Abstract

Web@glance is an Entre Lenguas section dedicated to share with our readers how teachers have integrated e-resources to the teaching and learning of foreign languages and/or to their own professional development. The review needs to include a brief description of the e-resource (purpose, audience, links, resources and tasks available, among others); how they integrated these e-resources to their language class and, some recommendations for learners and tutors. Web@glance also includes information about online and face to face events related to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

In this Entre Lenguas issue, Web@glance presents a review about the Teaching English website (http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/) produced by the British Council with content and editorial support from the British Broadcasting Corporation. This review offers a description of the e-resources available in this website for English Language Teaching. First, I will present an overview of the teaching methodology, current practice and English Language Teaching (ELT) issues resources. Secondly, I will offer a description of the forum space where teachers interact and discuss ideas about teaching and materials. Finally, I will describe teaching materials and activities for ELT.

If you would like to contribute to the Web@glance section, please submit your paper to Teadira Pérez at teadira@ula.ve.

The teaching English website: An e-community for teachers of English

Resumen

Web@glance es una sección de la Revista Entre Lenguas dedicada a compartir con nuestros lectores y lectoras la forma como los docentes han integrado recursos electrónicos a la enseñanza/aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras y/o a su desarrollo profesional. Su contribución debe incluir una descripción del recurso electrónico (propósito, audiencia, enlaces, recursos, tareas, entre otros); como se integraron al aula de clase y algunas recomendaciones para docentes y estudiantes. Igualmente, Web@glance incluye información sobre los eventos en línea o presenciales relacionados con el uso de las Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación (TIC) en la enseñanza/aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras.

En este número de Entre Lenguas, se presenta una revisión del sitio Web “Teaching English” creado por el Consejo Británico con apoyo editorial y de contenido de la Corporación de Radiodifusión Británica. Esta reseña ofrece una descripción de los recursos electrónicos disponibles en esta página Web que sirven de apoyo a profesores de inglés en la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa. En primer lugar, presentaré una visión general de los recursos que ofrece este sitio Web en cuanto a la metodología de enseñanza y las tendencias- problemas actuales de enseñanza del inglés. En segundo lugar, ofreceré una descripción del espacio de foros de discusión en donde los docentes interactúan y discuten ideas relacionadas con la enseñanza del inglés y recursos didácticos. Finalmente, describiré los materiales didácticos y las actividades para la enseñanza de inglés que ofrece el sitio Web “Teaching English”.

Si desea contribuir con la sección Web@glance, envíe sus aportes a Teadira Pérez a la siguiente dirección electrónica: teadira@ula.ve.
Introduction

The advances of technologies have opened doors to create online communities of practice (CoPs). According to Wenger, White and Smith (2008) CoPs are groups of people who share a passion for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better. Although most people consider that CoPs contribute to their professional development, some teachers are still working alone. The Web 2.0 calls for new kinds of community based on common practice and new e-spaces have been created in an attempt to bridge the digital divide and make teachers communicate and interact beyond geographical limitations. One example of best practice is represented by The Teaching English Website created by the British Council in order to group teachers of English in order to learn from each other and reflect on their teaching methodology and practice.

The Teaching English Website offers teachers of English a repertoire of resources to help them in their teaching by connecting theory and practice, but it also provides these teachers with an e-community where they can share ideas and resources. The purposes of this Teaching English Website are:

a) To offer teachers of English with a variety of teaching methodology articles.
b) To provide teachers of English with examples of good practice.
c) To promote interaction and collaboration through the forum space.
d) To engage teachers in different teaching activities by sharing ideas and resources.

Figure 1. The teaching English home page
Communities of practice are defined themselves along three dimensions: what they are about, how they function, and what capabilities they produce. Each community of practice has a unique domain, community, and practice. Online communities of practice share a number of elements that allow their members to work collaboratively in order to get engaged in sharing knowledge, developing expertise, and solving problems.

