

What can the Internet offer language teachers?

Macmillan
Heinemann

*Teacher Development Sessions
Barcelona, 13th May 2006*

Enda Francis Scott

efs@scottboardman.com

www.scottboardman.com/it/bcn06

Introduction

The Internet can be an endless source of material to brighten up our language classes. It can offer authenticity, novelty, variety and up-to-date material easily adapted for any groups of students, their interests and language needs.

The Internet can be used in many ways, from the very simple to the incredibly complex. This selection of sites, ideas and approaches gives an introduction to the area.

The Internet is just another potential teaching tool: ultimately, once teachers are familiar with the Internet, its potential and possible problems, each teacher will quickly have their own idea of how it should be best used within their context.

This is just a starting point ...

What the Internet has to offer Primary Teachers

A. Ideas and material a teacher can bring into class

1. www.barrysclipart.com

- Choose a category on the left eg COMIDA
- There are 81 pages for this category
- Find a picture you like and click on it
- You can print if you have a printer

<http://pbskids.org/coloring.html>
is a similar site with worksheets
teachers can print for students to colour.

2. www.puzzlemaker.com

- On the left click on the drop-down MENU
- Choose WORD SEARCH
- Follow the instructions
- In five minutes you have a WORD SEARCH you can print and use in class

There are NINE other
games you can create on this site!

3. www.booglesworld.com/songs.htm

- Look at the list of Songs and Rhymes
- Choose one
- The words will open in a Microsoft Word document which you can print or save to your computer.

On the MENU on the top click
on WORKSHEETS. Click on ANIMAL QUIZ. Find a
worksheet you could use with one of your classes.
There are many other wonderful resources on this site!

<http://www.fpx.de/fp/Disney/Lyrics/>
will give you the lyrics for songs from Disney films!

4. <http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/content/jokes/>

- Choose a category
- Copy or print some jokes for use in class

These jokes are a little difficult. One idea might be to make a
worksheet with ten questions and ask students to invent
their own answers. They can then be given the answers from the Internet.
They could try and translate some of their own jokes into English with a dictionary!

5. www.primarygames.com/print_zone/print_zone.htm

- Click on ACTIVITY PAGES
- Click on COLOR WORDS
- Click on COLOR WORDS 1
- You now have a simple worksheet to print
- Go back and look at other examples

This site has a lot more material from Calenders to Stationary. Go back to the main page and explore some of the options.

6. <http://www.bconnex.net/~kidworld/keypals4.htm>

- Choose an age group and read / copy some of the messages for use in class

Here is a site where you may find links to keypals. You could bring some of the messages into class and students could write their replies even without posting them on the Internet. Students could write their own messages to each other in class. Alternatively you may want to explore establishing some epals. Another site to explore is www.epals.com

7. <http://www.thetoymaker.com/2Toys.html>

- Click on A CHOCOLATE TRUCK
- You can print this and get students to colour and make in class!
- Look at some of the other toys on this site: are there any you would like to use in class?

8. www.wsu.edu/DrUniverse/

- Click on Enter
- Click on TODAY'S QUESTIONS or on RECENT QUESTIONS
- Copy three or four your students might be interested in
- Give them to students in class. Can they answer them?
- You can then tell them the answers or give them a copy and they can use a dictionary.
- They can then write their own questions for another group.

9. http://www.hitentertainment.com/artattack/menu_artattacks.html

- Choose CREATE A BORDER
- Could you do this with one of your classes?

This is an example of the many arts and crafts ideas on this site. They can simply give you ideas or may be printed for students to do.

10. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>

- Choose PRINT N GO COLORING BOOK from the menu on the left
- Here you can get and print information and pictures on all types of animals which might interest your students.

This is a wonderful site so do explore the other options including KID'S NEWS and MAPS.

B. Sites which could be used in class

1. <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/Dictionary.html>

- Choose a letter
- You now have pictures and a list of words for this letter

The teacher could do a worksheet for students to use with this material ie give them the first letter and a space for each additional letter in the word and students have to use the dictionary to find it. Students could possibly make a similar worksheet for another group. Alternatively they can be given a category such as food and encouraged to add vocabulary to this category.

2. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-little-kids.htm>

- Choose a song
- Students can read the words on the page
- CLICK HERE TO LISTEN

The vocabulary may be difficult but some could be done in class beforehand. If students click on a work they get a definition in English!

3. <http://pbskids.org/games.html>

- Choose a game

There are lots of games to choose from. It is usually best to guide the students at first and tell them which one to play, one you have used before or tried out earlier.

4. <http://www.magickeys.com/books/>

- Go down the page and select a story
- Read the story
- <http://pbskids.org/lions/stories.html> is another site
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/fimbles/comfycorner/> another one!

These stories can simple be read on the computer or the teacher can provide an accompanying worksheet. As follow-up in class students can draw pictures from the stories and remember vocabulary from them. They can draw their own simple stories.

5. <http://www.askforkids.com/>

- Type the question "What is a dinosaur"
- Click on GO.
- You now have information and pictures about dinosaurs

The teacher could give students set, previously-tested questions and ask them to copy a picture and make notes on some information. Alternatively, students could prepare some questions beforehand and try them out online.

6. <http://www.funbrain.com/kidscenter.html>

- Find the WORDS section
- Choose PLURAL GIRLS
- Choose a level
- Play a game

There are lots of other games on this site including many for Numbers

7. <http://www.sesameworkshop.org/sesamestreet/sitemap/>

- Try a dot to dot

This is just one of the many activities for younger learners

8. http://www.beenleigss.qld.edu.au/requested_sites/audiostories/index.html

- Click on a story to listen

9. <http://homepage.tinet.ie/~heathschool/>

- Go down the page and look at some of the categories

This page was written by Primary Children in Ireland. Children can complete a worksheet like the following:

10. <http://www.star-inn.com>

This page is difficult but may give children a taste of "being" in an English speaking country. Children can complete a worksheet like the following:

C. Some general sites of interest

1. www.scottboardman.com/it/bcn06 where material from this session is kept.

2. www.scottboardman.com/it/ where similar worksheets for SECONDARY are kept.

3. www.tesol-spain.org/resources

4. www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids

5. www.bbc.co.uk/schools

6. www.abcteach.com

7. www.isabelperez.com

1. Introduction to Internet:

Background:

If you are planning to use the Internet regularly with a class it is worthwhile spending some time on raising awareness of the Internet and how it works among students. Most will be aware of the Internet, but a clarification of what it is, what it can do is always useful. The following task is a brief off-line introduction to the Internet and commonly used terms which are often not completely understood.

Task:

How many of these questions can you answer?

1. Do you know what the *Internet* is?
2. Can you think of two more "names" for the "*WEB*"?
3. Do you know what a "*Website*" is?
4. Do you know what "*Hypertext*" means?
5. Do you know what is meant by a "*Link*"?
6. Do you know what a "*Browser*" is?
7. Do you know *three* ways of finding material on the Internet?

Now read the information on the next page and see if you were correct.

Extension:

Students who have used the Internet before could explain what they have done orally or through writing to those who have not. Students who have not could prepare questions to ask those who have. All students could prepare a brief survey about the Internet, what other students know, would like to use it for etc.

1. "**Internet**" is the result of computers world-wide being united through the telephone system (lines, satellite etc). Using a cable and a modem (the machine which encodes the computer information for transfer over phone lines) you plug into the phone socket and can "talk" to computers all over the world.
2. Just as satellites can bring you phone calls, TV and many other services, Internet refers to a collection of different services the best known of which are e-mail (electronic mail) and **the World Wide Web (WWW, the web)**. The web is only one of Internet's services but is certainly the most used and most interesting because it presents information with text, pictures, sounds etc and also allows you to move from one place to another by simply clicking once on certain words. It is extremely easy to use.
3. The web is composed of "**websites**". A "website" is a collection of "**pages**" (usually related in theme) maintained by an individual, company etc. Each website has a "**homepage**" which refers to the page you first go to (automatically) on a website (our homepage is what you see when we first open our Internet connection) – it's like the front page of a newspaper including usually a list of contents.
4. You move through pages or sites by using "**hypertext**". When the mouse arrow turns to a hand (over an image, or underlined text) all you have to do is click once to move on to another page.
5. All websites have an address, something like this: <http://www.yahoo.es> So if you want to find a particular site one option is to type the address (very carefully).
6. Very often however there is so much information we have no idea of the address so we have two options: one is to use **LINKS**, i.e. someone else's work. The second option is to **SEARCH** the Web using what is called a search engine. www.yahoo.com is a search engine and allows you to search for references for one word "Dublin" or a series "Dublin+Ireland+cinemas" on the WWW.
7. As with anything on a computer you need a special program to make it happen: if you want to type you need a word processor and if you want to use the web you need a **BROWSER** usually Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Communicator.

