When web sites include an RSS feed, select Google Reader as your feed reader from the list of choices provided. Google Reader links to all other Google accounts, making it an especially convenient choice if you are already a Google user.</p>
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<p>Bloglines bloglines.com</p>	<p>Bloglines is a dedicated RSS service. It also supports a number of different languages including French, Portuguese, and Spanish to name a few.</p>
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Readings and resources

Lefever, L. (2007). RSS in Plain English. [Video]. Retrieved from <http://youtu.be/0kIgLsSxGsU>

Richardson, W. (2005). *RSS: A Quick Start Guide for Educators*. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/2m5uwd>

Podcasts

A podcast (also known as a webcast) is an audio (or video) show broadcast over the World Wide Web, much like a radio show. Podcasts are often published as RSS feeds (See *News Feeds*, above), where listeners are notified of new programs via a feed reader (e.g., Google Reader). While you can download podcasts from the World Wide Web, it is also very simple to create audio podcasts. Creating a podcast requires only a digital audio recorder or computer that can create MP3 files, space on a server to host the file (e.g., iTunes, your Weblog), and something to talk about. Podcasts can be incorporated into classroom practice in a number of ways to support language skills development and knowledge building across proficiency levels.

Features of podcasts

- Podcasts can be played back through handheld digital devices such as iPods or iPads or can be played on a computer. Podcast files are referred to as MP3 files. MP3 files can be saved to memory sticks and played back on a computer. (See *Readings and resources* below for information about recording and publishing podcasts.)
- In classrooms that have limited access to the Internet, podcasts can be recorded using hand held digital recorders. Digital recorders are relatively inexpensive, easy to use, and have seemingly endless applications for use in English language classrooms. Use an external microphone for best recording results. Podcasts can also be created on desktop computers without Internet access using tools such as Audacity or Windows Media Player. Internet access is required to broadcast podcasts.
- Podcasts can be used for a variety of teaching and learning purposes, for example, disseminating course content, recording classroom instruction/lessons, and study support.²³ Podcasts provide useful materials for building listening strategies and skills in the

²³ Flanagan & Calandra, 2005


English language classroom. When learners create podcasts, they are practicing, among other skills, fluency and pronunciation.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Learners can create (individually or in a small group) an educational podcast about a local place of interest (e.g., zoo, nature reserve, historical monument). They can conduct research about the place or area, write a script, and record their findings and information. The podcasts can be presented to the class and discussed. Develop a rubric to assess the podcasts. (For a sample podcasting rubric, see <http://www.beaut.org.au/podcastrubric3.pdf>)
- Build learners' listening and comprehension skills and their intercultural understandings by listening to podcasts from the website, Absolutely Intercultural (<http://www.absolutely-intercultural.com>). Learners can follow along with a written script of the podcast they listen to.
- Learners can narrate a story or a video or practice a presentation. These podcasts can be used for focused pronunciation and fluency practice.
- Create and publish a classroom-based radio show. Learners can write, record, and compile news and weather segments, advertisements, editorial or opinion pieces, and include interviews with family and community members.
- Build a library of podcasts relevant to your curriculum content. Create your own podcasts or select podcasts from online sources such as iTunes University or language learning websites such as Learning English with CBC Edmonton (<http://www.cbc.ca/edmonton/eal>). Share your library with colleagues.
- Highlight the importance of recording audio and video in an ethical manner. That is, learners must know not to record someone without permission.

Online tools

<p>Audacity audacity.sourceforge.net</p>	<p>Audacity is an open-source sound editing and recording software program for creating and sharing audio files using your computer. It is available for Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, and BSD platforms.</p>
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<p>iPodder ipodder.org</p>	<p>iPodder offers a comprehensive directory of podcasts organized into broad interest areas, among them, arts, education, food, recreation, shopping, sports, and travel. This web site also provides detailed how-to's for publishing and promoting a podcast, how to record a podcast, as well as a list of podcasting websites, tools and resources.</p>
<p>iTunes itunes.com</p>	<p>Download the latest iTunes for free. Subscribe to podcasts available on iTunes or upload your own podcasts to iTunes to create a personal library.</p>
<p>Podcaster podcaster.fm & itunes.com</p>	<p>For iPhone, iPad, or iPod Touch users, podcaster is podcast management system for downloading audio and video podcasts directly to your hand held device(s). Available to download from the iTunes store for a small fee.</p>
<p>Windows Media Player</p>	<p>Downloads and manages recorded audio files from a handheld device (e.g., iPod Touch, iPad or iPhone). For Windows users, this program is already available on your PC. To start Windows Media Player, click the Start button , click All Programs, and then click Windows Media Player.</p>

Readings and resources

Absolutely Intercultural! Blog and Podcast. Retrieved from <http://absolutely-intercultural.com>

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. (2011). Learning English with CBC. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/edmonton/eal>

Channel Tech Smith. (2010). How to script, record, and edit tutorial video with Camtasia and Audacity. [Video]. Retrieved from <http://youtu.be/tSSsh-kAcQI>

Flanagan, B. & Calandra, B. (2005). Podcasting in the classroom. *Learning and leading with technology*. 33(3), 20-23.

Kavaliauskien_, G. (2008). Podcasting: A tool for improving listening skills. *The Journal of Teaching English with Technology*, 8(4). Retrieved from, <http://tinyurl.com/49vwaxm>

Lord, G. (2008). Podcasting communities and second language pronunciation. *Foreign language annals*, 41(2), 374-389.

