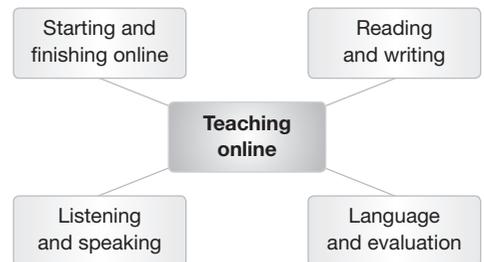# B

Teaching Online has so far examined the hardware, the software and, most importantly, the liveware – the human factor. Online teaching is as much about creating communication, rapport and interaction as classroom teaching is: we still have the teacher, the students, the language. The main difference is that these all-important human elements are mediated by machines. In this process of mediation there are, of course, some changes and adjustments. Talking face-to-face is not the same as talking via the telephone or via a webcam. But essentially, we are still talking about communication, and this is something that we all know is vital for learning a language.

Online teaching

All the activities presented in Part B are underpinned by the idea that communication and interaction are key for effective language teaching. Although we suggest a range of tools and sites for delivering the content of your course, we focus on activities that encourage learners to engage and interact *with* and *in* the language.

Starting and finishing online		Reading and writing
	Teaching online	
Listening and speaking		Language and evaluation

It is important never to lose sight of the liveware, and it is unlikely that computers will ever replace the teacher. Good online teaching needs effective human mediation – and this is provided by the teacher, not by automatic 'drag and drop' activities.

Online learning

There is a wealth of tools and sites available for English language learning. These range from 'static' sites which provide ready-made multimedia resources and lesson plans, to online tools which learners can use to create their own multimedia content and projects.

Our activities refer you to tools your learners can access both as *users* and as *creators* – and we suggest ways in which to encourage them to interact and communicate in English. We are not suggesting that you do *all* of these activities, nor that you do them in the order in which we present them. Depending on what your learners need, you can pick and choose as you please.

Note We list the tools you and your learners can use for each activity – in the order in which you will use them. And we use the generic term 'course site' to refer to any of the four main course site tools suggested on page 20 (VLE, discussion group, social networking site, wiki) through which you can package up and deliver your course content.

Sounds of me

Sharing favourite music with other learners

Tools	▼ Online music player
	▼ Course site

Technique

- ☐ Prepare a short playlist of three to five songs you like, or which are especially significant to you. Add the songs to an online music player.
- ☐ In your course site, write the names of the songs you chose and the reasons you like them, or why they are significant to you. Provide a link to your playlist in the online music player.
- ☐ Tell your learners to read about the songs you chose. Ask them to listen to the songs in your playlist.
- ☐ The learners then create their own playlists of three to five songs each, in the same online music player. Include instructions on exactly how to do this if necessary.
  - They add the names of the songs they chose, as well as the reasons they like them or why they are significant, to the same place in the course site.
  - They also need to include a link to their individual playlists.
- ☐ Ask them to listen to each other's playlists and to read about their selections. They respond to, and comment on, each other's choices of music.

Variation

If using an online music player seems too complex, you can look for music videos of songs you like on a video sharing site (for example YouTube). Post a link to the videos in your course site and then ask the learners to do the same for their playlists.

Comment

Sharing personal music preferences tends to work well with learners of all age groups and levels. One danger in delivering content for learners online is that we can become very text-oriented. Including a range of media such as images, video and, in this case, music will enhance your online course content and provide welcome variety.

Podcast dictations

Listening to and writing a short text

Tools	▼ Voice board or podcasting site
	▼ Course site or email

Technique

- ☐ Choose a short written text for your learners, on a topic that will be of interest to them and at a level they will be able to understand. You could choose the text from an authentic source, or write your own.
- ☐ Record yourself reading the text aloud slowly and clearly, on a voice board or in a podcasting site.
- ☐ Give the learners the web address of your voice board recording or podcast.
  - They listen to it in their own time.
  - They transcribe the text.
- ☐ As feedback, provide them with a written version of the text, either as a word-processed document in your course site or as an email, so that they can check their transcriptions.
- ☐ The learners then produce their own short recordings for dictations for the rest of the class, and add them to the same voice board or podcasting site.

