Interactivity, Collaboration and Feedback in Language Learning Technologies

Wireless Ready discusses the use of Web 2.0 for second language learning

Advances in instructional technology, particularly in the area of foreign language education, are frequently greeted with great excitement prior to a period of normalization, especially if they amount to more than a mere passing fad. On the back of the interest in Web 2.0 technologies and newly emergent social networking spaces, podcasting has appeared to a fanfare of similar excitement. Web 2.0 technologies focus on creating interactive, collaborative communities, using technologies like wikis, blogs, social bookmarking and online video. It is no surprise that they have quickly been adapted by technologists in second language education. Some of the most prominent sites on the web include, MySpace, Bebo, Metacafe, YouTube, de.licio.us, wikipedia and Blogger. Indeed, following on from blog in 2004, podcasting was named word of the year 2005 by Merriam Webster’s Dictionary.

Our one-day event, ‘Wireless Ready: Interactivity, Collaboration and Feedback in Language Learning Technologies’, gathers together three prominent keynote speakers and sixteen further papers by practitioners and academics in the field to discuss these developments. Each of our presenters deals with a number of questions surrounding Web 2.0 and is concerned with mapping the new terrain and calling into question its range and influence. Web 2.0 technologies have been advanced as technologies that fundamentally grapple with contemporary pedagogy and question the transformation of learning. We hope that this event will help you to consider the validity of Web 2.0 and how best it can be deployed in the second language classroom.

Contents

Keynote Speakers  2
Panel A  5
Panels B & C  7
Panel D & E  12
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title of the Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13:35 - 14:20</td>
<td>Michael Coghlan ICT Consultant (TAFE), Australia</td>
<td>m-Learning in the Wireless World: Where is the M in Interactivity, Collaboration and Feedback?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract**

The marriage between education and Internet technology has effected an extraordinary assault on perspectives about teaching and learning. The role of the teacher, the nature and context of learning, as well as the function and relative importance of course content have all been challenged and redefined. Mobile learning complicates the picture even further. M-learning is not just about using laptops, smart phones, and tag and code readers. The wider context of mobility implies multiple contexts for learning, the blurring of social and academic spheres of activity, student collaboration and production of content, and a view of knowledge that is dynamic rather than static. How does a teacher foster interactivity, collaboration, and feedback in this context? How and where do teachers and students acquire the skills to operate effectively in an m-learning world?

| 14:20 - 14:30 | COFFEE BREAK |
**Abstract**

This presentation will examine the use of screen recorder software to produce video feedback, reporting on a project at a UK university. The presentation will describe screen capture software, what it does and how it can be used in a wide variety of ways. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about screen capture software is the fact that despite being one of the most powerful and effective pieces of software in ICT it has taken such a long time for teachers to recognize its use. The software has existed for around a decade now but it has only been in the last two to three years that we have begun to see its mainstream adoption into education, especially at university level.

The possibilities in terms of training and teaching are clearly obvious, especially in training people to use computer software but what many teachers and practitioners have failed to realize is the potential for screen capture software outside of the obvious areas of software training. Even the producers of the software themselves seem to have ignored or missed the application of this software way beyond computer training. Therefore in this presentation once we have looked at the uses of screen capture software as a training and teaching tool, we will turn our attention to the less obvious uses of the software which in many ways have created the most interest. These areas can include feedback to pupils, commenting and giving advice to pupils on the marking schemes we provide with their questions and producing mini-grammar lessons.
The revolution in Interactive Whiteboard technology has provided teachers with a powerful class resource that allows them to combine previously disparate elements (video, sound, text, images) into one compelling and dynamic presentation tool. There is a danger, however, that this technology does nothing more than reinforce teacher-centric methods of class delivery, basically giving the tutor a spectacular and impressive way of making them once more the focus of attention. For that reason the key to Interactive technology in the classroom is not merely a case of installing a whiteboard in the room. It is also essential to ensure that the students themselves are also fully engaged in the interactive process, both through the pedagogy used and the introduction of additional technologies that allow them create a dialectical relationship between themselves, instructor and the content. Learner response systems are designed to allow students to interact with the whiteboard and the instructor by sending messages and responses over a wireless connection. At their most simple they provide the learner with a multiple-choice set of options (for example, A to F). These can be used for simple testing or to monitor class opinion and understanding. The advantage is that the entire class is involved in the communication, not just the vocal and able few. The teacher can therefore get immediate feedback from everyone, rather than having to guess what the students are thinking or waiting for test results later. More recent, advanced learner response systems, such as Promethean’s Activexpression, allow the student to send text messages to the board, allowing them to respond to more complex learning situations by inputting words, phrases and number sequences etc. Once every student has the medium with which to send complex communications to the board and teacher, in a controlled and systematic way, then we can see the use of Interactive Whiteboard technology in an enriching and inclusive way for the whole class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title of the Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16:40 - 17:10</td>
<td>Steve King and Matthew Pride</td>
<td>A Practical Demonstration of Content Available for Interactive Whiteboards</td>
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<td><em>Pearson Longman</em></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract**