McQuillan, J. (2006). *iPod in Education: The potential for language acquisition*. Retrieved from the Apple Computer website: <http://images.apple.com/ca/education/docs/leaders/Apple-iPodLangAcquisition.pdf>

O'Bryan, A. & Hegelheimer, V. (2007). Integrating CALL into the classroom: The role of podcasting in an ESL listening strategies course. *ReCALL*, 19(2), 162-180. doi: 10.1017/s0958344007000523

Podcast rubric. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.beaut.org.au/podcastrubric3.pdf>

Richardson, W. (2010). *Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful Web tools for classrooms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

White, R. (2007). Audacity tutorial for podcasting. [Video]. Retrieved from <http://youtu.be/IC3VZkfdgV8>

Searching the World Wide Web

Search engines, metasearch engines, and web directories are valuable tools for finding information on the Internet. Search engines use Webcrawlers to find information, and metasearch engines harness the investigative power of multiple search engines to find the information you seek. Web directories (also search directories) are human-compiled lists of web pages. Search engines include web directories in their searches. Providing facilitated instruction to learners as they search the World Wide Web supports language learning development and builds technology skills.

Features of search engines and web directories

- Search engines use a Webcrawler program (also called bots or spiders) that scours through the Internet indexing web pages and the words found on those pages. The indexing of the World Wide Web allows search engines to locate web pages that include the keyword(s) you use to find information online. Most search engines crawl through only a portion of the WWW, so it may be useful to use a metasearch engine to yield additional information.

- Metasearch engines (or Metacrawlers) use several different World Wide Web search engines at the same time to answer a query. The results from each of the search engines is compiled and reported, often in the form of a list.
- Web directories include web pages that have been compiled, indexed, and categorized by real people. Yahoo! Directory (dir.yahoo.com) is an example. Usually, directories do not provide the content of the web page; instead, they provide the name of the web page and a short description of its contents.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Develop a web-based scavenger hunt (aka WebQuest) for your learners. Warschauer, Shetzer, and Meloni (2000) suggest: "Scavenger hunts done early in a semester can help students practice Web-searching techniques. At other times hunts can focus on specific content or linguistic material related to the objectives of the course. By having students work in pairs during scavenger hunts, you can encourage oral communication to supplement reading and computer practice" (p. 55). Scavenger hunts may be as simple as having learners using search engines to find answers to 10 questions about the city they live in or as complex as asking learners to write their own questions and find the answers related to a theme or topic of their choice.
- In collaboration with your learners, develop a set of criteria for evaluating search engines, web directories, and metasearch engines. Explore a variety of World Wide Web search tools to critically evaluate the merits and challenges of each.

Search engines

<p>Altavista altavista.com</p> <p>Bing bing.com</p> <p>DuckDuckGo duckduckgo.com</p> <p>Gigablast gigablast.com</p>	<p>Lycos lycos.com</p> <p>Google google.ca google.com scholar.google.ca</p> <p>Yahoo yahoo.com ca.yahoo.com</p>	<p>There are many search engines available on the Internet, and these are a representative sample. Each includes a search box to enter your key words. Your search results are generally displayed as lists of web pages.</p>
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Meta-search engines

Dogpile dogpile.com	SurfWax surf wax.com	Meta-search engines harness the power of multiple search engines to compile a comprehensive list of web pages that include your keyword search query. After entering your keyword(s) into the search box, the meta-search engine will provide a list of web pages from a variety of search engines that include the information you seek.
Kartoo kartoo.com	Vivisimo vivisimo.com	
MetaCrawler metacrawler.com	Webcrawler webcrawler.com	
Mamma mamma.com		

Web directories

Open Directory Project dmoz.org	The Open Directory Project is unique in that any Internet user can become an editor and be responsible for creating a part of the index.
Yahoo! Directory dir.yahoo.com	Yahoo! Directory is organized into broad categories, among them, arts and humanities, government, health, science, and many more. Each category is further divided into sub-categories. Website links and a short description of the web page is provided.

Readings and resources

Herington, R. (Dec, 2002). Teaching EFL/ESL students how to use search engines and develop their English. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 8(12). Retrieved from <http://itelsj.org/Techniques/Herington-SearchEngines.html>

Mengel, L. & LaMaster, C. (1997, 2006). Finding information. *LInC Online*. Retrieved from http://ed.fnal.gov/lincon/tech_find_info.shtml

Warschauer, M., Shetzer, H., & Meloni, C. (2000). *Internet for English teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Slideshows

While you and your learners may be familiar with Microsoft Power Point for creating and presenting information, there are a number of dynamic online slideshow tools that are easy to use and support the use of audio, video, images, and text. These slideshow tools offer the opportunity to create unique multimedia slideshow experiences.

Features of slideshows

- Slideshow tools can be used by both learners and instructors for presenting information in a dynamic, innovative way. Because these tools support a variety of multimedia (e.g., audio, video, images, text), the content and use of slideshows is limited only by the user's imagination.
- When a learning task requires the development of a learning artefact, online slideshow tools allow learners to collect, organize, and present evidence of their learning in creative ways. If working in a group, members can access the slideshows at any time, from anywhere, thereby minimizing or eliminating the need for face-to-face meetings.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Learners can use slideshow tools to narrate a digital story or create a documentary that includes images and text. They can create an ePortfolio, review a book or article, create an advertising campaign, debate an issue, present a current event issue, explore geography and culture, work collaboratively with their peers, or respond to the work of their peers.
- Instructors can use slideshows in many ways, for example, to stimulate a class discussion, present information, show a timeline of events, demonstrate/explain a process or summarize a class discussion.