Variation

For your dictation texts, you could use short written texts or paragraphs from previous units in the coursebook, as revision for the learners.

Instead of short texts, you could use individual words as your dictation, such as vocabulary items or irregular verbs from previous classes.

Comment

Providing the learners with regular podcasts as dictations, once a week or once every two weeks, is a very simple and effective way to help them develop their listening and grammar skills.

What's my line?

Watching and listening to movie trailers

Tools
- ▼ **Course site**
- ▼ **Email**

Technique

- Find a website with several movie trailers. Two of the most popular sites are:
  - *Yahoo Movies*
    http://movies.yahoo.com
  - *Apple Trailers*
    http://www.apple.com/trailers/
- Choose five or six trailers for upcoming films that you think your learners will like.
- Watch each trailer and write the following:
  - Two lines of dialogue that are in the trailer
  - An invented line of dialogue that isn't in the trailer
- See the box opposite for two examples.
- Put the name and the lines of dialogue in your course site.
  - The learners watch the trailers and decide which lines they heard and which one isn't in the trailer.
  - They *email* you the answers, they don't post them to the course site.
- Respond by thanking each student by email as their answers arrive.
- Provide a summary of the correct answers in the course site. Ask the learners to compare the original answers they sent to you by email and to listen again to any trailers they got wrong.

Follow-up

Ask the learners to write a short paragraph about which trailers they think looked most interesting, and why, or which films they would like to see or have seen already. They post their paragraphs to the course site, or send them to you by email. Provide corrections and feedback as necessary.

Variation

You could ask the learners to make their own similar activity, based on trailers of films they choose themselves.

Comment

Learners usually enjoy watching film clips, and the advantage of using movie trailers is that the clips are short and therefore easier to work with. Even then, the dialogue in films can be difficult to understand, especially at lower levels. So if you provide three lines of dialogue, the activity simply requires them to recognise the lines from the written word.

Getting learners to produce their own three lines for a trailer is, of course, far more demanding as they need to recognise lines from the *spoken* word. For very low-level learners, choose trailers with the clearest spoken English as your examples – and don't use the Variation suggested above!

Watch and listen to the trailers for the films below. Which line do you hear? Tick the correct one.

Transformers 2

Fate rarely calls upon us at a moment of our choosing.	☐
The transformation is complete.	☐
What you are about to see is top secret.	☐

The Twilight Saga: Eclipse

She's still human.	☐
I know the consequences of the choice you're making.	☐
Choose me. He's a vampire.	☐

Binomials

Chatting about collocations

Tools ▶ Chatware (text)

Technique

- Prepare a list of binomials your learners will probably be familiar with. Binomials are pairs of words that often go together – see Box 1.
- Meet and greet the learners in the chatroom and explain the activity:
  - You will type the first word of a binomial.
  - They will each type the other half of the pair as fast as they can.
- Do an example first.
  - Type *salt and …* .
  - The learners should all type *pepper* (or another word they think goes with *salt*).

  If they are still not sure how the activity works, do another example.
- Type in the first half of the next binomial (eg *black and …*) and wait for all the learners to respond. They will not all come up with the same pair, and the results can be quite amusing.
- Recap the binomials which are most commonly used, and ask the learners to each type two binomials which were new to them in the text chat window.

Variation

You can use any word pairs for this activity – see Box 2.

Comment

Try to keep the pace of this activity fast; if you are not a very fast typist yourself, you can prepare your list of binomials beforehand in a word-processing document, and keep the document open during the chat so you can copy and paste your binomials into the chat window. You can prepare, and then copy and paste, the task instructions in the same way.

Using text chat is a very useful language activity. Because the learners are typing (rather than speaking), activities which focus on accuracy can work especially well.

1

salt and pepper	*bacon and eggs*
right and wrong	*left and right*
king and country	*king and queen*
black and white	*black and blue*
love and marriage	*love and hate*

2

- Infinitive and past tense irregular verbs (you type the infinitive of the verb, the learners type the irregular past simple form)
- Homophones (words which sound the same but are spelt differently)
- Synonyms and antonyms
- One-syllable words with the same vowel sound