2. Beginning to surf:

Background:

While many families and students are beginning to explore the Internet, access is still not widespread and many students will have little or no experience of surfing the Internet. This, if combined with a lack of computer skills in general, can create problems; indeed there is nothing more frustrating for students than watching others have fun while they cannot participate. It is worthwhile spending some time initially to help students develop the basic skills necessary to use Internet effectively: one of the things students find most difficult is typing an address correctly which is of course fundamental to any Internet surfing!

Task:

Activity 1:

- Can you find where you type an address in the box at the top of the screen?

Click once in the box and use the delete button to delete the existing address.

- Type this address very carefully: www.tesol.spain.org and press the ENTER key.
- This is the homepage for TESOL-SPAIN. Click on one of the red TABS at the top of the page and you move to another page ... this is called clicking on a hyperlink.
- Use the **ATRÁS** button(top left of the screen) to go back.

Activity 2:

- Find **RESOURCES** and click once
- How many sections are there?
- Click once on **GO** under one section.
- How many different links are there in this section?
- Try some of the links and find one you like.

Extension:

Even though it may be a language class it may be worthwhile allowing students to do the above exercise with pages in Spanish and indeed spend some time exploring the web in Spanish as long as they do not come to identify their Internet based English classes with uncontrolled surfing in Spanish! For further surfing skills practice students could be encouraged to select a home page and write some basic questions for a group at another computer about this site. Those who have more experience with computers can help those who are new to them but sometimes this means taking over rather than sharing!

3. Searching:

Background:

As students become more skilled with their use of Internet there are more opportunities to move from structured teacher-generated worksheets to freer student led activities. This may require students to find information that interests them personally and they therefore have to develop the skills to search for information on the Internet. The following worksheet provides an introduction to effective searching skills on the web.

Task:

- Very carefully type www.yahoo.com . In the space type what you want to search for: DUBLIN and click on SEARCH.
- How many sites did the search find?
- If you are particularly interested in only information about Dublin in Ireland it is better to search for: DUBLIN+IRELAND. Try it and compare results with your first search.
- If what you really want is information about Irish pubs in Dublin the best is to go to LOCAL YAHOOs section and click on UK+IRELAND. Now if you search for DUBLIN+PUBS only in this section you will not be wasting time: you are searching the area most likely to bring results.
- Yahoo is organised by categories. Type www.google.com and try the search for Dublin again. How do results compare? Google shows you the most popular Internet pages for what you are searching.
- Type www.askjeeves.com You can now type a complete question and see what the answer is. Try: where exactly is Córdoba?

Extension:

For students of lower levels or who might find the above exercise difficult it might be an idea to allow them to use a Spanish search engine or to search an English search engine for Spanish terms: what is important at this initial stage is to develop the students IT skills so that they will not prove an impediment to developing their English through the Internet later.

4. Cutting and Pasting:

Background:

As students become more familiar with the Internet they may want to experiment with taking information, text or pictures from web pages and either printing it for later use or importing it into a word processor. The following worksheet can be applied to any material on the Internet as it simply illustrates how text (or images) can be copied from the Internet and later pasted and manipulated in a word processor or other program.

Task:

- Type www.yahoo.com and press the ENTER key.
- Go down the page to the bottom. Can you find the section **MORE YAHOO'S**?
- Now find **NEWS** and click on **TOP NEWS STORIES**.
- When this page opens find the section **ODDLY ENOUGH** on the left of your screen.
- You now have a collection of strange but true news stories. Find one you think is funny.
- You are now going to copy this story into a word processor. Select the text by dragging the cursor over it and keeping the left clicker on your mouse pressed down.
- When the text is in blue go to the menu **EDICIÓN** and select the option **COPIAR**.
- Now close the Internet and open a word processing program on your computer, Microsoft Word for example.
- Go to the menu **EDICIÓN** and select **PEGAR**. You now have copied the text off the Internet and you can play with it.
- Either delete some words from the text and ask another student to try and guess what the original words were or type some questions about the story at the end and print for use later in class.