Online tools

<p>Photo Peach photopeach.com</p>	<p>In three steps, you can create an online slideshow. Upload digital photos to Photo Peach then add music and words to create a slideshow. Register for a free account. Share your slideshow on social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook or embed it into your weblog.</p>
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<p>Prezi prezi.com</p>	<p>Prezi is a unique slideshow tool with a zooming feature. A free student/teacher license is available for Prezi, but to qualify, you must register with a recognized educational institution e-mail address. With this license, your slideshows can be created online and presented offline, you can choose private or public viewing, 500 MB of memory is available, and you can use your own logo instead of Prezi's.</p>
<p>Slideshare slideshare.net</p>	<p>Slideshare allows users to upload and share their Power Point presentations, documents, and videos. A basic account is free and upgrades are available for a monthly fee. A free account includes unlimited uploads, but advertising is present. Users can browse the Slideshare by area of interest and by tags.</p>
<p>Voice Thread & Ed. Voice Thread voicethread.com</p>	<p>This dynamic tool allows users to create a collaborative multimedia slideshow that supports the use of images, documents and video. Comments can be left using voice, text, or a video. VoiceThread presentations can be embedded into websites and exported to MP3 players or DVD's. Learners can set up personal accounts where they can create, edit and manage their own portfolios. VoiceThread provides options for public or private access. Ed. Voice Thread offers a secure collaborative environment designed for K-12 contexts. Register for a free personal account. Educational pricing available for Ed.VoiceThread accounts.</p>

Readings and resources

Cummins, K. (2011). Thoughts on using Prezi as a teaching tool. [Video]. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/4gooetp>

Language learners use VoiceThread to practice speaking. (n.d.). Retrieved from VoiceThread website: <http://tinyurl.com/4so2amz>

Vesper, S. (2008). VoiceThread examples in Education. [Online slideshow]. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/4omm6b>

Social bookmarking

When you use the “Favourites” option on your Internet browser to catalog web sites of interest, these are stored on your computer and cannot be accessed from another location. However, when you use social bookmarking tools, you can save, organize, share and access your digital website library from any computer at any time.

Features of social bookmarking

- Online social bookmarking services, such as Delicious and Diigo, use tags or key words to organize your bookmarked webpages. Tags make it easy to find others who share the same interest and to follow them. You can subscribe to a tag using an RSS feed. (See *News feeds*)
- The bookmarks you choose to save can be shared with others publically, shared only with members of your personal network or kept completely private.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Advanced English language learners can use Citeulike to keep track of and share references they use in their research projects and papers.
- When learners work collaboratively to complete project- or research-based assignments, important websites can be shared among group members. With Diigo, learners can use the highlighter and sticky note feature to draw attention to pertinent information.
- Create a discussion group using Shelfari to discuss a book with your learners.
- Create a digital library of resources for your learners around a particular theme or topic by generating a tag within a social bookmarking tool such as Diigo. Have your learners subscribe to the tag using an RSS feed and Google Reader.
- Use Delicious to bookmark teaching and learning websites that support your curriculum. Share these with your colleagues to generate a larger library of resources.

Online tools

<p>Citeulike citeulike.org</p>	<p>This free social citation site allows users to manage their reference lists, share their lists with others. Readings are organized by tags. Stores PDFs online.</p>
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<p>Del.icio.us delicious.com</p>	<p>Delicious uses tags or key words to organize and share your bookmarked webpages. Download Delicious and the application will be added to your Internet browser toolbar. When you would like to save a webpage, click on "Save to Delicious". You will be able to access your bookmarks from any computer, making it an ideal service for instructors and learners who often work at different computers.</p>
<p>Diigo diigo.com</p>	<p>This powerful digital library tool allows users to annotate (using highlighter and sticky note features), archive and organize bookmarks. Diigo is a free download, and Diigo also supports transitions from Delicious.</p>
<p>Shelfari shelfari.com</p>	<p>Shelfari is free to join. Import books from your recent Amazon.com purchases, from a website, or your Delicious library. You can find and invite friends, join or create a group, write reviews, and discuss your favourite books with others. The books themselves are not available on Shelfari's website, but links are provided to online sellers such as Amazon.com.</p>

Readings and resources

Kiliçkaya, F. (2009). Social bookmarking: Publishing your bookmarks online. *The Journal of Teaching English with Technology*, 9(1). Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/6hdqmx>

Social networking

Social networking is commonly used for maintaining and extending existing relationships with friends and family members. However, social networking tools can also be used to extend learning outside the walls of the classroom and to engage with others who share similar interests.²⁴ Both friendship-driven and interest-driven uses of social networking tools can be harnessed for building and practicing English language skills.

Features of social networks

- Social networking tools are free to join and most can be downloaded to your computer and mobile devices (e.g., Smart phone, iPad, iPod).

²⁴ Ito, Horst, Bittanti, Boyd, Herr-Stephenson, Lange, Pascoe, et al., (2008).

- The ubiquity and popularity of social networking sites among some ESL learners can be harnessed in the English language classroom. One study investigating social networking in an intensive English course found learners interacted with their peers and the instructor outside of class time, posted photos of classroom activities, and built online identities.²⁵ Social networking can be used to capitalize on peer-based learning.
- There are numerous considerations to bear in mind when incorporating social networking into your practice. For instance, it is suggested social and professional boundaries be clearly established between you and your learners. You may want to set up one account for personal use and one for professional purposes. Be sure to manage and customize your privacy settings for both accounts. Encourage learners to do the same.
- Despite the popularity and usefulness of social networking sites for English language learners, administrative filters or blocks may prohibit the use of these sites at your institution.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Social networking tools can be used to engage learners with civic, provincial or federal government affairs. For instance, learners can visit (or join) politicians' pages to learn about their platforms and what they have to say.
- Through social networking tools, learners can become active members of their local communities by joining (or forming) a community group page. They will know when events and meetings will be held.
- Encourage learners to support a cause, promote a local charity or participate in a non-profit organization they care about using a social networking tool such as Facebook.
- Social networking can be used as a resource for learners' research interests by joining a group or an event that focuses on their topic.
- Learners participating in employment or workplace training programs can use the professional social networking tool, LinkedIn, to develop their personal work-oriented profile, build a network of professional contacts, and join groups. Instructors, too, may find this a useful tool for their own professional development and to optimize networking opportunities within the field.
- Create group pages for your entire ESL class or for smaller study groups. On the class page, post announcements, upcoming events, reminders, and photos. Encourage learners to post to the message board regularly. Smaller group pages allow learners to share and collaborate.