Pearson Longman's Interactive Whiteboard content brings together the benefits of a multiple-intelligence approach to language learning. Some students prefer to listen and absorb, others respond well to pictures, while others respond well to physical interaction. The New Cutting Edge Digital and Top Notch Digital programs support users with all these preferences through its rich multi-media and audio-visual content, as well as flipcharts involving a range of simple interactions, such as drag and drop, erase or write-in. Learning becomes more active and, therefore, more memorable.
Abstract

Japanese universities have made significant investments in technology to be used in classrooms with varied success. This presentation aims to consider a recent development that may have the potential to transform many aspects of classroom dynamics: Classroom Response Systems (CRS). It will discuss the use of a CRS System (Interwrite PRS RF) in language learning classrooms. Classroom Response Systems, or “Clickers” are wireless in-class electronic polling systems used by students to answer questions during lectures. Classroom Response Systems are said to allow an instructor to solicit and record feedback from up to 2000 students in a lecture at the same time and to immediately display the feedback in a variety of formats.

The presentation will discuss efforts to put such a system in place. It will allow attendants to use the devices and will initiate discussion and solicit opinions, examine the potential advantages of such a setup as well as consider examples of classroom applications at all levels. It will also situate the use of such devices within a pedagogical framework that involves learner-centered instruction and peer-based learning. Research to date on the following questions will be discussed:

1) possible advantages of CRS technology, as well as technical obstacles to CRS use in language lectures.
2) student attitudes toward the use of CRS technology in university ESL lectures, and
3) improvements in student performance which are attributable to the use of CRS technology.

Finally, the presentation will consider how Classroom Response Systems can be used in light of the current dialog regarding pedagogy employing technology and research in second language acquisition.
Abstract
This study examined the preferences of Japanese female university students when accessing e-learning materials to aid their study of technical vocabulary related to pharmaceutical sciences. A total of 274 first-year students were given 10-minute 10-item quizzes related to medical affix terms, such as gastritis or hepatology, at the beginning of each 90-minute class that met once a week. Over the week prior to the quiz, the students could access a Moodle site presenting the affixes used in words and in sentences similar to those that would appear on the quiz. The site could be accessed by computer or cellphone. Those who had access to neither used the printed materials only for study. Those who could use either the computer or cellphone were divided into groups that would use one mode for the first four weeks of the study and the other for the remaining four weeks. Of the 274 students, 54% were registered for both computer or cellphone access for 4 weeks each, 22% for computer access, 10% for cellphone access and 13% for the printed materials. A questionnaire administered at the end of the 8-week period showed that 70% of the students accessed the e-learning materials only once or less per week, but this may have been because they tended to cram just before the quiz. Of the approximately 260 respondents, 30.4% thought that the introduction of e-learning materials led to more time spent studying while 71.2% said that they used both e-learning and printed materials. While students say they are accustomed to text messaging using the cellphone (64.2%), they found the computer not as convenient to use (63.5%). Overall, the results indicate that the students had a favorable view of the e-learning materials which were introduced for the first time this academic year.
Abstract

Companies, universities and students realize the vital importance for graduate employability of language especially in a workplace with fast changing complex contents and with ever new technologies. Policy makers call for innovative approaches in schooling to help students acquire the necessary interactive competences and skills to perform professionally in foreign languages.