Extension:

The skills developed in the above exercise can be used to create any number of worksheets for other groups. Text can be copied off the net, used as a gap fill, used as a text for comprehension questions, used even to examine the grammar in it. Cutting and pasting can also be a teacher's best friend and the source of lots of worksheets for use in class even if it is the teacher alone who has access to the Internet.

Developing your own worksheets

The previous sections have provided twenty concrete ideas. Every teacher will have their own ideas and their own classes and needs. Here are some general rules followed by some activities which may help you develop your own worksheets and Internet based lesson plans.

- do not be over ambitious
- keep tasks simple and clearly focused initially
- set tasks that are not too demanding on computer skills
- think about how to link Internet material to course books
- think about ideas for incorporating Internet material into more general lessons

Putting it into practice:

Here are some of the steps involved in generating an Internet lesson plan linked to a course book.

It may appear that this means a lot of work to make one simple Internet lesson but only the first time: once you get familiar with the Internet and know how your classes react you can have an Internet lesson plan in ten minutes!

Step 1:

Choose a page or unit from a course book you are currently using. What is the general theme ... food, sport, famous people?

Step 2:

Using the Internet search for information about this theme. Remember the differences between www.yahoo.com which is organised by categories and www.google.com which gives results based on popularity. If you are looking for information about a pop singer it may be quickest to go to Yahoo, find the correct category and then search for the name within this category. It is always best to search for the clearest definition possible: a search for "Martin" will not be as efficient as a search for "Ricky Martin Singer".

Step 3:

Once you have searched you will get a large number of results. It is impossible to look at all of them so read the information carefully for clues as to which might be most interesting (for example when searching for a pop singer the "official" homepage is often a good place to start . If these sites do not seem to be of interest you may need to search again but be more specific.

When you do find a list of possible useful sites it is still impossible to analyse all of them. Look through some of them quickly: many are easily disregarded immediately. Choose three or four which look most promising and complete the following chart to help you identify which will be best in class.

Site Name/ Address	Visual Content	Ease of navigation	Level and Quality Of English	Relevant to Students?

Step 4:

Once you have found a site it is now time to make a worksheet for your students. The nature of this worksheet will depend on the class, their level and their experience with Internet.

- To start with some simple questions and clear instructions as to how to find the answers is the probably the best approach.
- If your students are new to Internet it is sometimes a good idea to get them to tick off the instructions as they do them
- Questions can be about the text but also about the visual content to make the exercise even easier for certain levels.
- It is often useful to have some "freer" tasks at the end for those who have finished first: tasks such as "write five questions about the site for another group".
- At higher levels, or classes with more experience of Internet you may want to try a less controlled task such as "make notes about ...". This can provide material for lots of follow up activities from reporting orally to writing later in class but it can sometimes be difficult for students to know what to make notes of and will need help.

Write the task in the following space or type it in a word processor.

Step 5:

Once you have an Internet based worksheet it is interesting to consider how to get the most out of it in the classroom. This may involve both *pre-* and *post-* Internet activities. In the spaces below there are some ideas which may be of use for your lesson plan. Read them and then write some for your lesson plan in the box if you think it is necessary or appropriate.

Possible activities in class *before* using the Internet worksheet.

- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Students predict what they will find either speaking or writing
- Students write questions they would like to find answer for

Possible activities *after* using the Internet.

- Students compare answers orally
- Students question each other on what they found
- Students report orally on notes they have taken
- Students write a summary of what they found

Step 6:

Finally, before taking students into the computer room to use Internet it is useful to think about the technical skills they may need, from using a mouse to "surfing" the Internet. This is particularly important the first times you use Internet with classes. Think of the class you are going to use the previous lesson plan with and make some notes under the following headings.

Their knowledge of Internet:

How could their awareness of Internet be improved: survey, questionnaire, worksheet?

How to deal with different levels of computer skills in the computer room:

How to make activity as easy as possible: are instructions clear etc? In Spanish?