²⁵ Reinhardt & Zander, 2011.

- Be aware of the security settings for your social networking accounts and for those of your learners. Security settings do change, so be vigilant to ensure personal information is secure at all times.

Online tools

<p>Facebook facebook.com</p>	<p>Users build their own personal website page. Photos can be uploaded and shared. There are numerous applications that can be used with Facebook, among them, Slideshare, GoogleDocs, Zoho Online Office, and Podcast. There are over 500 million active users of FaceBook.²⁶</p>
<p>LinkedIn linkedin.com</p>	<p>This is a professional social networking tool where you can connect with future employers, research companies or organizations you are targeting, and find employment opportunities. A basic account is free and premium services are available at a cost. LinkedIn supports apps such as WordPress and Twitter.</p>
<p>MySpace myspace.com</p>	<p>Chat with people in real- or delayed-time. Share video and photos. Follow or host threads, play games, watch videos, and listen to music. MySpace has an online “iKeep Safe” tutorial as well as numerous tips and downloadable documents about staying safe on the Internet.</p>
<p>Ning ning.com</p>	<p>Ning provides a free 30-day trial, but you must sign up for a Mini-, Plus-, or Pro-plans with your credit card information first. Each plan has a monthly fee. Ning allows users to build a private social networking web site.</p>

Readings and resources

Blattner, G. & Fiori, M. (2009). Facebook in the language classroom: Promises and possibilities. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 6(1), 17-28.

Reinhardt, J. & Zander, V. (2011). Social networking in an intensive English language classroom: A language socialization perspective. *CALICO Journal*, 28(2), 326-344.

²⁶ Facebook, 2010

Surveys and Polls

Web-based survey and polling tools can be used in English language programs by program administrators and instructors, as well as by learners. Polls can also add to the vitality of the face-to-face classroom with the use of student clicker systems (see *Clickers in the classroom*, below).

Features of online surveys and polls

- Survey and polls are easy to create and are customizable. Templates are provided along with a set of question types to choose from (e.g., multiple choice, rating scales).
- Results are tabulated automatically, often in real-time as responses are submitted.
- Survey and polling links can be embedded into personal or classroom web sites or weblogs.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Program administrators and instructors can use surveys to conduct needs analysis or to gather information from exiting learners about their experiences within the program.
- Instructors can use surveys with their learners for a number of purposes. For example, they might consider asking learners to (anonymously) complete a weekly survey about the course, the materials, the teaching style, what they learned, and what learning task was the most useful to them. Develop a survey or a low stakes quiz for learners to review course content, grammar points, or vocabulary.
- Learners can develop surveys and polls to administer to their peers, friends, family and/or community members as a part of a project to collect information about a topic.

Online tools

<p>QuizSnack quizsnack.com</p>	<p>QuizSnack is free for a basic account and can be upgraded to a premium account by purchasing pay-as-you-go points or paying a monthly fee. Simple step-by-step instructions take users through each phase of the process to generate a professional looking poll or survey.</p>
<p>Survey Monkey surveymonkey.com</p>	<p>A basic Survey Monkey account is free. This allows 10 questions per survey with up to 100 respondents. It's very easy to use. Fifteen question types are provided, among them, multiple choice, short answer, and rating scales. An upgrade to a 'Pro' account is available for a fee.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Zoomerang info.zoomerang.com</p>	<p>Zoomerang offers free unlimited surveys and polls each with 12 questions designed for 100 responses. Results can be viewed graphically in real-time.</p>
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Clickers in the classroom

Clickers are small devices that look and work much like a television remote control. Each learner is provided a clicker and they are able to vote on questions solicited by the instructor, much like audience members of a television game show. Results are tabulated and displayed graphically and in real-time within a Power Point presentation as learners select and submit their responses to the question. The benefits of using clickers in the classroom include: greater participation rates among learners, particularly for those who are 'shy'; active learning through prompt feedback; and the instructor is able to immediately gauge learners' understanding of the concepts and material presented. Clicker systems are not web-based, it is a hardware system that must be purchased. Another clicker system currently available is eClicker, an application for iPhone and iPad. Used in conjunction with eClicker Host, polls can be conducted in class using these mobile devices.

Readings and resources

James, R. (2010). *Using clickers in the classroom*. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/4ozmykf>

Martyn, M. (2007). Clickers in the classroom: An active learning approach. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, 2. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/4qdkh4k>

Using clickers to engage students and enhance learning.(n.d.). Retrieved from University of Calgary, Teaching and Learning Centre website: <http://tinyurl.com/47tyb9b>

Videos: Producing and publishing

Producing and publishing videos for teaching and learning purposes does not require sophisticated skills, expensive equipment or software to create professional quality videos. Video can be filmed using digital video recorders and cameras (e.g., Flip camera), Smart phones (e.g., iPhone), tablet PC's (e.g., iPad 2), or an iPod Touch. Software for editing, narrating and publishing is often available on the Internet at no charge. Video can be used for a wide array of purposes for English language teaching and learning.

