

## Book review

### How to Teach English with Technology

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**Gavin Dudeney and Nicky Hockly**

*How to Teach English with Technology*

*How to...* series editor: **Jeremy Harmer**

**Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2010, 192 pp**  
**ISBN: 978-1-4058-5308-8**

Every once in a while there is a volume that interrelates technology and language learning. In the past few years books have tended to promote what could be called 'teachers' literacy' in the use of ICT in foreign language teaching. However, many teachers use information technologies regularly, either retrieving information from the Internet, downloading exercises or even creating online tests. So what distinguishes one book from another? In principle, it seems that books can be divided into three main groups: first, those that approach the issue from a very theoretical perspective including pedagogical theories; the second group would include manuals aimed at teacher trainees which tend to be basic but need to integrate theory and practice; and the third would comprise predominantly practical guides, targeted mostly toward practicing teachers who need to discover and integrate new materials and aspects into their classes. *How to Teach English with Technology* corresponds to the third category. The new Longman series *How to...* comprise practical volumes which take into account the fact that teachers already have some experience with their classes, but for one reason or another, need time for preparation. Thus, innovation in their classes necessarily has to be paced and introduced gradually. This series of books emphasizes the importance of including additional audiovisual materials, such as *How to Teach English* (Harmer, 2007), which includes interviews with experienced and novice teachers about their activities in class. *How to Teach English with Technology* includes a CD-ROM containing the recordings of interviews with teachers who speak about their experience using computers and technology, plus nine video tutorials which include different types of projects or activities such as creating webquests, a keypal project, setting up and using a Skype account, using Hot Potatoes, joining Webheads, and a controversial use of 'Second Life' in the classroom. Additionally, there is a somewhat limited *webliography*, a video on the use of smart boards and a tour of the Longman dictionary.

The 12-chapter book also includes four appendices which first describe the theoretical background of each topic. At the end, there are references to the technical devices, software or hardware described in the chapter and some suggestions for classroom activities. The book is oriented towards a progressive degree of difficulty and expertise. As the authors mention, some teachers may only use some parts while others will be able to integrate most aspects into their teaching. Overall, all the chapters are well-written and organized. Although Dudeney and Hockly include both theory and practice,

the book is mostly practical and emphasizes activities and ideas for both teachers' development and class management alike. Thus the first chapter is aimed at introducing the value of technology in education and language (either first, second or foreign) followed by topics such as the computer as a word processor, the use and creation of websites, internet-based projects, how to use email and how to use chat, keypal projects, chat rooms, blogs, wikis and podcasts, the use of interactive whiteboards or online reference tools and technology based courseware or designing materials with or without authoring tools such as Hot Potatoes, Clarity Software, Creative Technology or Quia. The last section of the book includes issues relating to the trainer more than the trainee such as: e-learning, online teaching and training and an interesting chapter called 'Preparing for the future'. Finally, as mentioned above, the book includes activities and suggestions for the class which are related to the webliography and interviews presented in the CD-ROM and a reader-friendly jargon-free glossary.

According to the authors, one of the important goals of the book is to get teachers to replace their fears about using technology with confidence in the fact that change does not happen overnight and is, moreover, a process that may take some time and need not be rushed. Teachers need to trust and use technology to the extent where they feel confident. Some will simply type exercises or prepare simple activities for the Internet, while others may be able to convince their students to take a further step in their technological experience and adopt a significant role in the class. Another significant aspect that is well covered in the book is the importance and way of approaching teacher-created materials and the use of external websites when dealing with the Internet by suggesting examples of both. The authors strongly believe that content-based and cooperative language learning should be the methodology used in today's teaching and, therefore, project work and synchronous and asynchronous communication have a leading role in establishing internal (class, school) and external links (other schools, countries, students [for instance with keypal projects]).

Hopefully, some teachers will be intrigued by the title of the book but indeed the content is worth looking at. Although studies on potential rejection of the use of technology in teaching foreign languages are still reported, the immense potential should overcome the possible drawbacks. Dudeney and Hockly have trimmed a valuable and well designed volume whose flaws are insignificant in relation to the quality and interest of explaining how to integrate ICT in the classroom step by step. In their review of the book, García Laborda & Magal Royo (2007) pointed out other suggestions for improvement such as the inclusion of more tutorials or videos (video recordings of the teachers at work, though a challenge in itself, could have been a great asset) as Harmer (2007) did in another volume of the series. We also missed references to tools, materials and websites which are not produced by commercial publishers such as Isabelperez ([www.isabelperez.com](http://www.isabelperez.com)), whose website receives over 100,000 visits a month, the onestopenglish website ([www.onestopenglish.com](http://www.onestopenglish.com)) and easytestmaker ([easytestmaker.com/default.aspx](http://easytestmaker.com/default.aspx)). The chapter on future developments, although it is very interesting, could have expanded into the possibilities of the web 2.0 or the importance of the semantic web in further educational developments. I disagree with García Laborda & Magal Royo that the book is too subjective since a book of this very nature should be personal if it is really intended to convince and influence practicing English language teachers. Overall, this is a self-contained book for teachers, trainers and trainees alike. It includes a wealth of useful information and the CD-ROM with interviews adds a positive degree of realism, which readers will definitely enjoy reading and, who knows, maybe get some ideas to make their classes even more appealing.

## References

Laborda, J. G., & Royo, T. M. (2007) Book review: How to teach English with technology (Gavin Dudeney & Nicky Hockly). *Educational Technology & Society*, 10 (3): 320-324. Available online from [http://www.ifets.info/others/abstract.php?art\\_id=786](http://www.ifets.info/others/abstract.php?art_id=786)

Harmer, J. (2007) *How to Teach English*, Harlow, Essex: Pearson-Longman.