These elements are explicity embedded in The Teaching English Website and are closely connected to the premise of this site: think, try, talk and transform. Based on this premise, teachers, then, need to:

a) **Think** about their teaching methodology by reading articles written by teachers and experts.

b) **Try** lesson plans, quizzes, ideas for activities and other materials which you can download to use in class.

c) **Talk** using personal blog, joining discussion forums and forming groups around particular areas of interest.

d) **Transform** their knowledge by participating in forums to get help and advice on professional development.

The **Teaching Resources** session includes a wide variety of lesson plans and activities for primary, secondary and adult teachers. These resources offer teachers:

a) **Activities** – useful and meaningful activities to try out in the classroom. These usually include guide for preparation and procedure and printable worksheets.

b) **Lesson plans** – a series of lesson plans with complementary materials and worksheets.

c) **English for games** – a variety of topics and resources related to games.

d) **Tips** – a series of videos with tips for teaching English.

e) **English for kids** - a good selection of resources and materials for teaching children.

f) **Britlit** – a variety of resources for teaching literature in the English language classroom.

g) **Links** – a session devoted to online resources and websites for the teaching of English.

**Adescription of one of the Activities: Vision off – youtube technique**

The section devoted to activities is composed of a number of tasks to try out in the classroom and it contains a guide for preparation and procedure, and sometimes printable worksheets. One of the activities offered in this section is the **Vision off – youtube technique**. This activity is aimed at developing critical thinking skills. Students are offered a short youtube film and they are asked to answer the following questions:

- How many people are there in the scene?
- What sounds can you hear?
- Where is the scene set?
- What is happening?

Students are not allowed to watch the film while listening for the first time and the need to write a screenplay. Teachers can read the whole procedure and the printable worksheet and make decisions on what adaptations they may need for their language class.
The Teacher Development section includes news on conferences, webinars and continuing professional development. One of the most interesting parts of the Teacher Development repository is publications which include interesting documents related to language teaching policy and research. The Training Courses section offers teacher training materials for teachers and trainers in order to plan and organize their courses. The part devoted to Articles presents a wide variety of papers in the following areas: methodology, pronunciation, vocabulary, speaking, reading, listening, writing, literature and culture.

Teachers are not alone with this repository of resources: they do not just download and use these materials in their classroom. The Teaching English Website is also a dynamic community of practice that joins together teachers from different parts of the world to share ideas and resources. There are a number of ways of participating and interacting in this community, and they include:

a) Blogs - teachers registered in this website can create their own blogs.

b) Forums - teachers ask questions related to teaching to others colleagues around the world.
c) **Video discussions** – teachers watch interviews about teaching topics and add their voice.

d) **Newsletters** - teachers can register to get news on workshops, courses, conferences, among others.

e) **Polls** - teachers can take part in polls and add their opinion.

f) **Networks** - teachers can get information about teachers associations near them.

**Recommendations to use the Teaching English Website**

Based on my experience navigating and using the Teaching English Website for my professional development and my language classes, I would like to recommend teachers some tips to use the resources available in this site, as follows:

a) Get registered to keep track of your activities and to create your own blog.

b) Try to find out how resources are connected in this website. For example, when using the **Vision off – youtube technique**, you can also have a look at the articles section and get familiar with how listening needs to be taught.

c) Have a look at the home page on a regular basis to check updated information and current news.

d) Check out the teacher development section regularly to keep informed with materials, publications, conferences and webinars.

e) Listen to podcast resources such as the **Teaching English Radio** to reflect upon different topics.

f) Subscribe to the English Language Teaching Contacts Scheme – ELTeCS to get news on workshops, courses, resources, among others.

**A final thought**

The Teaching English website, as described above, provides teachers with important information about teaching methodology, but it also offers teachers the opportunity to put into practice this information through the downloadable resources. These resources are thoughtfully informed by pedagogy; they are supported by handouts which guide teachers in their classroom.

Teachers, by navigating this website, gain an insight into the understanding of how practice is more effective when is informed by theory. But, most importantly teachers get a sense of belonging since the Teaching English Website opens the doors to an online community to share ideas and resources and to build knowledge together.

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**References**

### COMING EVENTS IN 2012

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<th>March, 19 - 23</th>
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