Features of video

- Creating an original video (or movie) requires careful planning including the development of a script, rehearsals, filming, editing, and presenting or publishing the final product. When learners undertake to produce an original video either independently or within a group, it is an opportunity for them to build a range of language and technology skills. Keep in mind it takes time to produce quality videos.
- Video can be uploaded to any number of social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), online repositories (e.g., YouTube), slideshow sites (e.g., VoiceThread), or blogs that support multimedia.
- Videos offer learners an opportunity to listen (and re-listen) to English used in context.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Learners can create videos to document their learning throughout a course, complete with narration, music, and interviews with their peers and the instructor. The video could be uploaded for inclusion within their ePortfolio and presented to the class at the end of the course.
- With beginning level students, field trips or community visits can be video recorded and played back in the classroom. New vocabulary words can be identified as the learners and instructor view the video together.
- Videos posted on learners' personal blogs, VoiceThread accounts, or wikis can be used to stimulate peer-or self-assessment in response to the video material.
- YouTube video links can be embedded into Power Point presentations and played in class, if you have a reliable Internet connection. Create a YouTube playlist or several playlists of videos that support your curriculum. Share interesting, relevant videos with your learners.
- Instructors can use videos they create to supplement learning materials. For example, develop a video to demonstrate a how-to, show a cultural event, or interview a community member. Videos can be uploaded to the instructor's or the class blog or wiki. Embed videos into PowerPoint presentations and play them in class.
- Instructors may find it useful to record themselves teaching a class. Review the video as a tool for self-reflective practice.

Online tools

<p>ESL Video eslvideo.com</p>	<p>With ESL Video, instructors can create their own quizzes using video materials from repositories including YouTube. Multiple choice questions, dictation, and cloze exercises can also be added to ESL Video.</p>
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<p>iMovie (Mac computers)</p>	<p>iMovie is Apple software for Mac computers. Apple's iMovie HD site provides assistance with importing video, starting a new project, adding video to your project, enhancing your project, creating a trailer, sharing your final iMovie, organizing your projects, and much more. Troubleshooting information is also available. See: http://www.apple.com/support/imovie.</p>
<p>Safeshare safeshare.tv</p>	<p>Offensive content and advertisements included around YouTube videos can be removed using SafeShare.</p>
<p>Teacher Tube teachertube.com</p>	<p>This site features videos produced by learners and instructors. You can upload educationally-based documents, video, audio, and photos onto Teacher Tube. Teaching resources is a new feature for K-12 educators and this section includes: printables, lesson plans, themes, graphic organizers, and calendars. Register for a free account to access all features of TeacherTube.</p>
<p>University Tube theuniversitytube.com</p>	<p>Registration is free and enables users to upload and download videos, generate a playlist or playlists of videos, create a profile and connect with others.</p>
<p>YouTube youtube.com</p>	<p>YouTube is a video repository or video sharing service. Browse and view videos free of charge without an account or register for a free account to upload and share your videos with the world.</p>
<p>Video Spin videospin.com</p>	<p>Download this free online video editing software to 'spin' your own videos. The website provides detailed 'how to' tutorials to take you through every step of the video process, from shooting your video through to editing and adding music and sound effects.</p>
<p>Vimeo vimeo.com</p>	<p>This video sharing site is free for a basic, password protected account, allowing one video upload a week. Supports HD.</p>

<p>Windows Movie Maker (PC computers)</p>	<p>Install free Movie Maker software onto your PC computer.²⁷ Visit the Windows XP Movie Maker How-to web site for detailed instructions to get you started. Topics range from connecting your digital recorder to the computer to narrating, editing and downloading your movie. See http://tinyurl.com/3zcat</p>
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Readings and resources

Kebble, P. (2008.) Making movies: An integrated skills task for motivating ESL learners. *EA Journal*, 24(2), 16-26. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/489qgdg>

Yerrick, R. (n.d.). iMovie in teacher education. Retrieved from <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/sciencetg/ie>

Voice chat (*VoIP: Voice over Internet Protocol*)

Voice chat tools allow real-time conversations between two or more individuals over the Internet. Many voice chat tools also include instant messaging and video conferencing with multiple parties. Learners may be quite familiar with voice chat applications for communicating with their family and friends in their home country. A computer with a microphone and speakers or a headset is required when using voice chat tools. A webcam is also required when using tools with video-conferencing capabilities.

Features of voice chat

- Voice chat tools provide opportunities for language to be practiced in authentic communicative situations that resemble face-to-face exchanges. Learners use a wide variety of communication strategies in voice chat as they negotiate meaning.
- Unlike text chat, when voice chat tools are used for real-time communication, learners receive immediate feedback and real-voice interaction from their conversation partners. When voice chat tools are used for delayed-time communication, messages may be recorded. This allows the speaker to check their message and edit it before sending it.
- Voice chat tools support intercultural exchange opportunities when learners are paired with different L2 learners or native speakers. This provides an opportunity for ESL learners to experience different accents and dialects of English as well as different cultures.

²⁷ Windows Movie Maker is included with Windows XP Service Pack 2. The Movie Maker 2.1 download is available at <http://tinyurl.com/3fpo4>

- The audio quality of most voice chat tools is the same and sometimes better than mobile or landline connections, and there is no fee when PC to PC calls are made.
- Language proficiency gains for English language learners using voice chat have been identified in the literature.²⁸

Teaching and learning ideas

- In addition to using voice chat tools for real-time communication with a partner, learners can also use these tools to record and re-record their voices. For example, beginning level learners can practice leaving a telephone message by recording their message before sending it to a partner. Voice chat tools can be used by learners to develop their confidence and fluency skills through repeated practice.
- Arrange native English speaking or other second language speaking partners to converse with your learners via voice chat. Provide structured discussion topics that are intuitively appealing to both conversational partners and provide topics that are content-based.²⁹
- Learners' voice recordings can be used for self- assessment purposes as well as by the instructor to assess language speaking skills.
- When video conferencing (i.e., using a web cam) with a conversation partner, it is important to consider body language as an important part of the overall communicative message. For instance, be sure to sit directly in front of the webcam. When speaking to a partner, look at the webcam to establish eye contact. When listening, lean in to the webcam slightly to show interest in what the partner is saying. Refrain from eating or drinking when taking part in a video conference, and try to sit reasonably still during the conference.