This paper describes how professional face-to-face and online interaction in English has improved by means of a project: the development of an own learning community in Google by graduate students of business and economics and the subsequent reporting by these students to each other and to external business experts.

A qualitative and quantitative results questionnaire was administered on the content of the project (the open, new community in Google vs the existing, closed one Blackboard) and on its approach (project management).

Our conclusion is that an authentic virtual learning environment leads to: (i). a high involvement of the students, resulting in intensive interaction in discussion forums in the target language, (ii). a substantial growth in confidence as to spoken and written language for communicative purposes, and (iii). the discovery of the lack of training in project management skills at university, but also of the importance of documentation and reporting with students. The survey confirmed that a Google community can also be used as a virtual learning community and that it very well fulfills the requirements of student-pulled learning, user-friendliness, interaction, and new technological means. Social constructivism is what students experienced as the common ground in our Google community, which is lacking in Toledo/Blackboard. Google did not score well on privacy, structure and navigation, though.

For future lessons, the project approach as such was highly recommended, with the slight warning that if another platform is chosen the two learning environments: the new Web 2.0 Google community and the older, Web 1.0, Blackboard learning environment should not be mixed but rather adapted to the needs of the customers.
For educational institutions, Web 2.0 technologies have dramatically shaped both the way instructors teach and the way students learn. Web 2.0 not only expresses the dynamics of changes in the World Wide Web through social networking sites, for example, but also serves as a platform for open source productivity and online learning through the new dynamics of collaboration.

Perhaps the core educational Web 2.0 application is the Course Management System (CMS). These systems play important role in supporting both collaboration and learning content both inside and outside of the classroom. Whether a learning activity consists of text, links, graphics, sound or video, or whether the task is that of creating, storing, retrieving, viewing, or listening to digital content, database-driven course management systems based on Web 2.0 technology are the best prospects for deploying collaborative learning activities.

This presentation will explain how open source CMS can be modified to better make use of Web 2.0 infrastructure either by constructing customized modules or blocks, or by integrating existing Web 2.0 technologies into a CMS. A few of the modules that will be introduced include a mobile blog module, a shared whiteboard, a presentation module and a slideshow module. All of the open source modules which will be introduced were developed at Kochi University of Technology and are available for download at <http://blog.netcourse.org>.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title of the Presentation</th>
</tr>
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| 18:20 - 18:50 | Steve McCarty  
Osaka Jogakuin, Japan | Social Networking Behind Student Lines with Mixi        |

**Abstract**

Joining the social networking site Mixi has allowed the presenter to go behind the lines into student territory. In three 2007-2008 classes where most students have belonged to Mixi, the presenter has reached different stages of negotiating involvement with students in this extra social or personal dimension. This has allowed for more interaction, collaboration, and mutual feedback with students in the classroom as well as beyond. The presentation will introduce the Japanese language interface of Mixi through a YouTube video made in a Computer Communication class in authentic collaboration with students. Social networking with Japanese students is an area where teachers have not customarily entered, more for lack of online technology and language skills than for lack of an invitation. Student attitudes are probed as to a possible ambivalence in valuing their free expression versus the integrative motivation of social involvement with a teacher.

