

Language Instruction Using Web Pages about US National Parks

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Proceedings of the CATESOL State Conference, 2005

This presentation demonstrated how to build and use web pages for language teaching. Web-based language teaching employs learner-centered teaching methodology with a focus placed on authenticity of materials and interactivity of activities. We used Frontpage in the construction of the web pages and Hot Potatoes application to develop diverse problem sets. As an adult ESL/EFL program, it intends to show how four language skills, reading, speaking, writing, and listening, can be simultaneously practiced, and how they can be incorporated to diverse language instructional methodologies which include task-based language teaching (TBLT), content-based instruction (CBI), and thematic instruction. While providing contexts for instruction that are rich in opportunities for hands-on learning and interaction between learner and teacher and between learner and learner, we presented materials made more accessible and understandable for target learners.

According to Krashen (1985), second language acquisition occurs when a learner receives comprehensible input. Canale and Swain (1980) argued that learners must produce comprehensible output in order to develop communicative competence. Based on these observations, we selected materials and designed activities only when their difficulty level is appropriate for intermediate level ESL/EFL learners, who are the target audience of this web page. In addition, content-based instruction can provide students with a venue by which learners acquire language skills and cultural competence simultaneously (Snow, 2001). Agreeing with this opinion, we carefully incorporated materials that can enhance cultural knowledge of the target language audience.

The theme of the web pages, "National Parks in the US" was chosen because the theme can cover diverse domains of language such as biology, history, culture, economy,

archeology, politics, etc. The theme also can cover various topics such as safety guidelines, wild animals, camping, activities in the wilderness, etc. These topics carry authenticity which students are most likely to encounter in real life when they plan a trip to a national park or during a visit to a national park. As the final topic of the web pages, a video was taped and included. This video contains the process of packing for a trip to a national park. Videos can present a total communicative situation, and therefore, have been recognized as a valuable resource for intensive language study (Stempleski & Tomalin, 1990). Additionally, recognizing the efficiency of TBLT, these web pages contain extensive tasks and instructions for the tasks. The tasks are designed in such a way that they can be performed individually or by a group.

Each lesson consists of three activities: pre-surfing, while-surfing, and post-surfing activities. The three stages were consistently followed when we created independent learning pages that include hot potatoes activities and video-world activities consisting of these three stages. Activities made using Hot Potatoes contain such problem types as matching, short answer, multiple-choice, cloze and crossword puzzles. These problem sets are carefully designed to make possible flexible interactions between students and instructors, and they are also created with students' language proficiency being taken in consideration. These problem sets can be used both in class and out of class. As the programs provide ready-made frameworks, text manipulation such as a cloze activity is one of activities that "can be given a communicative dimension if teachers and students are able to relate them to the performance for some communicative task" (Johnson & Morrow, 1981). The web page can be used to help the learner acquire

necessary vocabulary and sentence structures. It can also be used to rehearse a few pre-fabricated routines to be used by the learner (Kenning & Kenning, 1990).

To facilitate target learners' interest and enhance their motivation, hints and clues are provided for the students during independent study. By this, students can use the strategy of speculation for possible answers when they solve questions of grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, etc. To promote self-paced learning and enhance self-awareness, students get feedback, can check their answers, and know their scores immediately. Instructors can modify hints and clues anytime depending on students' needs, and they also can change contents and format or upload new contents as deemed to be appropriate. Brown (1995) said that instruction is not a fixed process but an ongoing process that dynamically adjusts to students' needs without systematicity of instruction lost. The web pages were created with this point kept in mind.

The web pages were designed with recognizing that learners need to be involved in both the learning and the assessment process (Wiggins, 1998). Wiggins used the term *educative assessment*, and argued that it influences students' motivation and learning and that assessment should be authentic and appropriate feedback and opportunities for revision to improve should be given. The web pages follow this reasoning.

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