Online tools

<p style="text-align: center;">Gong gong.ust.hk</p>	<p>Gong is free and offers a number of communication tools including real-time voice and text chat. Messages from learners and their instructor can be recorded on voice boards. Voice recordings can be sped up or slowed down, a useful feature for ESL learners. A voice editing feature is also available. Gong can be used as a stand-alone application or added to Moodle.</p>
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²⁸ Kern, 1995

²⁹ Yang, Y.-T. C. and Chang, L.-Y., 2008

<p>Google Talk Google.com/talk</p>	<p>Google Talk supports text and voice chat. Transfer files, send instant messages, and audio conference. Free PC to PC calls are free. Download Google Talk from http://www.google.com/talk/index.html.</p>
<p>Skype skype.com</p>	<p>Skype features instant messaging, audio and video calling, file sharing, as well as video-conferencing tools. To get started, download the latest version of Skype and select a user name and password. Skype credits may be purchased as there is a fee for computer to landline or mobile phone calls. Subscriptions are also available for purchase. New features are added regularly.</p>
<p>Yahoo! Messenger ca.messenger.yahoo.com</p>	<p>Free PC-to-PC audio and video calls. To get started, download the free application. Drag and drop photo sharing is also available as well as instant messaging. More features are added regularly.</p>

Readings and resources

Eaton, S. E. (2010). How to use Skype in the ESL/EFL classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 26(11). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Eaton-UsingSkype.html>

Starfire, V. (2006). Free online voice chat programs revisited. *TESL-EJ*, 9(4). Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/5r5ww34>

Tsukamoto, M., Nuspliger, B., & Senzaki, Y. (2009). *Using Skype® to connect a classroom to the world: Providing students an authentic language experience within the classroom*. CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching, Selected Papers, Volume 5, 162-168.

Web conferencing: Webcasts and webinars

Webcasts and webinars fall under the umbrella of web-based conferencing. A webcast is similar to a radio production where audio and video is broadcast over the Internet to a user. A webinar (*web-based seminar*) may be a one-way or interactive presentation or workshop delivered to a particular audience. The focus is generally educational in nature. Web-conferencing software often feature real-time audio and video communication tools, an interactive whiteboard, desktop sharing, public and private text chat, polls, quizzes, surveys, and break-out rooms. Often these programs accommodate a large number of participants, and sessions can be recorded.

Features of web conferencing

- Web conferencing offers an option to programs wishing to provide courses of study for learners in geographically isolated areas; however, high speed Internet access is required for real-time participation.
- Workshops and presentations can be easily broadcast live. These can also be recorded allowing participants who were not able to attend the live version to listen at a time convenient to them.
- The tools available with webinar software, particularly polls, chat, and other multimedia, support interactivity between and among the learners and the instructor. In this way, learners are actively engaged in the learning process.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Use web conferencing applications to hold regular office hours and conduct meetings with learners.
- Learners can develop and facilitate multimedia supported presentations to their peers.
- Voice applications within web conferencing software can be used by learners to record a verbal response to an assignment and then submit this to the instructor for review and feedback (this can also be in audio form). Peer assessment may be done in the same way. This increases verbal proficiency through practice.
- Professional development, training sessions, and meetings may be conducted using web conferences. These can be held at a time that is convenient for instructors. The collaborative, interactive nature of webinars has been found to increase attendance rates and interest in the topics presented.

Online tools

<p>Cisco WebEx webex.com</p>	<p>A 14 day free trial is available. A monthly fee allows unlimited meetings with up to 25 participants at a time. WebEx also offers mobile options for 3G Smart phones and iPads.</p>
<p>Illuminate Live! illuminate.com</p>	<p>Though Illuminate is purchased and hosted by institutions, Illuminate also offers a free v-room for educators to hold a webinar session with groups of up to 3 participants. Go to http://www.learncentral.org/user/vroomreg. Illuminate can be integrated into CMS including Blackboard. For a free trial of Illuminate visit: http://tinyurl.com/48yt6ae</p>

<p>Learner Central learncentral.org</p>	<p>This site is sponsored by Elluminate and is a public Elluminate access point. After joining, as an educator, you may develop and host a free webinar for a large group or conduct a group meeting at http://tinyurl.com/nnygbk. Sessions can be recorded.</p>
<p>MS Live Meeting microsoft.com/online/office-live-meeting.aspx</p>	<p>A free 30-day trial is available. Monthly subscriptions are available at a minimal cost. MS Live Meeting features an interactive white board, desktop sharing capabilities, multi-party audio and video conferencing tools, and much more. Sessions can be recorded.</p>
<p>Wimba horizonwimba.com</p>	<p>Wimba is purchased and hosted by institutions and can be integrated into course management systems including Blackboard and Moodle. The Wimba collaboration suite of tools includes Wimba Classroom, Pronto, Voice, Create, and Diploma. Wimba provides live product demonstrations at: http://www.horizonwimba.com/demos/live.php</p>

Readings and resources

Hampel, R. & Hauck, M. (2004). Towards an effective use of audio conferencing in distance language courses. *Language learning & technology*, 8(1), 66-82. Retrieved from <http://llt.msu.edu/vol8num1/pdf/hampel.pdf>