The presenter also recognizes a sort of Heisenberg Principle whereby to observe a social phenomenon is to change it. An untested hypothesis was that results would differ on whether a teacher was welcome in a student community or not depending on how students were approached for an invitation. The presentation will go so far as to propose explanatory concepts for the phenomena encountered in interactions with students toward a theoretical framework for going behind student lines to gauge what Appadurai termed their technoscapes. Besides concepts already mentioned, the presentation will explore bilingual identity, student-generated content, student ambivalence and investment. Immersive activities are proposed to build authentic relationships with students that cut through power hierarchies and positively blur the distinction between the classroom and the real life of students and teachers, which nowadays includes a virtual dimension. The sharing of views and experiences along with questions by audience members will be welcomed.
Abstract

Telecollaborative projects such as e-mail exchanges have been shown to provide numerous benefits to language learners. Indeed, such projects have been demonstrated to increase learner motivation and improve writing and computer skills while, at the same time, improving the intercultural communicative competence and cultural awareness of those involved on both sides of the telecollaboration. Although these benefits have been discussed in the literature at great length, the numerous logistical and administrative difficulties that must be addressed for the project to be successfully implemented have received much less attention. Appropriate partner classes must be secured, mutually accommodating schedules must be worked out, assessment issues must be considered, and unpredictable complications such as student absences, uneven contributions, cultural misunderstandings, and simple mistakes with e-mail format must all be constantly monitored and handled on a nearly case-by-case basis. Unfortunately, for those instructors considering telecollaborative projects, many might be left to wonder if the benefits outweigh the problems.

One way to significantly minimize the potentially negative impact of the many obstacles to the successful completion of a telecollaborative project is to adequately prepare the learners involved by first conducting a practice e-mail exchange between learners within the same program. This presentation outlines how one such practice exchange was planned, executed, and incorporated into the established curriculum at a university in Japan. The results show that successfully completing an intra-program exchange can increase learner motivation while fostering improved self-confidence and providing a strong foundation of e-mail writing skills. Furthermore, such practice may assist instructors in more precisely clarifying future objectives for telecollaboration and in identifying problem areas before beginning an exchange with another school, if such an exchange is even still deemed necessary or beneficial.
## SPEAKERS ON PANEL D
### ROOM E11, GROUND FLOOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title of the Presentation</th>
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| 17:50 - 18:20 | C. T. Cheung  
Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong | An Online Computer Language Learning Environment with Automated Assessment |

### Abstract

Practical sessions are important elements in computer language courses. Students spend lots of time in practical session to learn the syntax and grammar of a computer language. We have developed a Web-based Learning Environment for students to practice and learn the syntax and semantics of computer languages. Our objective is to encourage active learning beyond classroom learning environments, so that students and teachers can participate in the teaching and learning process at any time, any where.

A Web-based environment allows students to access course materials online. To ensure that students understand the concepts in computer language courses, practical exercises and assignments are important elements that must be incorporated in the course contents. Although there are many web sites providing practical exercises, most of them do not provide immediate feedback to students. Without a Web-based environment for interaction and feedback, students need to passively learn the syntax in constructing computer language statements. By using a Web-based learning environment, it is possible for students to learn a computer programming language online and submit their exercises online, and our system could check the syntax and structure of the computer language statements submitted by the students with immediate feedback. Any errors in the structure of the statement or mistakes in organizing the computer languages instructions will be sent to the students as immediate feedback.

The system has been used by students for three semesters. Positive feedbacks were obtained from students (through questionnaires and survey results). The system currently records 26,000 student sessions. All the 26,000 logs contain all student activities, their computer language instruction file versions (26,000 exercises submitted from students) and the associated error messages recorded during compilation. By analyzing these results online and in batch mode, we are able to offer immediate and timely help to assist students in program development. The software is innovative in terms of support for online language learning, online syntax check and execution. The associated session record for all student activities, the incremental versions student programs and associated error messages provide useful results for future research work.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title of the Presentation</th>
</tr>
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| 18:20 - 18:50 | Darren Elliott  
Meijo University, Japan | How Web 2.0 Can Help Teachers Develop             |

**Abstract**

Modern technologies have undoubtedly ‘changed’ the way teachers teach, and learn to teach, on a surface level. The interactivity, the potential for collaborative research and shared data, the new ways of receiving, organising and manipulating information offered by web 2.0; these are what might transform the way teachers develop.

Access across continents and time zones to information and social networks will allow motivated teachers to free themselves from a reliance on institutional development. Yet in the broader context of the technology that came before, and what we have seen since, web 2.0 could be considered the latest fad in the cycle of hyperbole, or something truly unique and new; a transformation.

There are three central questions in this paper. One of these is whether online teacher trainers and trainees are fully utilising the potential of current technologies. Leading on from that question, we need to look at whether it is possible to successfully deliver teacher training through web 2.0 technologies, and if it isn’t now then if it might be possible in the future.

Finally, it is vitally important to consider the construction of whole new paradigms, based on the ways in which people interact and learn online. The speaker will address these questions with specific reference to web 2.0 applications and teacher development.
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title of the Presentation</th>
</tr>
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| 18:50 - 19:20 | Rodney Mantle  
*Shanghai International Studies University, China* | *A Case Study on Interactive Whiteboards in China: New Dog, New Trick?* |

**Abstract**

This paper will examine: 1). the spread of IWBs around the world, and 2). talk about one possible use of IWBs in TEFL.

1). I will start with Information on the three main manufacturers: Promethean, Smart and Hitachi, give some statistics on the overall use of IWBs and talk about their use in Education and TEFL, with reference to the need for IWB materials.

2). English majors at LNNU attend a course on Educational Technology taught in Chinese but with some English words. Students in the IT Department get some exposure to English terminology. I organised an extra-curricular course called ‘IT in English’, with students from the English and IT Departments. The aim was to reinforce their existing IT skills, entirely in English. While teaching ‘IT in English’, I was an on-line student on a course entitled ‘ICT in the Classroom’.

My course included:

a). Use of the IWB;
b). Moodles and Wikis;
c). Editing pictures from digital cameras, using only the Activpen;
d). Webquests, using the main English-language search engines;
e). Various blog types.

For ‘ICT in the Classroom’ I had to undertake an online project with a class. Chinese students are curious about their teachers: mine wanted a blog on me. I combined this with a webquest on the background to my working life. Each student was allocated a period and provided with my CV, Publications List and some websites. They transformed the materials from a first person account to a third-person account, with background, including photographs, on the periods, places and organisations I worked for. The student blogmaster showed the blog’s progress and help the class edit it more effectively. This approach could be applied to historical figures or students’ older relatives or friends.
### Abstract

Using a small private Japanese university as a one-year case study, my research examines the use of technologies and software derived from podcasting and blogging within an academic setting. I will cite my own experiences regarding the use of podcasts in class sessions; audio files in student evaluation and self-assessment; and podcasting and blogging software in recording and maintaining an archive of academic conference proceedings.

I wish to move away from a narrow analysis of technology within the classroom to include the uses of these technologies in and among the faculty and at related academic events. I feel that this approach provides a more complete picture of the relationship between education and technology.

First, I will discuss the use of Web 2.0 technologies in English language teaching. The popularity of blogging and podcasting increases the ease with which computing technologies can be used thereby allowing those in the educational profession with little previous computer knowledge to use web technologies in their professional careers. On a practical level, I will present preliminary findings on student attitudes towards the use of these technologies in a classroom setting.

Second, I will investigate the use of these same technologies when applied to academic conferences. Drawing from personal experience in managing conference materials, I will examine some of the common questions and concerns regarding these technologies such as: (1). the practicalities of data storage and retrieval, and (2). the ethical concerns of terms of use and privacy of recorded materials.

To conclude, Web 2.0 technologies demand that we critically examine the way in which technology is used in an educational setting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title of the Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18:20 - 18:50</td>
<td>Kent R. Da Vault</td>
<td>Using Skype for Enhancing P2P Interactivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract**

My paper and demonstration will include: 1). a rationale for using Skype technology for L2 instruction 2). a description of a pilot program using a computer lab to connect to other remote sites and language learners. While no agreement has yet been reached, I am working with my former University’s language department in the U.S. to pair up Japanese language students with Japanese students learning English to facilitate L2 practice with native speakers and 3). a demonstration of the technology with another person at a remote site.

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**Conference Information**

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