Wang, Y. (2004). Supporting synchronous distance language learning with desktop videoconferencing. *Language learning & technology*, 8(3), 90-121. Retrieved from <http://llt.msu.edu/vol8num1/pdf/hampel.pdf>

Writing on the Web: Web sites, weblogs (blogs) and wikis

Web sites can be developed for a wide variety of purposes for English language teaching and learning. Web sites may include web pages that are static or dynamic (interactive). Static web pages include information, documents, and hyperlinks that we can access and read, but not make changes to. Examples of static web sites include our provincial ATESL and national TESL Canada sites. Web sites that take advantage of interactive features such as collaborative editing and comment boxes are ideal tools for supporting writing projects, group projects,

and ePortfolios. Web blogs and wikis are interactive web sites. Each type of web site is driven by different purposes and processes. Each is taken up separately in the sections below.

Web sites

Both learners and instructors can use authoring (editing) software or online tools to develop personal or professional web sites.

Features of web sites

- In the past, web sites have included only static information, but increasingly sophisticated authoring (editing) software is available that supports the inclusion of interactive components such as discussion boards as well as multimedia.
- A web site with a registered address (domain name) offers users a persistent, recognizable URL.
- Authoring software makes it easy to create and edit web pages using a what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) format. Web site developers do not need to know html to create web sites when using programs such as Dreamweaver or Expression Web.

Teaching and learning ideas

- A class web page can serve as a vital source of information about your course. Communicate up-coming events, assignment reminders, or words of encouragement for your learners. Include all course learning materials on the class website, including hyperlinks to supporting resources and learning tools. You may also want to include a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ's). Build a repository of exemplars and samples of assignments from past learners: This serves as a resource for your current learners. Review materials and practice tests / quizzes could also be uploaded to the website for learners to access. Be sure to provide your contact information (e.g., e-mail address, Skype name) and availability on the website, so learners will know how and when to contact you.
- Refresh your website content frequently to ensure learners will re-visit the site to stay current. Remember to update the content, assignment due dates, and refresh the announcements with each new version of your course.
- Technology savvy learners may enjoy developing their own web sites using either authoring software or online hosting services. Web sites can be used to organize and compile assignments for an ePortfolio or develop a professional or personal space.

Authoring software

<p>Adobe Flash adobe.com/products/flash</p>	<p>Develop animated, interactive web-pages using this authoring tool. Free trial downloads. Educational pricing is available.</p>
<p>Dreamweaver adobe.com</p>	<p>Dreamweaver is considered among the best for designing and developing professional-looking web pages that include interactive content. Student and Teacher editions are available at a discounted rate. Download a free trial of Dreamweaver CS5 from http://tinyurl.com/kgoop</p>
<p>KompoZer kompozer.net</p>	<p>Download a free version of KompoZer to create web pages. Compatible with PC and Apple computers.</p>
<p>Microsoft Expression Web microsoft.com/expression</p>	<p>Expression Web replaces Microsoft's FrontPage for creating and managing web sites. Download a free Ultimate or Professional version for a 60 day trial from http://www.microsoft.com/expression/try-it</p>

Online tools

<p>Disposable Webpage disposablewebpage.com</p>	<p>Create webpages that have a countdown clock that you can set from 90 days to 0 days from the time the page is complete. This is a free, open-source site. Great for short-term projects.</p>
<p>Google Sites google.sites.com</p>	<p>Create free personal webpages or a class wiki page using pre-built templates. Security settings are available to control access and sharing of information. Tutorials are available.</p>
<p>Wix wix.com</p>	<p>Create a free Flash³⁰ web site or portfolio. Visit the Wix learning center to learn about planning, designing, writing and publishing a web site. Video how's are also available.</p>

³⁰ Flash (Adobe Flash) is a program that supports multimedia such as animation. Flash can be used to add interactivity to web pages that meshes audio, video, and photos.

Getting started: A few tips

- Authoring software makes it easy to create and edit web pages using a what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) format. Dreamweaver, Microsoft's Expression Web and Adobe Flash are authoring software that can be purchased.
- There are considerable design issues to attend to when planning and organizing a web site (see Readings and Resources below). In addition to creating and organizing the content for your Web pages, will you add multimedia such as images, audio and video? Will you include a discussion board, embed a blog, or include an RSS feed?
- Web sites developed using authoring software must be uploaded to a hosting server such as Telus (<http://tinyurl.com/4ndrxw9>) or Rogers (<http://tinyurl.com/49qukwj>).
- It is advisable to register your web site address (URL or domain name). Once registered, if you change your hosting server, you are able to take your domain name with you to another host. Register your domain name with the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) if you would like a URL ending in .ca (www.cira.ca) or see the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN, <http://www.icann.org>). There is a modest yearly registration fee.

Readings and resources

Building a class website. (1998-2010). Retrieved from University of Washington, Learning and Scholarly Technologies website: <http://tinyurl.com/4gr6zmf>

Creating an effective web site. (1998-2010). Retrieved from University of Washington, Learning and Scholarly Technologies website: <http://tinyurl.com/4ewm7zb>

Dreamweaver tutorials. (2010). Retrieved from SiteBuilder website: <http://www.sitebuilder.ws/tutorials/dreamweaver-tutorials>

Heng, C. (2010). How to register your own domain name. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/24frfm>

Weblogs (Blogs)

Practitioners know the importance of interactivity and collaboration, peer review, and the development of writing skills within the ESL classroom. While we are familiar with the idea of pair or small group work in face-to-face environments, we can move this knowledge building to the online environment where learners can contribute to the group at any time, from anywhere (i.e., asynchronous communications). Blogs are tools we can incorporate

into our practice as a way to facilitate the learning process beyond the confines of face-to-face contexts. Further, these web-based tools can be effectively used for writing practice and assignments as well as for self-reflection and peer review. A weblog or blog is “an easily created, easily updatable Web site that allows an author (or authors) to publish instantly to the Internet from any Internet connection” (Richardson, 2010, p. 17).

Features of weblogs

- Weblogs are personal websites where texts are organized chronologically and archived. The profile of the blog owner can be public or hidden.
- Text entries can be edited.
- Comment features are included to facilitate interaction with weblog readers.
- Most weblogs support multimedia (e.g., YouTube videos, digital photos, audio files) and support links to websites. Some blogs also have a built-in search engine.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Learners can build and maintain their own personal blogs. They can be used to support writing assignments, reflective journaling, and peer editing.
- Instructors can use blogs to post course outlines, materials and resources, links to online resources, and short readings for learners.
- A classroom blog can be used to support collaborative language and cultural exchanges with distant or foreign partners.
- Dooly, Pavlikov, Eastment, Müller-Hartmann, and Visser (2007) offer five tips and ideas for making blogs an integral part of a collaborative language learning project:
 1. Provide a variety of texts that are of interest to learners (e.g., poems, dialogues).
 2. Invite learners to write texts together on their blogs (e.g., write a movie review).
 3. Set up a chain story telling activity where learners respond to the most recent addition to the story.
 4. Get learners to set up exhibits on their blog that include multimedia such as digital photos and audio files (e.g., a national holiday in your home country).
 5. Have learners post riddles for one another.

Online tools

<p>Amplify amplify.com</p>	<p>Rated as one of the top 100 tools by the Centre for Learning and Performance Technologies.³¹ You can sign in using Twitter or Facebook accounts.</p>
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³¹ See the Centre for Learning and Performance Technologies at <http://www.c4lpt.co.uk>

<p>b2evolution b2evolution.net</p>	<p>A free open source weblog tool that supports multiple blogs, RSS feeds, file and photo management, and plug-ins. It can be installed as an extension to your personal website.</p>
<p>Blogger Blogger.com</p>	<p>Creating a blog is easy with Blogger, a free online tool. First, enter your valid e-mail address and select a password. Next, choose a name for your blog. Finally, select a starter template for your blog. You are ready to begin publishing on the Internet.</p>
<p>Edublogs edublogs.org</p>	<p>Edublogs is a weblog site designed specifically for educators and their learners. A free account is available, and it can be upgraded with additional features for a small fee. No e-mail address is required to register for an account. It provides tips for managing student blogs and helpful ideas for using blogs in the classroom. The site also boasts that most schools are able to access it in their computer labs, unlike other blogging tools that may be blocked by in-house administrative controls. Edublogs supports multimedia plug-ins.</p>
<p>Word Press wordpress.com</p>	<p>While a basic Word Press account is free, premium features may also be purchased (e.g., for your own domain name, additional storage). A tutorial is available to take new blog users "from zero to hero" in a few easy to follow steps. Features a spam blocker and privacy option for your blog.</p>

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Wikis

A wiki is a collection of Web-based pages that allows anyone with access to the Internet to contribute or modify content. Perhaps the best known example of a wiki is Wikipedia (Wikipedia.org). Wikis are web-based tools that can be used to support ESL writing skills through independent and collaborative writing projects: Learners can write, read, exchange, review, and edit documents. Wikis provide instructors with a flexible instructional tool to support and promote interactive learning and collaboration within their teaching and learning context(s). The instructor can monitor the contributions of each student by looking at the page history or 'recent changes' features available with many wikis. Wiki providers such as PBworks, Wikispaces, and Wetpaint offer easy, online alternatives to developing web sites for personal and professional use.

Features of wikis

- Free, open source wiki programs are readily available and simple to join. All you need is an e-mail account to get started.
- Wikis are an easy way to publish online contributions, and they always display the most current information.
- Participation and contributions are preserved so individual learners can be tracked.
- Membership to the wiki can be controlled. Public access can be denied, if you choose.
- Documents can be created, shared, edited, and published on the web.
- Most wikis support plug-ins for Web 2.0 applications (e.g., Twitter, Flickr, YouTube) and Microsoft programs (i.e., Word, PowerPoint).
- Wikis facilitate opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and the creation of a learning community.
- Wiki is short for wiki-wiki, Hawaiian for 'fast'.

Teaching and learning ideas

- Use a wiki to build a set of teaching and learning resources with colleagues.
- Co-create curriculum and materials with learners.
- Create a classroom wiki where upcoming events and assignments can be posted and learning materials and resources provided. Each learner can be given a page on this wiki to work on their assignments, upload samples of their work, or introduce themselves to the class.
- Learners can practice their editing skills on the wiki pages of their peers or on Wikipedia entries.
- Writing exchanges with long distant or foreign partners is easy with wikis. Learners can exchange cultural information about their home countries. Multimedia such as digital photos, video or audio files can be uploaded to the wiki to support written entries.

Online tools

<p>PBworks pbworks.com</p>	<p>This is a popular wiki service for educators. A basic classroom wiki space is free and can be upgraded for a fee. The level of security for accessing the wikis can be controlled.</p>
<p>Wikispaces wikispaces.com</p>	<p>Wikispaces offers a basic free account for individuals with the option to upgrade for a fee. There is also a fee-based option available for large organizations that require many wikis and advanced settings. Wikispaces is very simple and easy to use.</p>
<p>Wetpaint wetpaint.com</p>	<p>A basic account is free. Upgrades are available for a fee and include the option of removing advertisements from your wiki pages.</p>

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